



Oversight and Governance

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday 18 July 2024
12.30 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Reilly, Chair

Councillor R.Smith, Vice Chair

Councillors Mrs Beer, Gilmour, Krizanac, McLay, McNamara, Simpson, Steel, Stephens and Tippetts.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf. This meeting will be webcast and available on-line after the meeting. By entering the Warspite Room, Councillors are consenting to being filmed during the meeting and to the use of the recording for the webcast.

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Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

2. To note the appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Municipal Year 2024/25

To note the appointment of Councillor Zoe Reilly as Chair, and Councillor Rebecca Smith as Vice-Chair, for the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel for 2024/25.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect to items on the agenda.

4. Scrutiny Panel Responsibilities: (Pages 1 - 2)

5. Minutes (Pages 3 - 14)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 February 2024.

6. Chair's Urgent Business

To receive reports on business which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

7. Plymouth City Council Special Educational needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Plan 2024-2030: (Pages 15 - 58)

8. Seeking Education, Employment and Training July 2024: (Pages 59 - 66)

9. Q4 2023/24 Performance Report: (Pages 67 - 82)

10. Achieving Excellence - A Strategy for Children's Services 2024 - 27: (Pages 83 - 118)

11. Child Exploitation Update: (Pages 119 - 126)

12. Tracking Decisions: (Pages 127 - 130)

13. Work Programme: (Pages 131 - 134)

- 14. Exempt Business:
- 15. Plymouth City Council Special Educational needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Plan 2024-2030: (Pages 135 - 140)

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Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Linked to the Cabinet Member and Department with responsibility for:

- Schools and Colleges
- Apprenticeships
- Early years Development
- Education Grants
- Youth Services
- Children's social care (primary responsibility for Children's Service Matters)
- Adoption and Fostering
- Early intervention and prevention
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Corporate Parenting
- The leadership and delivery of all services for children and young people

MEMBERSHIP – Proportionality applies, the Chair of the panel shall serve on the Scrutiny Management Board. All members of the panel will adhere to the general rules of Overview and Scrutiny.

There are 11 members of the panel including the Chair and Vice Chair.

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Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 28 February 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Reilly, in the Chair.

Councillor Carlyle, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Dr Cree, Dingle, Harrison, McLay, Penrose, Stephens and Tippetts.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Holloway

Also in attendance: Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications), Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Apprenticeships and Skills), Nigel Denning (Interim Service Director for Children, Young People and Families), Matt Fulton (Lead Accountancy Manager), Hannah McGuigan (Performance Advisor), Paul Stephens (Performance Advisor), David Haley (Director of Children's Services), Jim Barnicott (Head of Education and Virtual School), Lisa Linscott (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Clare Hetherington (Principal Educational Psychologist), Youth Ascends, Helen Huntley (PIASS Team Manager), Nicole Gallagher (SENDIASS Case Officer) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 14:00 and finished at 17:11.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

37. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Holloway.

38. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

39. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 07 November were agreed as a true and accurate record.

40. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

41. **Tracking Decisions**

Action:	Response:
1)	A letter would go out to Multi-Academy Trusts for their response;
3)	Nigel Denning would distribute the data in relation to the amount of foster carers which had successfully become a Plymouth City Council approved Foster carer after showing interest.

The Committee agreed to note the tracking decisions log.

42. **Finance Monitoring Report**

Matthew Fulton (Lead Accountancy Manager) introduced the report and provided the following highlights:

- a) The report broke down the budgetary changes between previous and the current financial year;
- b) Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) saw a reduction of £464,000 from 2022/23 to 2023/24 which was made up of additional cost of volume for placements which was received at £3.053 million, pay award adjustment, pension increase adjustment and additional Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) targets;
- c) The MTFP targets saw the budget reduction decrease between financial years by £464,000;
- d) The Education, Participation and Skills (EP&S) budget saw an increase between financial years of £1.827 million which was largely down to home to school transport;
- e) In quarter three for 2023/24 there was an overspend due to increased costs due to sufficiency issues and the volume of children in the city;
- f) There had been investment in home to school transport to EPNS of just over £1 million;
- g) The 'bottom-line' for Children's Services in Quarter Three was £1.859 million for EPNS and £8.929 million for CYPF which was close to £11 million over budget.

In response to questions, it was explained:

- h) The budget had been exceeded due to placement costs, sufficiency and ensuring children were safe;
- i) Without national intervention, all councils, including Plymouth, would not be able to continue;
- j) A large pressure on the budget was home to school transport, and this

was not just a pressure faced in Plymouth, but nationally;

- k) Provisions had been maintained across the service despite the overspend;
- l) The projections were done in October 2023 including how many children were in care at the time, however this number had increased;
- m) Children's Services had become a whole Council priority;
- n) Plans were in place to contain the budget for the next financial year as much as was possible;
- o) There was no reply to the letter sent to the Children's Minister sent by the Leader of the Council which addressed profits and profiteering;
- p) A key part of the strategy would be to bring children out of the area to be closer to Plymouth;
- q) Proposed changes to foster carer council tax and payment would be shared.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

43. **Performance Scorecard and Risk**

The report was taken as read, questions and discussion points from the Committee included:

- a) Confidence had increased at the Council's front door service;
- b) Training had taken place regarding thresholds of need;
- c) Manageable workloads for social workers was a key priority;
- d) Councillors were urged to take part in Children's Social Care's Practice week sessions;
- e) Recruitment of experienced social workers remained competitive and caseloads were identified as a key area to remain low in order to retain social workers;
- f) Newly qualified social workers had protected caseloads for one year and then increased for years two and three but still capped;
- g) The service would see increased funding for 2024/25. The managed team would leave but the structure would be permanent for another team and the service would be looking to actively recruit to those posts;
- h) There was strong oversight of children and young peoples interventions and financial costs of those interventions;

- i) The levels of referrals in 2022/23 were not right and Plymouth was not dealing with its referrals correctly and was part of the remedial work that was taking place and Plymouth was now in line with its statistical neighbours;
- j) The number of child protection plans had significantly increased and was in line with statistical neighbours. Caseloads remained fairly static;
- k) The task and finish group for the recruitment and retention offer would be looking at the key areas of focus identified by foster carers.

Action: Members to be given a briefing on the Leaders for Excellence programme.

Action: Members to be provided a briefing on the NSPCC Neglect tool.

Action: Links to the councils recruitment drive to be shared to Committee Members to spread more awareness.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

44. **Children's Social Care Improvement Plan**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications) introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Plymouth had come to the end of the stabilisation and firm foundations of the plan and would be moving into develop, sustain and embed;
- b) The report shared a self-assessment which was provided to Ofsted in the recent inspection;
- c) Improvements in relation to the focussed visit of the Front Door at the end of 2022 had been achieved and sustained;
- d) Stabilising the workforce leadership and additional investment improved recruitment and retention;
- e) There was a clear understanding of strengths and areas of required improvement;
- f) The workforce was able to demonstrate passion and commitment to make differences to children's lives;
- g) The Ofsted report would be published on 15 March 2024.

Questions and discussions points from the Committee included:

- h) There were seven young people in unregistered placements and numbers have fluctuated. The children in those placements were not the same and

had good move on plans to appropriate placements;

- i) The target for children being seen alone by a social worker to gather their wishes and feelings was 95%. The performance reported included all children and it was acknowledged it was not appropriate to see some children alone;
- j) Plymouth had shown its capacity to improve and sustain improvements under the improvement notice;
- k) The age cohort of 5-9 years on a child protection plan;
- l) Early help was a key offer for the city and the offer would be improved in the city;
- m) Family hubs were integrated into the three year improvement strategy;
- n) MASH had seen increased resource which had seem sustained improvement since the improvement notice was given.

Action: Additional line to be placed within the report for unregistered placements.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

45. **Key Stage 4 Outcomes Report**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education xxxx) introduced the report to the committee and was supported by Jim Barnicott (Head of Education and Virtual School).

Questions and discussion points from the Committee included:

- a) The number of children receiving SEN support and the waiting times in assessment times;
- b) How the Local authority held schools to account in how they spent their pupil premium;
- c) The Education service and Councillor Cresswell's continued and consistent engagement with schools in the city.

Action: Examples of best practice in relation to the pupil premium would be circulated to Members.

Action: The committee would receive a demographical report which would evaluate the links between free school meals and pupils grades and whether there were some schools evidencing positive outcomes. The report would also advise members of the numbers of children that were entitled to free schools meals but were electively home educated or were permanently excluded.

Action: In addition to action xx Jim Barnicott would write to work placed based co-ordinators and Multi Academy Trusts CEO's to ensure the place based plan continued to reflect the city's priorities.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

46. **Attendance Strategy and COVID Legacy Issues**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) presented the report to the Committee.

Questions and discussion points from the Committee included:

- a) Absence and key points in which absence became an issue such as the transfer between KS2 and KS3;
- b) The Plymouth inclusion and attendance toolkit;
- c) Transitions work being undertaken by the city and the need to get it right;
- d) The differences between Primary schools and its nurturing setup into secondary schools which were different;
- e) The introduction of the transitions portal for Primary and secondary schools and the introduction of the Early Years to Primary transitions portal which would begin for 2024/25;
- f) Toileting issues and the potential affect it was having on children and young people's attendance;
- g) Senior officers within the Council were challenging schools in relation to the issues around toileting;
- h) There were 541 pupils electively home educated at the end of Q3 2023/24 which increased from the previous year from 396;
- i) Severe absences of pupils in the city were increasing and were exacerbated at transition phases;
- j) Continued communication with families to ensure they felt welcomed back at school;
- k) Plymouth City Council's attendance campaign which fed into the Department for Educations campaign and the need to revisit that campaign and embed practice;
- l) The Council's Electively Home Educated team were able to provide resources to families where the decision to electively home educate was positive;

- m) The Council would understand children's needs where being electively home educated was a decision that was taken by parents/carers where they felt they had no choice to try and get those children and young people back into school;
- n) Children who were electively home educated but had a ECHP;
- o) Lack of SEND placement sufficiency within the city and the focussed piece of work to build places immediately and setting out a longer term strategy;
- p) Satellite provision within Plymouth's existing schools;
- q) Falling roles in relation to primary schools;
- r) The need to keep children and young people in their communities;
- s) The Graduated approach and requirement to keep some children and young people in mainstream school.

Action: Members would be provided the action plan that delivered the Attendance Strategy.

Action: The Inclusion and Attendance toolkit would be circulated to Committee Members.

Action: Education officers would arrange through the Participation team analysis into issue of attendance and bullying of children and young people within the LGBTQ+ community.

Action: Jim Barnicott to share materials that were taken to the Attendance Conference.

The Board agreed to note the report.

47. **Local Area SEND Improvement Plan and Accessible Plan**

Youth Ascends delivered a video and presentation to the Committee. Youth Ascends asked the following questions and were answered by Councillor Cresswell.

Q1) I haven't heard or seen anything about the Commitments in school. What are you doing to tell everyone about them?

The Accessibility Improvement Plan was approved by the SEND Improvement Board in December 2023. PIAS would be responsible for the maintenance and updating of the plan, however it was recognised work was required in relation to sharing and communication and this would be picked up by the Strategic Development Group on the 14 March 2024 to develop a plan for a full rollout. This would be taken back to the SEND Improvement Board to address issues of communication.

Q2) How will you ensure that leaders in the city are watching over the plans properly?

The Plan was overseen by the SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership Board and the independent chair, Karen Bradshaw. There was political representation on the Board with senior council leaders people from Schools, Health, PIAS and Plymouth Parent Carer Voice and met every 6 weeks to review progress and take actions where required.

The Board reported to the highest levels of local bodies which included Plymouth City Council, ICB and DFE. The council knew how important this was and the importance that plans moved forward and had an impact and you were the key people to understand whether the plans were making a difference in your lives.

Q3) What are you doing to make sure that every classroom is a place where children belong and learn with the right support?

There was work being done by the Council on the Graduated Approach to make sure in schools there was an approach to special education needs and supporting them all the way through their school lives which was in draft form and a new website was being developed and launched in May 2024. The website and Graduated Approach would help teachers and assistants to work and support SEND people.

The things you (Youth Ascends) were putting forward helps to improve teachers and teaching assistants and how they work. The wider support service would develop the workforce.

Q4) I don't think other children know about Autism and ADHD. How will teachers stop children bullying children with special education needs?

In the improvement programme the specialist support service, Educational Psychologists, specialist teaching service, special schools and outreach services alongside health professionals would work closely with schools to provide support and advice in relation to specific special education needs.

The team would be building on the consultation led model of delivery where the educational psychology service would meet individually with schools to discuss whole schools and individual children's needs.

This would now be further developed to include the wider specialist services to ensure class teachers were coming back to classes and they had the right approach, right tools and right support at the right time. The team would be interested in more instances of bullying to ensure that they were addressed.

Children that were moving from primary into secondary school tended not to have understanding relationships with their peers when in secondary school settings.

We need to take that back in terms of pupils voice within schools. Schools Council's could be talking about this themselves to improve. A wider discussion could take

place around how we supported schools to deal with bullying and ensure it was sorted.

Q5) How will you make sure that teachers know about Special Education Need in schools and college?

This fell under the work around the Graduated Approach and Lisa McDonald with SENCO networks to provide schools with a framework to help with professional development. Lisa was helping to put together professional development to help teach teachers better so they could do their job better and have better things in classes which could help children learn.

Q6) What are you doing to increase transparency on waiting lists?

There was a work stream looking at waiting times as part of the SEND Improvement plan and Health were committed to:

- Setting standards for how we communicate and deal with people that were waiting and would like to collaborate with children, young people and carers.
- Improving the data we share with the local authority and local area through routine inputs on dashboards and through process and meetings such as scrutiny meetings;
- Working to understand those with the most needs are prioritised within the waiting lists;
- Co-producing with children, young people, parents and carers
- Working to reduce waiting times and to bring assessments and carers closer to schools and communities;
- Some waiting lists were published nationally, such as the children's mental health services waiting time.

Q7) How will you make the transition from children to adult services easier?

We are working with the Educational Health Care Plan team, and our specialist teams in education and social care to develop an improved programme which would ensure the right professionals worked closely with schools and families and young people, starting that work in year 9 and we know we have a lot of work to do in getting this right going forward.

Q8) Could children and young peoples voice be included within staff training?

This was a good suggestion and perhaps that could be put in and you could trial and provide feedback as to what they were like. Youth Ascends had already showcased its good graphics and that input could be useful to provide really good quality provision.

DH – This was a helpful offer to have your voice developing the learning and development training for Plymouth's schools and the Council's workforce would be helpful. There were no bounds in relation to how you would like to be involved, developing and shaping the materials, contributing to the delivery of the materials and using Natalia's excellent graphics and we would like to take this forward with you.

Q9) Do you have an estimated date for when these promises would be fulfilled?

We are gradually working through things but I cannot give you a full estimate when everything would be fulfilled but we are working to a timetable of certain things as we had a SEND inspection which was not very good and recognised a lot of work required. We need to make sure we get some things in place for another inspection, likely to be in January 2025 and we needed to make sure we were working at pace.

It was important that Plymouth didn't only put things in place for the inspectors but that Plymouth needed to ensure things were better for our children and young people in our city and city schools and in our community and that is what drives us and makes us work. If you make some positive contributions we could perhaps make progression at a faster rate. You could also advise us and provide comments as to how well you think we are doing in supporting you.

Q10) Criteria for help inside and outside of schools: Could the criteria be lowered as your case was not 'bad' enough for one service but too serious for another.

Plymouth needed to have consistency and we were working on early intervention and giving support to our young people and parents and carers as early as we can. This is an aspiration and we haven't managed to achieve all of that criteria. Plymouth needed to ensure that its workforce had good knowledge of SEND and supporting young people in schools so that as many as possible could remain in mainstream school and were fully included.

DH – we need to talk to Health about this as well and we have asked people in Health to contribute to these questions. There is scope for Health to come and speak to you, to gain specific examples of what would be helpful and what your experiences are to inform their practice.

Q11) Are there particular methods to talk to young people? Henry advised that some young people may not have felt safe discussing in front of their peers or alternatively young people that were being home educated.

Plymouth needed to make sure people were comfortable to speak to us. We needed to seek out and talk to young people around what the most suitable environment for them. What you have said is right and you should be in a comfortable environment and school isn't always the best place to talk about things and you need to feel comfortable and relax before putting the best points of view across. We would appreciate that as you have a lot to offer us in how we work better, smarter and provide better outcomes for yourselves.

Q12) Can you clarify the situation of bus passes and not being able to use them before a certain time to get to school.

Recommendation: The Committee would go to a Youth Ascends meeting.

Action: Officers would investigate Youth Ascends feedback that the time taken to between applying for a bus pass and receiving it was too long.

48. **Work Programme**

The Committee agreed to:

1. Hold a select committee on Emotional health and wellbeing of children in the city
2. To add to the work programme 'school toileting'

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Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	18 July 2024
Title of Report:	Plymouth City Council Special Educational needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Plan 2024-2030
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Amanda Paddison
Contact Email:	Amanda.paddison@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This plan will address the current status of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision within the City and the challenges that the City faces with increasing demand for specialist provision. It sets out options for the future of SEND provision within Plymouth.

Recommendations and Reasons

I. Your Recommendation

To endorse the proposed options for expansion of special educational provision within Plymouth to meet increasing demand.

Reason: Reason for your recommendation

Plymouth currently has insufficient SEND capacity within the city. Children are being placed in independent special school provision outside of the city to meet their needs due to capacity pressures. This does not fit with our ambition as a city to educate children close to their homes in high quality educational provision and is putting additional financial pressures on the designated schools grant.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. We could do nothing and keep our provision as it is. We do have a statutory duty to provide school places for children. By not expanding we would see an increase in the number of children placed in costly independent special school placements which would place additional pressure on our designated schools grant budget and could damage the reputation of the local authority if we are unable to provide special educational provision to the children who need it.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This plan links to the delivery of Plymouth's SEND Strategy vision to ensure that there is sufficient provision to enable children to be education within Plymouth and within their local community. It links to A Bright Future and the council's purpose of ensuring children and young people are healthy and happy, safe, aspire and achieve. It also supports the Plymouth Plan to deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and their families by ensuring that there are sufficient high quality schools and Theme 1 of the plan and Plymouth's ambition to become a welcoming city where children have access to an environment that provides outstanding early learning opportunities.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The options outlined in the plan are funded via the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grant and will support reducing the pressures on the designated schools grant.

Financial Risks

The designated schools grant is already under pressure, if we do not expand our current special school provision this pressure will increase as more children will be placed in expensive independent out of city special school placements.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

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Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Plymouth City Council Special Educational Needs and Disability Sufficiency Plan – Financial Information – which is commercially sensitive							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							
C	Climate Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)
----------------------------------	--

	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	Click here to enter text.	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: The plan has already been to CMT who are in support of the proposal.											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 02/07/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: [electronic signature (or typed name and statement of ‘approved by email/verbally’)]Sally Cresswell – verbally approved. Date approved: 08/07/2024											

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High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SUFFICIENCY PLAN

2024 – 2030

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1. Introduction:

This plan will address the current status of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision within the City and the challenges that the City faces with increasing demand for specialist provision. It sets out options for the future of SEND provision within Plymouth.

The purpose of this Plan is to:

- Provide the current context for the provision for SEND in Plymouth and in so doing, provide an understanding of need and future structure and size of the provision.
- Provide relevant data and evidence to inform decision making alongside the Plan as the Council fulfils its sufficiency duty in order to deliver adequate numbers of high quality and inclusive provision, moving into the mid-term.

2. Our Vision for Children and Young People with Additional Needs and Disabilities:

Plymouth's SEND Strategy vision is to ensure that the education provision for all children and young people with SEND is increased so that our children can stay in Plymouth and thrive in their local communities. As outlined in A Bright Future, Plymouth City Council's (PCC) purpose is to ensure children and young people are healthy and happy, safe, aspire and achieve. PCC also wishes to ensure:

1. Children and young people are at the centre of our thinking, and we work with families to determine how we can meet their children's needs and plan how we will deliver support and provision in the future.
2. All settings that provide education and support to children, young people and their families are welcoming of children and young people with SEND.
3. Children and young people with SEND can access the help and support they need to thrive and achieve within their local communities. They can attend education provision that meets their needs, access services and play an active role in the community close to where they live.
4. Families have easy access to information which helps them understand how best to meet their child's needs and access the help that is offered.
5. We have a good, shared understanding of our children with SEND in Plymouth and our educational offer matches their needs.

We want Plymouth to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and where families are supported to be the best that they can be. A place where children and young people can access educational opportunities in mainstream settings and there is a reduction in the number of specialist out of city placements. Our Sufficiency Plan contributes to this purpose and will reduce the number of children who have to access provision outside of Plymouth.

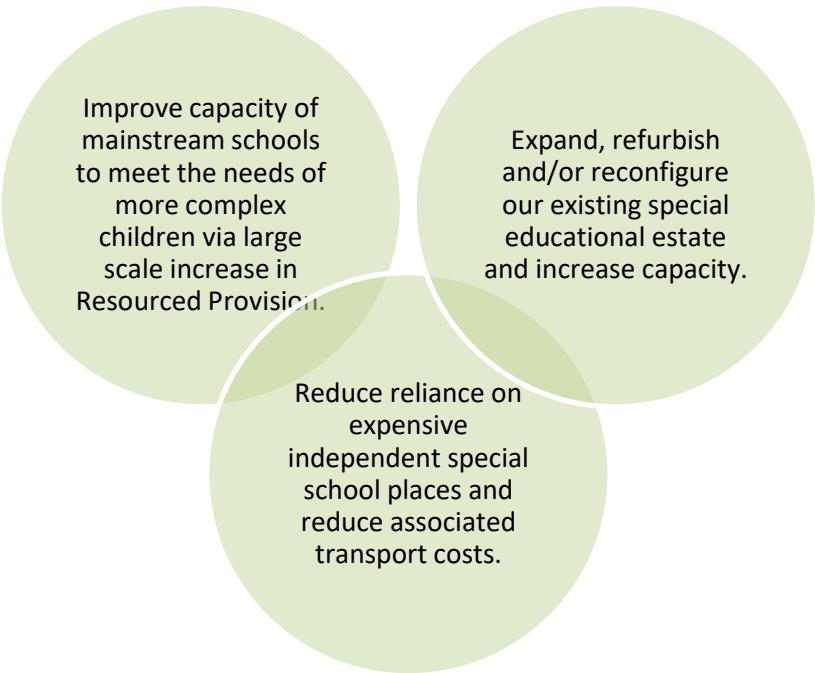
3. Our Aims for Plymouth Children and Young People:

Our aim in producing this Sufficiency Plan is to enable the educational system to realise better outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

We will do this by:

- Unpacking some of the key things we know about Plymouth children and young people with SEND, including how many there are, what their particular needs are and how this might change over time.
- Exploring the provision that is currently available in Plymouth to meet these needs, the capacity of that provision and how much it costs.
- Understanding the connection between our increasing number of children and young people with SEND and our future demand for special educational provision within the city.
- Delivering sufficient, high-quality specialist provision to meet our children’s needs.

4. Our Ambitions for The Future:



The SEND Sufficiency Plan will support the aims of A Bright Future to ensure that children and young people are able to attend a good quality educational provision and will increase the offer for children and young people with SEND within their local area by increasing SEND provision within localities. It will also support the Plymouth Plan to deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and their families by ensuring that there are sufficient high-quality schools.

5. National Context:

The Government’s vision for children and young people with SEND is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well and lead happy and fulfilled lives. The

Children and Families Act 2014 places important statutory responsibilities on local authorities for supporting children and young people. This is a vital role that local authorities retain in our increasingly school-led education system and one that requires long-term strategic planning, informed by detailed local knowledge enhanced through consultation with parents and carers, and good relationships with local schools.

Local authorities must ensure there are sufficient good school places for all pupils, including those with SEND.

In March 2017, the government committed £215 million of capital funding via the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grant (HNPCA) from 2018 to 2021 to help local authorities create new school places and improve existing facilities for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, in consultation with parents and providers.

In May 2018, the government announced a £50 million increase to this HNPCA fund and in December 2018 a further £100 million to local authorities, taking the total investment in this fund to £365 million. Individual allocations are published at: [SEND provision capital funding for pupils with EHC plans - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/send-provision-capital-funding-for-pupils-with-ehc-plans) funding for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). This capital funding is not ring-fenced, and local authorities can use it as they see fit to improve special provision for children and young people with EHCPs. This funding can be invested in mainstream schools and academies, special units, special schools and academies, early years settings, and further education colleges, or to make other provision for children and young people aged from 0 to 25. The Department for Education (DfE) expect that local authorities will seek to use this funding in a way that helps them manage the cost pressures on their high needs revenue budgets. Since 2018 Plymouth has been allocated a total of £15,184,231.20 via the HNPCA.

Significant reforms to childcare will remove barriers to work for nearly half a million parents with a child under 3 in England not working due to caring responsibilities, reducing discrimination against women, and benefitting the wider economy in the process. The new funded hours will sit alongside the existing funded hours: 15 hours for the most disadvantaged 2-year-olds, universal 15 hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds and the extended 30 hours for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. The new funded hours will be introduced in phases and is dependent on the parent/carer meeting eligibility criteria.

6. Current Demand for Early Years within Plymouth – Implications for Early Years SEND provision:

We currently have 200 childcare providers citywide registered with Ofsted to take early years children. There is currently no dedicated SEND early years provision within Plymouth and all childcare providers offer places to children with SEND. This is currently a gap in our SEND provision within the city and future developments will address the need for SEND specialist early years provision to meet the needs of our most complex children within early years. The number of childcare places citywide for all early years children including those with SEND is calculated as 10,764 - 15-hour places.

Early years childcare providers manage their space and calculate how many children and what age group they take at any one time. Currently we do not monitor how they divide their spare capacity; we would however assume that this would be based on market needs.

We currently have an estimated 7,763 funded spaces taken, leaving a spare capacity citywide of 3,301 x 15-hour places. Currently we do not know how many of these places are taken up with privately paying parents.

We estimate that the new childcare entitlements will create a need for an initial 1,511 x 15 hour funded childcare places for children aged 0-2 years.

All settings support children with SEND and we have seen a 5% increase in the children with SEND at early years childcare settings needing one to one support. We anticipate that this will continue to rise as SEND rises across the city. We have factored this increase in when planning SEND places for early years children. As currently there is no dedicated specialist SEND early years setting some children have comprehensive packages of support within a mainstream early years setting to ensure that the provider can meet their individual needs.

Providers can apply for additional funding to support children with SEND from the SEND Inclusion Funding (SENDIF). During 2023/24 there were 566 children receiving additional support funded via SENDIF. This is 7.2% of the overall number of funded childcare places within Plymouth. Continued monitoring of SENDIF applications will ensure early identification of any wards where there is increased demand and settings that have a high number of early years children with SEND. Increased numbers of children with SEND within a setting can impact on the availability of spaces as often these children need a higher staffing ratio. We are already seeing some wards within the city having very high levels of SEND within early years provision with some settings having over 30 children identified in need of additional support.

Currently both Budshead and St Budeaux area of the city have settings where over 30 children are in need of additional support to meet their SEND needs.

The Department for Education (DFE) has allocated Plymouth a £435k Childcare Expansion Capital grant to support the delivery of the 30-hours early years entitlement and wraparound provision. The purpose of this grant is to enable providers to create more childcare places for children by providing funding for capital projects. This fund is to expand all childcare places and will include provision for children with SEND. The conditions of the grant specify the type of capital projects that can be funded. All expansion of early years provision will come from this grant and there will be no need for any additional funding to be identified.

The Sufficiency Plan will support Theme 1 of the Plymouth Plan and Plymouth's ambition to become a welcoming city where children have access to an environment that provides outstanding early learning opportunities by supporting the increase of high-quality early years SEND provision across the city.

7. Current Demand Within Plymouth – School Age Children:

Pupil numbers in Plymouth primary schools between 2009/10 and 2017/18 grew steadily, driven by an increase in live births since 2002, this included pupils identified with SEND. The total number of primary school children in Plymouth rose from 17,927 in January 2011 to 20,882 in January 2018, an increase of 16%.

From 2011/12 the birth rate began to decline. However, it remained above 3000 births per year until 2015/16. Since then, the number of births has been below 3000, with last year's (2022/23) birth total being the lowest recorded up to this point at 2417. Although we are

seeing declining numbers of live births, we are seeing that children with complex needs are surviving longer due to advances in medical intervention.

In line with what we know about live birth data it is expected that Primary pupil numbers will continue with the decline that began in 2018/19; the peak of pupils being 20,882 in 2017/18, and up to the forecast point of this SCAP return (2027/28) will be approximately 17,400. There will be declines in pupil numbers in all our primary planning localities. In September 2023, Y6 will be the last of the 'above 3000 pupils' cohorts in primary school; from this point onwards, cohorts are forecast to be between 2600 and 3000. Therefore, we believe we are now on the downward side of the bulge curve. Although our pupil numbers are declining our analysis identifies that the number of children in need of a special school place will continue to rise.

The bulge has now moved into secondary education; however, due to previous low secondary pupil numbers, secondary schools adopted flexible policy between 2009 and 2017 to reduce their pupil capacity but secondary pupil numbers had been in a slow decline since 2005. When the increase moved into secondary phase the schools were asked to be flexible in order to accommodate this increase in secondary pupil numbers knowing that this figure would begin to fall again after 2025/2026. No correlating major increase in SEND pupil numbers was identified in line with the bulge in births at the time. However, during the past 5-year period we have seen an increase in the number of requests for EHC needs assessments. Until 2017/18, secondary pupil numbers in Plymouth were falling, following the trend seen in primary schools prior to the increase in the birth rate detailed above. From September 2018, the number of pupils in secondary schools has begun to climb as the bulge moves through the secondary phase, we are also seeing an increase in the number of children supported by an EHCP within the secondary phase.

It is expected that in line with the primary growth seen prior to 2017/18, and a current trend of increasing numbers coming from other LAs in year 7, secondary school numbers will continue to grow until 2025/26. The largest cohorts to start school since September 2000 will then be in years 7 to 13 and will total approximately 19,000 pupils.

The growth in secondary phase has been absorbed by requesting some mainstream secondary schools to take additional numbers, the University Technical College (UTC) lowering its age range to take from year 7 and due to the fact that we have two Key Stage 4 establishments which offer places from year 9.

Based on the January 2023 Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data, PCC currently has **98** schools, including **7** Special Schools (the count includes academies and LA provisions). These provide an overall total of **39,424** pupil places across nursery, primary and secondary phases of education.

Pupils within a SEND need are broken down as follows:

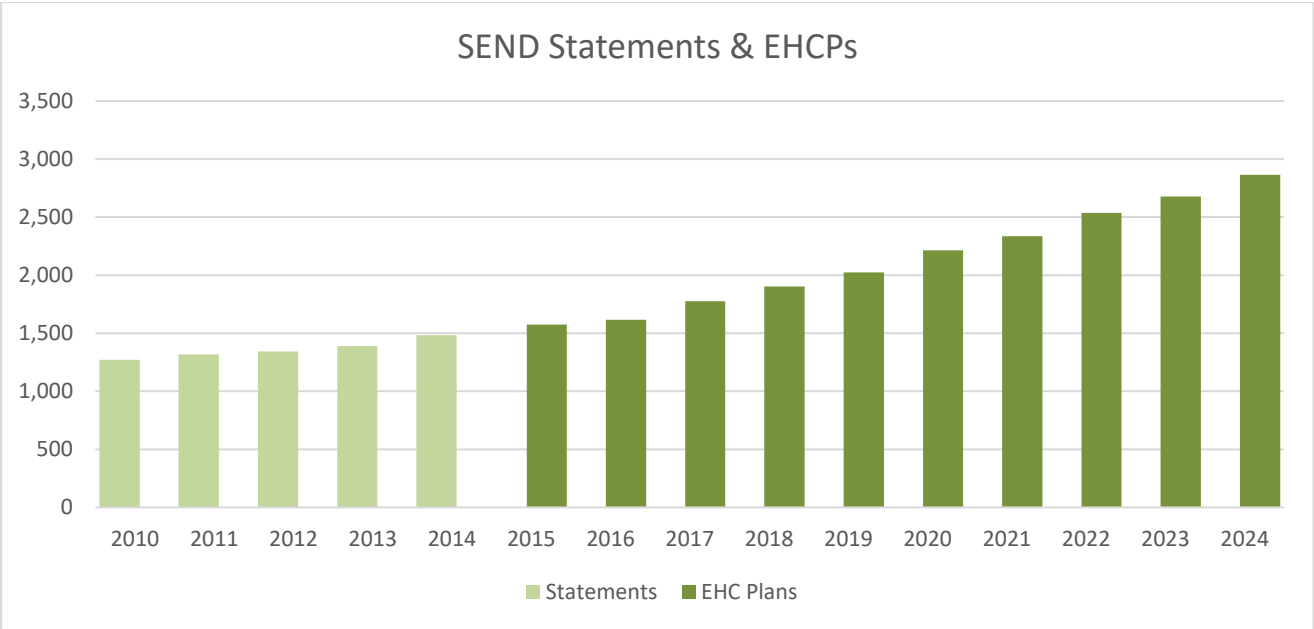
	Number of pupils	Percentage of all pupils	National comparator
Pupils with any form of SEND support	7261	18.5%	13%
Pupils with and EHCP	1731	4.5%	4.3%

The Special Schools currently provides for only **737** of these pupils, **1.87%** of all pupils.

8. Plymouth SEND EHCP Cohort:

At a time of significant pressure for local government, the SEND cohort of children with EHCPs has continued to increase year on year since 2010. Nationally the total number of EHCPs has continued to increase. The number of children and young people with an EHCP increased to 517,000, as at census day in January 2023, up by 9% from 2022. This has increased each year since 2010.

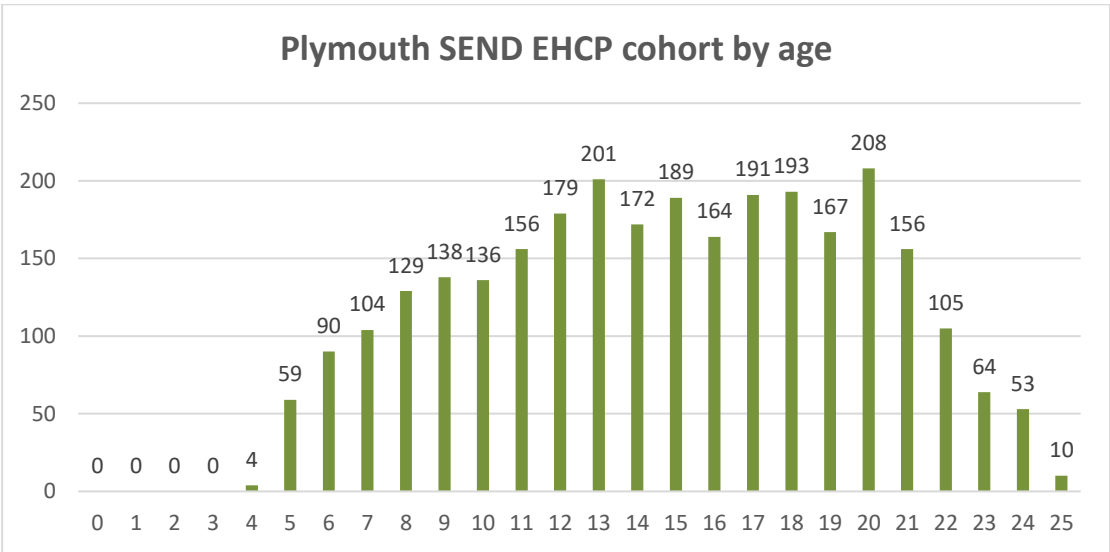
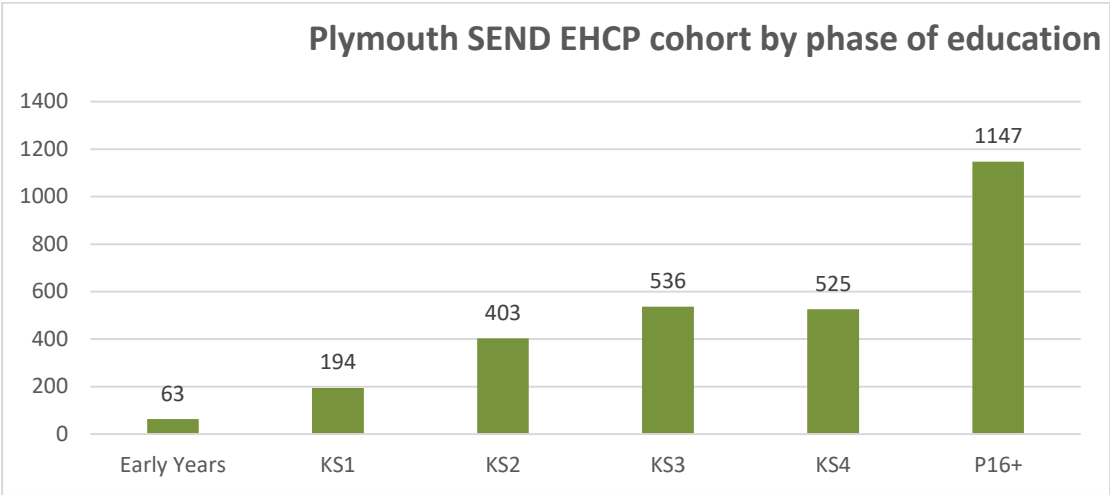
We have seen a similar picture in Plymouth with an increase from 2536 EHCPs in 2022 to 2678 in 2023. This represents an increase of 5.5% which is below the national average; however, the increase from 2023 to 2024 up to the end of March 2024 was 6.9% which is above the national average. The increase from 2010 to March 2024 is an increase of 125.4%.



Current SEND EHCP Cohort

The SEND cohort includes 2868 children and young people who are supported through an EHCP. The majority of children with EHCPs across the cohort are in Post 16 provision (1147 pupils – 39.99% of the cohort). This is partly due to the bulge in birth rates as those young people are now within their secondary and post 16 phase of education. Work is underway to ensure that young people transition to meaningful employment or training, this will see our number of post 16 EHCP's start to drop.

The current EHCP cohort is broken down as follows:



The number of EHCPs continues to grow, particularly for secondary aged pupils. Currently very few EHCPs cease at secondary phase that these plans transition with pupils into post 16 provision.

5.65% of children and young people with EHCPs are placed out of the city.

Primary Needs

Education, health and care plans identify a primary need for each child. Plans are co-produced with parents and professionals with parents having the final agreement of what is contained within the plan. Early years providers, schools and settings have fed back to us that the primary need highlighted in the EHCP is not always the only significant need for a child or young person. The following data is based on the primary need as identified in the EHCP.

The first most common primary need in Plymouth is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) (27.4% of the EHCP cohort); the national average is 14%. The second most

common primary need is Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) (22% of the EHCP cohort); the national average is 15%. The third most common primary need is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (21.8% of the EHCP cohort) the national average is 30%.

The data demonstrates that the city's SEMH cohort is significantly out of step with the national average. Whilst no immediate conclusions can be drawn, this may warrant further research to understand the demographic of this cohort.

9. Funding for Education, Health and Care Plans:

In Plymouth pupils with an EHCP receive additional funding via a banding system. EHCPs are banded according to the level of provision outlined in the plan from Band 1 to Band 8+. Generally, **Bands 1-3** are managed in mainstream settings, with support provided how and where necessary, based on their individual EHCP. **Bands 4-5** are managed within support centre provision based within a mainstream setting and pupils from **Band 6 to Band 8+** are usually placed within a special school which caters for their specific learning needs and disabilities.

In Plymouth the schools apply to the Single Multi Agency Panel (SMAP) for a child to be assessed for an Education Health Care Needs Assessment. On completion of the assessment, if required, the pupil may receive an EHCP and an allocation of additional funding. The banding provides additional funding for each child in receipt of an EHCP to enable the school to put in place tailored support to meet the needs of the individual child. This is support which is above and beyond what would be available to all children within the school. The pupils' level of need can and does change during their development, as they age or as their condition lessens or worsens. Depending on the child and their SEND need, the banding can be increased or reduced. This banding and the child's need is reviewed at the annual review of the EHCP.

It must also be noted that when a child is placed in a special school, the number of staff may increase, based on each child's EHCP and the support they require. Schools taking pupils with a high level of needs may require a number of rooms of varying size for small group work. They will also need to ensure that staff facilities are sufficient to accommodate the changes in staff numbers.

If a child with an EHCP is refused a place in a special school, the parents have the right to an appeal via a tribunal. If the case is upheld by a tribunal, the named school must take the child. This has severely impacted on the Plymouth special schools, whereby they have made adaptations to the school in order to accommodate the additional pupils.

If we can identify the overall capacity of the school, linked to the banding of the pupil, the LA can prove that there is no physical space within the school to take the additional pupil without creating safeguarding and staff welfare issues.

The overall capacity of the school must be measured in the context of a combination of available pupil / teaching space and relevant staff welfare space. Both have very specific guidance that needs to be adhered to in order to avoid possible legal action or claims. The council has a duty of care to both staff and pupils. Failure to adhere to these principles potentially creates health and safety and safeguarding issues for both staff and pupils.

In Plymouth, like other areas of the country, increased medical knowledge and intervention has impacted on the number of pupils requiring specialist provision. The special schools have therefore seen increased complexity and increased needs in their cohorts of pupils.

Plymouth has generally maintained an average of **4 - 4.5%** of all pupils within the city having a high level of SEND which require specialist support and / or special school places. Of these, just under 2% of all pupils are in specialist provision. As the mainstream school pupil numbers rose across the city, so did the number of pupils with SEND. Whilst many of these SEND pupils are able to be educated within mainstream schools, some require more specialised facilities and different methods of education.

Bandings equivalent to space requirement

A schools Published Admissions Number (PAN) is a significant but not the only factor to take into account in considering space in a Special School.

Using the Building Bulletin (BB104) formulae the space required for an average pupil can be calculated. This calculation takes into account the needs of the pupil and the additional support and equipment that they may require. As a general calculation banding can be linked to space, as below:

- Band 6 = 7.5m² per pupil
- Band 7 = 8.2m² per pupil
- Band 8 = 8.8m² per pupil
- Band 8+ = 9.5m² per pupil

Banding changes are an issue as they can make something that is compliant, no longer compliant when they change. As bands increase staffing often increases which is why higher bandings require more space. The more complex the needs of the pupils, the more space the pupils need.

Constraints

Only the schools, SEND Service and the Finance teams are aware of pupil bandings and this information does not form part of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data.

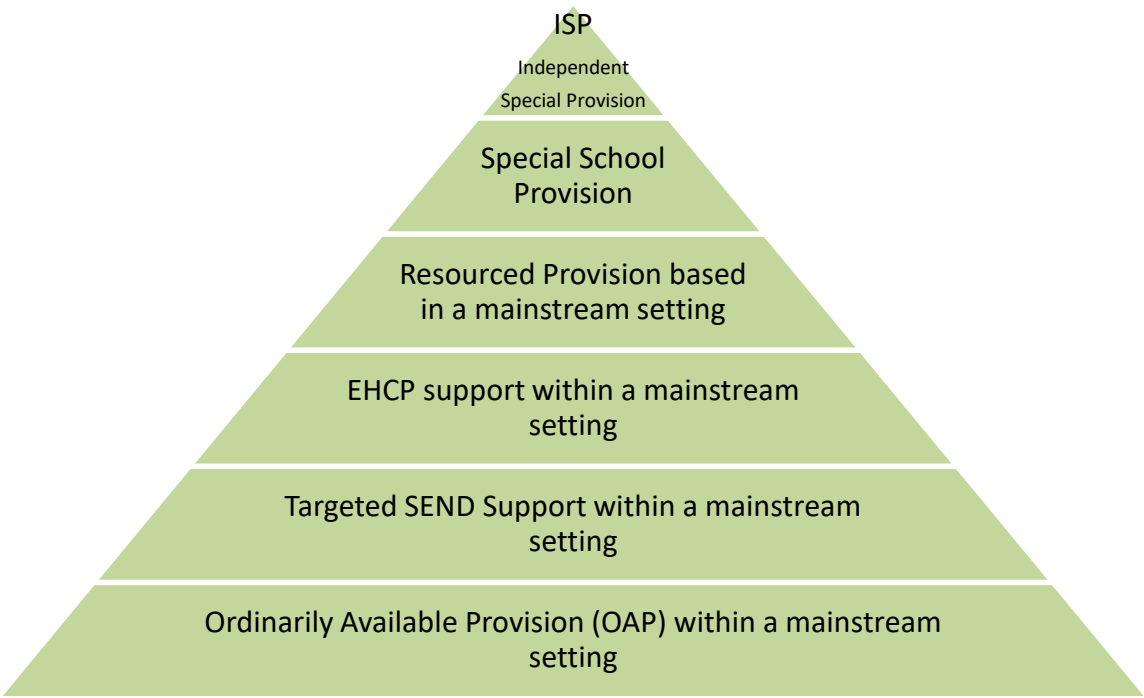
Currently SEND Bandings are set by the LA and agreed at a city level. Bandings are locally identified, and currently there is no National Banding recommendation.

There is a methodology for the bandings, based on the Children's and Families Act, sections 33 and 39. This methodology is utilised for pupils being transferred in from another LA.

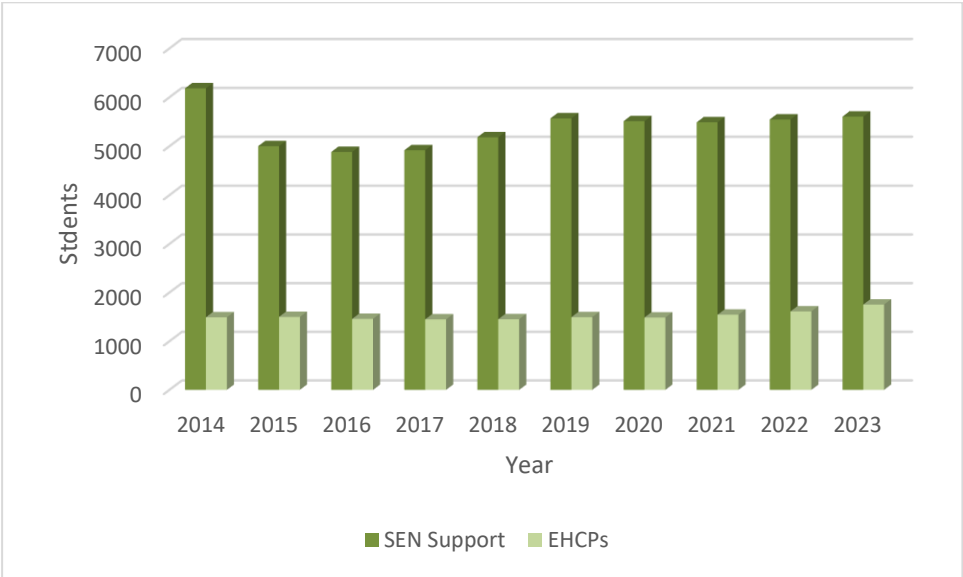
10. SEND Demand within Plymouth:

Wherever possible our aim is to support children within a mainstream setting. Support for students with SEND is offered via Targeted SEND Support within schools. The majority of children are supported this way without the need for and EHCP.

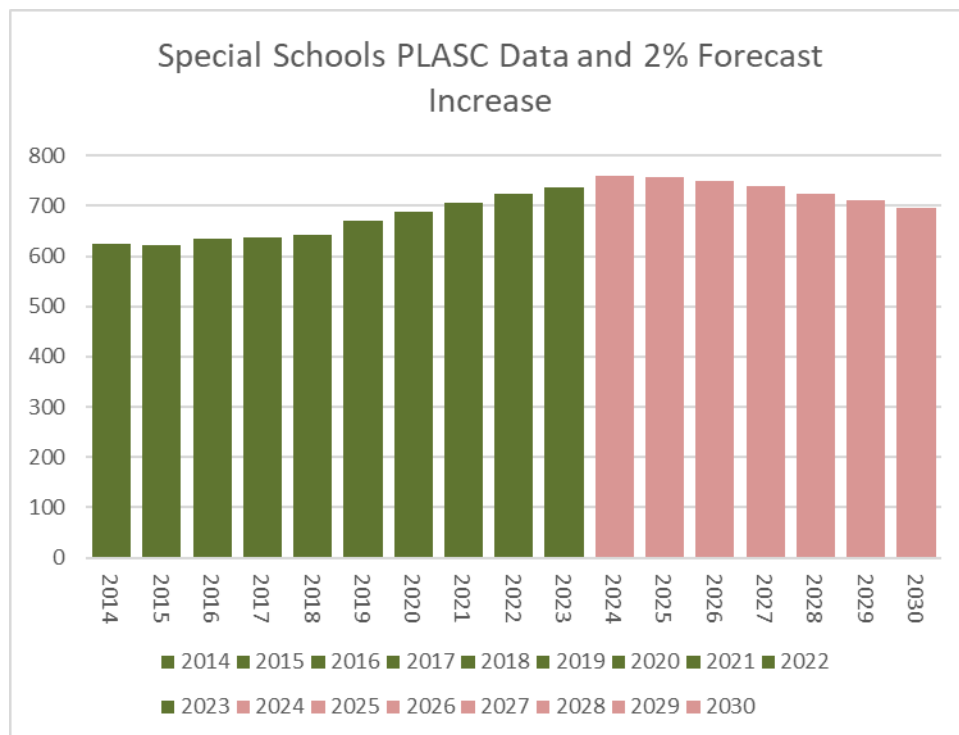
Hierarchy of SEND Support and Provision



Based on PLASC data for the past 10 years the percentage of school aged children who are in receipt of targeted SEND support had remained between 12 and 14% of the overall school age population and the percentage of school aged children with an EHCP had remained between 3 and 4% of the overall school population. However, this has started to rise.



Although the overall percentage of the school population in receipt of targeted SEND support and EHCP had remained reasonably stable, the demand for special school places continues to rise over the past 6 years.



PLASC data has been used for analysis for school aged pupils from 2024 up to 2030. An increase of 2% of SEND pupils requiring a place at a Special School has been applied. The increase of 2% is based on the average increase we have seen year on year for Special School places.

If the numbers continue to rise at the current rate, then there will be a greater requirement during the next year for Special School places before beginning to reduce again in 2025.

II. Current Special School Designations:

There are seven special schools within the city. All were constructed at different periods to several differing standards that were current and relevant at the time the schools were built.

Special Schools	Locality	Age Range	SEN Designation(s)	Number of pupils school was built to accommodate	Current Number on Roll
Brook Green Centre for Learning	North	11-16	SEMH with MLD	80	98
Cann Bridge	North	3-19	SLD	72	92
Courtlands	North	4-11	SEMH with MLD	80	100
Longcause	East	4-16	SLCN/ASC with MLD	92	116
Mill Ford	North	3-19	SLD, PMLD	100	120

Mount Tamar	West	4-16	SEMH	80	110
Woodlands	North	2-19	PD, MSI	72	85

Resourced Provision

Plymouth also has several Resourced Provisions, meeting the needs of SEND pupils across the city, based on their learning support needs. In a resourced provision a child will have access to teaching assistants and specialist teachers aligned to their needs. Resourced provision is not intended to be isolated from the rest of the school community and should be fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school.

The Resourced Provisions identified below, follows the same process as the Special Schools, requiring a pupil to meet certain levels of need prior to obtaining a placement at the support centre.

Resourced Provision	Designation	Locality	Education Phase	Placement Capacity	Current Number on Roll
Eggbuckland Vale DEC	Deaf Education centre	North	Primary	18	14
Goosewell Support Centre	Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	East	Primary	10	10
Mayflower Support Centre	Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	West	Primary	12	8
Thornbury Language Support Centre	Language	North	Primary	18	17
Eggbuckland CC Hearing Support Centre	Deaf Education centre	North	Secondary	12	9
Stoke Damerell Support Centre	Communication & Interaction difficulties together with Cognition & Learning	West	Secondary	14	6
Tor Bridge High Language Support Centre	Language	North	Secondary	10	7

The sufficiency review of resourced provision undertaken in 2023, recognised the gap in mainstream specialist provision as part of a graduated approach, for meeting the current and future needs of children with SEND in Plymouth. Currently, most of the resourced provision, attached to mainstream schools, is in the west of the city with a large proportion for children with complex learning needs, who would ordinarily be educated in special school provision.

Working closely with school leaders, the local authority is seeking to increase its offer of local, community based, resourced centre provision, with the expectation of reducing the current demand for special school places as more children and young people are able to access specialist provision in their local area.

There needs to be a more inclusive focus on supporting neurodiverse young people and their families within the city. Therefore, a more flexible approach to supporting young people is needed. Currently the designation of our resourced provision is very narrow with little flexibility.

Positive pathways for neurodiverse young people and their families are high on all partner agendas both locally and nationally. Many of our health initiatives such as Project for Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) across our primary provisions and the neurodiversity/SLCN steering group have a clear focus on upskilling schools and wider partners to consider the barriers that young people who are neurodiverse may face. This work plans to culminate in development of clear signposting to raise awareness of neurodiversity and the support available, alongside the integration of a graduated approach system. It is important to reflect on this local area and national work when considering the designation of our resourced provisions so that a wider span of needs can be met in the right place, and that staff within provisions feel confident, knowledgeable and skilled to provide a robust offer for those individuals with multiple needs. Provision such as this would allow for a more genuine inclusive environment that builds on the talents of young people and prepares them for the future.

12. Understanding Plymouth’s Needs:

In 2022 Plymouth City Council commissioned a company called Mastodon C to carry out a statistical analysis of future SEND numbers to provide insight into future provision requirements. The recent rise during 2023 of applications for EHCPs indicate that the Mastodon C forecasts are likely to be on the lower side of actual future numbers as the data available at the time was from 2022. The data used was also based on the primary needs as identified in the EHCP and as outlined above this is a simplification that does not fully present the needs of the child. The lack of data for the whole of the SEND cohort which represent actual need and not just that identified as the primary need in an EHCP is a national issue across the country and not unique to Plymouth. The analysis is therefore likely to be the best-case scenario with the actual position likely to be worse than that outlined below.

This table identifies the different SEND designations under the main headings for the type of need. These designations here will be used in the rest of the report.

Categories of special educational need and their abbreviated forms	
Cognition and learning	
Specific learning difficulty	SpLD
Moderate learning difficulty	MLD
Severe learning difficulty	SLD
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	PMLD
Social, Emotional Mental Health	
Social, Emotional Mental Health	SEMH
Communication and interaction	

Speech, language and communication needs	SLCN
Autistic-spectrum disorder	ASD
Sensory and/or physical	
Hearing impairment	HI
Visual impairment	VI
Multi-sensory impairment	MSI
Physical disability	PD
Other	OTH

Predictive modelling of the size of the cohort in the field of SEND is limited for a number of reasons. Whilst the forecasting of the wider education cohort can be informed by data such as birth rates, early years trends and housing development, to name a few variables, there are not similar data available for the entire SEND cohort.

Furthermore, since the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND EHCP cohort has grown rapidly each year meaning that any trends are difficult to extrapolate.

Despite this, there are several assumptions and trends nationally where assertions can be made which should be factored into the forecasting of the SEND cohort. These are:

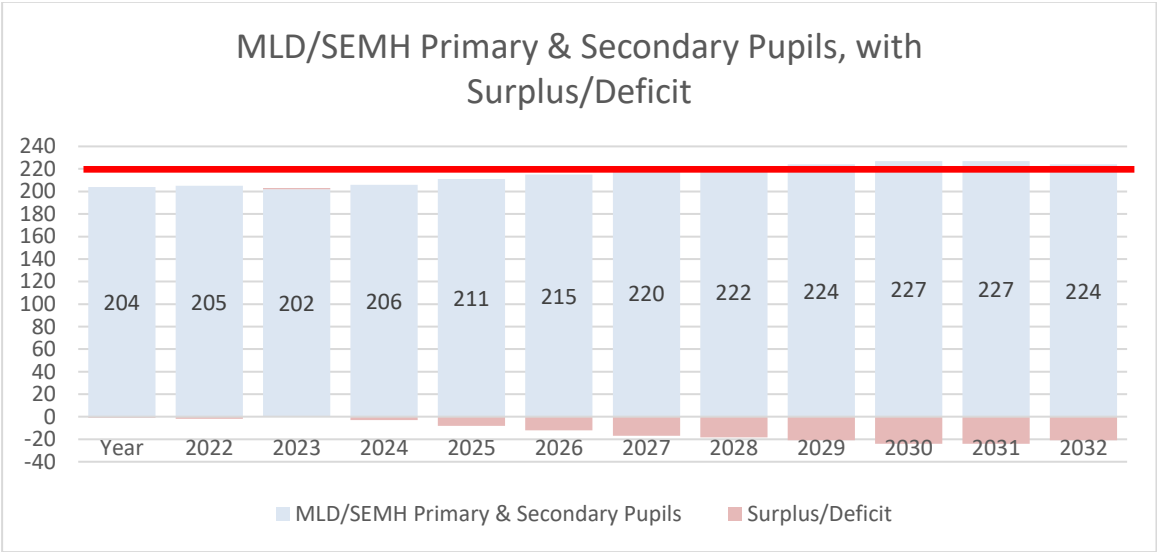
- Whilst the size of the SEND cohort continues to rise rapidly, it is expected that number of children with an EHCP is reaching a saturation point (over the next 5 years) whereby the number of children that require an EHCP will be broadly equal to those no longer requiring one.
- The number of children diagnosed with ASD as the primary need has continued to rise at a greater pace than the wider cohort, as medical professionals, educational settings and parents improve identification and the impact on learning.
- Stronger early identification may result in a rise in the identification of SEND in the early years, KS1 and KS2.
- Whilst the impact of Covid-19 on the learning of children and young people is still not fully known, we can anticipate that it may give rise to an increase in requests for EHCPs with primary needs in Social, Emotional and Mental Health, Speech, language or Communication difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties.

The analysis that Mastodon C carried out has confirmed that the SEND need in the city is increasing. Their report has also identified that the LA designations assigned to the Special Schools reflects the LA use of the schools. The number of new SEND pupil places being requested annually is predicted to rise beyond the current numbers experienced in the city. Mastodon C have forecasted future demand for specialist provision, and this has been compared against the current capacity both within the Plymouth estate and for placements outside of the PCC estate, to identify the overall **forecasted** shortfall which the table below identifies.

All Special Schools			Surplus / Deficit PCC Special Schools & Non PCC Special Schools											
School	MAX Cap acity	Designation	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Woodlands	73	CPD	4	3	9	12	15	15	15	21	23	22	23	23
Mount Tamar	110	SEMH	1	3	15	23	20	17	21	23	21	20	18	19
Cann Bridge / Mill Ford	185	SLD	-3	-10	-15	-21	-19	-18	-13	-12	-2	-1	0	1
Courtlands	100	MLD/SEMH	-1	1	6	7	3	0	0	-1	0	1	3	3
BGCFL	103	MLD/SEMH	0	-3	-5	-9	-11	-11	-17	-18	-21	-23	-26	-25
Longcause	126	SLCN/ASC	-14	-39	-62	-77	-99	-126	-141	-156	-163	-170	-174	-174

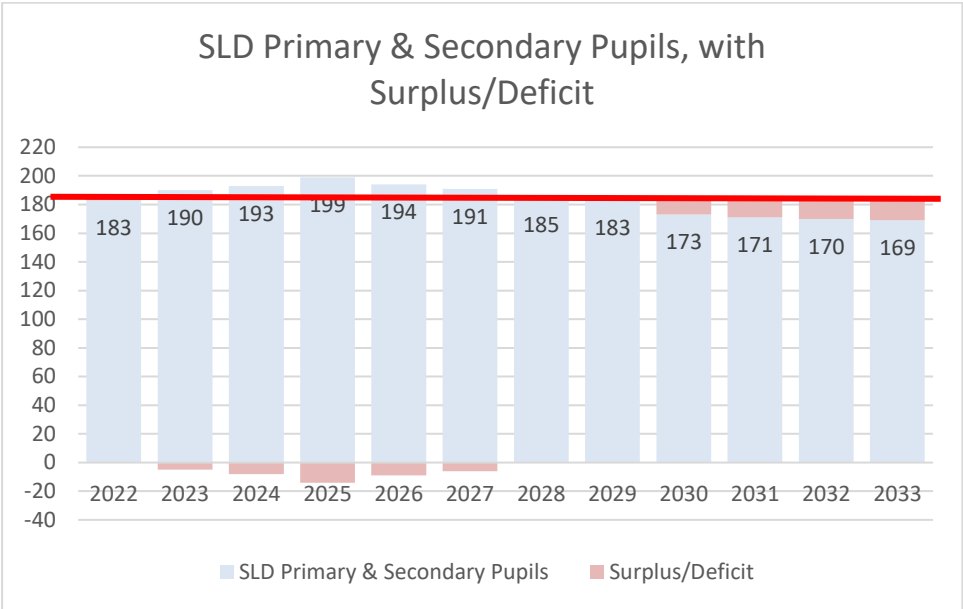
This rise is specifically forecasted for pupils with moderate learning difficulties or social/emotional/mental health needs (MLD/SEMH), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and speech language communication needs/autistic spectrum disorder (SLCN/ASD).

Data indicates a long-term deficit of spaces for school aged pupils with MLD/SEMH. (Brook Green, Courtlands, Mount Tamar, Longcause).



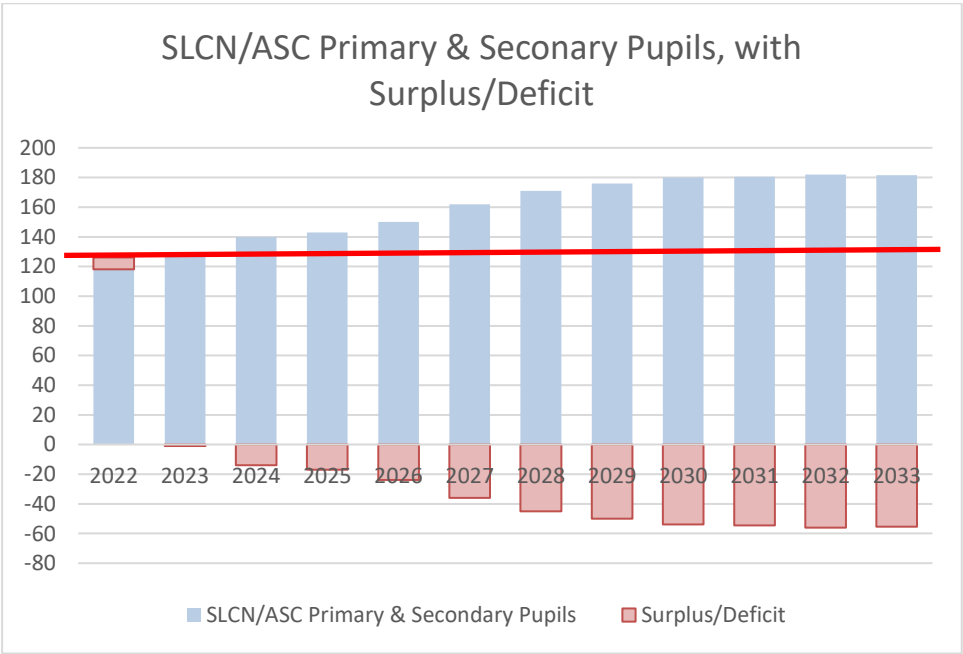
This indicates a long-term deficit of spaces for school aged pupils with MLD/SEMH. (Brook Green, Courtlands, Mount Tamar, Longcause). There is a deficit of over 25 places by 2030.

Data indicates a temporary deficit for school aged pupils with SLD. (Cann Bridge and Mill Ford)



This indicates a temporary deficit for school aged pupils with SLD. (Cann Bridge and Mill Ford). This temporary deficit is of approximately 20 spaces until 2028. This may in reality not be a decrease as Mill Ford report that approximately 56% of their cohort of children also have ASD needs with 38% having cognition and learning. The data may actually be showing that parents are preferring to have ASD identified as the primary need on the EHCP and not SLD.

Data indicates a long-term deficit for school aged pupils with SLCN/ASC. (Brook Green, Courtlands, Mount Tamar, Longcause, Mill Ford).



This indicates a long-term deficit for school aged pupils with SLCN/ASC. (Brook Green, Courtlands, Mount Tamar, Longcause, Mill Ford) of approximately 60 places by 2033.

Current analysis, therefore, indicates that the city will be short of the following special school places for school aged pupils by 2030:

Designation of place	Number of places for school aged pupils
MLD/SEMH	25
SLCN/ASC	60
SLD	20 (declining after 2028)

MLD/SEMH

Currently special schools within Plymouth have children and young people with a mix of EHCP primary needs. The following information is taken from the SEN2 2023 census and show the mix of primary needs as identified in the pupils' EHCP for each of our special schools.

Name of Special School	Number of Students according to SEND2 Census year 2023											
	ASD	HI	MLD	MSI	OTH	PD	PMLD	SEMH	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	VI
Woodlands School	1	1	2	1	10	37	6		3	5		2
Brook Green	5	1	34		6			33	22	1		
Courtlands	14		14			2		23	36	2	1	
Mount Tamar	18		2					70	6	1		
Longcause	57		14		4	2	1	4	31			
Cann Bridge	9	1	7		4	1	8	4	12	44	2	1
Mill Ford	21		7	1	5	4	5	4	17	58	1	

13. Plymouth's Use of Independent Special School Places:

Due to capacity pressures within Plymouth's special school estate the council has found itself in a position where it has had to place children in Independent Special Schools (ISP). There are currently 376 children and young people in Plymouth who have attended 37 registered independent schools and post-16 settings in the current financial year 2023/24.

The total cost for these placements for the financial year 2023/24 was £8,632,450.79.

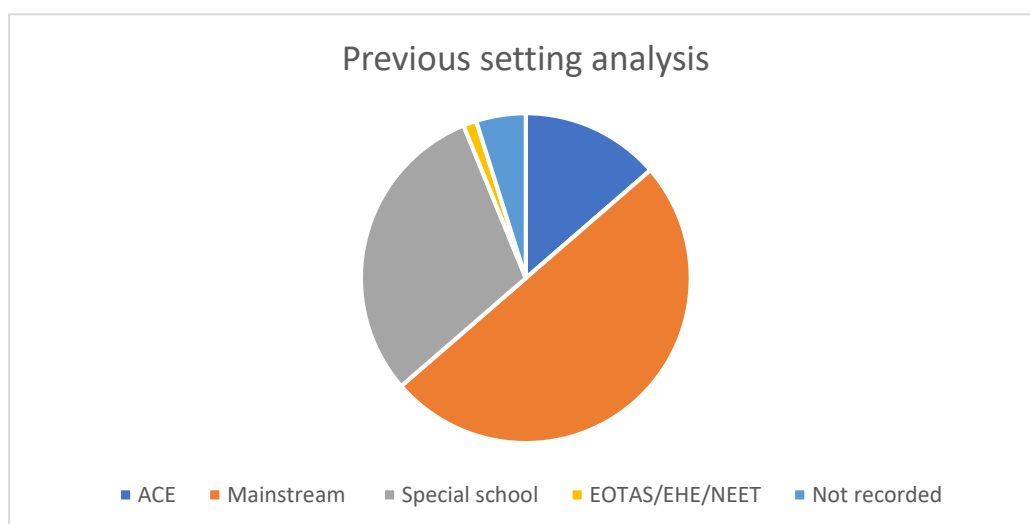
ISP	Total Number of places	Number of Primary	Number of Secondary	Number of Post 16	Total spend 23/24
ISP Educational Settings offering primary, secondary and post 16 provision					
Total	153	49	100	4	6,053,478.29
ISP Educational Settings that offer Post 16 provision					
Total	223				2,578,972.50
	376	49	100	227	8,632,450.79

ISP Spend			
Financial Year	Primary and Secondary	Post 16	Total spend per year
21/22	£2,031,808	£1,553,957	£3,585,765
22/23	£3,457,694	£2,170,099	£5,637,793
23/24	£6,053,478	£2,578,972	£8,632,450

Total numbers of current independent school placements: Breakdown by key stage as of March 2024

Key Stage	No of children/young people
EYFS and Key Stage 1	22
Key Stage 2	27
Key Stage 3	66
Key Stage 4	34
Key Stage 5/Years 12-13	131
Post 19/Further Education	96

Previous settings prior to placement



Analysis of previous settings for all 376 children and young people indicates that a significant number have moved from mainstream settings into the independent specialist sector. This has occurred at various key stages and phase transfers.

The second largest group of children and young people have moved from maintained/state-funded specialist settings into the independent sector. In the main, this is at the point of phase transfer for secondary or post-16.

By expanding capacity within Plymouth's special educational provision, it will reduce the need for placement at more expensive ISP provision. Expansion within Plymouth will also help to reduce the pressure on the Home to School Transport service budget as children will not be traveling out of the city. The current cost of providing home to school transport to ISP provision is £1.177m.

14. High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grant (HNPCA):

The local authority has been receiving funding via the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grant (HNPCA). This grant should be used to increase the number of special educational places that are available within Plymouth.

The table below identifies the income for SEND Capital allocation over the last 7 years.

	Income	Spend	Remaining Grant (cumulative)
2018/19	254,566.53		254,566.53
2019/20	787,380.20	107,583.00	934,363.73
2020/21	254,566.33		1,188,930.06
2021/22	1,447,787.32	34,258.80	2,602,458.58
2022/23	4,100,611.18	109,800.00	6,593,269.76
2023/24	7,361,586.64	1,907,887.20	12,046,969.20
2024/25	977,733.00	4,186.71	13,020,515.49
	15,184,231.20	2,163,715.71	13,020,515.49

All future expansion needs to be funded via this grant as there is currently no additional funding identified. Although it is hoped that the LA will continue to receive NHPCA grant funding this is not guaranteed. The Department for Education has not indicated that any additional funding will become available to local authorities to invest in capital programmes to increase their special school estates. However, if additional national funding does become available to replace existing schools or to build new special schools Plymouth will apply to subsidise the total funding available to the city.

15. Financial Analysis:

Plymouth receives funding to deliver statutory education services for children and young people with SEND through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is delivered through a range of providers including Maintained Special Schools and Academies, special Support Centres attached to mainstream schools, Further Education/Post 16 Colleges and Independent Providers.

Plymouth has experienced an increase in the number of EHCP's issued and pupils allocated to specialist provision inside and outside of the City. There has also been a significant increase in the number of pupils allocated to the Independent Special School (ISP) Sector as provision within the Plymouth estate has reached full capacity.

Plymouth will be reporting a deficit within the High Needs Block of the DSG for 2023/24. This will be the first time the LA has been in a deficit position.

An additional 94 pupils have been placed within the Independent Sector at the start of the 2023/24 academic year compared to the end of the 2022/23 academic year. It is anticipated that this number will increase throughout the year as more EHCP's naming special school provision are agreed.

The cost of Independent Placements is significantly higher than the cost of providing specialist provision within the Plymouth estate (Maintained Special Schools and Academies). As per the table below, it costs an additional £43,422 on average to place a pupil with an independent provider compared to the Plymouth estate:

	Plymouth Estate*	Independent Providers**	Increase compared to the Plymouth Estate
Average annual cost per pupil (£)	30,966	74,388	43,422

* Based on £10,000 place funding plus average top up funding per pupil as at July 2023.

**based on the average cost of bespoke packages agreed for each pupil known to finance as at October 2023

The table below provides a breakdown of the average cost per pupil within the Plymouth Estate (Five Maintained Special Schools, Two Special Academies and One Pupil Referral Unit);

Plymouth Estate	Average cost per pupil (£) per year
Brook Green	24,080
Cann Bridge	31,858
Longcause	30,586
Mill Ford	27,952
Woodlands	31,758
Courtlands	27,413
Mount Tamar	36,601
ACE (PRU)	37,478
Total Average	£30,966
Average cost of an ISP placement	£74,338

The growing SEND cohort creates financial pressures on PCC's revenue budget and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). However, with sufficient evidence-based planning, PCC can mitigate the impact on its budgets through investing in capital projects that develop the SEND estate and create the capacity within the city to continue to meet pupils' needs and to reduce the reliance on ISP provision.

The cost of building a new special school is extremely high, more than double the cost of building a primary school. Based on space, a special school will have approximately 60% fewer pupils than a mainstream school but will have approximately 50% more staff. A standard Special School costs depend upon the designation of the pupils and whether they are ambulant or non-ambulant.

Recent costings from Bailey Partnerships for SEND projects in England are indicating costs as below.

12 Classroom SEN Building	2021	£2,700.00 Per SqM (Final account)
4 Classroom SEN extension	2023	£2,850.00 Pre SqM (Final account)
4 Classroom SEN extension	2023	£2,640.00 Per SqM (current estimate)

The above costs exclude risk, fees, fixtures, fittings and equipment and VAT and includes allowances for associated external works.

16. Vacant Educational Site:

A new primary school was built as part of a housing development in the Plymstock area of the city. This enabled Dunstone Primary to transfer to the new build and vacate their existing premises. The Dunstone site is becoming increasingly dilapidated and remains an ongoing risk from the perspective of Fire, break-ins and at some point, possibly collapse as the building deteriorates further. Initially the site was only expected to be mothballed for a year or so, however this period has now elapsed and there is no firm plan for any commencement of works on the site. The site is secured as much as is reasonably practical and regularly inspected.

Due to the deteriorating condition of the site, demolition of the existing wooden temporary units and the main school buildings is recommended, as it would only require one major incident on the site to expose PCC to significant legal, financial and or reputational risk.

This site could be used to build a new school and should be retained for this purpose. It is currently the only available educational land that is owned by PCC that could be used if and when further funding becomes available to build a new/replacement school.

17. Models for consideration:

Model 1: Childcare Expansion

Plymouth has received £435k Childcare Expansion Capital Grant which must be spent on capital projects to meet the capital costs associated with developing sufficient childcare places for:

- children 9 months to 2 years taking up an early years place through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents;
- increasing the supply of wraparound childcare for primary-school aged children.

This option is to administer a capital grants scheme, where childcare providers can apply for capital grants up to £20,000 to increase new childcare places. The council would prioritise places for children with SEND and target areas where there are gaps in provision. The key outcome of this grant is creating approximately 200 new childcare places, the rest will be created through adaptations to business models.

A “Request for Quotation” opportunity for local childcare providers to apply for grants of up to £20,000 towards the cost of a capital project will be administered.

The Commissioning and the Education Improvement team will run the small grants scheme. This will involve administering a request for quotation scheme, which will be evaluated by an

evaluation panel to ensure that all bids meet the requirements of the grant scheme as laid out by the DFE.

Model 2: Mill Ford – Satellite Provision

As Mill Ford is in need of refurbishment and modernisation there is currently a need for additional temporary capacity to be created within a satellite provision. This provision would be within a mainstream primary school but would be run and staffed by Mill Ford. This would enable the school to increase its numbers for September 2024. As the refurbishment of the current building will take between 12-36 months satellite provision would also enable the school to decant some pupils temporarily during the refurbishment phase to minimise the disruption to some students.

This would provide additional SLD places withing the city.

Additional Places: 20 – 30

Estimated Timescale: 2-4 months (to be in place for September 2024)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be a good use of existing school buildings. • Would support a school with falling numbers who have vacant space. • Would expand our current special school estate. • Would be under a strong SEND leadership and delivered by an Ofsted ‘good’ school. • Promotes SEND inclusion. • Potential new employment opportunities in area • Additional capacity would be in place very quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust lease arrangements would need to be in place. • Suitable space would need to be adapted to accommodate the needs of children. • The LA would be investing capital funding in a temporary solution. • The LA could be investing in a Trust owned building. • School could say they need to space back if numbers suddenly increase. • Additional staff parking could be needed. • Traffic in the area may increase at school drop off and pick up times.

Model 3: Provide Resourced Provision within our existing education estate.

This option would see resourced provision being developed within existing mainstream settings. The city already has several resourced provisions based within mainstream settings. This option would see the number of provisions increase to ensure that is a resourced provision within each locality of the city. Clear parameters, funding arrangements and service level agreements (SLAs) would need to be in place with the Trusts that would deliver the provision.

Currently our resourced provisions are not at full capacity and work will need to be carried out across the city to promote the benefits of children attending a resourced provision

within a mainstream setting and to promote the benefits of inclusion that this can bring for a child.

This option could provide on average an additional 12 – 20 places per resourced provision.

Current resourced provision is predominantly within the primary phase of education. Although there are three resourced provisions within the secondary phase, one is for young people with a hearing difficulty, and one is for young people who experience language difficulties. As the largest area of need within the city is for young people with SLCN/ASC needs these new resourced provisions should be for this cohort of young people to support them to remain within a mainstream environment. This proposal would see 5 new resourced provisions being established, 2 within Primary to service the north and south of the city and 3 within secondary to service the north, south and east.

The provision would be established for the broader area of neurodiversity including SLCN/ASC. By establishing 5 new provisions the city would have a neurodiversity/SLCN/ASC primary and secondary provision in each locality.

We would work to establish resourced provision within each locality of the city to ensure that children and young people can remain in their communities wherever possible. We also need to ensure that there is both primary and secondary provision available for young people who need this type of support. Currently our existing provision is primary focused meaning that some children do not have a resourced provision to transition to at secondary point of entry thus propelling them into more expensive special school placements.

This option would need work to be completed with Trusts to identify those willing to provide resourced provision. This work has already started, and several trusts have come forward expressing an interest in exploring this option.

The work to develop new provision would run in parallel to the work underway as part of the SEND Strategy to improve, review and remodel the existing resourced provision within the city.

Additional places per resourced provision: 12-20

Estimated Timescale: 18 months - 2 years to finalise the designs and deliver the final project.

Total additional places across 5 new resourced provisions: 60 – 100

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes SEND inclusion. • Would support between 60-100 children to remain in mainstream school. • Expressions of interest would be sought from all trusts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourced Provision has not been popular in recent years. • Suitable space would need to be identified and would be subject to planning permission. • The LA could be investing in a Trust owned building.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision would be located within 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted schools. • Potential for new employment opportunities within the area • Reduces pressure on home to school transport. • May attract additional investment from Trusts. • Could support schools with falling numbers who have vacant space. • Would expand our current resourced provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusts could say they do not want to run provision in the future after investment on the site. • Additional staff parking could be needed.
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Model 4: Mill Ford – Refurbishment and Remodelling

Based on the available funding it may not be possible to replace Mill Ford. As the building is in poor condition the proposal is therefore to refurbish and reconfigure the existing building in the short term. Design and feasibility work has commenced to determine what is possible within the existing fabric of the building. Full conditions surveys, mechanical and electrical survey (M & E), asbestos survey and feasibility studies will be needed to inform the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the building. Due to the restrictions on space and the likelihood of not obtaining planning permission to physically permanently expand the premises the proposal would also consider further use of modular units on the current site. As these are modular, they are not deemed a permanent expansion and it is therefore predicted that planning consent will be achieved.

Previous building condition surveys of Mill Ford have indicated that it would require approximately £580,476.00 to rectify the defective elements within the existing design of the building. If the works were carried out, it would not, in this instance, mean that the building was then fit for purpose, due to its configuration potentially being unsuitable for the current numbers and complexity of the SEND children and staff welfare. Further work would be needed alongside the remedial work to increase the capacity within the school.

A total refurbishment would be required, internal reconfiguration and the addition of modular accommodation onto the existing site. This would then increase the capacity on the existing site.

This would provide additional SLD places withing the city.

Additional Places: 30

Estimated Timescale: 12 - 36 months.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the building would be improved. • Children and staff would have a building which was suitable for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full conditions surveys would be needed to determine if the building can be refurbished and remodelled.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity will be increased.• Investment will be in an LA maintained building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some planning permissions may be needed.• Construction work may have to take place during term time which would disrupt the students and staff.• Significant spend on a building which may need to be fully replaced.
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Model 5: Expand our current Special School provision.

This section outlines a variety of expansion options.

There is limited capacity for external building work to expand our current special school estate due to the nature of the sites they are occupying. Expansion therefore needs to be a combination of external work where possible and internal reconfiguration.

Brook Green

Brook Green does not have space on its current site to commence a building expansion programme externally. However, the new head has expressed an interest in developing plans to reconfigure the internal space within the school to allow for more school places.

This would provide additional MLD/SEMH/ASD places withing the city.

Estimated Additional Places: 20 subject to planning and design
Estimated Timescale: 12-18 months. (The school have asked if we can allow some time for them to stabilise the new leadership team before any planning work commenced.)

Cann Bridge

Cann Bridge has already been expanded with the addition of modular accommodation onto the site to increase the capacity by 16 places, there is currently no further external space to expand on their site. The LA are exploring other options with the head to reconfigure some of the internal space to increase capacity.

This would provide additional SLD places withing the city.

Estimated Additional Places: 8
Estimated Timescale: 6-12 months.

Courtlands

Courtlands is part of Transforming Futures Trust. They currently do not feel they are in a position to expand the number of places that they can offer. However, they would like to revisit this in 12 months' time.

Estimated Additional Places: 8-10

Longcause

Longcause does have capacity to expand on its current site. This would involve internal remodelling of a small space within the school for September 2024, the addition of modular accommodation and complex internal remodelling of the existing accommodation. Currently the school is over its recommended capacity of 85 and there has been a plan in place to reduce the current numbers to bring them back within range. This option would enable the school to increase from the current 103 (academic year 2024/25) to 120.

As the largest area of need for the city is for SLCN/ASD places this would build capacity within this designation.

Estimated Additional Places: 17 additional places on top of current 103 (35 in addition to capacity of 85)

Estimated Timescale: 6 - 36 months.

Mount Tamar

Mount Tamar is part of Transforming Futures Trust. Mount Tamar has already secured support from the Department for Education to rebuild part of their building on the main site. This rebuild will replace an existing building and will provide high quality educational accommodation for the current children and staff. The LA is not financially supporting this building programme however we are supporting the development of additional places. The LA is working with the Trust to expand the overall number of places available on the main site. This will include places within the new build, once it is complete, and places within the rest of the school.

This would provide additional SEMH/ASD places withing the city.

Estimated Additional Places: 10 – 20 depending on phase of education.

Estimated Timescale: 6-18 months. Depending on the current building programme.

ADVANTAGES OF EXPANDING OUR CURRENT SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION	DISADVANTAGES OF EXPANDING OUR CURRENT SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of the building would be improved.• Capacity will be increased.• There will be a reduction in the need for ISP placements.• Children would not need to be transported out of the area to access learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some planning permissions may be needed.• Construction work may have to take place during term time which would disrupt the students and staff depending on the level of expansion.

Model 6: Special School Nursery Provision.

Woodlands – Nursery Provision

Woodlands do have capacity to expand on their current sites. There is currently space within the school which had previously been a short breaks residential unit run by the school which closed. This area could be remodelled enabling an additional 20 early years places to be provided.

Currently we are not seeing any pressure for places for school aged children to attend Woodlands.

There is however a need for early years SEND assessment nursery provision within the city. This option would need to be explored further but would support children without an EHCP who appear to be on the pathway to a special school. It would enable robust specialist assessment of their needs to take place quickly to ensure that they have the right packages of support in place to either support them within a mainstream setting or to identify early the type of specialist provision that is needed.

Several options have previously been explored for the vacant part of the school, however due to accessibility being limited and area only accessible via the Woodlands School premises these have previously not been possible/viable. A viable option it to expand the school into this unused space to provide early years places.

Additional Places: 20

Estimated Timescale: 12 - 24 months.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be a good use of existing space within the school. • Would provide specialist assessment early years provision. • Would facilitate quick assessment of early years children to determine what level of support they would need. • Would be under a strong SEND leadership and delivered by an Ofsted 'good' school. • Investment would be in an LA maintained building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable space would need to be adapted to accommodate the needs of children. • Additional staff parking could be needed. • Traffic in the area may increase at school drop off and pick up times.

Model 7: Longcause – Additional Building

An opportunity to purchase an existing building adjacent to Longcause has arisen. This is a grade II listed building and would need internal remodelling to bring the accommodation up to specification. There are other examples around the county of special schools that are within listed buildings and the accommodation has successfully been adapted to meet the

needs of SEND pupils. If this option was pursued, this could provide an additional 100 places for Longcause subject to planning and design. It would also give the option to include a SEND training facility for Plymouth where young people could expand their skills to equip them for adulthood and/or a staff professional development centre.

This piece of work is at its very early stages. If agreement is made to consider purchasing this building it would be subject to feasibility studies, surveys, planning and design work.

As the largest area of need for the city is for SLCN/ASD places this would build capacity within this designation.

Additional Places: 100

Estimated Timescale: 12 - 36 months.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity within the city will be increased. • New building would be part of the LA educational estate. • Location of building is next to existing special school. • Would be under a strong SEND leadership and delivered by an Ofsted 'good' school. • Building could be developed in further in the future to establish a post 16 training provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LA would have to purchase the building and would need full conditions surveys would be needed to determine if the building can be refurbished and remodelled. • Some planning permissions may be needed. • The building is grade II listed so planning would have to take this into account. • It would take time to purchase and refurbish the building. • There would be an impact on traffic in the area as capacity increases.

Model 8: Mill Ford – Replacement School

This option would see a special school being built which could expand current provision for SLD and would relocate existing provision. This would be a new build so a suitable site would need to be identified. The Dunstone site could be utilised for this option. This option would replace Mill Ford which is in need of replacement due to its current condition.

The condition and fabric of the current Mill Ford building is poor. There have been proposals to replace the building for several years, however these have not been approved to enable them to progress. If a new school is built to replace Mill Ford this option could provide an additional 50 - 100 SLD, PMLS spaces depending on the design. Mill Ford could then relocate into the new building from their existing site. This would then free up the current Mill Ford site for future educational development or for disposal.

Initial designs were completed and identified a minimum capacity of 150 places and designs had identified that a potential 180 pupils with an overarching target of 200 pupils could be

achieved, as this would be the most cost effective and least disruptive method for delivery. This option means that Mill Ford would have an additional 50-100 places depending on design.

This option could be in place by 2028 subject to planning and building permissions.

This would provide additional SLD and PMLS places withing the city.

Estimated Timescale: 2-3 years to finalise the designs and deliver the final project.

The current available funding is £13m. To enable this option to be carried out additional funding would need to be identified. The option would encompass the modifications that are required for Mill Ford's current students and staff. Additional capacity would still need to be built in other special schools to meet other designation of needs.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity within the city will be increased. New building would be part of the LA educational estate. Would be under a strong SEND leadership and delivered by an Ofsted 'good' school. A new build would provide high quality learning space for children and staff currently at Mill Ford. Would use a site that is already available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new build will take several years before it could open. Significant additional funding would need to be identified. Planning permission would be needed. There would be an impact on traffic in the area as capacity increases.

18. Recommendations for SEND Development and Growth:

Approval of the SEND Sufficiency Plan will form the basis of a SEND Estate Plan that will increase the capacity of SEND provision and will maintain the SEND estate whilst having the flexibility to constrict if the data shows a sustained decline in pupil numbers.

Summary of models and order of prioritisation

Priority One

Our first priority should be to expand our childcare provision across the city to ensure that Plymouth has adequate places to accommodate the increase in the number of families who will be able to access free early years places.

This is funded from the Childcare Expansion Grant and would be totally funded from within the £435k that has been allocated to the city.

Priority Two

Some small-scale realignment has already taken place within two of our special schools to increase capacity for September 2024 for SLD/MLD/SLC and ASD. To increase the number of SLD/PMLD places for September 2024 further and to relieve the site pressures it is recommended that a satellite provision is established for Mill Ford.

A site has already been identified within one of our trust schools and the trust are keen to work with Mill Ford to offer an inclusive and integrated experience for the children who attend. They would like to plan for integration of the special school children into the day-to-day life of the school and both the trust and Mill Ford see this opportunity as a rich development experience for both children and staff. Currently the satellite provision would be established for an initial period of 2 years. This will also allow development work to take place within Mill Ford to improve the building and increase capacity on their main site.

Priority Three

To promote inclusion and to give children access to specialist support within the area of the city that they live we should prioritise the development of additional resourced provision across the city. These would allow for children with SEND to be educated within a mainstream setting and would promote inclusion.

Priority Four

If additional funding became available to rebuild Mill Ford this would take some considerable time. We must therefore refurbish and reconfigure the existing site to provide a high quality environment for both staff and students.

Priority Five

To increase capacity across all designation of SEND within Plymouth then a programme of expansion is needed with the majority of our special schools. This will increase the number of spaces available to children and young people within the city and will reduce the use of ISP provision.

Priority Six

To help to reduce the demand for special school places it is important that children are assess as early as possible so that robust packages of support can be put in place within a

mainstream setting. The provision of an early years assessment setting would enable these children to be assessed quickly by specialist.

Priority Severn

To increase capacity for children with SLCN and ASC further that consideration should be taken to purchasing an additional building. Not only would this site allow for increased school age places the site could in the future also be used to develop a SEND training centre for post 16 young people to equipment then for adulthood.

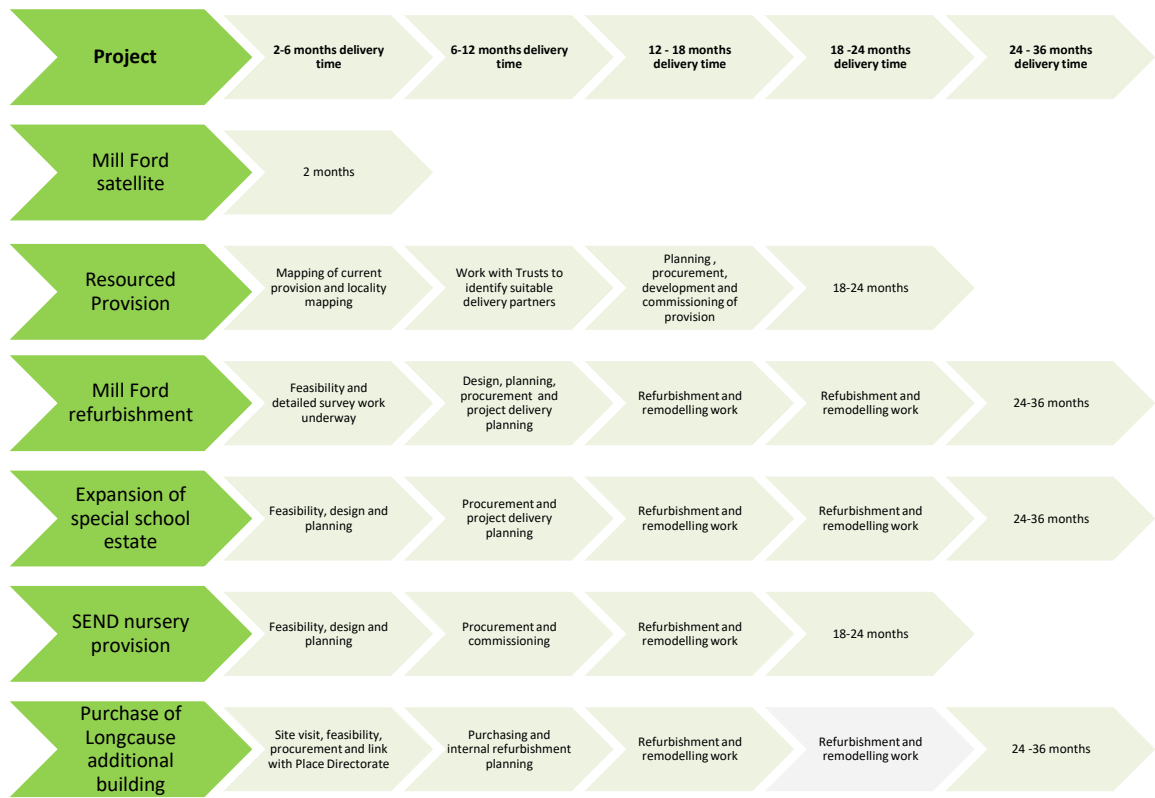
Priority Eight

Although currently additional funding is not available the condition of Mill Ford may mean that refurbishment of the building is not viable option and further consideration may be needed to build a replacement school subject to securing additional funding.

19. Implications for HNPCA Fund:

All options and delivery models outline above with the exception of the building of a replacement special school for Mill Ford can be funded from within the existing HNPCA fund.

20. Timeline for delivery:



21. Legal:

The Council may provide capital funding to any state school to cover construction works / equipment to support SEND provision. To ensure that the completed structure / equipment continue to be used for the desired SEND purposes rather than other education purposes, the capital could be provided by means of a grant or secured loan. The grant / loan would need to be subject to specific conditions controlling the ongoing use of the assets, a breach of which would necessitate repayment of the capital funding.

In the case of maintained schools, the relevant agreement would be enforceable against the Governing Body; and for other state schools, against the relevant corporate body (e.g. charitable company in the case of Academy).

To cover the situation of a maintained school subsequently becoming an Academy, the grant agreement / loan could provide for the loan to be called in; or assigned to the new governing body, therefore ensuring the capital asset continues to be used for the intended purposes.

The Academy Trust Handbook (2023), states that in the case of a loan agreement to an Academy, the Trustees would need to obtain Education and Skills Funding Agency's prior approval to a secured loan regardless of the interest rate.

Assumptions

Changes made to accommodate additional pupils will have an effect on staffing and staff facilities. Additional pupils may increase staffing levels above the standard staffing level for the facilities in the building. When only the additional pupils are considered, it can lead to loss of adequate and suitable staff space and increase risks in safeguarding and health and safety.

Considerations

Building regulations and industry changes are inflating the costs annually.

Net Zero and the Green Agenda both inflate costs to meet changing requirements.

The views of the Highways Agency need to be taken into account regarding increased traffic due to parents/carers dropping off and collecting pupils at peak periods causing traffic to slow down in certain areas. Consideration will also have to be taken for the higher level of support staff that can be required at a special school which cater to the pupil's individual requirements and that this can cause residential areas to become congested due to staff parking off site.

It is clear that extra capacity must be found in the SEND estate to meet increasing demand.

In order to develop and finalise the SEND Sufficiency Plan a number of decisions based on the points contained within this document will need to be made and then a scope and programme can be finalised.

It should be recognised from the outset that this will have to be a phased delivery approach and that any construction or remodelling of the estate will take time due to the various phases of approvals, funding, architectural designs, planning permission, procurement, tender period, contractor selection and finally construction. Most of these will apply to both redevelopment of existing stock and new builds.

In reviewing the pupil space any planning and developments must also review staff space and welfare facilities, this could reduce pupil numbers, however the employer has a duty of care to employees.

There is not a large supply of building land available which is suitable for Education, most having previously been sold off for housing developments following amalgamations and expansions to new sites.

Appendix A

Building Bulletins (SEND)

Building Bulletin 77: Designing for Pupils with Special Educational Needs, Special Schools 1992

In 1992 the Government identified that approximately 15–20% of all pupils, have some form of SEN or disability, over a given period of time.

- National average figures show that 3% of all pupils have statements of special educational need. This varies across LEAs, however, from less than 0.5% to more than 4.5%.
- Over 50% of all pupils who have statements of special educational need attend their local community mainstream schools.
- Overall, approximately 1.6% of all pupils who have SEN attend a special school.
- As an outcome of medical advances, a higher percentage of children with profound physical, health or complex needs are surviving and have a much longer life expectancy.
- The development of early-intervention programmes for children may reduce the impact of disability on their educational and life opportunities.
- There is a perceived increase in the number of pupils who have behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and those whose needs fall within the autistic spectrum.

Table 12: Recommended areas for general-teaching class bases

Phase	Pupil numbers	Area m ²
Special school (MLD/complex needs/SLD/ASD PMLD)		
Early years	varies	75
Primary	6–8	65
Secondary	6–8	65
Special school – BESD		
Primary KS 1	6–8	65
Primary KS 2	6–8	55
Secondary	6–8	55

(Note: in KS 1 there may be a need for play activities due to developmental delay).

Table 11: Typical occupancy levels for staff and pupil groups

Type of SEN	Pupil number in a class for one teacher
BESD	6 – 8
PD	6 – 8
VI	6–10
HI	6–10
SLCN	6–10
MLD/complex needs	6–10
SLD	6–8
ASD	1–8
MSI	5–7
PMLD	5–7

Source: DfES Circular 11/90 Staffing for pupils with special educational needs 13 December 1990

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Building Bulletin 91: Access for Disabled People to School Buildings 1999

Building Bulletin 94: Inclusive School Design 2001

BB94 provides advice and guidance on the challenges posed when accommodating pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in mainstream schools.

2008 - BBI02

- Eight and 15 children with moderate needs
- Six and eight children with severe to profound needs
- Four and six children with profound needs only

Table 7: Classrooms – primary special		
Typical range of needs	Number of children	Area m ²
A. BESD		
Early years/Reception	6–8	65
KS1 and KS2	6–8	52
B. MLD/SLD/SLCN/ASD		
Early years/Reception	8–10	65
KS1 and KS2	8–10	60
C. MLD/SLD/SLCN/ASD/under 50% PMLD		
Early years/Reception	6–8	70
KS1 and KS2	6–8	60
D. MLD/SLD/SLCN/ASD over 50% PMLD		
Early years/Reception	6–8	75
KS1 and KS2	6–8	65

Table 18: Typical general teaching spaces - secondary special		
Typical range of needs	Number of children	Area m ²
A. BESD		
	6 – 8	52
B. MLD/SLD/SLCN/ASD		
	8–10	60
C. MLD/SLD/SLCN/ASD/less than 50% PMLD)		
	6 – 8	60
D. MLD/SLCN/ASD/SLD more than 50% PMLD		
	6 – 8	65

BBI02 Aside from identifying teaching spaces for pupils, the document also identified additional types of spaces necessary to support the pupils needs.

Table 27: Typical medical and therapy spaces – special schools	
Space	Area m ²
Medical room	15–25
School nurse	15–20
Store – sundries	2 – 4
Store – oxygen cylinders	2 – 4
Physiotherapy/shared use for therapy	25–30
Store	4–10
Speech and language therapy	12–15
Audiology	20–24
Observation room	10–12
Audiology technician	20–30
VI resource	40–60
VI technician	16–20
VI mobility training room	20–50
Sensory room	12–24
Sensory studio	50–60
Hydrotherapy	85
Warm water pool	144
Soft play	24–30
Social/recreational	50–60
Social skills	20–25

2018 - BBI04

The Building Bulletins directly impact on the teaching areas and the space required per pupil based on their SEND needs.

Tribunals generally only refer to the current Building Bulletin pupil space requirements and not the guidance at the time of the build. The tables above, taken from the Building Bulletins, identify the changes in government thinking and designs for Special Needs Education. This, together with the increasing complexity of the pupils, works against the LA and the pupils.

How SEND impacts on area Special schools, AP, SRP and Units all require more area per pupil place than mainstream schools because:

- *pupils are taught in smaller groups, averaging around 8 to 12 and as low as 4 to 6 where pupils need extensive support.*
- *staff to pupil ratios are higher, particularly in a special school where 2 or 3 teaching assistants or support staff work alongside the teacher or give support in a separate space.*
- *pupils who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids need more movement space and space to store their equipment when not in use (some pupils may use up to three different pieces of mobility equipment during the school day for medical and functional reasons) 4.*
- *disabled pupils need facilities for physiotherapy (which can require specialist equipment such as a hoist) as well as specialist changing facilities.*
- *pupils who are easily agitated often need more personal space around them.*
- *pupils in special schools and AP need individual teaching, counselling and therapy, requiring a range of small spaces.*

- visiting professionals, such as speech and language therapists, need access to a desk space and storage in addition to the teaching areas.

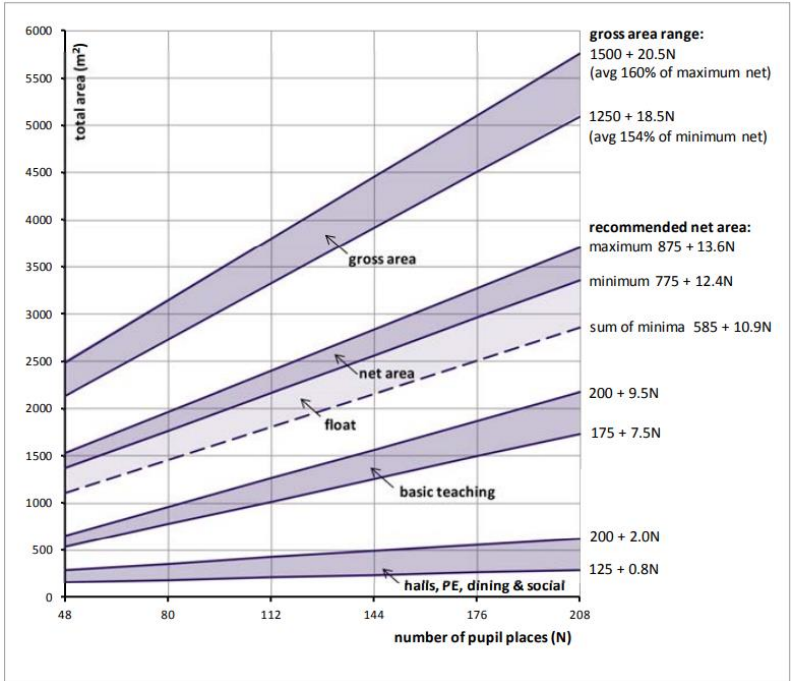
Co-location

A special school sharing a site with a mainstream school allows pupils to interact and can give special school pupils access to a wider range of facilities. However, the special school’s teaching area should remain the same to ensure pupils have guaranteed access to their curriculum. Some non-teaching spaces such as the commercial kitchen and premises manager's office can be shared resulting in an area reduction of up to around 75m2. However, co-location may not always be appropriate where, for example, it may be more effective for pupils with behavioural difficulties to be educated away from their peers.

Split sites

A special school is occasionally on more than one site, e.g. where it has a primary and a secondary department or where two special schools have combined to form one establishment. Where a significant part of a school is provided in buildings on more than one site extra area may be needed, to allow for the replication of key resources. This is unlikely to be more than 75m2 gross, for administrative and kitchen facilities, depending on the distance between sites and the facilities on each site. Distance between sites is likely to be more of an issue for a special school than for a mainstream school.

- Net area which is the usable area and comprises basic teaching area; halls, PE, dining and social spaces; learning resource areas; staff and administration; and storage.
- Non-net area which supports the functioning of the building, and includes toilets and personal care facilities, commercial kitchens, circulation, plant and internal walls.
- Supplementary area (including net and non-net), such as a community health or counselling centre.



Staff and administration in special schools and AP

The total staff and administration area for a special school should include:

- *a general office for administrative staff, with storage for confidential records in FF&E, a reception desk onto the reception area, and the option of a second reception desk onto a part of the school open to pupils.*
- *a secure reception area for visitors, with access to the rest of the school controlled by the office staff (this net area is for seating and display, over and above the circulation space through the entrance/ reception space).*
- *an interview room, ideally accessed from the entrance foyer or reception area, along with an accessible visitors' toilet, so that they can be used by visitors without them entering the main school.*
- *a headteacher's office of about 15m²; • a meeting/training room for case meetings, staff training, etc;*
- *a parents' room which could also be used as a second meeting room.*
- *preparation and social space for teaching staff, usually in the form of a central staff room for work and social use including a kitchenette.*

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	17 July 2024
Title of Report:	Seeking Education, Employment and Training July 2024
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Tina Brinkworth
Contact Email:	Tina.brinkworth@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	TB/2024/006
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

Update of employment, education and training (EET) status of young people in the city

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. To note the report

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

- **Corporate Plan** – it helps maintain the quality of public services.
- **Plymouth Plan** – it contributes to a number of policies, specifically HEA2 'Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families' and GRO2 'Delivering skills and talent development'.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None

Financial Risks

None

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Scrutiny SEET paper June 2024							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	Click here to enter text.	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tina Brinkworth											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 08/07/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Cresswell Date approved: 08/07/2024											

YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING (SEET) UPDATE JUNE 24



EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

CONTEXT

PCC have a statutory duty to collect NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) data for all young people in year 12 and year 13 i.e. those who are 16 and 17 years old. In addition, we collect data on those NEET young people who are moving into positive next steps i.e. seeking employment education and training (SEET).

In May 24, against a year 12 and year 13 cohort of 5,868 young people in the city, the NEET number for year 12 and year 13 combined was 292 young people (4.8%) and there were 90 (1.5%) young people where the situation was unknown in terms of employment, education, or training status. Over the last 12 months there has been significant work undertaken to know more of our young people and this has been reflected in our improving position.

Year 12 - 13 NEET and Not Known % - Last 3 Months					
Month	Cohort	NEET	Not Known	NEET %	Not Known %
March 2024	5871	297	81	5.1%	1.4%
April 2024	5869	296	86	5.0%	1.5%
May 2024	5868	283	90	4.8%	1.5%
3 Month Avg	5869	292	86	5.0%	1.5%

Year 12 - 13 NEET and Not Known % - Last Year					
Month	Cohort	NEET	Not Known	NEET %	Not Known %
March 2023	5646	258	129	4.6%	2.3%
April 2023	5646	253	150	4.5%	2.7%
May 2023	5647	270	135	4.8%	2.4%
3 Month Avg	5646	260	138	4.6%	2.4%

We are tracking our young people who we are actively moving into positive next steps. As of May 24, 148 (52%) young people of the 282 NEET cohort are actively seeking employment education or training (SEET). This has taken significant multi-partnership working to triage and access bespoke support, tailored for each young person.

We have implemented Unlocking Plymouth's Potential SEET strategy, and action plan, the impact of which can be seen below.

Young people with a special education need or disability (SEND)

Cohort: 394 in year 12 and 13 with an EHCP (of which 40 (10.2%) are NEET and 7 (1.8%) situation unknown) and 669 young people aged 18 to 25 with an EHCP.

What we have done

- Established a Task and Finish group to provide focused and targeted support
- Completed a data cleanse, hold accurate data, which has been cross referenced with external partners
- Grown the number of Supported Internship placements from 9 to 60 placements
- Tracking young people with an EHCP on apprenticeship and developing pathways (from 9 in 2022/2023 to 25 this academic year)

- Secured £1.3m SEND innovation grant year 3 to support transition that includes an innovative 'Your Future Programme' which provides 4 to 5 week employability programmes and support for young people.
- Weekly Post 16 decision making panels in place for Post 16 transitions
- Meeting with parents and young people to discuss next steps, which has been positively received.

Impact

- Ceased 219 Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) as young people have transitioned into adulthood, employment and higher education
- 88.1% SEND young people are in education, employment or training, the focused support has resulted in an upward trend over the last 4 months (from 76%). As such there has been agreement at the SEND Improvement board to increase the target to an ambitious 92% for academic year 2024/2025.
- Year 2 SEND Innovation grant (see above) supported 277 young people against a target of 150 people. In quarter 1 of Year 3 we have already engaged 150 young people against an annual target of 360 young people
 - 100% of young people transitioning into City College Plymouth when they have undertaken the summer activity transition programme (funded from SEND Innovation grant year 3)
 - 100% positive next steps for young people completing your future programme, 4 cohorts have completed and cohort 5 is currently underway. This is a programme for small groups of young people 33 young people to date have taken part on the programme, with plans for a further 6 cohorts (approx.50 students). Below are outcomes for the recently completed cohort 4 which completed early June.
 - Young person 'S' has struggled to travel independently, throughout this course their confidence has grown. 'S' has an aspiration to establish their own dog walking and grooming business and with the team's support has secured a volunteering placement with a local company and receiving mentoring to upskill in how to run a business, as well as upskilling in animal care. 'S' is now travelling by bus independently to this volunteering position and is thriving. We will continue to support 'S' until they enter into employment or establish their own business.
 - 'Young person 'L' could drive, but prior to the course only had the confidence to drive around their housing estate. Within the first week of the programme 'L' had made friends with some other students and was driving across the city to collect the other students and driving them all to Mount Batten. 'L' had previously achieved a level 2 in engineering and the team worked with local employers, securing an interview with a large engineering company. The team prepped them, supported them throughout. 'L' undertook a full day assessment and is now through to a final interview, date to be confirmed. We have every confidence that 'L' will secure this position.
 - Young person " started the course with low confidence, within 5 weeks their confidence has grown, they have gained valuable employment skills and we are pleased to share that ", with the support of the team, has secured full time employment in the Naval Base as part of a first aid and firefighting team.
- High number of young people moving into employment or apprenticeships from Supported Internships. Following a Supported Internship young person 'O' secured an apprenticeship with a large leisure centre as a fitness instructor. Young person 'K', after trailing a number of roles has secured part-time work in the leisure centre's café. This demonstrates the impact and value of a Supported Internship (work-based study programme that builds skills and confidence in the work place), these case studies represent many examples.

Next steps

- Post 16 forum set up with providers from September (in diaries)
- Termly reporting agreed with providers (meetings held and content agreed)
- Actively sourcing funding for post-16 transitions and 'Your Future Programme'
- Grow Supported Internship placements to 100 by March 2025
- Embed Quality Assurance and a Learning Framework

In Care Cohort

Participation Data as at 20/6/24	Year 12 CiC	Year 13 CiC	Year 13 Care Leavers (over 18s)	Year 13 ALL
EET No.	33	5	28	33
EET %	65%	42%	60%	56%
NEET No.	18	7	19	26
NEET %	35%	58%	40%	44%
Total Per Year Group	51	12	47	59

As at 20/6/24 there are 110 Children in Care in year 12 and 13 (of whom 44 (40%) are NEET. The number of young people in employment, education and training is up 1.3% from April 24 and 3.7% from May 23.

What we have done

- Hold accurate and personalised data
- Funding a Youth Outreach worker as a pilot through the pupil premium funding. This post has been in place since April 2024 and they are actively engaged with 17 young people. They have all have a personalised action plans and personalised support in place.

Activity	Total Number
Actively engaged	17
Face to Face meetings	17
Identified hobbies and interest	12
Identified career aspirations and barriers	11
Supported to identify life goals	4
Supported access to English and maths courses	2
Supported with pre-employability course	1
Supported into volunteering placement	1
Supported with FE/HE applications	3
Supported to transition into full time FE/HE	2
Supported to apply for Apprenticeship	1
Supported into skills development courses	3

Impact

- Young person 'C' has been in care since 2020, they are 17 and have been living in supported accommodation for 18 months. 'C' has been out of education since year 11 and has an aspiration to work with children. 'C' has been supported to find a volunteering

placement at nursery, this nursery has an apprenticeship programme. 'C' has been supported to independently travel to the nursery and over the coming weeks they will develop key employability skills. This will best position 'C' to apply for an apprenticeship with this nursery.

- 1:1 support for one young person – supporting them to complete their health and social care qualification at Discovery College, the young person has so much going on outside of college at present and has been falling behind. The team has been helping the young person and putting in place additional support to help them get back on track.
- A young person has been supported to attend an interview for an apprenticeship, we are awaiting the outcome.

Next steps

- To engage the 4 young people not currently engaging and work up personalised action plans and to understand the status of the young people where the situation is unknown.
- The Outreach worker will continue to build relationships with the young people and develop personalised action plans.
- Put support in place to transition into positive next steps.
- Continue to track and measure progress

Care Leavers

Cohort: There are 273 Care Leavers **open to the Care Leavers Service** age 18-25 years of whom 110 (40.3%) are in employment, education or training (EET), 5 (1.8%) are unknown, 3 (0.1%) are seeking employment, education or training (SEET) and 158 (57.8%) are not in employment, education or training (NEET)

76 of the above 273 Care Leavers have an open education and health care plan (EHCP)

What we have done

- Data cleanse across PCC and wider partners to ensure accurate data
- Fortnightly Care Leavers multi-agency meeting to look at personalised support
- Look to develop a personalised action plan and support for every NEET young person
- Care Leavers Covenant
- Livewell Care Leavers pilot (ring-fenced apprenticeships)

Next steps

- Focused delivery (similar to the SEND cohort), established a weekly Task and Finish group to look at support for young people
- Personalised employment programme i.e. Your Future'
- Engage and develop and Action plan for every young person
- Targeted and focused support for young parents through OCSW family learning programme
- Encourage more employers to sign up to covenant and transition Care Leavers into employment
- Roll out training for local businesses looking to recruit a Care Leavers i.e. trauma informed training, mental health first aid etc.
- Implement tracking to measure impact
- Organising a visit to Exeter prison for those young people serving a sentence / or in custody awaiting sentencing, and putting in place personalised support

Young people known to Criminal Justice system

Cohort: There are currently 10 NEET young people in year 12 and 13 known to the criminal justice system, of which 2 (20%) are in education, 1 (10%) is seeking employment, education and training (SEET) and 2 (20%) have confirmed start dates with a provider. 5 (50%) of this cohort currently not in employment, education or training (NEET).

What we have done

- focused support to young people working alongside the PA / Caseworker

Impact

- Young person 'N' after struggling to engage in school for many years, has secured a college placement with Discovery College in September on a 'Future Works programme', this includes English and maths qualifications. In addition, 'N' will be supported throughout the summer with 1-2-1 tutoring at OCSW and a bus pass and gym membership has been purchased from the Progression funding with Discovery College to enable a smooth transition and independent travel. This was achieved through working with the case worker and provider in open and transparent way. Young person 'N' in their words is so excited and chuffed to have secured this placement.

Next steps

- Focused support and action plans for every young person
- Developing a bespoke Your Future programme

Other cohorts

- **Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)** – cohort of 435 in year 12 and year 13 of which 10 (2.3%) are NEET and 5 (1.1%) are situation unknown
- **Teen Parents** – cohort of 21 in year 12 and year 13 of which 16 (76.2%) NEET, as they are pregnant or parenting and 1 (4.2%) has a situation unknown
- **Young Carer** – cohort of 44 in year 12 and year 13 of which 9 NEET (40.2%)

Next steps

- Establish a Task and Finish Group for Teen Parents
- Establish a Task and Finish Group for Young Carers
- Focused support and action plans for every young person
- Work with employers to provide flexible working opportunities for young people with caring responsibilities
- Implement tracking to measure impact

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	18 July 2024
Title of Report:	Q4 2023/24 Performance Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Paul Stephens & Susan London
Contact Email:	paul.stephens@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	PSCSS-2023/24(Q4)
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To share key performance data information related to Children Services (Children, Young People and Family Services and Education, Participation and Skills)

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the attached briefing paper for information and discussion

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Not applicable

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

For information

Financial Risks

Not applicable

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

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		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							
C	Climate Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 09/02/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing & Cllr Cresswell via email											
Date approved: 09/02/2024											

Q4 2023/24 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

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I. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS

I.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
1	Number of referrals received within the last 12 months	3,616	3,285	2,415	544.5 (2022/23)	739.1 (2022/23)	3,961
	Referrals received within the last 12 months - Rate per 10,000 children	678.5	616.4	467.7			762.4
2	Number of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	861	743	483	22.4% (2022/23)	24.3% (2022/23)	821
	% of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	23.8%	22.6%	20.0%			20.7%

In the 12 months to the end of quarter four, Plymouth progressed 3,961 referrals, this is 1,546 more than the 12 months to March 2023 and 676 more than the 12 months to March 2022. At a rate per 10,000 children (enabling comparisons against other authorities) Plymouth is reported at 762.4 at the end of quarter four. This is higher than Plymouth's published position for 2022/23 (467.7), higher than the statistical neighbour average of 739.1, and higher than the England average of 544.5.

The proportion of re-referrals received (where a referral had been received for the same child in the 12 months prior) has seen a slight increase (up 0.2pp) in the last quarter. The end of quarter four position was reported at 20.7%, up 0.7 percentage points from Plymouth's published figure for 2022/23. Plymouth is currently at a level lower than the 2022/23 published levels for both its statistical neighbours and the England average.

In January 2024, Ofsted undertook an inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS), which included practice within the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The findings of the ILACS inspection found that 'Most referrals from partner agencies are timely and thresholds for different levels of support and intervention are appropriately understood and applied. Referrals about children are progressed promptly and are appropriately risk assessed.'

Since the inspection we have continued to work with the MASH to further improve the way we work with children and families. Further development work is taking place to strengthen the front door which includes discussions with our stakeholders to increase presence of our partners in the front door and improve the response to children and families by ensuring the right service can respond promptly to need. As we do this work, we are likely to see a reduction in the referrals being accepted for a statutory response as other practitioners will be able to respond at an earlier opportunity preventing the need for this.

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
3	Number of children subject to a Child In Need Plan (snapshot)	1,121	965	944	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	1,379
	Children subject to a Child In Need Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	210.4	181.1	177.1	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	265.4

Quarter four has seen an increase in Plymouth's 'Child in Need' caseload (which does not include children subject to Children Protection Plans or Looked after Children) and remains at the level higher than the previous three financial year-end positions.

As a result of the practice improvement work across the department we have seen an increase in the number of children opening on a Child in Need plan. For example, where there is a theme around sexual abuse and domestic violence, we are carrying out earlier assessments to identify the level of risk and intervention needed.

We know that children may need support and through early intervention could avoid coming into statutory services. There is a workstream that has been developed with partners to identify a clear pathway for families who can easily access early help and targeted early help without requiring social work intervention. We also know there are some children open within the children social work service who no longer need a social worker but require ongoing support to ensure the improvements they have made are sustained.

The children social work service has four weekly Child in Need tracker meetings chaired by the service managers to enable reflective discussions and ensure there is no drift and delay around the support and intervention for families. The service continues to embed quality assurance work with specific focus on these four areas of improvement.

1. Assessment
2. Plans
3. Supervision
4. Management Oversight

Training and development continues for all managers. There is a specific management programme which is underway for aspiring team managers, with Heads of Service supporting them to develop the skills and confidence to manage and lead teams. This is alongside the 'Leaders for Excellence' programme.

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
4	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (Snapshot)	333	326	230	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	296
	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	62.5	61.2	44.5	43.2 (2022/23)	55.9 (2022/23)	57.0
5	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Neglect	50.2% (167)	51.5% (168)	45.9% (107)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	50.3% (149)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Physical Abuse	7.8% (26)	7.7% (25)	6.4% (15)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	8.4% (25)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Sexual Abuse	5.1% (17)	3.7% (12)	4.3% (10)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	8.4% (25)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Emotional Abuse	36.9% (123)	37.1% (121)	43.3% (101)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	32.8% (97)
6	% of children subject to multiple child protection plans - Within lifetime of the child (new plans starting in last 12 months)	27.4% (90)	27.5% (103)	25.8% (65)	23.6% (2022/23)	24.7% (2022/23)	30.2% (112)

At the end of quarter four (31 March 2024) there were 296 children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan. This is a rate of 57.0 children per 10,000 children, which is higher than the published 2022/23 rate of 44.5 (230 children). The rate per 10,000 children is currently 13.8 above the England average and 1.1 above our Statistical Neighbour average. As explained at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 28 February, we anticipated that the number of children on Child Protection Plans would increase to a more similar level to statistical neighbours as practice in this area continues to improve.

The proportion of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan within the 12 months up to the end of quarter three (April 2023 to March 2024), who have been on a previous Child Protection Plan in their lifetime was reported at 30.2%.

This is at a higher level than the last three year-end positions as seen in the table above. During the last 12 months, 112 children/young people have started repeated Child Protection Plans (within their lifetime), this is an increase of circa 72% on the 65 reported for the reporting year of 2022/23. The current percentage is higher than the published 2022/23 statistical neighbours average of 24.7% and the England average of 23.6%. With the increases in referrals and to a lesser extent re-referrals over the last 12 months, we have seen the increase in repeated child protection plans. We were expecting this increase whilst we improve practice to ensure that children and families received the right level of support at the right time.

There is a strong focus on requests for repeat Child Protection Plans with greater oversight by Service Managers. This provides more consistency and further opportunity to have reflective

discussions to ensure that the care plan is right for these children, or whether we can work differently with the family.

The department is working with the Plymouth Safeguarding Partnership Board to roll out the 'NSPCC Neglect Graded Care Profile 2 Assessment Tool' to support all staff and volunteers working across the system to identify and improve support for children and young people who may experience neglect. We are working towards ensuring all staff undertaking assessments have been trained by the end of 2024.

As part of our improvement journey, we are equipping our social workers with a better understanding of the identification of sexual abuse and domestic abuse; this is visible in the information shown above with a shift in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan for these reasons.

1.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)

I.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
7	Number of children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children (Snapshot)	485	490	500	71.0 (2022/23)	96.5 (2022/23)	515
	Children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children - Rate per 10,000 children	91.0	91.9	96.9			99.1
8	Number of Looked After Children in an unregistered placement (snapshot)	4	4	6	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	9
9	% of Looked After Children placed outside of the city of Plymouth (i.e., the placement is not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9)	39.0% (25% DfE – city boundary)	38.0% (23% DfE – city boundary)	39.9% (25% DfE – city boundary)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	42.7%
10	Placement Type: Family Placement (fostering or connected carers)	336	325	339	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	368
	Placement Type: Children's Homes & Residential Care	53	56	57	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	57
	Placement Type: Hostels & other Supportive accommodation	31	33	48	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	47
	Placement Type: Lodgings or Independent living (16+)	12	16	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Other Placement	x	x	5	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	8

Placement Type: Placed for Adoption	25	24	18	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	5
Placement Type: Placed with Parents	25	28	32	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	26
Placement Type: Other accommodation - NHS, Family Centres, Parent & Child	6	7	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
Placement Type: Secure Units	x	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x

Please note: where the number of children is below five, the actual figure is suppressed and shows 'x'.

On 31 March 2024, there were 515 children/young people who are children in care. This is a net increase of 15 children/young people on the published figure for 2022/23 and 25 more than the published figure of 490 for 2021/22. The average month-end position for the last 12 months is calculated at 501 children/young people with six month-end positions being at 500 or more.

We are working with our SLIP partners in relation to children and young people's long-term matching for permanence to support our improvement work across the children's teams and the Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Team. This in turn will positively impact stable care arrangements.

We continue to work collaboratively with our health partners to ensure children in care access health assessments and support in a timely manner, in line with the agreed improvement plan which is reported to and monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board.

295 (57.3%) of children in care are placed within the city, the remaining 220 children (42.7%) placed outside of the city. This measure is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall (potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address), but it is outside of Plymouth. Using provisional information, approximately 76.5% of children in care are placed within 20 miles of their home address (394 of 515). 32 children / young people were placed more than 125 miles from their home address.

This has increased slightly compared to the 2022/23 average, however the percentage of children and young people placed outside of Devon and Cornwall has not significantly changed.

The number of children and young people in residential settings remains the same as the 2022/23 average. We have identified a cohort of those children and young people for whom we have assessed that they could live in a family-based placement with careful preparation and matching. Work is progressing with these children, and this is monitored through Children's Resource Panel and our Homes for Cared for Children work.

Sufficiency of suitable homes for cared for children continues to be an issue locally and nationally. Foster for Plymouth's new co-designed financial support offer has been launched through awareness raising activity in Foster Care Fortnight. The Regional Fostering Recruitment Hub (South West Fostering) is now live and the implementation of Mockingbird in Plymouth is progressing.

The Special Guardianship Support Team is now being established with the Team Manager starting in August 2024. The policies and procedures will be developed along with proactive information sharing with our Special Guardians. This will offer support that promotes stable care arrangements to prevent disruption of these family arrangements and enables prospective Special Guardians to feel confident in caring for a child under a Special Guardianship Order, which in turn should result in increased discharges from care.

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)

1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
11	% of Care Experienced young people in Unsuitable Accommodation (Statutory Service (aged 18 to 20))	9.6% (17/178) (15% DfE)	6.1% (11/181) (11% DfE)	4.1% (8/192) (12% DfE)	12.0% (2022/23 DfE)	11.2% (2022/23 DfE)	9.5% (19/201)
12	% of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Service (EET aged 18 to 20))	52.8% (94/178) (39% DfE)	56.4% (102/181) (49% DfE)	50.0% (96/192) (47.0% DfE)	56.0% (2022/23 DfE)	55.3% (2022/23 DfE)	43.3% (87/201)

Plymouth's quarter four figures show that the proportion of Care Experienced young people in unsuitable accommodation (9.5%) was at a lower level than the statistical neighbour and England averages (as published for 2022/23). The cohort of young people in unsuitable accommodation has increased on our locally held figures for 2021/22 and 2022/23 figures. Although comparing favourably with the England and statistical neighbour averages, this cohort is rigorously reviewed and reported via our internal reporting monthly.

A Housing & Preparation for Adulthood meeting established in February 2024 is operating monthly and monitoring the plans for all care experienced young people aged 16 and 17 to improve transition planning. This has evidenced improved planning and fewer young people requiring extensions to 16+ provisions post 18 due to delayed planning.

Those in Education, Employment and Training were reported at a level circa 6.7 to 12.0 percentage points lower than the 2022/23 published figures for our comparators.

We continue to focus on the cohort of young people recorded as NEET and targeted monthly review meetings are starting on 02 July 2024 in line with the improvement plan. This will review each care leaver who is NEET and, where appropriate, the Skills Launchpad develop will engage with them to develop an individualised action plan. This has been slightly delayed due to the SEND work and will initially prioritise those identified as ready to seek employment, education or training (SEET) in order to maximise impact for them ahead of the new academic term.

Work is ongoing through the Corporate Parenting Operational Managers Group to explore and develop opportunities across Plymouth City Council, our partners and the wider community for care experienced young people to access work shadowing, work experience, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities.

Please note: The DfE calculation differs from our local figures. We include all care leavers (Qualifying, Relevant & Former Relevant) and use the latest information available for those aged under 21. However, the DfE only include Former Relevant care leavers and use information held around the young person's 19th, 20th or 21st birthday.

2. EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES

2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England	South West	Q4 2023/24
1	% of all schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	Inspections paused due to COVID	76.0%	77.6%	89.6% (Dec 2023)	87.0% (Dec 2023)	88.8% (87/98)
2	% of pupils attending Plymouth schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	Inspections paused due to COVID	77.1%	81.0%	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	86.5% (33,958 / 39,273)

There are 98 state-funded schools in Plymouth and at the end of quarter four 88.8% of schools are judged as Good or Outstanding, an improvement of 12.8% on 2021/22 and bringing Plymouth more in line with national averages. When we break this figure down into the number of primary, secondary, and special schools judged as Good or better, we can see that there are:

- 2 out of 2 Nurseries (100% compared to 98.2% nationally)
- 64 out of 69 Primary Schools (92.8% compared to 91.2% nationally),
- 14 out of 19 Secondary Schools (73.7% compared to 83.2% nationally), and
- 6 out of 7 Special Schools (85.7% compared to 90.1% nationally).

Overall, 86.5% of pupils are attending a school judged as good or outstanding in our city.

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING

			Previous Year & Benchmarking				Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	England (Academic Year 2022/23)	South West (Academic Year 2022/23)	Autumn Term 2023/24
3	% of overall absence in all schools	4.9%	8.8%	8.2%	7.4 %	7.6%	7.7% (341,717 sessions missed)
4	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) in all schools	12.9%	28.1%	24.1%	21.2%	21.3%	23.2% (7,760 of which 860 severely absent)
5	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs)	38.8%	45.0%	40.5%	36.0%	37.8%	37.5% (611)

The information provided above is provided from the Department for Education “Pupil absence in schools in England” collection. This is a statutory return completed on a termly basis. The best available report for the three indicators above is the 2022/23 academic year data. Overall absence and persistent absence data for indicators three and four, were published for the Autumn term 2023/24 on 16 May 2024. However published data is yet to be broken down by pupil characteristic, this is expected in July 2024.

Local unvalidated data for Autumn 2023/24 (01/09/2023 to 31/12/2023) for those with an EHCP who are persistently absent currently sits at 37.5%.

Local unvalidated data from the Plymouth Inclusion Scorecard showed that:

- Overall absence rate for the 2023/24 Autumn and Spring term (01/09/2023 to 31/03/2024) was 8.5%.
- The percentage of those persistently absent was 21.8%
- The percentage of those with an EHCP who were consistently absent was 38.5%.

It is expected that the DfE will publish the validated data for Plymouth and the rest of the country in October 2024.

The Plymouth Inclusion Scorecard indicates that the overall absence rate for the whole 2023/24 academic year which falls within quarter two, is likely to sit at 9.1%; that the percentage of those persistently absent will likely sit at 23.9% and that the percentage of those with an EHCP who are persistently absent is likely to sit at 40.6%.

Throughout this academic year our place-based approach has been focused on inclusion, particularly the attendance, mobility and outcomes for children who experience disadvantage. This has been through a working group led by SEND 4 Change who were commissioned to produce a set of recommendations for city education leaders.

The new national attendance expectations for local authorities, multi academy trusts and schools is reshaping the work done by each of these partners regarding attendance. Plymouth City Council are working with schools and trusts to ensure that this is implemented successfully. The first attendance network was held in July 2024 and have been termly thereafter, with an attendance conference in November. The new duties focus the work of schools towards direct engagement with their families and focuses the work of the local authority towards strategic oversight, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and children with SEND.

Attendance is a key focus for all schools. Multi agency work to support those pupils who are severely absent has been a focus of targeted support meetings which have been held jointly between education and social care early help teams.

2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q4 2023/24
6	% of 16- and 17-year-olds in Education, Employment and Training	92.1%	91.1%	90.4%	92.5% (Q4 2022/23)	Not benchmarked	93.6%
7	% of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training	83.1%	83.2%	81.4%	88.7% (Q4 2022/23)	Not benchmarked	86.8%

At the end of quarter four 2023/24, 93.6% of 16- and 17-year-olds were participating in Education, Employment, and/or Training (EET) and 86.8% of young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities are in education, training and/or employment.

It is important to note that by the end of May 2024, the target of young people with SEND in education, employment and training of 88% has been met, currently sitting at 88.1%. The target will be revised to 90% for the 2024/25 year.

By the end of quarter four, 145 young people had moved from being not in education, employment, and training (NEET) to seeking (SEET), many of these young people need extensive support to transition into employment, education or training. This is an area of focus for the Participation and Skills areas of EPS in Plymouth City Council.

Several initiatives are under way to extend the options available to 16–25-year-olds with EHCPs which includes growing the number of Supported Internships, Supported Apprenticeships, paid and unpaid volunteering placements. Actions and impacts include:

- Tracking young people with an EHCP on apprenticeship and developing pathways (from 9 in 2022/2023 to 25 this academic year)
- Secured £1.3m SEND innovation grant year 3 to support transition that includes an innovative 'Your Future Programme' which provides 4-to-5-week employability programmes and support for young people. Year 2 of the SEND Innovation grant supported 277 young people against a target of 150 people. There has been a 100% success rate regarding positive next steps for the young people who have already undertaken the 'Your Future' programme. Achievements for these young people have included increased confidence, independent travelling, receiving mentoring to achieve future goals, securing interviews, and securing employment.
- A high number of young people moving into employment or apprenticeships from Supported Internships

2.4. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES

				Previous Year	Current Period & Benchmarking		
Ref	Indicator Name	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual	England 2022/23	Statistical Neighbours 2022/23	Plymouth 2022/23
8	Key Stage 4 - % of pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths	47.1%	51.9%	46.0%	45.5% (22/23 revised)	43.2% (22/23 revised)	41.7% (1,214/2,912)
9	Key Stage 4 - Average Attainment 8 score	48.5 points	50.5 points	47.6 points	46.4 points (22/23 revised)	45.0 points (22/23 revised)	44.9 Points (Average score for 2,912 pupils)

In 2022/23, 41.7% of pupils achieved the 'basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This sits below National (45.5%) and statistical neighbour (43.2%) averages. Performance in Plymouth is 4.3 percentage points lower than the previous academic year, which is just below the decrease seen nationally from 50.0% to 45.5% (4.5pp reduction).

The average Attainment 8 score is 44.9 points this is below the national (46.4 points) and statistical neighbour (45.0 points) averages.

18.5% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved 'the basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This is below the national average for FSM pupils at 25.0%.

8.2% of pupils with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) and 18.7% of pupils receiving SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support achieved 'the Basics'. This is above the national average of 6.9% for EHCP pupils and below the national average of 20.7% of pupils receiving SEN Support nationally.

3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES
Referrals & Re-Referrals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where concerns about a child have been raised to Children, Young People and Family Services, once the initial contact has been screened by our multi-agency hub, if appropriate, referrals will be accepted. The rate of referrals per 10,000 children is based on the number of referrals received in the 12-month period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. A re-referral is where we receive a new referral for a child within 12 months of a previous referral. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., 01 December to 30 November).
Children In Need – CIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purposes of this report, the number of children within the CIN cohort are those that have been assessed as being in need (but not CP or LAC) and the number of children who are in the process of being assessed to understand their level of need. The rate of CIN per 10,000 children is based on the number of CIN at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities.
Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - CP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Child Protection Plan should assess the likelihood of the child suffering harm and look at ways that the child can be protected. It should decide upon short and long term aims to reduce the likelihood of harm to the child and to protect the child's welfare, clarify people's responsibilities and actions to be taken; and outline ways of monitoring and evaluating progress. The rate of CP per 10,000 children is based on the number of CP at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. There are four categories for a Child Protection Plan; Neglect, Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Emotional Abuse. The table shows the number and proportion under each category. The % of children subject to multiple child protection plans is the proportion of new Child Protection Plan starting within the period, that are for a child who has had a previous Child Protection Plan at any time in the child's lifetime. The indicator is based on a rolling 12-month period (e.g., the proportion of new Child Protection Plans that started in the period 01 December to 30 November).
Looked After Children (also referred to as Children in Care) - LAC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The table shows the number of Looked After Children at the end of the reporting period. The rate of LAC per 10,000 children is based on the number of LAC at the end of the period divided by the number of children aged 0 to 17 in the city (ONS estimate this at 53,291 for Mid-2021) multiplied by 10,000. This gives a rate that can be benchmarked against other authorities. The proportion of placements outside of the city is simply based on the postcode of the child's placement address. Those not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9 are considered outside of the city. For example, PL12 refers to Saltash in Cornwall, which could potentially be less than a mile from a child's home address, but it is outside of Plymouth. The figures provided for the placement types follow the Department for Education and Ofsted definitions, grouping multiple types into nine groups (for example, Family Placements contains six different placement types).
Care Experienced (also referred to as Care Leavers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is deemed as 'Unsuitable' accommodation has been defined by the Department for Education. The following are examples of unsuitable accommodation: Bed and Breakfast / Emergency Accommodation, Prison, Temporary/No fixed abode/Street Homeless, Unknown/Not in Touch. The proportion of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training is based on our statutory service and therefore covers those young people ages 18 to 20. Whilst we work with Care Experienced young people aged 21 to 24, support is optional for the young person. Please note: The figures are likely to be different to the published Department for Education figures as they look at the age of the young person during the year at the period around their birthday and not at a specific snapshot.

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**Ofsted Outcomes**

Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools and other social care services for children. There are four possible Ofsted ratings that a school can receive; Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. These Ofsted grades are based on inspectors' judgements across four Ofsted categories – quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development of pupils, leadership and management as set out under the [Ofsted framework 2019](#).

Absence Monitoring

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance as set out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

Education, Employment or Training

The law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday, although in practice the vast majority of young people continue until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. The responsibility and accountability for young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) lies with the local authority and is set out in [Participation Statutory Guidance](#). The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the performance of local authorities in delivering their duties, and specifically in their tracking and supporting of 16 and 17 year olds.

Key Stage Four Outcomes

Key Stage 4 (KS4) is the legal term for the two years of school education which incorporate GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education). During this time, pupils must follow relevant programmes of study from the National Curriculum. At the end of this stage, pupils are entered for a range of external examinations. Following a phased introduction since 2017, GCSEs taken in 2020 and 2021 are all reformed GCSEs graded on a 9-1 scale. Two particular measures are commonly reported on at key stage four:

- percentage pupils achieving 5-9s at English and Maths GCSE in the city, and
- average Attainment 8 scores achieved by schools across the city.

Attainment 8 is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government approved school subjects. While these numbers are not made publicly available on a pupil-by-pupil basis, scores taken from across a school year group are averaged to produce a school's overall score. The eight subjects are divided into three categories, called "buckets":

- Bucket 1 - English and maths, which are worth double marks, but English will only count for double marks if both English literature and English (i.e., English language) are taken. The higher grade of the two is used;
- Bucket 2 – The top three scores from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects taken, i.e. sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages;
- Bucket 3 – The top three scores from remaining EBacc subjects or other government approved qualifications (e.g., other GCSEs or Level 2 Certificates in some technical subjects).

The grades are converted into points, put through a formula and finally out comes the school's Attainment 8 score.

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	18 July 2024
Title of Report:	Achieving Excellence – A Strategy for Children’s Services 2024 - 27
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Vivien Lines
Contact Email:	Vivien.Lines@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

Following extensive consultation with staff, children and young people, Children’s Services has developed a new three-year strategic plan, Achieving Excellence, to drive improvement and transformations in the service over the 2024-27 timeframe.

This report sets out the key drivers to the plan and the ten strategic priorities that are proposed for Children’s Services 2024-27 together with high level milestones for delivery over this timeframe and the intended outcomes.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. It is recommended that the Children’s Services Strategic Plan, Achieving Excellence, is endorsed by the Panel and the proposed milestones for the delivery of the ten Strategic Priorities are also endorsed and implemented in Children’s Services as set out in the attached three-year milestones.

Reasons

The strategic plan and the proposed ten strategic priorities put forward (as detailed in the attached appendix) are informed by key service drivers including;

- The priorities set out in the Plymouth Plan and A Bright Future, the partnership plan for children and young people.
- Responding to the findings of Ofsted Inspections of our Local Area SEND provision and children’s social care services (ILACS).
- Responding to the national reform agenda, including for children’s social care (Stable Homes Built on Love) and the SEND reform agenda.

- Our data and quality assurance tells us that outcomes for children and young people in Plymouth are not yet consistently good in key areas, including school attendance and educational achievement and outcomes for priority vulnerable groups.
- Children, young people and families have told us that they do not always experience strengths and relationship-based approaches.
- The need to stabilise and manage our budget position in response to increasing costs and demand and ensure that there is sufficient provision in key areas.
- The need to develop a stable, skilled and well trained and supported workforce.
- To maximise opportunities to embrace new technology and modernise our working practices.

The plan builds on the direction of travel created by the Children's Services Target Operating Model (TOM) during 2023, to transform our approach and improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The plan sets out how we will develop earlier and more effective help for children and families to prevent problems and needs from escalating where possible, through a locality model of delivery and working closely with partners, and how this will improve outcomes for children and young people from the early years through to preparation for adulthood.

Adopting a three-year plan creates a framework for service delivery where we can drive change and improvement in priority areas over the longer term making lasting, sustained and impactful change. All service areas within Children's Service have revised and developed service plans that align to the ten priorities. These provide clarity and focus on delivering the priorities within the teams. The ten priorities are based on a 'One Children's Service' approach where we are building collaborative approaches across Children, Young People and Families service and the Education, Participation and Skills Service, particularly in key areas such as improved early intervention and inclusion for children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes, improving attendance and outcomes for whole families and preparing young people for success in adulthood with improved education, training and employment outcomes.

The plan sets out how we will transform and improve key services to improve outcomes for children and families, this includes creating the conditions within the organisation to enable us to achieve excellence. It includes how we will build on the work we have started to develop a stable, highly skilled, well supported and high performing workforce. A new approach to leadership and management development, which the whole Council will benefit from, and a refocused workforce development programme that will support us to recruit, support, develop and retain the right people with the right skills and develop a high performing workforce. This includes through the 'High Expectation, High Support, High Challenge' culture we are developing. Performance management and quality assurance are also identified as key pillars to achieve excellence, helping us to know that we are on track and operating a learning framework where we know ourselves well and continuously improve.

Many of our strategic priorities cannot be delivered on our own. We are working with Partners through our Strategic Systems Leadership Board and Corporate Parenting arrangements to develop shared strategic priorities and a partnership delivery plan which will inform the refresh of our partnership strategy A Bright Future. This includes key areas of partnership engagement in and governance of the development of a comprehensive early help offer across Plymouth, work with schools and Trust Leads to develop more inclusive approaches and reduce absence from school and work with health partners to improve access to and outcomes for health services, particularly for priority groups.

The plan describes our vision for children's services by 2027, where children and families receive the help they need when they need it and we prevent problems from escalating wherever possible. When families do need support from our statutory services we step in seamlessly with timely and high quality assessment and intervention, meeting identified needs using evidence based and value for money approaches which are delivered within Plymouth wherever possible.

Alternative options considered and rejected

I. Alternative options considered and rejected

None

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Keeping children safe and Education and employment outcomes for all.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The delivery of the three-year strategic plan will include work to reduce financial pressures in key areas, including reducing demand on higher cost statutory services, improving placement sufficiency and costs of children in care, SEND sufficiency, home to school transport and stabilising the social care workforce.

Financial Risks

None identified.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None identified

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

Equalities impact has been considered in the development of the plan and equality of opportunity and equality of opportunity for vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics will be delivered as part of the implementation of the three-year strategy. Programme Governance will include the management and mitigation of any risks that arise and a risk and issues log will be in place throughout the implementation.

Appendices**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Achieving Excellence – A three year strategy							

Background papers:**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>



**CHILDREN'S
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High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Achieving Excellence

A Three-Year Strategic Plan to develop, sustain and embed good and outstanding practice for all children, young people and families in Plymouth.

2024-27



Introduction



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Plymouth's Corporate Plan sets out a commitment to keeping children, young people and families safe, alongside improving education, skills and health outcomes and a commitment to prevention and early intervention, using our resources wisely, providing high quality services and engaging communities and empowering staff. Our Children's Service has developed this new three-year plan to take forward these commitment, being **ambitious for all children and young people in Plymouth**, focusing on ensuring services work seamlessly with families to identify needs early, responding quickly and effectively to prevent them from escalating, providing the right help, support and protection at the right time to improve wider outcomes.

We have agreed a vision with our partners, set out in **'A Bright Future 2021-26'**, that all children and young people in Plymouth will live full and happy lives, receive good quality health services, attend high quality education, have fun and stay safe. All children and young people in Plymouth will make a good start in life, will be well supported when they need extra help and build the skills, knowledge and resilience they need to transition into adulthood successfully.

Most children and young people in Plymouth have a positive experience of services and experience good outcomes. However, we know that some children and young people are not yet well enough supported and included to achieve their full potential. We want all children, young people and their families to benefit from provision in their local communities which meets their needs and helps them to make good progress. This is particularly the case for children and young people who may be more vulnerable to poor outcomes because of their family circumstances or their additional needs.

We have made solid improvements in key areas, stabilising services and providing the firm foundations needed for the future. This three-year plan takes us into the next phase where over the next three years we are **Achieving Excellence**, and will develop, sustain and embed good practice so that all children and young people achieve their potential. We have engaged with staff, children, young people and families and what they told us about what is important to them and what we need to do differently has informed this plan. Young people told us they want to live in a City that is **"Equal, Kind and Safe"**, where professionals in their local communities build relationships with them and their needs are met. Staff told us they want a stable workforce and support to develop the skills and partnerships they need to build relationships with families and communities, help families early and improve outcomes for all children, young people and families.

In this plan we set out our **ten priorities for service improvement and transformation** developed with children, young people and our staff and the milestones that we will achieve over the next three years. These ten priority commitments will ensure we develop, sustain and embed consistently good and outstanding practice approaches, achieving our vision and transforming children and young people's lives.

This includes how we will work with partners so that together we deliver **'A Bright Future'** for all children, young people and families in Plymouth.

Our planning framework

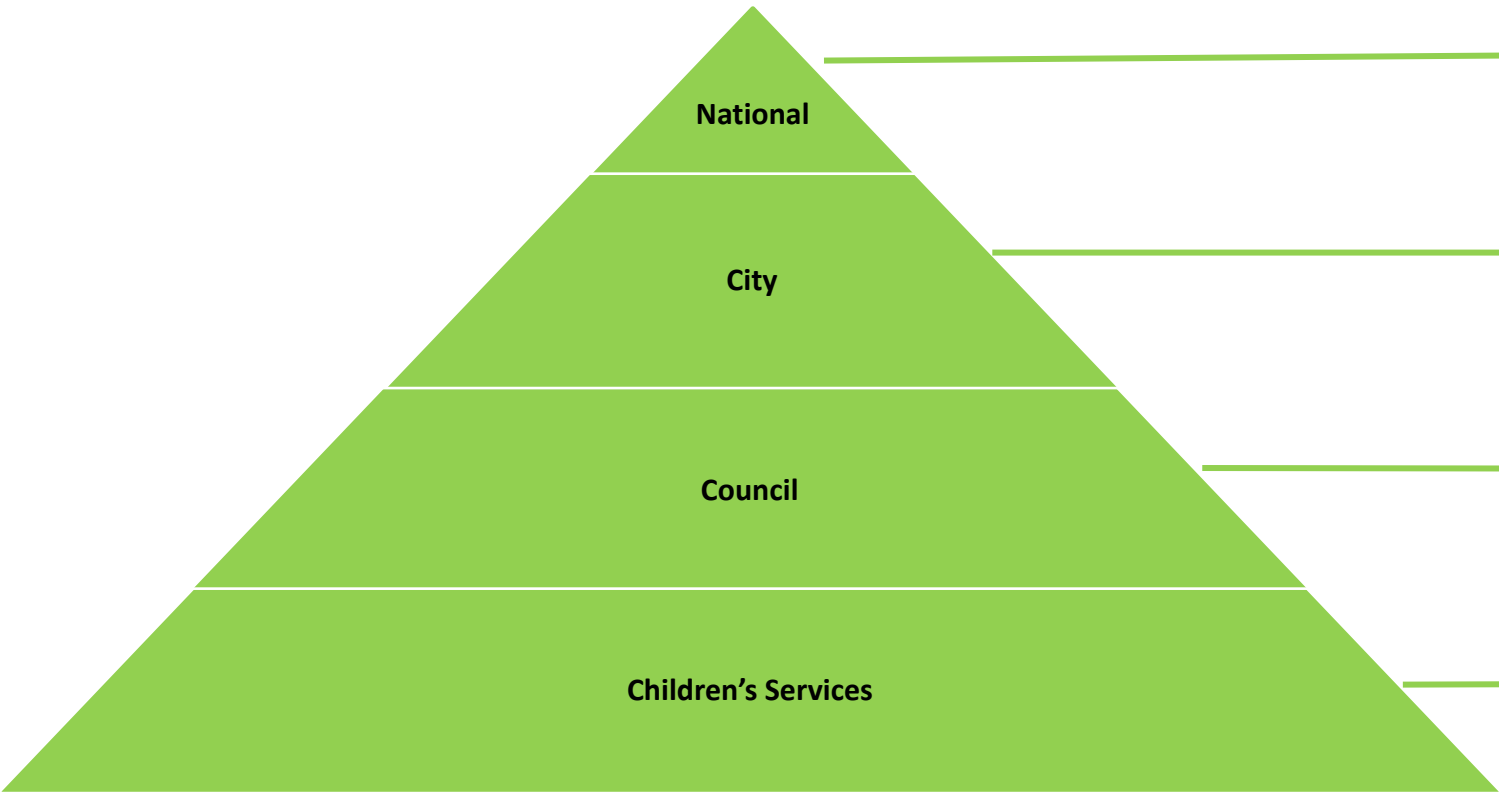


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Children's Services Transformation
Strategies and Plans



- Children's Social Care Reform Strategy
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan
- A Bright Future
 - Skills for Plymouth Plan
 - Plymouth Plan
 - Local Care Partnership Priorities
- Corporate Plan
 - Medium Term Financial Plan
 - PCC Design Principles (ICT, Digital, People, & Accommodation)
 - PCC Target Operating Model
- **Children's Services Strategic Plan 2024-2027**
 - Target Operating Model
 - Children's Workforce Strategy
 - SEND and Placement Sufficiency Strategy
 - SEND Strategic Improvement Plan
 - SEND OFSTED Action Plan
 - Children's Social Care Improvement Plan
 - Not in Education Employment and Training Strategy
 - Inclusion Strategy
 - Attendance Strategy
 - Service Area Business Plans

FLT
owned
Initiatives

Transitions:
Preparation for
Adulthood

Young Carers

Early Help (inc.
Family Hubs and
Community
Empowerment)

Homelessness
Prevention

Health
Contributions

Dependent
Programmes

Future Council
Programme

Accommodation
Programme

Adult Social Care
Transformation
Programme

Distance travelled – key highlights



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We are making good progress; The Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in January 2024 confirmed that children's social care services 'require improvement' to be good.

- **Some strong practice identified;** Participation with young people, Academy programme for newly qualified social workers and support to young people missing or at risk of homelessness.
- **Key improvements noted;**
 - No children were identified as being at risk of harm during the inspection.
 - Priority actions identified in the focused visit of the Front Door (Dec 22) have been fully addressed.
 - Strong improvements across our practice obsessions of case summaries, supervision, visits and plans.
 - Strong and effective engagement of Members, senior leaders & staff across the Council in improvement.
 - We now know our strengths and areas for improvement with improved quality assurance.
- **More to do;** to strengthen practice in key areas, improve consistency in assessment and planning and partnership approaches to improve outcomes for children, including at the early help stage.

Education, Participation and Skills, some key achievements;

- Stronger focus on attendance and attainment for vulnerable children, Graduated Approach to support inclusion, improving support to children and young people at key points of transition.
- Increasing the number of special school places for children within the city
- Downham House our short breaks residential provision has received a 'Good' Ofsted rating
- Our Home to School Transport Team have expanded the independent travel training programme to support more young people who qualify for support getting to school.
- More supported internships (from 9 to 60), and an increase in Approved Apprenticeships.
- **The Local Area Plan;** good progress following our SEND inspection in 2023.



ILACS findings - help and protection

Practice strengths identified include;

- Improved responses by the MASH, including the evaluation of information, consent, thresholds, access to advice.
- When children and families do access early help services, their needs are assessed and understood well, plans are strong and subsequent interventions support positive changes.
- Child protection investigations are timely and appropriate.
- Increased tracking and manager oversight for children in pre-proceedings has prevented drift and delay.
- Most children at risk of coming into care receive intensive and creative support to remain with their families.
- Many social workers know their children well and build positive relationships with them.

Areas for improvement include;

- The quality of management oversight and decision making.
- Not all children and their families benefit from seamless, timely and appropriate early help and support.
- When concerns are raised about children out of office hours, the response is not always effective.
- Not all allegations made against professionals are managed well or well recorded.
- The quality of assessment is inconsistent with around half seen taking too long to complete and lacking a thorough analysis of children's experiences. Some children wait too long for a multi-agency plan to address their needs.
- Disabled children receive an inconsistent service. Too many children are not attending school as much as they should. This is an additional risk for vulnerable children.

ILACS - Children in care

Practice strengths identified include;

- For most children, decision-making for them to come into care is appropriate and in their best interests.
- Children in care are supported well to maintain safe and meaningful contact with family and friends. When it is safe and appropriate for children to return to their parents or extended family, this is achieved well.
- Most children in care receive visits from their social workers in line with their needs, and most children benefit from meaningful relationships with their social workers.
- Assessments are increasingly written to children and capture children's histories, their wishes and feelings.
- The fostering service has started to make well-considered and ambitious improvements. Their aspirations are underpinned by significant support and investment.

Areas for improvement include;

- Too many children enter care in an unplanned way or in response to a crisis.
- Some children still experience too many changes of social worker.
- Permanence for children is not always considered as early as it could be.
- IROs oversight is not routinely impacting on the content or pace of children's plans.
- Children who are looked after in Plymouth are not all getting their health and dental needs assessed in a timely way.
- UASC do not currently benefit quickly enough from access to the services and support they require.
- There are still too many older children in care who are not in full-time education. The impact of the Virtual School for these children is not yet strong.

ILACS - Care Leavers

Practice strengths identified include;

- Care-experienced young people mostly benefit from Personal Advisers (PAs) who know them well and PAs are relentless in helping them emotionally and practically at times of crisis.
- Children benefit from PAs being allocated to them at 16. This means PAs can work alongside children's social workers and better help children prepare for and move to adulthood.
- Care-experienced young people benefit from a strong and well-thought-out offer of support and have a good awareness of their entitlements.
- Despite inconsistencies in the quality of Pathway Planning, some care-experienced young people's outcomes far exceed their expectations, a testament to the efforts of these young people and the tenacity of PAs.

Areas for improvement include;

- Once children reach 18, arrangements for specialist health support are not as strong. Not all have access to adult social care services when they need it and accessing mental health services can be challenging.
- Pathway planning for and with care-experienced young people is underdeveloped. Plans are not always clear enough and are not always updated within the required timescales or when young people's situations change.
- Too many care leavers are not in education, employment or training and plans in place are not yet impacting.
- Not all care-experienced young people are living in accommodation that matches their needs.
- Support for young people who are care experienced and are in or have been in custody is inconsistent and as a result, plans about release are not always coordinated well.

ILACS - Impact of Leaders

Strengths identified include;

- The leadership team of the council recognises and understands what needs to happen to ensure that services for children improve.
- Most agencies are working more collaboratively and effectively at a strategic level and can challenge each other.
- Ensuring that there is a sufficient range and number of foster placement and other accommodation options for children remains a significant challenge. Realistic plans are in place, but significant delivery is to follow.
- The local authority has an outward-looking culture and leaders continue to seek advice and support from a range of sources to help drive service improvement.
- The strengthening of quality assurance is helping leaders to better understand the quality of practice and the impact for children.
- Leaders have taken effective action to stabilise and increase the workforce. Staff are supported well by the social work academy,

Areas for improvement include;

- While there is a plan to deliver early help through family hubs, at present early help services are neither a cohesive offer nor well integrated with statutory services.
- The wider management team has yet to ensure that they consistently demonstrate the recording of the rationale for decisions about children in their electronic case records.
- Not all learning activity, including audit activity and supervision for staff, is currently being used as well as it could be to drive improvements in practice, either with individual children or at a strategic level.
- The effectiveness of some aspects of joint working across the council and with partner agencies, in particular, housing, health, schools and education providers, and adult social care services.
- More needs to be done, for example with housing organisations, to help improve care experienced young people's access to housing options that more consistently meet their needs.

ILACS areas for improvement



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The inspection identified that more improvement is needed to ensure children and young people benefit from consistently good support. A number of areas for improvement were identified and are included within this plan;

1. The effectiveness of the response to worries and concerns for children out of office hours.
2. The Local Authority Designated Officer's (LADO) quality of practice and advice, oversight and recording of allegations.
3. The effectiveness of some aspects of joint working across the council and with partner agencies, in particular, housing, health, schools and education providers, and adult social care services.
4. The quality and availability of accommodation for children and young people.
5. The timeliness of health assessments for children in care.
6. How well children and young people are supported to access appropriate education, training and employment.
7. How effectively the local authority works with schools and education providers to bring down the current high rate of children being excluded.
8. The arrangements to plan for and support children with additional needs to smoothly transition to adult services.

A new three-year plan



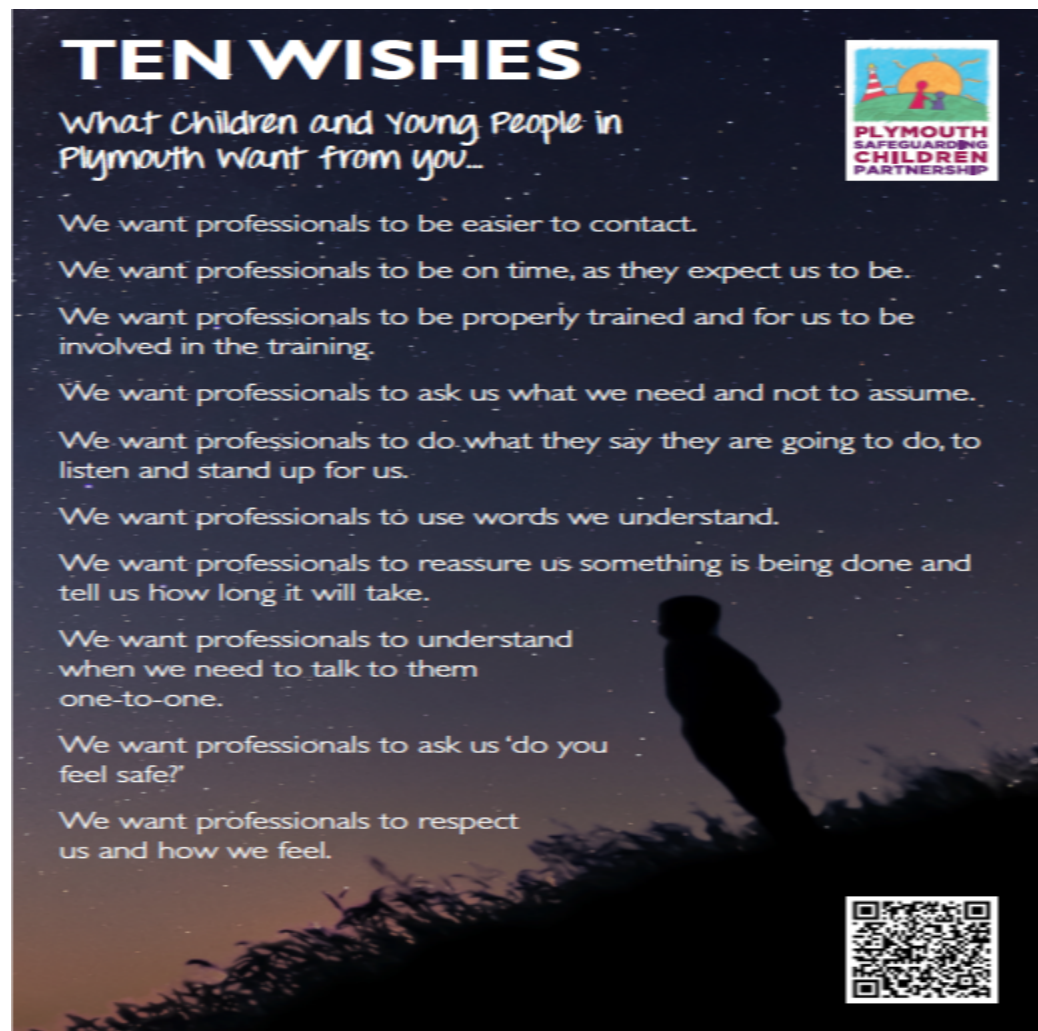
High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



What's important to us;

- Ownership and accountability across the partnership based on 'High expectations, High Support and High Challenge'.
- Delivering evidence of improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Commitment to trauma informed, strengths based and restorative behaviours and practice approaches.
- We will codesign transformation with staff and regularly report on progress.
- We will codesign transformation with children, young people and families and regularly report back on progress.
- Families get the help they need when they need it, evidence-based approaches prevent needs from becoming more complex.
- Commitment to family led models of working helping families to find their own solutions wherever possible.
- Seamless pathways operating between early help, targeted support and statutory provision for families.
- Where statutory interventions are needed, they will be timely and high quality.
- Approaches support the development of confident and effective partnerships to deliver improved outcomes.
- A stable, highly skilled and well supported workforce is enabled to carry out their roles effectively
- Staff have the tools and systems that support them to do their jobs.
- The development of more integrated approaches within Children's Services and with partners.
- Commitment to a One Children's Service approach and Council wide benefits from our approach to transformation.

Headlines from engagement with children and young people



[Ten-Wishes-The-why-and-the-how-booklet](#)
[Ten Wishes Film](#)

The three-year plan needs to set out how we can all be 'Equal, Kind and Safe'.

- There can be lots of record keeping during visits which takes away from us building a relationship with you.
- Regular changes of worker make it difficult to build relationships. We don't want to tell our story more than once.
- We need more support to understand the role of their worker, what their meetings are for and they need to be more involved in their own plans.
- Access to good mental health support is important.
- All professionals need to understand the impact of trauma.
- There needs to be good support and understanding in Plymouth for children and young people with SEND.
- Accommodation for care leavers is not good enough.
- More support is needed to help us stay in education and find employment.
- We need to make sure foster carers are well supported and allowances and savings are operating well.
- There is a need for more safe spaces for young people to meet and positive activities for all age groups within local communities.
- We should be allowed to go to the toilet in school when we need to.

Ten priority commitments

Priority 1- Early help



A strong and effective early help offer which reaches children, young people and families who need it when they need it and improves outcomes and destinations for all children and young people and families.

We know that more families in Plymouth would benefit from earlier help to address challenges when they first emerge. Ofsted found that at present, early help services are neither a cohesive offer nor well integrated with statutory services. We will build on our locality family hub approach to ensure all families have access to the early help support they need when they need it, from birth to adulthood. This means working closely with partners to clarify and deliver our early help offer to families and children across all ages, and developing resources to ensure families can find the help they need and access it easily. We will improve information sharing between agencies and strengthen our pathways to early help so that children, young people and families are supported by the right service at the right time improving outcomes and reducing the need for statutory interventions.

As a key part of supporting improved early identification and inclusive approaches, we will finalise and implement our Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Approach to ensure a common set of expectations about the provision and practice that is available and expected in all settings, schools and providers for children and young people with SEND. We will develop approaches to support children to develop good speech, language and communication skills at an early age as we recognise this to be crucial to young children's development and an essential key to learning, for communicating and building relationships with others as well as making sense of the world around them.

We will continue the development of a clear offer to all schools to reduce absence and improve attainment, particularly for children with SEND. We will work closely with schools, settings and providers to understand the root causes of absence, creating a sense of belonging for children and young people and to support early intervention and inclusive approaches. This includes ensuring we have in place a range of appropriate, interesting and exciting further education and careers opportunities in place to meet a wide range of needs and aspirations.

Key elements;

- Continue implementation of locality family hubs.
- Finalise and implement Partnership Early Help Strategy and agree and operate effective partnership governance.
- Early identification and intervention offer to support inclusive approaches and support early language development.
- Skills and adult learning offer to support opportunities for young people and family empowerment.

Priority I Early help Key milestones



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Key elements: Continued implementation of family hubs. Finalise and implement Partnership EH Strategy, agree effective partnership governance. Fully develop early identification and intervention offer to support inclusive approaches and early language development. Skills and adult learning offer support family empowerment.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement family hubs as agreed, review Children's Centre offer. Develop and implement partnership Early Help Strategy and governance. Agree partnership measures to implement agreed strategy (agreed approach to EH assessment, lead professional arrangements, information sharing, recording, workforce strategy). Develop a citywide data base that supports the identification of need. Implement Outcomes Star. Implement PSCP strategies; Neglect, CSA, Adolescents, DA. Implement guidance on Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Approach across all schools and settings. Implement SEND early help funding offer to schools. Implement an integrated consultation model for SEND. Codesign local offer website with the parent carer forum. Complete trials of evidence-based universal early language development programme. Develop approaches to identify and support vulnerable pupils to stay in full time education. Effective systems in place to identify barriers and support young people at risk of becoming NEET. Undertake gap analysis of family learning programmes and develop curriculum where needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend family hub offer across localities and age groups to be a 0-18 offer. Increase number of Early Help assessments completed and reduced rates of statutory assessment. More families receive early help support and evidence of improved outcomes. Guidance and best practice embedded and well understood by schools and settings. Local offer website providing easy and accessible information implemented. Evidence-based universal early language development programme in place across the city Evidence-based packages of support are in place for at risk of NEET young people. Fully implement approaches to identify and support vulnerable pupils to stay in full time education. Reduced rates of exclusions and improved attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive partnership locality based early help offer in place across 0-18. Confident EH workforce undertaking assessments which lead to families receiving the right help. More families supported at an early help stage. Schools are significantly inclusive with a culture of belonging. Schools share best practice around SEND. Requests for assessment and rates of EHCPs in line with or lower than national averages. Language strand of GLD at least in line with national average. Attendance and exclusions in line with national averages for all children. More young people supported at an early stage to progress into ambitious post 16 and employment pathways. Below average unemployment rates in under 25s

Outcomes include

- Children, young people and families will** benefit from a comprehensive offer of early help and interventions that are timely and have a positive impact.
- Children and young people will** be supported to reach their potential through effective early identification of additional needs and support from evidence-based inclusive approaches.
- Children and young people will** experience improved attendance and attainment.
- Children and young people will** experience schools and settings that welcome every child and support them to thrive.

Priority 2 – Targeted help



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Targeted help for priority vulnerable groups that meets needs when they first emerge and prevents them from becoming more complex.

Some children and young people in Plymouth are not yet experiencing good outcomes because their additional vulnerabilities are not yet being identified and met well at an early stage. We will improve how we use data to identify children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes and are in need of additional help seeking to prevent problems from emerging, or to prevent needs from becoming more complex.

We will continue to operate an effective 'Front Door' ensuring timely information sharing and decision making, appropriate thresholds and management of consent. We will develop clear pathways between early help, targeted help and statutory services to avoid 'wrong doors', ensuring families get the right help quickly and reducing the experience of repeat referrals.

Working with partners, we will deliver evidence-based interventions to priority vulnerable children and young people to improve outcomes for them by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors. This includes where children are vulnerable as a result of their SEND, or those living with domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health and parental substance misuse or those adolescents at risk of being exposed to contextual harm.

We will utilise family led decision making models, putting families at the heart of planning, building on the strengths in their wider and community networks to develop resilience through supporting family led plans.

Key elements;

- Practices which build family and community networks and support more children to remain safely in their families.
- Reshaping the targeted help offer to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and reduce the number of families receiving statutory assessments.
- Develop and implement clear pathways between early help, targeted help and statutory social work for families and partners.
- Targeted approaches to improve educational attendance and attainment for vulnerable groups.

Priority 2 Key Milestones

Key elements: Practices which build family and community networks and support more children to remain safely in their families. Reshaping the Targeted help offer to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and reduce the number of families receiving statutory assessments. Develop and implement clear pathways between early help, Targeted Help and statutory social work and confirm pathways to support for families and partners. Targeted approaches to improved educational attendance and attainment for vulnerable groups.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued delivery of a timely response in the MASH and appropriate application of consent and thresholds. Review criteria for 'MASH' response to support improved decision making. Develop MASH as a single point of entry to both targeted and specialist services. Extend targeted help offer; more vulnerable families receive a co-ordinated and evidence-based intervention when they need more help, reducing the need for statutory interventions. Development of clear and agreed pathways across early help, targeted help and statutory services. Refocused Edge of Care offer to further prevent unplanned admissions. All families are offered a family led support plan when they need help. Continue to focus FGCs on vulnerable families. Virtual School makes visible the needs of the cohort of children who have ever had a social worker and those not in full time education are prioritised by all partners. Reduction of families experiencing repeat referrals. Improved outcomes for priority groups of children and young people. Deliver attendance strategic priorities via attendance plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the gateway to targeted support so that families can get targeted help more easily. FGCs lead to the right children needing child protection plans and increase the use of connected carers when care is needed. Reduction in number of children and families requiring statutory interventions. Reduction in unplanned entrants to care. Extended Virtual School CPD offer is in place across services. Further reduction in families experiencing re-referrals. Children at risk of poor attendance are identified at the earliest point and targeted support put in place. Reduction in % of children with persistent or severe absence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families describe receiving help when problems first emerge that prevents problems from escalating. Evidence of improved early outcomes. Reduction in need for statutory interventions. Reduction in numbers of children needing care and when they do an increase in children placed with connected carers. Improved full time education and reduction in in-year transitions of children who have ever had a social worker Further reduction in % of children with persistent or severe absence.

Outcomes include

- Children and young people and families will** receive timely and effective targeted support when they are vulnerable, to have their needs understood and met at the earliest opportunity.
- Children and young people will** benefit from evidenced based targeted interventions that prevent needs from escalating.
- Children, young people and families** will benefit from family led models of support which build on the strengths and capacity in their extended family and community networks.
- Children and young people will** be supported to remain within their families and when they do need care, an increase in children placed with connected carers.
- Children and young people will** benefit from targeted support to achieve good rates of school attendance and a low rate of exclusions.

Priority 3 –Timely and effective social work practice

Timely and effective social work practice which keeps children and young people safe, both in their families and in our care when this is needed and improves wider outcomes.

This plan will ensure that wherever possible children and families receive early and targeted help to prevent needs from escalating or becoming more complex, reducing the need for statutory interventions. However, when problems are more complex or children and young people may not be safe, we will ensure a timely and high-quality response, reducing risks and keeping families together wherever possible.

We will ensure consistently timely and comprehensive assessments, in line with our trauma informed, strengths based and restorative practice approach, which inform effective planning, keep children and young people safe and improve their wider health and education outcomes. We will ensure the voices of children, young people and their family are central to assessment and planning.

Where it is needed, we will ensure that children and young people benefit from outcome focused child protection plans and legal proceedings which progress in a timely way. If it is needed, children will come into our care in a timely and well-planned way with a focus on early planning for permanence, including returning to their family where this can be achieved safely. We will develop practice to ensure the right children are subject to child protection plans, legal proceedings or in our care at the right time. When they are in our care, care and pathway planning will be ambitious and support children and young people to achieve good wider outcomes.

We will ensure that all workers and all children and young people benefit from high quality supervision and management oversight which facilitates reflective discussion and supports children's plans to progress. In response to what children have told us, we will strengthen relationship-based practice and improve our 'endings', when a new worker becomes involved or when our involvement ends.

We will finalise the prompt action taken to strengthen practice in specific parts of the system where this is identified as needed

Key elements;

- Good assessment and planning for every child and young person which supports needs being met in a timely way.
- High quality supervision and evidence of the impact of management oversight for all workers/children.
- Improvements in priority areas; Out Of Hours, LADO, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Children's Disability Team.

Priority 3 Key Milestones



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Key elements: A good assessment, planning and endings for every child and young person which supports needs being met in a timely way. High quality supervision and evidence of the impact of management oversight for all workers/children. Improvements in priority areas; Out Of Hours, LADO, Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, Children's Disability Team.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved approaches in priority areas post Ofsted; LADO, OOH, UASC, CDT. Timely and consistent quality of assessment & response in IRTs. Additional CSW Team in place to meet levels of demand and maintain caseloads at acceptable levels. Assessments, planning and endings to be service obsessions and improve in quality in line with practice standards. Develop and implement unborn baby practice and assessment tool and a pathway to ensure early assessment. High quality supervision and management oversight for all. Timely PLO practice and earlier permanence planning. Implement a revised Academy offer based on the Plymouth practice approach, focused on core priorities/priority teams. Improved evidence of impact of Independent Chairs on planning and outcomes for children and young people. Improved early permanence planning with close tracking. Improved support to care leavers in custody. Improved accommodation & EET outcomes for all care leavers. Implement the agreed approach to locality ways of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional CSW Team ends in Q4. Caseloads sustained at acceptable levels. Consistently good assessments and planning. Children experience fewer changes of SW. SW teams work effectively with partners, including through co-located models where agreed. The right children are subject to CIN, CPPs, the PLO and in care at the right time and more timely outcomes when this is needed. Disabled children receive high quality assessments and plans that ensure they receive the right support. Children in care and care leavers experience good health, education and employment outcomes. UASC benefit from the right support at the right time. Refocus Academy offer and continued focused WFD offer in light of QA evidence. Robust, timely and evident management oversight. Practitioners experience high quality supervision. Children's voices are at the heart of planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-located locality teams support improved outcomes. Fewer families receive a social work response. Where a statutory response is needed QAF evidences that a clearly articulated practice approach underpins a high-quality assessment and planning for all children and young people. Fewer children are in our care and more children in care with connected carers when care is needed. Case decisions are tracked and reviewed, and unnecessary delays are avoided. Children in care and care leavers continue to experience good health, education and employment outcomes. Supervision is restorative, timely, reflective, high quality and leads to improved practice and outcomes for all children. Management oversight is clearly evidenced.

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Outcomes include

- Children and young people will** be safeguarded in a timely way when this is needed, building capacity in their family networks to enable them to remain in their care.
- Children and young people will** benefit from high quality assessments informing work that is well planned and which helps them to make the changes needed.
- Where children and young people need to come into our care** planning will be aspirational, deliver good outcomes and support young people to maintain relationships with their family network.
- Children and young people will** receive high-quality, relationship based and child-centred support and timely interventions that improve outcomes,
- Children and young people will** have access to a range of effective services and support that promote stability, permanence, educational success and routes into employment, and positive health outcomes.

Priority 4 - The right homes for cared for children at the right time



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The right homes for cared for children at the right time, which meets their needs and enable more children to live in family settings closer to Plymouth.

Many of our children and young people in care are in family homes where they are stable and their needs are well met. However, too many of our children are living in residential care and sometimes at some distance from Plymouth,

We will ensure that more children will be looked after in a family setting, close to Plymouth, where they can continue to access their school and local services and maintain relationships with their family network. This includes placing sibling groups together, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and older children with more challenging behaviours with our foster carers. We will develop a specific fostering offer for emergency placements and a model of high resilience fostering, to support carers where children have more challenging or risk-taking behaviours. We will utilise evidence-based approaches to ensure children are in the right placement at the time and will work closely with local, regional and national residential and fostering providers to develop more local provision in line with local need. This includes considering becoming a provider of residential care.

We will further strengthen our approach to ensuring all children have an agreed and early permanence plan in place, including reunification and utilising connected carers. As part of this we will implement improved support to special guardians to ensure positive outcomes for children leaving care through this route.

We will ensure that as young people move into independence, they will have access to a range of accommodation options which meet their needs.

Key elements;

- Use of tools and assessment to identify children ready for step down from residential and step-down planning.
- Foster For Plymouth recruitment and retention and increased use of connected carers.
- External local market growth plan.
- Achieving permanence for children, including through reunification and improved support to Special Guardians.
- Work with Housing and accommodation providers to improve access to accommodation and develop a range of supported options.

Priority 4 Key milestones



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**



High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge

Key elements: Use of tools and assessment to identify children ready for step down from residential and step-down planning. Foster For Plymouth recruitment and retention and increased use of connected carers. External local market growth plan. Achieving permanence for children including through reunification and improved support to Special Guardians.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of evidence-based assessment process to identify children ready for step-down from residential care to a family setting. • Improved quality of placement request forms. • Implement refocused foster carer recruitment strategy leading to a net gain of 15 carers, including through regional approaches. • Implement commitments made following Fostering Summit. • Implement first Mockingbird constellations. • Develop and implement high support model of foster care. • Recruit to new Special Guardianship Support Team and agree model of support to special guardians. • Improved approach to assessment and support of connected carers. • Develop model to increase supported lodgings provision. • Model of emergency fostering aligned to the edge of care offer. • Develop options appraisal and business case for options for expanding residential provision within Plymouth. • Develop strong communication and planning across social care and EPS to include the child's education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further cohort of children identified for step-down from residential care to a family settings. • Continue to achieve net gain of 20 in house foster carers offering placements to all age groups. • Increase sufficiency of foster placements for priority groups, including UASC, sibling groups and short breaks for disabled children. • Embed Mockingbird and implement further constellations. • Further extend emergency foster care, high resilience foster care offer and supported lodgings. • Embed special guardianship support offer. • Take forward agreed approach to extending residential provision in Plymouth. • Increase % of children experience the right placement from when they first come into care. • Increase % of children and young people placed in family settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only children who need to be are in residential settings. • Continued increase in in-house foster carers and % of children in care placed in family settings close to Plymouth. • Further extend and embed Mockingbird model. • Further development of provision in line with updated Sufficiency Statement. • Young people are provided with 'Staying Put' when this is appropriate to their care plan. • Further scale up agreed residential model in Plymouth. • Children experience the right placement from when they come into care. • Placement stability performance at least in line with good LAs.

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Outcomes include

- **Children and young people will** come into care in a timely and well-planned way when this is needed.
- **Children and young people will** have access to a home that meets their needs from when they first come into our care.
- **Children and young people will** be placed in family settings closer to Plymouth. Children will only be placed in residential care when this meets their needs & is appropriate to their agreed plan.
- **Children and young people will** be placed with their siblings when this is right for their needs.
- **Children and young people will** be supported to maintain good relationships with their extended family networks.

Priority 5 – Sufficient provision which meets local need



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**

High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Sufficient high quality and value for money education and short breaks provision to meet local need (Early Years, SEND and Alternative Provision).

Too many children in Plymouth are not accessing high quality early years provision or are not yet in a local provision which meets their specific needs. We will continue to work with settings to increase the sufficiency of high-quality early years provision across the City and to increase take up by eligible families.

The overall focus of this plan is to ensure that wherever possible children and young people with additional needs are included in mainstream and special school provision. This will include focused work to support young people with additional needs to remain in mainstream provision. We will develop and implement a responsibility-based model of Alternative Provision (AP), bringing leaders together to develop a local system to ensure that where it is needed, children and young people are placed in high quality AP settings which meet their needs and enable them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers.

However, in line with national trends, the growth in number of children with SEND has led to there being insufficient capacity locally to meet this need in coming years. We will prioritise working with schools and providers to ensure there are sufficient good school places for all children and young people, including for the increased number of children and young people with SEND. We will prioritise continuing the work we have started with partners to develop additional specialist places in Plymouth through investing in capital projects that develop the SEND estate and create the capacity within Plymouth to meet the needs of specific children and young people across all age groups and meet predicted needs over the next 5-10 years.

Key elements;

- Ensuring sufficient high quality Early Years provision and take up.
- The development of a responsibility-based model for Alternative Provision.
- Development and implementation of a strategy for sufficiency of SEND provision that meets need and emerging need.

Priority 5 Key milestones



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**

High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Key elements: Ensuring sufficient high quality Early Years provision and take up. The development of a responsibility-based model for Alternative Provision. SEND provision that meet need and emerging need.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened Alternative Provision (AP) offer, governance and support arrangements in place for allocation and monitoring provision. Develop model for AP specialist taskforce in AP settings. Develop plan for the delivery of a responsibility-based decision-making, funding and commissioning of AP. High-level costed sufficiency proposals and implementation plan agreed for specialist SEND and AP provision Review current resourced provision and develop plan for increased capacity for identified needs across the city. Effective oversight and termly provision statements in place for high priority groups of children and settings. Effective processes in place to allocate specialist resources and exceptional provision including oversight of spend. Monitoring cycle in place for specialist independent provision. Review current short breaks provision and develop appropriate local offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear vision and purpose for the Alternative Provision system underpins the operation of day-to-day processes. Co-located, blended teams deliver support with and from AP. Phased roll out of increased resourced provision. Phased roll of out of capital works to increase special school provision. Service level agreements embedded through the termly monitoring meetings. Decision-making groups and financial controls in place setting out trajectories and mitigation arrangements. Reduced demand for Home to School Transport An updated short breaks offer, and commissioning approach has been co-produced that is flexible, equitable and accessible and meets needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A successful range of pathways enable children in need of AP to achieve good outcomes and successful transitions. Co-ordinated, responsive AP support responds to children's needs quickly and appropriately. Resourced provision understood by families and take-up of these places is strong. Increased special school provision meets local needs and leads to reduction in use of high-cost independent placements. Embedded service level agreements through the termly monitoring meetings with improved attendance and outcomes for children and young people. Embedded decision-making groups, with High Needs Block managed within budget and a trajectory for year-on-year reduction of the use of non-maintained independent placements.

Outcomes include

- Children and young people will** access and regularly attend the most appropriate early years setting, school or college for their needs – whether mainstream or specialist.
- Children and young people will** access additional support when it is needed through a fair, consistent and transparent process.
- Children, young people and families will** co-design services and be involved in evaluating their effectiveness and our local offer will be understood by children, families and professionals.
- Children and young people will** experience a reduction in the use of independent non-maintained school as more children access their local school.
- Children and young people will** experience a high-quality education placement, suited to their needs, that equips them with the skills and attributes they need to make a positive contribution to their community and to succeed in life.

Priority 6 - Preparation for adulthood



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**

High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Preparing all children and young people well for adulthood and ambitious employment.

We want planning and preparation for adulthood to start early for all young people, bringing professionals together with young people and their families using person centred approaches to ensure all young people develop good independent living skills and have an early and clear plan in place for their transition to adulthood, including appropriate accommodation, training and employment outcomes. We will ensure that local arrangements and plans are ambitious and set out clear aspirations for young people's futures.

We will work with partners to ensure priority groups of vulnerable children and young people are provided with effective additional support at key stages of transition to ensure they make a success of moves and changes at key points.

We will ensure that children's social care and adult's social care operate effective arrangements to agree and implement eligibility for support in adulthood and ensure an early plan is in place with a smooth and stress-free transition of support, including effective planning with health for any continuing care needs.

We will work with partners, including health, housing and training and Skills providers, to confirm additional support at adulthood for priority vulnerable groups, including young people with SEND, care experienced young people, young people in the criminal justice system, young parents and young carers. We will ensure clear pathways to support are agreed, well publicised and operate effectively.

Key elements;

- Strengthening support at key points of transition.
- Earlier planning with partners and professionals who are skilled and confident in preparation for adulthood..
- Confirming and implement expectations for priority/vulnerable groups with partners.
- Delivering Lifelong learning and Unlocking Plymouth's Potential.

Priority 6 Key milestones



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**



High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge

Key elements: Strengthening support at key points of transition. Earlier planning with all partners. Confirming and implementing expectations for priority/vulnerable groups with partners (including young people and residents with SEND, Care leavers, young people in criminal justice system, parents and carers, young carers). Lifelong learning and delivering Unlocking Plymouth's Potential.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an updated strategic framework for Preparing for Adulthood in Plymouth. • Develop revised and agreed person-centred pathways to support effective transitions between all stages of education and into employment and adult services. • Develop and implement partnership operational approach to support early pathways to adulthood. • Mapping and gap analysis completed across the four delivery plans within the Plan for Economic Growth. • Further development of apprenticeships and supported internships. • Enhance young people's exposure to role models, work experience and training routes into sectors and occupations, including via support from 3 universities. • Embed and extend T Level delivery in the city, including working with employers to offer industry placement opportunities • Develop the use of Family Hubs to support careers guidance and sign-posting to residents. • Develop robust processes for transitions of children with an EHCP. • Baseline the academic, vocational and functional skills offer across the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate effective person-centred pathways and transitions for all priority groups. • The development of skills built across the four delivery plans within the Plan for Economic Growth. • Join up training and skills provision across the city to deliver a united and streamlined skills offer. • Increase traineeships and apprenticeships at higher levels and in STEM industries. • Ensure talent pipeline of graduates and people with higher level skills is enhanced and aligned with priority growth sectors. • Deliver improved approaches to supporting identified groups including care leavers into employment. • Develop and implement support for entry level, basic and functional skills (including maths, English, digital, employability and transferable skills). • Young people with an EHCP are accessing appropriate pathways to transition into adulthood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early and well co-ordinated planning and support for key transitions in place for all eligible young people. • Young people have high levels of satisfaction at key transitions • Evidence of improved outcomes for priority groups. • Skills routes to meet the future economic needs of the city are in place. • A greater variety of businesses adopting apprenticeships and supported internships and more young people taking up these opportunities. • Fewer NEETs, including in identified priority groups. • Ringfenced ambitious employment pathways across the city for vulnerable young people.

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Outcomes include

- **Children and young people will** experience early, well co-ordinated multi-disciplinary planning and preparation for adulthood.
- **Children and young people will** benefit from support and provision to fulfil their potential.
- **Children and young people will** experience person-centred planning and support to enable successful transitions.
- **Children and young people will** experience well co-ordinated training and skills provision across the City and benefit from increased opportunities to be supported into employment.

Priority 7 - Workforce development



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**

High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



A stable, highly skilled, well supported and high performing workforce.

We are making Plymouth a place where people will want to come and work in our Children's Service and stay with us to develop further and progress their careers. We are putting workforce development approaches in place based on a 'High Expectation, High Support, High Challenge' culture. Our Children's Workforce Strategy sets out how we will recruit, develop, support and retain the right people with the right skills. We will build on progress to date with a refocused approach to recruitment for priority groups of staff, stabilise the workforce and put in place a renewed approach to workforce development.

We will deliver the bespoke management and leadership development programme to all managers focused on supporting staff through change and building a high performing workforce. Our Academy will continue to support routes into social work and deliver a high quality ASYE programme and a focused offer to support practice improvement in priority areas and will develop the offer across the children's workforce and wider partnership, including prioritising the development of a programme of SEND professional development.

We will also clarify and implement career progression pathways for all staff groups providing clear pathways for both practitioners and managers.

We will ensure all our staff have access to a high-quality learning and development offer aligned to their role and career progression pathway, have manageable workloads that enable them to deliver relationship driven practice and access to high-quality support and supervision.

Key elements;

- Workforce/service/team charters based on 'High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge'.
- Targeted recruitment for priority groups (experienced SVs and EPs).
- Retention and WFD; including a refocused Academy Offer, the development of an apprenticeship offer and career progression.
- Partnership workforce development in priority areas (including early help and SEND).
- Leadership and Management Development Programme to develop high performing managers and leaders.

Priority 7 Key milestones



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**



High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge

Key elements: Workforce charters based on 'High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge'. Targeted recruitment for priority groups. Retention and WFD; including a refocused Academy Offer and SEND and partnership WFD in priority areas. Leadership and Management Development Programme to develop high performing managers and leaders.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a revised Academy offer based on our agreed practice approach and focused on our core practice priorities. • Prioritise attendance and track attendance and impact of WFD. • Commission and deliver a management/leadership development programme to develop skills and behaviours. • Run management 'masterclasses' on performance and financial management. • Review spans of control, team structures and implement career progression opportunities for all staff groups. • Actively recruit priority groups (EPs, managers & qualified social workers). • Develop Team Charters and undertake a skills audit. • Improved retention and % of permanent SW staff. • SW caseloads at target levels & increase in 'good' supervision. • Deliver a programme of SEND and education of children with a social worker professional development. • Identify early career opportunities including apprenticeships to grow our own talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver revised Academy offer in light of evidence from the QAF to focus on core practice improvement priorities in priority areas. • Extend the Academy to provide learning and development offer across the Children's Services Workforce. • Improved SEND capacity and expertise in mainstream education from early years to post-16. • Improved retention and % of perm staff in priority groups, including EPs and exp. SWs. • Children experience fewer changes of SW. • SW caseloads at target levels and increased % of supervision rated 'good'. • Lead the development of a Children's Workforce Strategy across the partnership. • Improved skills and confidence in SEND and education of children with a social worker across the workforce. • Reduced absence and improved levels of staff satisfaction • Apprenticeship frameworks in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently staffed teams with highly skilled and well supported workers. • improved capacity and expertise in mainstream education from early years to post-16. • Social Work caseloads at target levels. • Retention and % of permanent social work staff in line with good LAs. • Models of group supervision in place to support multi-disciplinary approaches. • Best in class Academy delivering comprehensive programme of workforce development across the children's workforce in line with identified priorities. • Academy leading partnership workforce development. • Reduced absence, including persistence absence.

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Outcomes include

- **Children and young people will** benefit from skilled and engaged professionals, and experience better leadership and management oversight of practice and outcomes.
- **Children and young people will** benefit from a stable and sustainable workforce that is supported to provide high-quality, effective support and interventions that meet their needs and aspirations.
- **Children and young people with SEND will** benefit from a highly skilled and supported workforce from early years to post-16.
- **Children and young people will** benefit from reduced professional absence and professionals who demonstrate increased professional satisfaction.

Priority 8 - Performance management & quality assurance



**CHILDREN'S
SERVICE**

High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



A performance management and quality assurance learning framework that listens and responds to the voices of children, young people and families, 'closes the loop' and supports improvement.

We have made improvements to how we use data and quality assurance to support improvement. However, there is more to do. Ofsted found that not all learning activity, including audit activity and supervision for staff, is currently being used as well as it could be to drive improvements in practice, either with individual children or at a strategic level.

We will strengthen our approach further by bringing together a wider range of qualitative information, including complaints and participation with children, young people and families, alongside evidence from audit activity to effectively evaluate the quality of practice, articulated in our practice standards, across our key improvement priorities. We will develop this into a full learning framework.

We will strengthen how this is used to support improvement in practice with stronger communication and 'closing the loop' on learning with teams including through the Academy curriculum. We will extend quality assurance approaches across key areas of practice in children's services, including EHCPs, and further develop our approach to partnership quality assurance to evidence the impact of partnership practice development on outcomes for children and families.

We will further strengthen our performance management framework, ensuring we are using performance reporting to evaluate core improvement priorities and the quality of practice and to inform targeted improvement activity. We will use scorecards and performance surgeries to track performance over time and enable teams and service areas to keep sight of how our performance compares with 'good' and 'outstanding' local authorities.

Key elements;

- Ensuring practice standards are clear and embedded across Children's Services.
- Strengthen quality, quantity & impact of QA across Children's Services, building on practice strengths and closing the loop on learning .
- Strengthen partnership quality assurance processes.
- Performance data which measures and reports the right things and supports improvement.

Priority 8 Key Milestones

Key elements: practice standards are clear and embedded across Children's Services. Strengthen quality, quantity and impact of QA across Children's Services, building on practice strengths and closing the loop on learning . Strengthen partnership quality assurance processes. Performance data which measures and reports the right things and supports improvement.

Key Milestones 2024/25	Key Milestones 2025/26	Key Milestones 2026/27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a focused programme of quality assurance activity and a 'close the loop' approach that supports improvement in children's services. • Track actions from audit ensuring required improvements are made. • Deliver Practice Weeks to evaluate a specific practice theme and ensure learning is shared and acted on. • Expand quality assurance across children's services, prioritising EHCPs. • Further strengthen engagement of children, young people and families' in quality assurance and wider participation. • Operate Performance Boards across the service. • Provide regular reporting that enables distance travelled on priority improvements to be monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance brings together a range of qualitative information from audits, complaints and engagement with children and families, to provide a full evaluation of practice strengths and areas for further development. • Feedback to staff highlights good practice and supports further improvements to be made. • Quality assurance provides evidence of impact of improvement work. • Performance Boards evidence progress on KPIs across key practice areas in line with agreed targets. • Children and young people are listened to and are holding us to account for the improvements we are making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Boards evidence progress on KPIs across key practice areas at least in line with SNs. • Quality assurance brings together a range of qualitative information from audits, complaints and engagement with children and families, to provide a full evaluation of practice strengths and areas for further development. • Quality assurance provides evidence of impact of improvements being made and services are identified as 'good'. • The voice and experience of children and young people is consistently listened to and acted on.

Outcomes include

- **Children, young people and families will** feel listened to and be heard, and their voices will influence service design and delivery.
- **Children and young people will** benefit from continuously improving services and both increased timeliness and quality of responses.
- **Children and young people will** experience improved outcomes as a result of a QA system which focuses on their lived experiences and the impact of practice.
- **Children and young people will** benefit from a quality assurance framework which ensures that identified learning is evaluated, disseminated to staff and acted on.
- **Children and young people will** experience good planning and outcomes from effective oversight of planning and challenge by Independent Chairs and appropriate escalation to ensure outcomes are improved when needed.

Priority 9 - Strong partnerships



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High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Strong partnerships and partnership governance arrangements deliver effective joint arrangements which improve outcomes for children and young people, particularly in priority areas.

We know that we can't deliver the priorities in this plan on our own. We are committed to delivering a refreshed 'A Bright Future' for children and young people in Plymouth with our key partners across the City. We have some strong partnerships in place already, but there is more to do to ensure they are effective at delivering the improvements we know are needed in key areas. This includes in early help, in targeted interventions for priority groups such as children with SEND, in improving health outcomes for children in care and housing and accommodation options for care leavers.

We will meet the expectations of Working Together 2023, implementing strengthened multi-agency expectations for all practitioners involved in safeguarding and child protection.

We will develop partnership quality assurance approaches which help us to evaluate whether the partnership approaches we are implementing are effective and deliver the desired outcomes.

Key milestones in 2024-25;

- Strengthen partnerships with housing, health, schools and education providers and adults social care to govern and drive progress in priority areas through a refocused Strategic Systems Leadership Board Chaired by the DCS.
- Refresh our partnership priorities and strategy 'A Bright Future' for 2024-26.
- Strengthen coordination between the SSLB, the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safer Plymouth Partnership including three monthly meetings of all chairs and co-ordination of workplans and agendas.
- Develop, implement and embed effective partnership governance of early help.
- Develop and implement a partnership accountability framework and quality assurance to support evaluation of the impact of partnership improvement work in priority areas.

Priority 10 - Enablers

Enablers which support staff to do their jobs well;

As part of this plan, in response to feedback from staff during the development of this plan, we will prioritise creating the conditions within the service that enable staff to do their jobs well.

Including;

- **System development;** ensuring systems support staff to do their job, freeing them up from administration to spend more time with families.
- **Recording practices;** are clear and understood and support child focused practice.
- **Performance data;** ensuring we are measuring and reporting the things that make a difference and tell us about the quality of practice and the impact of practice on outcomes for children, young people and families.
- **Commissioning;** helping to us to ensure we have high quality provision in place to meet need, both now and in the future, and which represents value for money to the Council.
- **Maximising funding streams;** maximising opportunities to bring funding into the Council.
- **Reducing bureaucracy;** reviewing schemes of delegation and processes to ensure staff are freed up from unnecessary bureaucracy.

Key indicators of success



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We will measure the success of this plan by tracking our impact against some key outcome measures for children, young people and families including;

- ✓ An increase in early help assessments and evidence of the impact of these on outcomes for children.
- ✓ Improved education attainment and attendance, particularly for vulnerable groups and reduced exclusions.
- ✓ Increase in targeted interventions and evidence of impact on wider outcomes.
- ✓ A reduction in statutory interventions, including social work assessments and EHCPs.
- ✓ Timely responses across the system.
- ✓ The right children on CPPs, subject to PLO and in care at the right time.
- ✓ More children in care living in foster homes close to Plymouth.
- ✓ Improved health, education and employment outcomes for our children in care and care leavers.
- ✓ Children and young people in the right accommodation in line with their needs.
- ✓ Sufficiency of high-quality Early Years settings, school places, short breaks and SEND provision close to Plymouth.
- ✓ Young people progressing into meaningful post 16 opportunities.
- ✓ An increase in audits identifying practice that is good or better.
- ✓ A stable workforce with reduced workforce turnover and reduced absence.

Where we will be in 2027



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What we will achieve

The impact this will have

The Partnership delivers an effective early help offer in localities

- Families access information and a partnership early help offer which enables them to parent effectively.

Evidence-based targeted interventions reach families who are vulnerable to poor outcomes

- Interventions reach families that need it when they need it, prevent needs from escalating and ensure all children and young people make good progress.

Inclusive approaches are in places across all schools and settings

- Improved attendance and educational achievement for all children and young people, particularly those who need more help.

Social work assessment, planning, supervision and management oversight is consistently 'good'

- Children and young people will be safe within their families wherever this is possible.
- When this is not possible, children and young people will benefit from aspirational planning and outcomes and have access to the right homes and accommodation when they need it.

Mature and effective partnerships with health, housing, schools and settings deliver effective approaches on shared priorities

- Improved attendance and attainment for all children and young people
- Children and young people in care experience good health and education outcomes
- Care leavers in accommodation that meets their needs and supported into employment.
- All young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to flourish in the workplace.

Provision in Plymouth meets need

- Young people's needs are met in high quality and inclusive settings in or close to Plymouth.

The workforce is stable and managers and staff are high performing

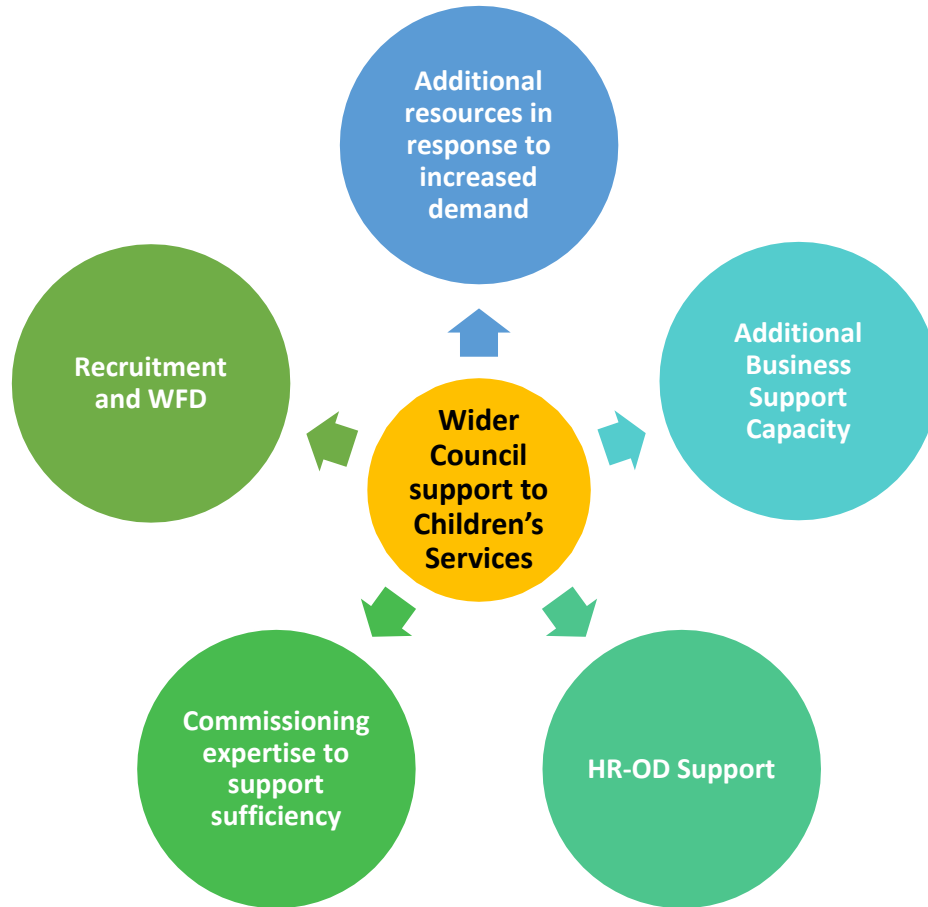
- Children, young people and families benefit from relationship-based practice.
- Staff progress their careers in Plymouth.

Taking a Council wide approach

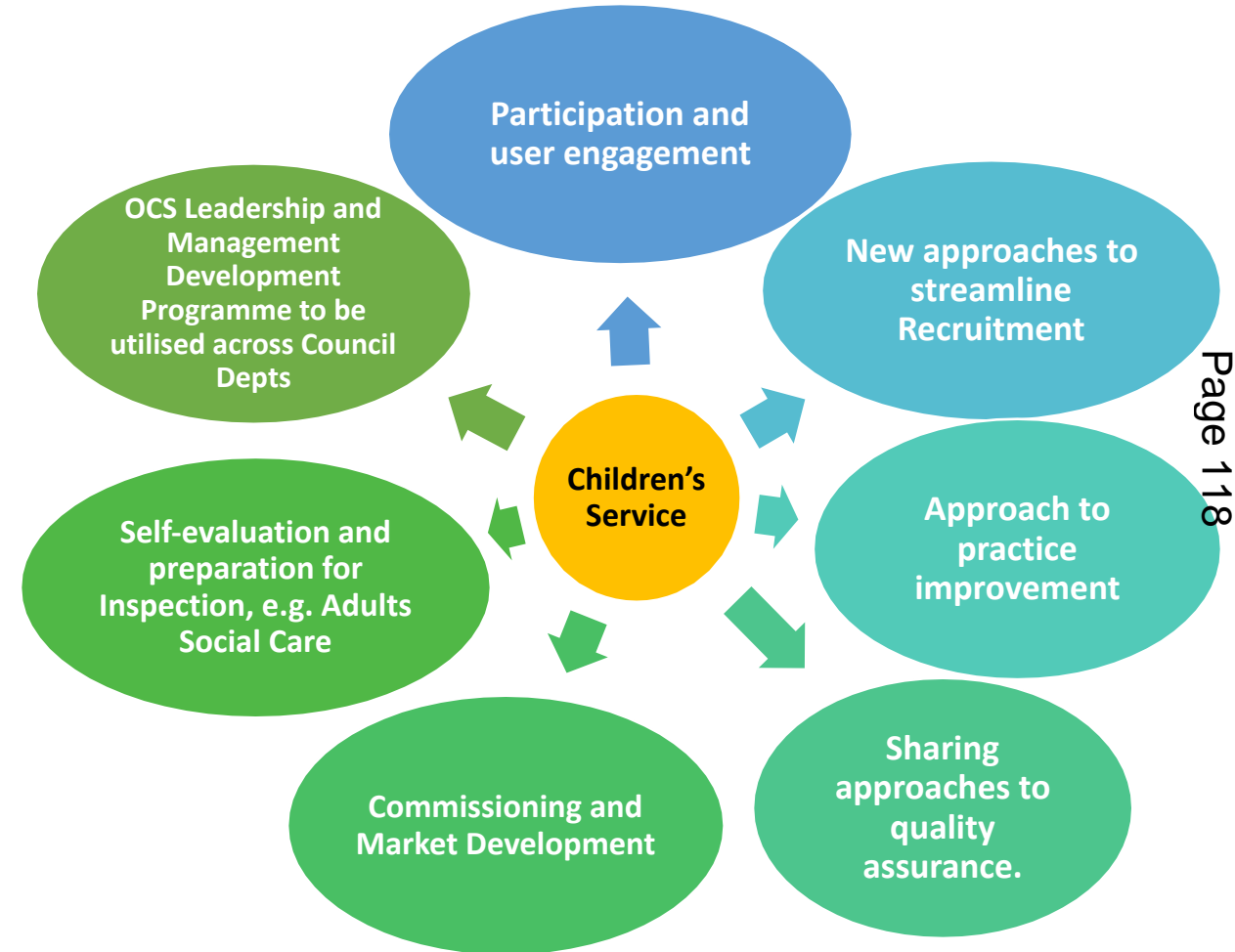


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High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge



Wider Council Commitment to Children's Services



Children's Services sharing approaches across the Council

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	18 July 2023
Title of Report:	Child Exploitation Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director of Children's Services)
Author:	Martine Aquilina (Head of Service)
Contact Email:	
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The report presents; a detailed account of our city's efforts in addressing and combatting child exploitation within the context of a wider extra-familial harm definition, including the progress made in implementing a contextual safeguarding approach, through the Adolescent Safety Framework. The report also includes an overview of the various approaches adopted by agencies in responding to missing children.

Recommendations and Reasons

For the Committee to note the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This work contributes to the Corporate Plan on 'Keeping children, adults and communities safe.'

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

N/A

Financial Risks

N/A

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council’s duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.
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Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	Click here to enter text.	Leg	Click here to enter text.	Mon Off	Click here to enter text.	HR	Click here to enter text.	Assets	Click here to enter text.	Strat Proc	Click here to enter text.
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Temilola Salimon, Service Director for Children, Young People and Families											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 10/07/2024											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing approved via email Date approved: 10/07/2024											

1. Introduction

At the request of the Scrutiny Panel, this briefing report has been prepared to offer an informative update on the issue of Child Exploitation in Plymouth. For convenience and reference, appended are the definitions of Child Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation. The report presents; a detailed account of our city's efforts in addressing and combatting child exploitation within the context of a wider extra-familial harm definition, including the progress made in implementing a contextual safeguarding approach, through the Adolescent Safety Framework. The report also includes an overview of the various approaches adopted by agencies in responding to missing children.

'Extra-familial harm' refers to a broad category of harm types, including peer-on-peer harm, sexual and criminal exploitation, and bullying. Often, these different harm types share overlapping drivers, methods, and consequences for young people.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Children's social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships have developed new ways to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors. Our holistic framework for this approach in Plymouth is called the Adolescent Safety Framework.

2. What we know about extra-familial harm in Plymouth

For many safeguarding partnerships, including Plymouth, the development of a comprehensive data system that is able to quantify the type, range and distribution of extra-familial harm across the City, remains a challenge. The development of the Adolescent Safety Framework (below) has sought to address this and provide better visibility of data and these at the strategic level and make possible a 'helicopter view' of the city in a way that is currently not possible. Much of the extra-familial harm we are seeing in the city is peer on peer, however we have continued to monitor adults involved in contextual safeguarding.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018).

It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse. County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2019). Young people do most of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines" are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable, and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police.

We have seen an increase in active county lines with Police investigations and operations undertaken to disrupt these activities. Whilst successful, we have noticed, when a line is broken/disrupted, the adult have either been quickly replaced or just as worryingly, we see the same children moving between lines. We believe there is at least 5 active county lines in the city with children being coerced/forced to collect, hold and deliver drugs. We are working closely with the Police to disrupt these activities and share intelligence.

Knife Crime

Last year, there were some concerns that the number of young people involved in knife crime is escalating. However, we have worked closely with our colleagues in the child centred policing team to educate children at their schools and, unlike the nation picture, we have not seen knife crime escalating.

Children coming through the prevention / early help pathway are being supported with relationship-based approaches, specific programme work completed around knife crime via the knife crime programme we use.

3. Adolescent Safety Framework

Plymouth's Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) was introduced in January 2022. The purpose of the framework was to set out a coherent contextual safeguarding multi-agency response to extra-familial harm, at practice, operational and strategic levels. The ASF has a strong evidence base and was developed in consultation with Research in Practice and the Contextual Safeguarding Network/ Bedfordshire University.

The ASF offers a single and holistic approach to assessing and responding to; individual children; peer groups; neighbourhood, location or person/ people of concern. The underpinning assessment tool, the 'Safer Me' assessment identifies risks, protective factors and supports corresponding responses through a range of pathways including at the individual level through Safer Me and Safer Me Plus (Child Protection) meetings designed to ensure a strong focus on contextual / extra-familial risks, maximise the participation of the young person and focus on collaboration with them to cultivate safety; peer Group, Neighbourhood (Location) and School Context conferences. These conferences provide a mechanism to coordinate interventions and improve safety in the context of concern.

While the framework offered by the ASF is comprehensive, work has been undertaken over the last twelve months to ensure this is further embedded, and to develop confidence and competence within Children's Social Care and across the wider partnership. Insight and feedback have been gathered at practitioner and management level to ascertain how best to achieve these objectives, with the following actions taken forward:

1. In response to feedback regarding the complicated / complex set up of the ASF 'flowchart' / process, this has been streamlined, with clear guidance included so that any professional engaged with children across the city can identify appropriate next steps once a Safer Me is completed.
2. In recognition of consistent feedback regarding the length of the assessment, this has been reviewed, reducing the document from 18 to five pages, while ensuring that all strengths, vulnerabilities, and indicators are considered and there is opportunity to provide analysis where needed.
3. For practitioners using the Safer Me Assessment to direct their intervention with a child at risk of exploitation, a 'Safer Me Plan' has been introduced, setting out clear objectives, tasks, and timescales to support delivery.

4. A Safer Me Review document has been created to support practitioners in identifying outcomes with the child they are supporting, and to support managers in evidencing wider impact of the work delivered by their team.
5. Collaborative work has begun with the Academy of Social Work to design bespoke Exploitation and ASF training for social workers, supporting understanding of exploitation, with an insight into how the Safer Me can be used as a supportive tool alongside their Single Assessments and other care planning documents.
6. In the absence of one single point of coordination, as was the case when the ASF was introduced, responsibility for key elements of the ASF has been allocated to relevant agencies.

There have been broader developments to strengthen our city-wide offer in relation to contextual safeguarding. The Strategic Missing and Child Exploitation Sub-group (SMCE) has been replaced by the Strategic Safeguarding Adolescent's Group (SSAG) in recognition of the broader safeguarding needs of adolescents outside of exploitation. A working group has been established alongside this to deliver on key actions and priorities set within the SSAG. Finally, the Safeguarding Adolescents webpage, including guidance and toolkits, as well as links to the renewed ASF page, is due to be launched imminently and was presented through workshops at the recent PSCP conference. The webpages are designed to support practitioners and managers across the partnership in understanding and responding to the needs of adolescents at risk of contextual harm.

4. Daily Intelligence Briefings

Daily Intelligence Briefings continue to be held and consistently attended by partners including Police, Health, Education, Children's Social Care, Youth Justice Services, Edge of Care Team, Targeted Help and Community Connections. Work has been undertaken over the last twelve months to ensure representative yet proportionate attendance, ensuring a timely review of intelligence and subsequent responses for children who have been reported as missing, presented as homeless, been brought into custody, or presented at the Emergency Department within the previous 24 hours. Actions are reviewed until the Chair is satisfied that appropriate measures are in place to ensure a child's safety, and / or broader contextual safeguarding measures (e.g. Peer Group Mapping) is underway.

The briefings have received ongoing praise and recognition from partners due to the timely response to children at risk of harm and was recognised during January's Ofsted Inspection as an example of good practice.

5. How we respond to children who are missing, at risk of exploitation or presenting with harmful sexual behaviours

In the last twelve months, REACH (Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care and Home) has undergone a review, resulting in some realignment of the team's remit and use of resource, which is due to be fully implemented by the end of July 2024.

The team, now known as Be Safe, has now formally been brought into the wider Youth Justice Service, supporting collaborative working across the service and promoting resilience through increased opportunity to share staff resource. Be Safe will continue to meet the statutory duty of responding to children who are reported as missing, with the offer of a Return Home Conversation – RHC (previously Return Home Interview – RHI) within 72 hours of being found. As before, the RHC will explore the reasons for the child going missing, the circumstances surrounding their absence and any harm they may have experienced, the child's perception of potential risk and what support may be needed to prevent further missing episodes.

Children's risk of exploitation is now initially assessed using a Child Exploitation Screening Tool (CE Screen), which was constructed based on key indicators set out by the National Working Group

(NWG). This is completed for very child who is reported as missing and accepts an RHC. Where a risk of exploitation is identified through the CE Screen, a Safer Me Assessment is completed, which offers a more detailed insight into risk, indicators, and appropriate response.

The team continues to offer additional support for children who have multiple missing episodes, and / or are identified as at high or very high risk of exploitation. This work is delivered on a voluntary basis, supporting children to build resilience through identifying and developing existing strengths and interests, as well as increasing understanding around exploitation, such as understanding the grooming process or strengthening online safety.

The offer of support for children with Harmful Sexual Behaviours (that is, sexualised behaviours presented by a child which are harmful to others), and those in need of AIM assessments has now been formally included within the team's remit. This has been pertinent given the overlap in our cohorts of children with HSB accessing support through REACH and Youth Justice Service. Work continues to be delivered in close alignment with the NSPCC's local offer, including a joint triage process. This process ensures that resource across the two services is used effectively to promote timely responses for children in need of support, as well as sharing knowledge and expertise when considering appropriate interventions.

It is for this reason that REACH has become Be Safe, to reflect the broader remit of the team, now including the local authority's response to missing, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour.

The team structure now consists of one Team Manager, one Senior Professional Youth Worker, three Professional Youth Workers and four Family Support workers. Within this structure, two Family Support Workers hold a specific role in delivering assessment and intervention for children with HSB.

6. Performance

The table below contains performance data for REACH for Q1 of 2024-25. While there was a significant increase in missing episodes for children in Plymouth in May, performance in our core KPI – completing RHI within 72 hours – has remained stable at around 50%, in line with national performance benchmarks. Where children are not seen or seen outside the statutory window of 72 hours, this is due to declines from parents, carers, or the young person, the young person being missing, being in custody or moving out of area.

Indicator	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24
Missing Children (Overall)	49	75	50
Missing Episodes (Overall)	75	108	71
Average missing episodes per child (Overall)	1.5	1.4	1.4
Missing Children (Children in Care)	13	21	12
Missing Episodes (Children in Care)	24	35	24
Average missing episodes per child (Children in Care)	1.8	1.6	2
First Contact made within 72 hours (Overall)	100%	93.5%	98%
First Contact made within 72 hours (Children in Care)	100%	100%	100%
% of return home interviews booked (Overall)	74.7%	74.1%	66.2%
% declined return home interviews (Overall)	25.3%	20.4%	22.5%
% where the RHI is within 72 hours (date of RHI) (Overall)	66.7%	60.2%	59.2%
Number where the RHI is within 72 hours (date of RHI) (Overall)	50	65	42
% of return home interviews held within 72 hours where YP attended (Overall)	57.3%	49.1%	50.7%
Number of return home interviews held within 72 hours where YP attended (Overall)	43	53	36

7. Conclusion and next steps

As discussed, in the last twelve months there has been ongoing work to adjust and improve our city-wide responses and offer of support to children at risk of exploitation and wider contextual harm. This has been on both a strategic level – with the introduction of the Strategy Safeguarding Adolescent Group, corresponding webpages, and review of the Adolescent Safety Framework – and an operational level in terms of the realignment of resource within the Be Safe Team as described above.

Priorities going forward will include:

- Embedding the renewed ASF, with training to be delivered across CYPFS and communications to be offered across the partnership.
- Launch and promotion of the Safeguarding Adolescents and ASF webpages.
- Delivering changes within the Be Safe Team, with a continued focus on improved performance and achieving positive outcomes for children engaged with our service.
- Ensuring ongoing effective, proportionate, and timely information sharing and actions are delivered within the Daily Intelligence Briefing, specifically strengthening our links with education colleagues.

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Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Tracking Decisions 2023/24

	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
1)	The Council would write to MAT's to see how they were working towards the Plymouth Plan in driving towards a consistency across all schools and other area's in regards to SEMH; In addition Jim Barnicott would write to the work placed based co-ordinators and Multi Academy Trusts CEO's to ensure the place based plan continued to reflect the city's priorities.	Date: July 2024 Progress: In progress. Officer: Claire Hetherington
3)	Councillors to be distributed data as to how many foster carers from them having interest to then becoming a Plymouth City Council approved foster carer.	Date: November 2023 Response: In 2023/24 there were 96 enquiries to become a foster carer, 36 of these enquires went on to have a home visit. 19 applications were received with 12 progressing to becoming a foster carer.
13)	Members would be given a briefing on the Leaders for Excellence programme.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
14)	Members to be provided a briefing on the NSPCC Neglect tool.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
15)	Links to the councils recruitment drive to be shared to Committee Members to spread more awareness.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Tracking Decisions 2023/24

16)	Additional line to be placed within the Performance scorecard report for unregistered placements.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Will be in place for September's scrutiny. Officers will provide an update for the July meeting. Officer: Paul Stephens
17)	Examples of best practice in relation to the pupil premium would be circulated to Members.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
18)	A report would be produced to advise members of the numbers of children that were entitled to free schools meals but were electively home educated or were permanently excluded. How was this spread across the city.	Date: February 2024 Progress: The service was actively Working with CAPITA to be able to access this data as there is no report for this that can be automated. Officer: Isabelle Morgan
19)	Members would be provided the action plan that delivered the Attendance Strategy.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Officer: Jim Barnicott
20)	The Inclusion and Attendance toolkit would be circulated to Committee Members.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
21)	Education officers would arrange through the Participation team analysis into issues of attendance and bullying of children and young people within the LGBTQ+ community.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Officer: Jim Barnicott/Stuart Hogg
22)	Jim Barnicott to share materials that were taken to the Attendance Conference.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Tracking Decisions 2023/24

		Officer: Jim Barnicott
23)	Officers would investigate Youth Ascends feedback that the time taken to between applying for a bus pass and receiving it was too long.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Officer: ??
24)	Case study x2 for covering the use of service premium in the city. Officers would produce a position statement relating to service premium in the city.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
25)	Position statement for Pupil Premium spend relating to adopted children.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
26)	EEF pupil premium materials to be circulated to members.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Teaching and Learning Toolkit EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)
27)	Circulate Emotionally Based School Avoidance guidance to schools	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete
28)	Officers to revisit the attendance campaign work and spread wider	Date: February 2024 Progress: Met with Newham Council to discuss their attendance campaign, in the process of working with PCC comms team to look at Plymouth campaign and share the learning from previous campaign with headteachers. Officer: Isabelle Morgan
29)	Position statement as to what Plymouth's strategic approach was to reducing electively home educated numbers.	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete

Education and Children’s Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Tracking Decisions 2023/24

30)	How are our post CiC children supported? (They mentioned funding, which we have no control over, but we should have a post CiC offer via the Virtual School)	Date: February 2024 Progress: Complete Officer: Lee Earnshaw
31)	How robust are measures now to reduce multiple CP plans for individual children or families?	Date: 10 July Response: Prior to any initial child protection conference (ICPC) there is a consultation between the Social Worker/Team Manager and Independent Chair of the proposed ICPC. The Quality Assurance and performance framework provides further opportunities to have a clear line of sight on practice to reduce the likelihood of repeat referrals and repeat CP plans.

Education and Children's Social Care OSC

Work Programme 2024/25



Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this work programme is intended to be of strategic relevance.

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this Committee's work programme, please contact Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor) on 01752 305155.

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for Consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member / Officer
18 July 2024	Child Exploitation	4	Scrutiny request to have a report yearly and to review current and changing themes in the City.	Martine Aquilina
	Performance Scorecard	4	KPI's for the performance of Children's Social Care and Education, Participation and Skills Services.	Paul Stephens
	SEND Sufficiency Commission Strategy	5	To review the proposed strategy for the City.	Amanda Paddison
	Children's Services Improvement and transformation plan	5	To review Children's services improvement and transformation plan. This item would see young people involvement and to hear their views on the plan.	Vivien Lines
	Education, Employment and Training Review	4	To include Care experienced children and care leavers.	Tina Brinkworth
10 October	Elective Home Education			
	Homes for Cared for Children			
	Suspensions and exclusions			
	Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report		Scrutiny to have an update from the Safeguarding Children's Board.	John Clements

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prior itisati on Scor e	Reason for Consideration	Responsib le Cabinet Member /Officer
14 November	Attainment			
6 February				

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prior itisati on Scor e	Reason for Consideration	Responsib le Cabinet Member /Officer
Items Raised by the Committee to be scheduled for 2023/24				
2023/24	Cost of Living for Education	(4)	Identified for consideration by the Committee at its July 2023 meeting.	Councillor Sally Cresswell
	Early Help	(4)	Family Hubs	
	Accommodation of cared for children and care leavers	(4)	A Key component of the improvement work.	
	Transitions to adulthood	(4)		
	Attendance Strategy	(4)	Key component of improvement work	
	Alternative Provision Strategy		This would include information on exclusions and suspensions in the city.	
	Children Missing Full Time Education			
	Education Mobility issues			
	Traveller Community			
	Children in the criminal justice system			
	Toileting in schools		Young Safeguarders	
Issues Identified for Select Committee Reviews				
	Emotional Health and Wellbeing of children		Inclusion/Persistent absence/Child death/SEND/EHCP's/Toileting	

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The following relates to exempt or confidential matters (Para(s) 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Govt Act 1972). Any breach of confidentiality could prejudice the Council/person/body concerned & might amount to a breach of the councillors /employees codes of conduct.

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