



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
Plymouth PL1 3BJ

Please ask for Jake Metcalfe
T 01752 305155
E democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk
Published 29 January 2025

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday 6 February 2025
2.00 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Reilly, Chair

Councillor Wood, 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.

The Council is a data controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with authority's published policy.

You can watch any of our webcast meetings on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com). For further information on attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link - [Get Involved](#)

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes **(Pages 1 - 10)**

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 November 2024.

4. Chair's Urgent Business

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

5. Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood: **(Pages 11 - 20)**

6. Local Area SEND Improvement Plan Progress Report: **(Pages 21 - 32)**

7. Pupil Place Planning Report: **(Pages 33 - 66)**

8. Q3 2024/25 Performance Report: **(Pages 67 - 84)**

9. Children, Young People and Families Service Q3 Improvement Update: **(Pages 85 - 96)**

10. Family Homes for Plymouth Children: **(Pages 97 - 110)**

11. Young Female Violence Prevention Programme: **(Pages 111 - 116)**

12. Tracking Decisions: **(Pages 117 - 120)**

13. Work Programme: **(Pages 121 - 124)**

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 14 November 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Reilly, in the Chair.

Councillor Wood, Vice Chair.

Councillors McLay, McNamara, Ney, S.Nicholson, Raynsford, Simpson, Steel and Stephens.

Also in attendance: Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships), Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications), Lisa Linscott (Service Director for Education, Participation and Skills), Vivien Lines (Project Consultant), Jim Barnicott (Head of Education and Virtual School), Isabelle Kolinsky (Service Manager Inclusion and Welfare), Martine Aquilina (Head of Service), Naomi Sutton (Practice Manager Besafe), PC Dani Albany (Devon and Cornwall Police), Susan London (Performance Advisor), Paul Stephens (Performance Advisor) and Jake Metcalfe (Democratic Advisor).

The meeting started at 11.00 am and finished at 1.21pm.

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.

81. **Apologies**

There were apologies from:

- Councillor Mrs Beer, Councillor Sally Nicholson substituted;
- Councillor Gilmour, Councillor Ney substituted;
- Councillor Krizanac, Councillor Raynsford substituted;
- Councillor Tippetts

82. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

83. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 10 October 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

84. **Chair's Urgent Business**

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

85. **2023/2024 Education Attainment in Plymouth**

Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the report to the Board and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The report presented unvalidated data of the achievement of children in Plymouth;
- b) Overall there was a stable and improving picture across the phases of Education in the city;
- c) Early Years outcomes for 2024 were improved on the previous year with 66.7% of children achieving an overall good level of development within a trajectory of moving closer to the national average of 68%;
- d) Year one phonic screening check outcomes remained strong at 81.2% achieving the standard score above the 2024 national average of 80%;
- e) At Keystage Two overall results for reading, writing and maths combined were improved on the previous year and indications were that they would remain above the national benchmark;
- f) Early Key Stage Four indications are that Plymouth would draw closer, if not, matching national progress measured benchmarks;
- g) For Plymouth cared for children, Plymouth needed to continue to focus on ensuring that strong individual programmes of support were in place so that every child fulfilled their potential and progressed to a positive destination. Additional opportunities to strengthen numeracy and literacy skills would be key to ensuring this through high quality personal education plans (PEP);
- h) Whilst the results were promising, Plymouth would not be complacent and there were specific areas for development including ensuring that children developed the language skills required that would provide them with a strong basis for literacy.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- i) Best practice was shared through three strands including Plymouth's place based plan, the school effectiveness framework and then through multi-academy trusts (MATs);
- j) The Council was meeting with the city's MAT's to understand what resources they were putting into early years provision to support children;
- k) The Plymouth place based plan had two strands which focussed on and targeted transitions amongst the key stages including those transitioning from early years settings. There was a transition portal in place between settings and schools and ensured as much information as possible was passed

between them to ensure a smooth and detailed transition took place;

- l) The other strand focussed on early language acquisition and was being worked on with Health colleagues to ensure the best possible start for Plymouth's children. This strand would be key to Plymouth raising the bar across the school system;
- m) Service children analysis would be included when evaluating the validated results;
- n) Data in relation to pupils at ACE and looked after children were kept as headline data, to avoid them being identified;
- o) All Saints Academy was opening a community based hub to bring the community together around the school and would welcome Councillor visits to see the provision.

Action: Education officers would advise how protected playing fields were in the city to allow for the provision of physical education.

The Board agreed to note the report.

86. **Educational Attendance in Plymouth**

Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the report to the Board and highlighted the following key points:

- a) Improving schools attendance for children was a national focus with Plymouth highlighting it as a key priority;
- b) The Council's school attendance campaign undertaken in 2023 did not land well. Learning had been adopted and a much more gentle approach called 'The Strong Start' had early indications of falling much better by Plymouth residents;
- c) The message behind the campaign was to ensure children and families felt a sense of belonging in school;
- d) Issues around attendance were about recognising and understanding why families chose to keep children away from school or why children did not feel that they could attend;
- e) The attendance strategy and the place based plan were designed to tackle the underlying causes that impact school attendance.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- f) 2019 data for children attending schools in the west of the city indicated that they would achieve one grade below expectations. The most recent data was

now indicating that they would achieve a third of a grade below expectations. The Council was aware that it had much further to go in supporting children who were experiencing disadvantage to achieve their potential;

- g) Children who were experiencing disadvantage were more likely to move schools affecting their school attendance. Research evidenced that the first few weeks of the term were critical in how a child's attendance pattern would formulate;
- h) The Council was trying to change the messaging to children and families in relation to poor school attendance that the school valued them and wanted them part of their community and to provide the opportunity to develop relationships;
- i) Plymouth was in line with national and regional benchmarking in relation to authorised absences but Plymouth had higher unauthorised absences that weren't related to unauthorised holidays;
- j) Early intervention and support work for children that have, or may have special educational needs or disability, needed to happen more, and earlier, to ensure children and young people engaged fully in their education at an earlier stage;
- k) A parent survey to understand the factors of non-attendance at school would go live on 15 January 2025. This would inform the school attendance strategy and would also provide a clear understanding of what the barriers were for children and families;
- l) Bullying was a significant reason as to why parents were electively home educating their children. The parent survey would be able to clearly advise if bullying was a prevalent theme for non-attendance at school;
- m) The Council had robust procedures in reviewing children that were Electively Home Educated (EHE) within the boundaries of the Department for Education (DFE) guidance. The previous ILACS inspection identified this area to be positive for the Council;
- n) Access and attendance officers would meet with schools to discuss children that were on part time timetables. Early Help link workers would also be present at those meetings to have joint planning sessions around those children.

Action: Three-year trend data of absences would be provided to Scrutiny Members.

Action: Data on how long a child/young person would wait for a school place would be provided to the Panel. Cllr McNamara would be provided data of how many children were waiting at the upper end of the wait time.

The Board agreed to note the report.

87. **Alternative Provision Assurance Report**

Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the report to the Board and highlighted the following key points:

- a) By law, those children and young people that were permanently excluded must have education arranged for them by the local authority as soon as possible and by the sixth day at the latest;
- b) In Plymouth, day six provision was provided by ACE, part of the Transforming Futures trust;
- c) The role of ACE was to support children to transition back into mainstream school as quickly as possible, however for some children where needs were particularly complex, they may transition into special schools or for some who joined ACE during years 10 and 11 they would remain there and complete their examinations;
- d) The development of an alternative provision (AP) specialist task force would further support good planning and outcomes for children who had been permanently excluded.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- e) The transition strand in the place-based plan included transitions into post-16 and there had been representation in the place based working group from Plymouth's colleges;
- f) There were termly monitoring visits in place with colleges to look specifically at cohorts of vulnerable young people to ensure that they were attending well and making good progress;
- g) SHARP were working directly with schools to put on workshops with young people to address vaping and attempt to reduce its usage by young people in Plymouth. Vaping use amongst children and young people would be addressed through the place-based plan to address the issue across the phases of school from primary through to secondary. Since the work had been in place, there were no instances of permanent exclusions in relation to drug related vaping;
- h) Children and young people who were stepping down from Alternative Provision would be managed by the Fair Access Panel, a partnership between the local authority and Plymouth schools. This partnership would meet once a month to review children that were ready to step back into mainstream education.

The Board agreed to note the report.

88. **Q2 2024/25 CYPF and EPS Performance Report**

Paul Stephens (Performance Advisor) and Susan London (Performance Advisor) presented the report to the Panel and highlighted the following key points:

- a) The report reported on quarter two of 2024/25, July to September and there were additions to the standing item report which provided links to alternative sources of published data which provided an opportunity to review historical information;
- b) The next quarter of information would have more up to date benchmarking as data would be available from 2023/24.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- c) The service was working through an assessment backlog of which the service was making rapid progress following additional staffing and more coming on board in January 2025. The service had been hitting its deadlines for six week assessments since the additions and 20 week deadlines were significantly improved. The full backlog would be completed by October 2025, which included any new assessments for plans coming in. Scrutiny of this work was undertaken by the independent SEND Improvement Board which received a monthly report on all the detail that sat within;
- d) The Council continued efforts to increase in Kinship care support;
- e) The social worker workforce was being trained to use the family network meetings routinely as part of every intervention with families;
- f) The Council continued to work with early partners to build the capacity in the system to support families at that early stage. Pilots were developing in Stonehouse where it was the intention to bring together partners to offer a more integrated model of early help delivery, early in the life of problems to meeting family's needs;
- g) Plymouth's targeted support service organised a marketplace for professionals across the city to come together and learn about what services were available from the community voluntary sector as well as statutory agencies;
- h) The Council was looking to have additional support in the MASH around domestic violence and substance misuse. The Probation service was now in the MASH one day a week;
- i) The Council continued to work in a relational way with its families which has been known to be more effective in creating change within families. When families come back through to Children's services quickly following a period of closure, they would usually return to the same team and they were not expected to go through the front door.

The Board agreed to note the report.

89. **Children, Young People and Families Service Quarterly Improvement Update**

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

- a) The Children, Young People and Families Improvement Plan had been in place since the inspection of the local authority children services in January 2024;
- b) Progress had been overseen by the Plymouth Children's Improvement Board and put in place as part of the statutory intervention following the focus visit in December 2022. The improvements noted by Plymouth's improvement partner and the DfE, the intervention was lifted earlier in the year;
- c) The Council and its partners agreed to the continuation of a Board, to meet in order to ensure that progress continued to be made in key areas, in particular the Out of Hours service, the local authority designated officer (LADO) arrangements and the response to unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). These areas were identified by Ofsted as 'in need of improvement' and the remedial work had progressed well so much so that Dorset County Council, Plymouth's sector-led improvement partner, was able to confirm to the Board in September that good progress was made;
- d) Improvements at the Front Door were sustained and the refocusing of Plymouth's targeted help services were seeing positive impacts on more families receiving earlier help;
- e) There was however more to do in order to further strengthen the Front Door to children's services, improving the journey of children and families from needing to receiving help;
- f) There were improved timeliness of the completion of assessments and the workforce development undertaken to ensure that they were all of high quality;
- g) In addition, maintaining caseloads within an acceptable range was a key part of enabling social workers to complete consistently high quality practice;
- h) Quality assurance work continued to provide the bedrock of practice improvement;
- i) The particular challenge faced by the service included the recruitment of experienced social workers.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- j) The service faced issues of re-referrals where families received support from early help and they were then closed after a period of intervention to earlier help or more universal services. Those families then did not take up that support and their situation deteriorated again which required further intervention. The service was working hard to address this by ensuring professionals from universal services were involved from the very beginning;
- k) The service was always trying to build capacity in family networks in order to support sustained change over the long term;
- l) The service was successful in recruiting a permanent LADO;
- m) There were 18 UASC and it was commented that Plymouth's numbers were low compared to the formula that was used and it was expected that Plymouth would receive more UASC in the future;
- n) The values and behaviours framework was in its final draft and was being socialised with managers and staff across the service. It was designed in partnership with staff and work on it began when formulating the services' three-year plan. The service in Plymouth would have high expectations, high support, high challenge as its philosophy but this framework would provide detail behind what it meant day to day for all staff in children's services.

The Board agreed to note the report.

90. **Child Exploitation and the Philomena Protocol**

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

- a) As with all cities, the nature and scope of child exploitation was changing rapidly and Plymouth had 17 active drug lines for organised crime groups. Those criminals often targeted children's vulnerabilities to exploit and criminalise them;
- b) Over a two year period the team had worked closely with the child centred policing team and made great strides in terms of identifying children at risk of sexual and physical exploitation, offering those children interventions as well as targeting the adults who perpetrated those crimes;
- c) The Philomena Protocol was a police initiative to help, locate and safely return a young person as quickly as possible when they are missing. The basis of the scheme was for vital information about the young person to be recorded on forms which could be used to locate them safely and quickly;
- d) Carers, parents and guardians were encouraged to complete the form with as much detail as possible and to keep that safe somewhere, along with a recent photograph. The form would then require regular updates with new information on description, friends, associates, locations, frequented phone

numbers and identifiers to maximise the opportunity for the young person to be found.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- e) Children and young people that were known to the Youth Justice service were more likely to have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and therefore more likely to have been known to children's services;
- f) 60 – 75% of children that went missing that were responded to by the BeSafe team were known to children's services;
- g) The Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) gave the service the ability to look at indicators and vulnerabilities that were associated with young people being at risk of exploitation;
- h) When police officers engage with children or young people on the street, they would complete a PPN, a safeguarding form which would highlight any concerns which would then be shared with school, Health and Social services;
- i) Children or young people already involved in violent or aggressive behaviours were already likely involved with exploitation and being targeted by particular people;
- j) Councillors would receive a briefing on exploitation in December.

The Panel agreed to note the report.

91. **Tracking Decisions**

The Board agreed to note the Tracking Decisions Log.

92. **Work Programme**

Members of the Panel added the following to the work programme:

- Family Homes for Plymouth's children. This would include the residential provision plan.

Members of the Panel agreed to recommend to the Scrutiny Management Board that:

The Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel has an item from the Plymouth Schools Sporting Partnership to look at the provision of sport and physical activities delivered to schools, including early years.

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	06 February 2025
Title of Report:	Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Lisa Linscott/ Stephen Beet
Contact Email:	Stephen.beet@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood project and progress on delivering the six priorities of the project.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. To note the report

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. None

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This is a project in the One Children's Service Programme

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Will deliver within current budget

Financial Risks

None

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.*

Project promotes opportunities for young people

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							

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: Lisa Linscott											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 29/01/2025											
Cabinet Member approval:											
Cllr Laing via email on 24/01/2025											
Cllr Aspinall via email on 29/01/2025											

TRANSITIONS AND PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

Plymouth Children's Services



I. INTRODUCTION

'[A Bright Future](#) 2021 – 2026' outlines how local partners planned to support the best outcomes for all children. The vision focused upon three areas, to stay happy and healthy, to be safe and to aspire and achieve. This project is developed within this vision and takes on a wider system responsibility for the development work needed in Children's, Adults and Health services to enable an effective joined up system.

The delivery of the Transitions: Preparation for Adulthood project is a fundamental project in the One Children's Service Programme, with the intention to help children and families at the earliest sign of need, and to provide support, ranging from advice through to specialist intervention. This commitment has been formalised into one of the 10 priorities outlined in the One Children's Service 3-Year Plan: 'Preparing all children and young people well for adulthood and ambitious employment.' It aims to, in collaboration with all key city partners, build on the existing Transitions offer to develop a network of services, processes and interactions that are able to understand, predict the need and respond together to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity.

CURRENT SERVICE OFFER

Universal Offer

There is a preparing for adulthood section of the SEND local offer on the Plymouth Online Directory: [Preparing for adulthood - Plymouth Online Directory](#) whilst it contains some useful information, it is focused on families of children with SEND and does not overtly address transitions and preparation for adulthood.

An integrated early help approach in Plymouth is provided through the universal and community network of support, using the Early Help Assessment Tool and a Team around the Family approach. To date this has been offered in many but not all services across the city to support families and children, and again, does not have a specific focus on transitions.

Plymouth has commissioned ten emerging Family Hubs, partly funded through the Start for Life and Family Hubs Grant, six are now open and a further four are on schedule for 2024. The family hubs are offering a range of support through universal offer to extra/early help and safeguarding and SEND support for families. [Family Hubs | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#) They have created a growing network of agencies who are building together an integrated offer locally for families.

Targeted Offer

In Plymouth we have developed a response to the need of disabled children and those in the care of the Local Authority that ensures a number of services are commissioned from the 'adult service market' to support young people from the age of 16 onwards (e.g. improving access Psychological Therapies, accommodation, adult social care transition worker) and some services that for children and young people can reach up into early adulthood (e.g. Children's Disability Team Transition Social Worker, CAMHS children in care team, 0-25 EHCP officers)

Providers

A diverse array of organisations currently supports Transitions in Plymouth, ensuring that children and families receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs. Key providers include:

- **Plymouth City Council:** Plymouth city Council have many staff and departments working on different areas of Early help. Social Service are often those who triages cases and coordinate with various partners to ensure children and families receive appropriate support.
- **Family Hubs:** Managed by Barnardo's, Action for Children, and Lark, these hubs serve as primary points of access for universal early help services. They receive requests for support from nurseries, schools, colleges, and other agencies across the city, as well as from families who walk in seeking help.
- **Health Services:** Partners include Livewell Southwest, Public Health and NHS Plymouth, providing health-related support.
- **Schools and Colleges**
- **Community Organisations:** Plymouth Information and Advice Service (PIAS) Safe Families, MIND, Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service (PDAS), Plymouth Safeguarding Partnership, Hamoaze House, Harbour, The Children's Society, Youth Services, Argyle Community Trust, YMCA, Improving Lives Plymouth, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and Plymouth Community Homes to name a few who work with families to address challenges and prevent escalation.

CURRENT SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND FEEDBACK

Feedback from the information gathering stage of the project indicated that while there were areas of good work taking place, there is insufficient join up between services, meaning that there is too much opportunity for families to fall into gaps, wait too long or not have needs identified and met swiftly enough.

Currently when a children's services client is approaching their 18th birthday (age varies between 16-18) a referral is made to Livewell/ASC to assess their ongoing needs in adulthood. There are 2 "arms" to the referral process:

- Safeguarding – Adult social care intake team

The majority of these referrals will be from permanency and include Children in Care and Care Leavers. To meet the ASC threshold there will also be some additional needs.

- Care and Support – Livewell (part of the ASC intake team commissioned by ASC). These referrals are usually via CDT and SEND and Livewell assess the current care plans inc. living arrangement and will recommend whether to continue with the current care plan or what changes will be made when the child turns 18.

There are various pathways that transitions can take and these are as follows:

- Employment
- Independent Living
- Community Inclusion
- Health

A young person transitioning may require assistance with one or a number of the above pathways. A decision is made via all the agencies involved who will be the lead worker on a case-by-case basis and referrals are not always made in a timely manner and can be very last minute which can make the transition rushed, chaotic and not ideal for the young person.

The Commissioned services for these pathways are:

Theme	Commissioned services for children	Commissioned services for adults
Employment	CSW	Supported employment for adults (PLUSS)
Independent living	Placements including fostering, residential, 16+ supported accommodation and supported lodgings Merrivale training flats Short breaks	Supported living Sheltered and extra care (usually for over 50's) Shared Lives Housing routes
Community inclusion	Family Hubs Young carers services Parent Carer voice	Wellbeing Hubs Befriending Day opportunities Non- dom floating support Adult carers services
Health	Camhs Health funded dom care	Adult mental health services

Recently, Children's Services have formed a Monthly Transitions Meeting which is a multi-agency meeting including Children's Services (CSW/CDT/Permanency), Livewell, Health, Adult Services, NHS). The intention of the meeting is to have oversight of children aged 15 ³/₄ who have an agreement to put a referral into ASC. These are added to a spreadsheet and includes relevant information and progress. Currently the emphasis is on children fast approaching their 18th birthday.

As corporate parents to our Children in Care we have set up the Corporate Parenting Managers Operational Group which is another multi-agency group which looks at strategic planning and support and our corporate parenting responsibilities which includes transitions. This multi-agency meeting feeds into the Operational Managers Board which is attended by PCC managers and Cllrs.

Plymouth Parent/Carer Voice

Bullet point feedback from this forum was as follows:

- Transitions between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health is not good as young people may not have a consultant, and this can affect ongoing support.
- Autistic young people may not meet Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) criteria, and this can sometimes be decided 6-8 weeks prior to 18th Birthday which means services can just stop.
- Respite care for parents and carers is limited and cannot be used for prolonged holiday care.
- The success of transitions is dependent on the social worker – some are very good some not so.
- Not all social workers live in Plymouth, and this can create a barrier to forming a bond with a young person as appointments are rigid and the worker is not accessible.
- Transition planning is quite often left to the last minute and needs to happen earlier.
- Agencies work in a siloed way.
- The innovation fund which is used for young people to attend activities finishes at 18 and there is no appropriate provision in Adult Services for young people. This can make the young person feel isolated and reduces their interaction with peers.

PCCV runs "Preparing for Adulthood Conferences" for young people aged 14-25 and there have been 2 to date. These are multi-agency and are attended by various organisations to engage with and disseminate information to young people. This can include On Course South West, ASC, Community Connections, Plymouth University etc.

ACTIONS AND PROGRESS

Through the course of the summer 2024 we ran a series of workshops with partners to share the findings of the initial research and to gain support for a multi-agency approach to improving transitions for children and young people across Plymouth, regardless of whether they have a SEND, health, or social care need, or no need at all.

This has led to the creation of a multi-agency Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Board, co-chaired by senior leaders from Children's and Adults Services, with clear terms of reference and an associated action plan. The Board meets monthly to monitor the progress of the creation and delivery of the Transitions Action Plan. The Board was launched in September 2024.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Our vision, principles and project scope have been created in multi-agency collaboration and with input from children and young people.

Our vision is that all children and young people in Plymouth will have their voices heard and have the right support and the ambitious opportunities for their futures.

We will achieve this by being:

Collaborative: Working across organisations and with children and young people to build trust and develop the required pathways and information to make transitions consistent and equitable.

Empowering: Giving staff, young people and families the information, advice and opportunities to enable effective pathways to be developed for all Plymouth's children and young people

Ambitious: Removing barriers and obstacles and encouraging all children and young people to aspire and reach as far as they can for their own futures.

Honest: Being clear about what support can and can't be offered and sharing information with all parties openly, transparently and with sensitivity.

SCOPE

The scope of the project incorporates six priorities:

1. Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with SEND
2. Transitions into, through and beyond school for Children and Young People
3. Transitions from Children's to Adult's Social Care Provision
4. Transitions from Children's to Adult Health Provision
5. Transitions from Young Carers to Adult Carers
6. Transitions Universal Advice and Guidance

Each strand has a multi-agency delivery group with a lead officer from across the partnership.

Progress Of Each Strand

Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with SEND

- The data cleanse for the academic year 2024/2025 is complete with the Children's Social Work Group. Regular updates are embedded into practice. With accurate data we can accurately report EET, SEET and NEET status of young people.

- There has been a continued shift in EHCP timeliness and EHCP reviews. There are now 100% decisions made within 7 days of the 6-week decision mark, and 88% on time within 6 weeks. Team output of final plans has increased 72% in October.
- The needs and voice of children and young people is understood and embedded into the EHCP. Their voice reflects improvement in the way in which they are supported through the pathway to adulthood.
- The decision-making panel for post 16 has been re shaped to ensure that clear communication and processes are in place across SEND and commissioning.
- EHCPs embed a consistently good standard of preparation for transition at all phases.
- 57 Supported Internships November 2024, increasing to 75 Supported Internships by March 2025.
- Employment, Education and Training status for our SEND young people is 90.4% (November 2024) up from 72% (January 2023).

Transitions into, through and beyond school for Children and Young People

- An action plan has been developed following sessions between the cross-sector membership of the group with specific actions being followed up with appropriate colleagues and monthly oversight by the group lead. Action areas include:
- Deferred/delayed entry into school from Early Years provision - A task and finish group has been established. This includes looking into the reasons for the increase and consideration of the potential impact. Currently undertaking a survey with settings and parents/carers with a questionnaire developed for use in the New Year. Responses will be evaluated in line with research findings leading to the development of co-produced guidance for settings, parents/carers.
- Placed Based Work - One of the strands is working on transitions at all stages of a child's educational journey. This will consider the most impactful elements of transition including enhanced transitions for children with SEND. Following a launch at a headteacher conference, a Placed Based working group session took place on 9.12.24. The first draft of action plans developed, building on the summary feedback from the strand consultation groups is currently underway. Through consistency of approach, with identified best practice, young people will have plans that enable a smooth, positive transition into a new setting.
- The Child in Need framework – Being relaunched in the spring, leading to improved care plans developed through a collaborative approach around care planning for these children. So that all relevant professionals are aware of the support for children open to social care leading.
- Updated accessibility of information support available - CDC (Child Development Centre) page within the trust has been updated, therapies teams (physiotherapy and occupational therapy) along with other CDC services now have individual dedicated generic emails where referrals, and queries can be sought. Training sessions with SENCOs have been delivered which include service information.

Transitions from Children's to Adult's Social Care Provision

- Transitions Protocol from Children's Services to Adult Social Care to be finalised and launched (31/01/2025). This will mean earlier assessment of need and integration of this within pathway planning.
- Service Managers for Children's Social Care (CSC) to ensure that all children in care aged 14 upwards where it is considered likely that an Adult Social Care (ASC) referral will be needed have been added to the Tracker (By 17/01/2025) . Adult Services will be able to forecast future capacity requirements.
- Service Managers and Heads of Service to undertake dip samples of social work supervision for young people aged 14+ with additional needs to ensure that the early alert/referral process

is being discussed and actioned in supervision (28/02/2025) . Young people will experience earlier assessment and smoother planning.

- Transitions Pathway on a Page document have been drafted and meetings have taken place with the VOICE group to gain young people's views in respect of most pathways (Social Worker to Personal Assistant, Housing, CAMHS to AMHS) but not yet for CSC to ASC as this has not been completed. CSC to ASC Transitions Pathway on a Page to be developed with young people after Transitions Protocol is finalised (14/02/2025). Staff and young people will be clear on the pathway, timeframes, and responsibilities.
- There will be earlier pathway planning for children in care transitioning to adult social care.

Transitions from Children's to Adult Health Provision

- An action plan has been developed following three co-design sessions between the Local Authority, Livewell Southwest and University Hospitals Plymouth. Leadership arrangements and a monthly oversight group are in place to oversee the delivery of the plan.
- 3 actions have been completed relating to LSW, CAMHS and AMHS relating to successful recruitment of transition support workers, development of a transitions leaflet and reviewing the transitions policy between CAMHS and AMHS. 14 further actions have been identified with planned completion dates pre-April 2025. This will lead to improved patient related information and improved capacity to support transitions.
- Patient and Carer engagement is planned over the next quarter to identify further areas for focus once the initial actions have been implemented and to gauge the impact and benefit created from the initial actions.

Transitions from Young Carers to Adult Carers

- Young Carers Assessment & Transition Assessment - Follow up workshop with Time4U partners to develop the Young Carers (end of Jan) which will develop a workplan. Assessment and Transition templates and guidance as part of the assessment and transition pathway to be shared including young carers feedback
- Education - School's completing the Spring School Census to identify young carers through the young carers' indicators. Education have given guidance to schools on completing the census which opens on 16th January and closes on 12th February. Awareness raising training and young carers assessment training will be offered to schools and other professionals. Schools' young carers network meeting taking place in Spring Term led by The Children's Society. Young Carers Education Support Team has ceased but remaining staff member is being supported by The Children's Society who have developed a new capacity building support offer for schools.
- Voice of Young Carers - The 10 wishes audit completed by Time4U Partners, Housing and UHP which will help to inform our workplan going forward.
- Online Offer - Review of the POD Young Carers Support Hub pages to update with new support offers.
- Peer Review Visit - Peer Review taking place with a planned visit to the young carers group on 21st January 2025 and a carer specific session for the carer's provider and commissioners.
- Carers Strategy - Launched on Carers Rights Day 21st November 2025. Development of the Action Plan for the Carers Strategy will be monitored by the Carers Strategic Partnership Board.
- Data - Launch of the Young Carers Dashboard which pulls data from Eclipse (children's) and Capita. LIFT data pilot potential to be used to increase uptake of Carer Allowance.
- Research - Exploring opportunity with HDRC to build a research project on young carers and adult carers.

- Carers Allowance - DWP are developing carer friendly information that can be shared with young carers and adult carers. DWP also offered to attend YC Action Day in March 2025 to promote the Carers Allowance benefit.

Transitions Universal Advice and Guidance

- The focus for the Universal Advice and Guidance strand is to ensure there is clear, and easy to access and digest, information, advice and guidance for children, young people, parents, and carers from early years all the way through to work and further/higher education. This will require research and a review of existing information which is then co-produced with children and families. We will capture what information is required and in what format, to provide refreshed information, advice, and guidance. The following exercises are being undertaken:
- User Journey Mapping – how do children, young people and families find information and advice for Transitions
- Commissioning Mapping – what commissioned services are provided for Transitions advice, guidance, and service delivery from 0-25 years
- Attendance at the PPCV Transitions: Preparation for Adulthood Conference in February 2025 which will provide an opportunity for collaboration with children, young people, and families.
- Following this activity, the strand will design an offer, co-produced with young people and families, that will include information and guidance on how a young person can step into living independently and where to go for help.

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	06 February 2025
Title of Report:	Local Area SEND Improvement Plan Progress Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Childrens Services)
Author:	Lisa McDonald, Head of SEND
Contact Email:	
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report provides comprehensive information on the progress made in the Plymouth Local Area SEND Improvement Plan since the local area SEND inspection which took place in June 2023. The aim is to highlight the advancements in each of the priority action areas as verified in the SEND critical review in January 2025.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. For the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel to note the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. Alternative options considered and rejected

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This Plan aims to make Plymouth a great place to grow up by keeping children, adults and communities safe by providing quality public services, focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Council is committed to providing an excellent service to its SEND children and young people which has been reflected in the proposed budget, subject to council agreement.

Financial Risks

N/A

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None.

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

* 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	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: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 29/01/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)											
Date approved: 27/01/2025											

EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS

Local Area SEND Improvement Plan Progress Report
January 2025



Overview

This report provides comprehensive information on the progress made in the Plymouth Local Area SEND Improvement Plan since the local area SEND inspection which took place in June 2023. The aim is to highlight the advancements in each of the priority action areas.

Local Area SEND Critical Review

The critical review held in January 2025 aimed to establish what progress has been made since the inspection and to test what impact this is having on children and young people. The review had six distinct elements:

1. A new Local Area SEND Self Evaluation Form (SEF)
2. Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV) survey
3. A critical review workshop to review progress against the actions on the Local Area SEND Improvement Plan.
4. Creation of a strategic case study from each of the nine priority areas to demonstrate progress and learning since the inspection.
5. Collaborative audits of six children, including multi-agency partnership auditing of the children's files, and a visit to each of the children in their school or setting.
6. Discussion groups with children and young people in mainstream schools about their experiences, led by the Participation Team

The final three elements were completed at the end of January, and therefore the findings have not been able to be included in this report due to the timing of Scrutiny Panel.

Local Area SEND Self Evaluation Form (SEF)

The Local Area SEND SEF has been fully updated to represent and evaluate the current work of the local area to support children and young people with SEND and to be in line with the Ofsted local area SEND inspection criteria.

Our SEF is representative of the local area partnership and a document owned by all. Collectively we hold high ambitions for our children and young people with SEND, and we keep our children and young people at the heart of what we do. We have robust governance in place which has a cycle of review and challenge to ensure this.

Our partnership ensures that children, young people and their families have regular opportunities to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them. We hold termly (6) forums for parents and carers, and make use of parent carer surveys, and we have a feedback loop for children and young people led by the council's Participation Team.

Please read the SEND SEF here: [SEND SEF](#)

Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV) survey

The main respondents of the PPCV survey were parents and carers of children with SEND with an EHCP, and those with SEND without an EHCP.

Service strengths identified from the survey were:

1. **Education and School Support:**

- Special schools and personalised placements like Mill Ford School, Heather Bridge, and Courtlands received significant praise for meeting individual needs.
- Dedicated staff such as SENCOs and supportive teachers were frequently appreciated.
- School transition plans, tutoring arrangements, and accommodations for GCSE exams were highlighted as beneficial.
- Forest schools and alternative provisions (e.g., Flint and Steel, outdoor learning programs) were effective for engagement and wellbeing.

2. **External Support Services:**

- Services like PIAS, Routeways, and Barnardo's were deemed invaluable, providing emotional, educational, and administrative support.
- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were helpful when accessible.
- Fit and Fed programs and direct payments supported extracurricular and care needs.

3. **Parental Involvement:**

- Parents often played critical roles in sourcing tutors, managing transitions, and advocating for children's needs.
- Consistent communication and collaboration with schools were essential for success.

4. **Community and Extracurricular Activities:**

- Clubs like Plymouth Dance and Theatre Royal were beneficial for creativity and social engagement.
- Activities fostering routine and low-demand environments at home or in small-group settings worked well for many children.

The key findings and recommendations were:

1. **Service Availability:** Increase the number and variety of wraparound care options, particularly for older SEND children and during school holidays.
2. **Specialist Provisions:** Expand resources like speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behaviour support.
3. **Funding and Training:** Address staffing shortages with better training and funding to ensure schools can support diverse needs.
4. **EHCP Improvements:** Streamline EHCP updates, ensure timely reviews, and involve appropriate specialists throughout educational transitions.
5. **Awareness and Access:** Improve communication about available services (e.g., Local Offer, short breaks) and simplify the access process.
6. **Parental Involvement:** Incorporate parent feedback in service design and policymaking to address unmet needs effectively.
7. **Streamline EHCP Processes:** Reduce delays and enhance communication between families and Local Authority.
8. **Increase Funding and Resources:** Expand capacity for special schools, therapies, and direct payments to meet growing demand.
9. **Enhance Support Services:** Broaden the scope and reach of mental health support, sensory assessments, and post-18 planning assistance.
10. **Improve Training and Inclusion in Schools:** Equip educators with better SEN training and adapt curriculums to cater to diverse needs.
11. **Expand Extracurricular Programs:** Provide more inclusive and accessible activities for secondary-age children.
12. **Parental Support:** Offer clearer guidance and dedicated personnel to assist families in navigating complex systems.

Critical Review Workshop

A critical review workshop has been held with all partners on 9th January 2025 to review the plan. The workshop facilitation group included the DfE Adviser and the Head of SEND from Telford and Wrekin, ensuring that it therefore was robust and objective. The workshop findings were then moderated by the Service Director and Head of SEND. The findings are that of the 55 actions in the plan:

- 17 are deemed to be not yet fully completed.
- 31 are completed and now monitoring for evidence of impact on children and young people.
- 7 are completed and there is evidence of clear impact on children and young people.

Feedback from partners on the experience of being involved in the critical review workshop included:

“It was helpful to share thoughts together and reflect honestly on progress, areas still to develop and how we evidence impact. IT issues aside, a helpful process, thanks.”

“Great to be a part of it - there are lots of reasons to be positive and hopeful, although there is a need to be realistic about what we can actually say and evidence at this stage.”

“Very helpful session to learn about the work being undertaken as a new member to Plymouth. Really good conversations on testing our impact on children and young people.”

“Good to have some open conversations about progress with some very dedicated colleagues and reflect on how we move forward in each area of SEND improvement for children and families. However, as with many such meetings, I find the available time is not commensurate with the importance of the task and the depth of thought and reflection needed for it... I recognise the time constraints but equally acknowledge this potentially limits input and may affect the quality of response and ultimately, action. That said, overall, this was a very engaging session, if a little short for the value of the task.”

“Good to hear that so much has already happened and the impact so far. Particularly interesting to hear other perspectives and learn from each other.”

The key outcomes from the review thus far are detailed against each of the priority areas below.

Priority Action Area I: Leadership and Governance

The plan emphasises that leaders must ensure children and young people with SEND are at the heart of all improvement plans, with clear oversight and tracking.

Significant progress has been made in this area, with the appointment of a permanent Head of SEND and the ongoing implementation of leadership development programs. The voice of children and parent/carers is present in the recruitment processes for leadership roles. There is a full time SEND commissioner in the ICB and an ICB Head of SEND and Children in Care. The ICB now has an aligned children's portfolio, inclusive of children's mental health, SEND and all core children's services.

Whilst the Service Director for Children's Social Care is absent and the Service Director for EPS is leaving, there is now strength in depth within the services to ensure that SEND Improvement Plan continues to be driven forward. From families' perspective there has been a lot of disruption in the past five years, with a number of senior leaders changing over this period. We need to continue to improve the relationships and long-term stability between senior leaders and families.

Leadership development is in place for senior and middle leaders, and a SEND training programme is in place for the local area partnership. Children's voice informed the Children's Services middle and senior leadership development programme 'Leaders for Excellence'.

Governance structures have been strengthened, and there has been positive feedback from the Department for Education (DfE) and SEND peer reviews, indicating robust oversight and effective leadership. The local area partnership improvement plan has strong governance in place with robust monitoring and holding to account via the independently chaired SEND Improvement Board, SEND Strategic Delivery Group chaired by the DCS, Children's Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet members via Cabinet Planning meetings. SEND Delivery is reviewed at the ICB Quality Committee bi-monthly.

Children and young people's voice feeds into each SEND Improvement Board meeting and has included the presentation of a video on inclusion made by children and young people, and their attendance at the Board to ask questions of Board members.

The SEND Improvement Plan was co-developed with children and families. There is regular communication with schools and settings to update them on the progress of the SEND Improvement Plan via the Schools Bulletin, Head Teacher briefings, the SENCo forum.

School leaders are members of the PSIB, SEND Strategic Board, SEND Strategic Delivery Group and priority delivery groups.

The Place Based Working Group is being led by one of the city's multi-academy trusts and has 100% focus on inclusion and belonging. The place-based work is fully multi-agency, cross phase. Learning is shared widely across the Head Teacher conferences. The SEND graduated approach is a key focus in termly Head Teacher Conferences, as requested by Head Teachers.

Priority Action Area 2: Early Identification and Support

The plan calls for the development and implementation of training on thresholds relating to vulnerability and risk, ensuring early identification of children at risk.

Progress in this area includes the completion of threshold training with over 400 attendees. Additionally, the integrated front door for referrals is being implemented, with a target completion date of April 2025. These efforts aim to enhance early identification and support for children with SEND.

There have been clear improvements in the ownership of the inclusion agenda and the importance of a partnership approach. Inclusion has been woven as a golden thread through all family hubs work, with a growing SEND offer and support for families from birth to 25.

Increased family communication has received positive feedback with monthly forums infographic updates offering transparent information about the local area progress. These have also been excellent opportunities to seek parent/carer feedback to add to the quality assurance and review.

There has been strong improvement across the transition processes to ensure that all children and young people's needs are identified succinctly, and there are no gaps in provision. The early years team have been expanded, and their approach refined which will allow for early targeted support, advice and guidance. Phase transfer for Y6-7 is being actioned on time and a transition portal is now embedded across schools to allow for succinct transfer of information.

In addition, the post 16 terms of reference have been finalised and the team fully reviewed. A preparation for adulthood quality assurance report has identified some strong practice across post 16 provisions, and within key stage four plans. The priority action plan will now focus on consistency within schools, and mapping offers for the local area.

A valuable addition to the EHCP annual review team has been the allocated officer for vulnerable children with low attendance and/ or at risk of provision breakdown. Targeted early annual reviews are supporting identification of need and offer of resource to ensure there is a team around the child.

Priority Action Area 3: Reducing Exclusions

To reduce the likelihood of exclusion for pupils with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), the plan outlines collaborative efforts.

Progress includes the launch of place-based strands and the refinement of action plans. Early identification of children with multiple suspensions has been implemented, resulting in a significant impact on reducing exclusions. These measures demonstrate a commitment to keeping children with SEND engaged in education.

The Place Based Plan launched at event on 9th December 2024, with the action plan for each of the six strands completed by 20th December 2024. The plan is wholly focused on inclusion and belonging. Progress against delivery is to be presented at Head Teacher Conference on 6th March 2025.

Learning from child's voice research of children who are permanently excluded will feed into the place-based work, with research findings shared in February 2025. The attendance survey and home education survey with Plymouth universities includes a survey for children. Surveys go live in January 2025. Research will be fed into the place-based strands and service design.

Work to date includes:

- The early identification of children with multiple suspensions - termly meetings are in place with schools to discuss individual children and prevent risk of permanent exclusion.
- The educational psychology service has developed a pilot to prevent permanent exclusions, working with schools on a different way of approaching the issue.
- The educational psychology service has produced resources for schools to understand physical behaviour and reduce risk of exclusion. This is now available to schools.
- The Ordinarily Available Provision has launched and is being used across schools in the city. This is now being monitored.
- A Vulnerable Pupils Panel has launched and is held monthly. It has strong multi-agency membership across the local area partnership supporting schools to reduce risk of permanent exclusion for vulnerable children. Educational outcomes for children referred to the panel are tracked for 12 months.
- Regular dip samples of educational outcomes for children known to a social worker are now embedded within One Children's Services and supporting practice developments.
- A research project into permanently excluded children which is driven by child's voice is being undertaken. Research findings will be presented to the Priority 3 Delivery Group in February.
- Targeted conversations are in place with schools to discuss planning for individual children with an EHCP who are on part time timetable or severely absent is taking place.
- A model for joint dip-sampling with schools is being developed and will be presented to the SEND Priority Delivery Group in February 2025.
- A 'Need to Know' process has been introduced for all primary permanent exclusions and all secondary exclusions of vulnerable children, increased oversight and planning for primary PEX and those on CiN or CP. PEX prevention.
- 61 permanent exclusion prevention meetings have been held since the start of academic year, of which only five have resulted in a permanent exclusion, none of whom have an EHCP.

The work has had an impact on numbers of children with an EHCP being permanently excluded, with a reduction of 40% (2) this academic year to date. Of the three children with an EHCP who were due

to be permanently excluded this academic year, one was from a Cornish school and one permanent exclusion was quashed at Independent Review Panel.

The data for the year to date shows there has been:

- 22% (273) reduction in number of suspensions for children who require SEN Support in school.
- 33% (75) reduction in number of suspensions for children with EHCP
- 28% (10) reduction in number of permanent exclusions
- 40% (2) reduction in number of permanent exclusions children with EHCP

Priority Action Area 4: Risk Assessment for Waiting Lists

The plan emphasises the need to risk assess children on waiting lists to ensure those with multiple needs receive the earliest support possible.

There is an innovative piece of work on a clinical prioritisation tool currently being piloted on speech and language. Although not completed it is not a high risk area as there are other examples of clinical prioritisation which can demonstrate children with complex needs are receiving support earlier than at the time of the inspection.

The waiting well offer has been developed for children waiting for neuro assessments across Livewell Southwest and University Hospitals Plymouth (UHP) - the wellbeing team have developed this with children, young people, parents and carers

Access Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is now in place. The Vulnerable Pupils Panel is now established and running. Public health nursing is based across the city in localities. There is a locality based Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTS) across most localities in Plymouth.

<https://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/mental-health-support-team> . This website shows a map of all schools supported by MHST's in Plymouth. CAMHS Early Help also provide school support and have allocated school liaison practitioners that provide consultation and staff drop in.

Priority Action Area 5: Social Care Needs

Ensuring that children with SEND who have social care needs receive the necessary care and support is a key focus of the plan.

Progress includes regular reviews of children receiving short breaks and the strengthening of governance structures. Transition pathways are being developed to ensure smooth transitions for children with SEND. These efforts aim to provide comprehensive care and support for children with social care needs.

Quality assurance activity by the Participation team on the relationships between the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and the children has been presented to Corporate Parenting Board. Young people told us in the main that their IRO knows them, supports them, enjoys having an enduring relationship with them, listens to them, advocates for them and were positive about their role on their lives. Key themes for areas of development were ensuring that all young people have a clear understanding of the IRO role, knowing that they can escalate concerns on their behalf if these issues are in their best interests and that the Child in Care Review is their meeting.

IROs have significantly increased their use of the resolution/escalation framework when children are experiencing practice drift and delay, and improved outcomes can be evidenced as a result of these escalations.

Visits to children in residential homes, special schools and unregistered homes is currently 89% - for the children who have not been visited it is mostly due to them very recently moving to this provision. During children in care statutory visits, children are always given the opportunity to be spoken to alone. This is detailed in the visit recording. The visit recording asks key questions: "Why was the child not seen alone? Who was with them? When will this be arranged?" thus prompting the curious questions and ensuring an action is set to ensure the child is seen alone as soon as possible.

The Virtual School attended Foster Carer Support Groups to share information and advice about getting the best out of EHCP Reviews and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings. Attendance and engagement were not high, but foster carers and residential staff have continued to express a need for this learning. In response to feedback, we have reviewed this approach and are designing some joint workshops for social workers, supervising social workers, foster carers, residential and 16+ staff to learn together. Colleagues from a range of teams and agencies have been consulted to consider how we can achieve this collaboratively. This will enable the sharing of knowledge, experiences and for the virtual school and SEND Team to provide learning that improves confidence and engagement across the system through Spring 2025.

An EHCP officer is now in place for children in care and known to a social worker. We are also linking with other local authorities to ensure that reviews are completed and shared.

There is now a transition pathway that is in place which includes health, ICB, Adult Social Care (ASC), Children's Disability Team (CDT) and permanence teams, to ensure that all children are referred into ASC and health by the age of 15 ½. We are also providing a list of those aged 14+ to give early alerts to ASC.

There is a monthly meeting that is held where all children are discussed who require a referral into ASC/ ICB. Action plans are formulated and reviewed each month thereby ensuring that all young people who are needing to transition to ASC are referred in and discussed much earlier.

The team recognised that oversight and governance of the service has not been as robust as it should have been, and we have an action plan in place for robust governance. To date:

All children and young people known to CDT who have not been assessed in the last 3 months has been reviewed at panel. A regular review has been implemented at 3, and 6 months depending on need of child, young person, family or carer.

All children and young people known to children's service (not CDT) that have not been assessed in the last 3 months will be scheduled for review at short breaks panel (Dec 24 through to Feb 25).

More robust communication and closer working are in place with children's services, which has been reflected in the improved step-up, step-down process which has been developed and implemented. Improved decision making at panel and referrals across to Resource Panel.

Established a format to baseline health of children and young people new to short breaks (via the CHC checklist) Downham House review is now partially complete.

Children identified for priority admission and children who no longer require residential provision to meet their short break need have also been identified.

Priority Action Area 6: Consistency of Support

The plan aims to ensure that all children receive mandated checks and benefit from a consistently applied graduated response.

Progress in this area includes improvements in recruitment and retention within the Public Health Nursing service, leading to increased delivery of mandated reviews.

Over the past year a programme of “grow your own” within the PHN service has been developed, established. This has been very successful in recruiting qualified nurses into the service at band 5, for a short period moving onto SCPHN training. First cohort is within the establishment and in consolidated practice.

Impact of increase in the ‘grow your own’ programme within the PHN service:

- Increased ante-natal review within 14 days from 25.5 % to 39.2%
- New birth review within 14 days have increased slightly from 82% to 83% (97.3%)

Data is showing increase in the five mandated reviews completed within timescales due to the increased capacity of the workforce. New reporting systems are in place to monitor reviews on a weekly basis.

There has been significant progress with the re design of the graduated approach for the local area. This has included the new landing page which has been co-produced, providing a consistent framework for support. This includes a resource directory with a wealth of training, research and targeted offer for settings and schools. The Ordinarily Available Provision [Plymouth Council - Ordinarily Available Provision for Schools by The Education People - Issuu](#) has been launched as part of this work, offering settings and schools a toolkit to embed a consistently inclusive universal offer.

Our co-production approach has included children and young people, families, education provisions and all partners across the local area. A seconded SEND coordinator from a local secondary school has led the final stages of the resource directory; a platform that has been created based on feedback from practitioners, children and their families.

The quality assurance process for Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) is now a stronger feature across the service and includes monthly auditing, regular embedded dip sampling across all statutory panels and creation of new process guides. Over 100 dip samples were completed across the Autumn term leading to progress in processes for health and social care advice and support available to all partners when preparing a young person for adulthood.

Training sessions for both the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans, and the tracking of SEND data on Capita are in motion and these have been targeted specifically for areas identified as highest priority through dip sampling and auditing.

The graduated approach is being further enhanced through the enhancement to special school outreach for mainstream provisions and the targeted funding model for children and young people without and EHCP.

Priority Action Area 7: Addressing Long Waiting Times

Addressing long waiting times for children requesting support from health services is a critical focus of the plan.

Progress includes the strengthening of governance and the addition of capacity for speech and language therapy and neurodiversity assessments. These measures are aimed at reducing waiting times and ensuring timely access to necessary services for children with SEND.

The average length of time children and young people must wait has reduced significantly since the inspection and the waiting well offer has improved guidance, support and access to families including 24/7 mental health crisis support.

Devon ICB has a children and young person community recovery plan in place, and this has been endorsed by NHS Devon Senior Executive Team.

Immediate work and longer-term transformation programmes include:

- autism waiting list recovery
- organisation specific recovery: neurodiversity and SLCN.
- longer term: neurodiversity and SLCN transformation (including PINS – a neurodiversity in schools project).

Priority Action Area 8: Training for Practitioners

The plan emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all practitioners have the training they need to provide consistent care and support for children with SEND.

Progress includes the launch of a core level of mandatory training, with over 600 participants completing the training.

This training is hosted on the PCC Learning Pool Platform page and accessible to all internal or external members. The page also contains:

- An introduction page and has links to the training.
- A sign-up page (MS Form) to monitor attendance.
- A plain text version of the training has been developed that works with immersive reader, Goblin technology and with overlays for staff with accessibility issues or neurodiversity.

Specialist training programs have also been developed to further enhance the skills and knowledge of practitioners. The Head of SEND launched a series of training sessions for the Ordinarily Available Provision, delivered a training sessions to leaders & managers on the graduated approach and created training opportunities for social workers on the topic of EHCPs and SEND support in schools.

Further bitesize training opportunities and specialist resources will be available for all partners on the new graduated approach directory.

Priority Action Area 9: Planning Ahead

Using available information to plan ahead and ensure the right services and support are in place is a key focus of the plan.

The updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has been co-created with Public Health and presented to the SEND Strategic Board for approval. The Board felt that it was a strong overview and much improved piece of work.

Young people and families were involved in the creation of the survey questions for the parent carer survey. The most recent findings of the parent carer survey have been distributed to partners and have been provided in the first section of this report. Providers will now give feedback on what actions they are taking as a consequence of the findings.

A SEND Sufficiency Plan has been created, published and agreed at cabinet (September 2024). The delivery plans are now underway. Milll Ford satellite provision has successfully opened its first classroom on the 6th January 2025, with the other classes (creating a total of 50 places) due to open in September

2025. Both Brook Green and Longcause expansion plans are in motion, and the assessment nursery is due to open at Woodlands in September 2025.

Resourced provision growth within our mainstream schools is developing with one primary school undergoing feasibility auditing, and four additional schools in discussions regarding the potential use of their sites.

Conclusion

Significant progress has been made in implementing the Plymouth Local Area SEND Improvement Plan. Key actions have been completed, and ongoing efforts are in place to address remaining areas. The Critical Review - Action Plan Tracker provides evidence of the impact and effectiveness of these actions, demonstrating a commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Plymouth.

The findings of the SEND critical review in totality will be presented to the SEND Improvement Board once all elements of the process have been completed and quality assured.

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	01 February 2025
Title of Report:	Pupil Place Planning Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Interim Director for Children's Services)
Author:	Isabelle Kolinsky
Contact Email:	Isabelle.kolinsky@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Pupil Place Planning
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report summarises the information produced in the latest pupil forecast model based on the January 2024 school census data and uses this information to suggest numbers of school places required.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. For the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel to note the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. NA for information only.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Every child has access to an environment that prevents, reduces and mitigates the impact of child poverty, and which provides outstanding early learning opportunities and schools with a wide-ranging curriculum, as well as safe homes where they can thrive and neighbourhoods designed with their. Every young person has access to the opportunities they need to gain skills for productive and fulfilling employment, and the housing, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities they need to be able to remain in the area should they wish to do so

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

NA for information only.

Financial Risks

NA for information only

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

NA for information only.

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.

NA for information only.

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: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 29/01/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Cresswell approved via email Date approved: 27/01/2025											

PUPIL PLACE PLANNING

April 2024



Introduction

This report summarises the information produced in the latest pupil forecast model based on the January 2024 school census data and uses this information to suggest numbers of school places required. It begins with the current NOR and the surplus places available by city and planning locality.

I - Current Numbers on Roll and Surplus/Deficit– Academic Year 2023/24

23/24 Academic Year	Primary				% Surplus	Secondary			% Surplus
	PAN	NOR	Surplus	PAN		NOR	Surplus		
R	3317	2715	602	18%					
1	3034	2680	354	12%					
2	3061	2744	317	10%					
3	3207	2898	309	10%					
4	3067	2931	136	4%					
5	3185	2940	245	8%					
6	3181	2970	211	7%					
7					3226	3268	-42	-1%	
8					3177	3186	-9	0%	
9					3109	3100	9	0%	
10					3035	2973	62	2%	
11					2959	2868	91	3%	
12									
13									
Primary	22052	19878	2174	10%					
Secondary	15506	15395	111	1%					
Overall PAN (R-11)		37558							
Overall NOR (R-11)		35273							
Overall Surplus (R-11)		2285							
Overall % Surplus (R-11)		6%							

PRIMARY

Primary numbers on roll are monitored and forecasted numbers are based on separating the city in eight pupil planning areas (PPA). This is required by the DfE when providing forecasting information to ensure a measured approach to allocating Basic Need Funding; the funding provided to the Local Authority to meet its statutory duty of ensuring that there are adequate school places in Plymouth.

The following tables show:

1. The surplus in each PPA based on the determined PAN's when each year group joined school and the number on roll in the January 2024 census.
2. The surplus in each PPA based on the current admitted number in each year group and the number on roll as of 05/04/2024

1 - PAN at admission and NOR as of January 2024 census

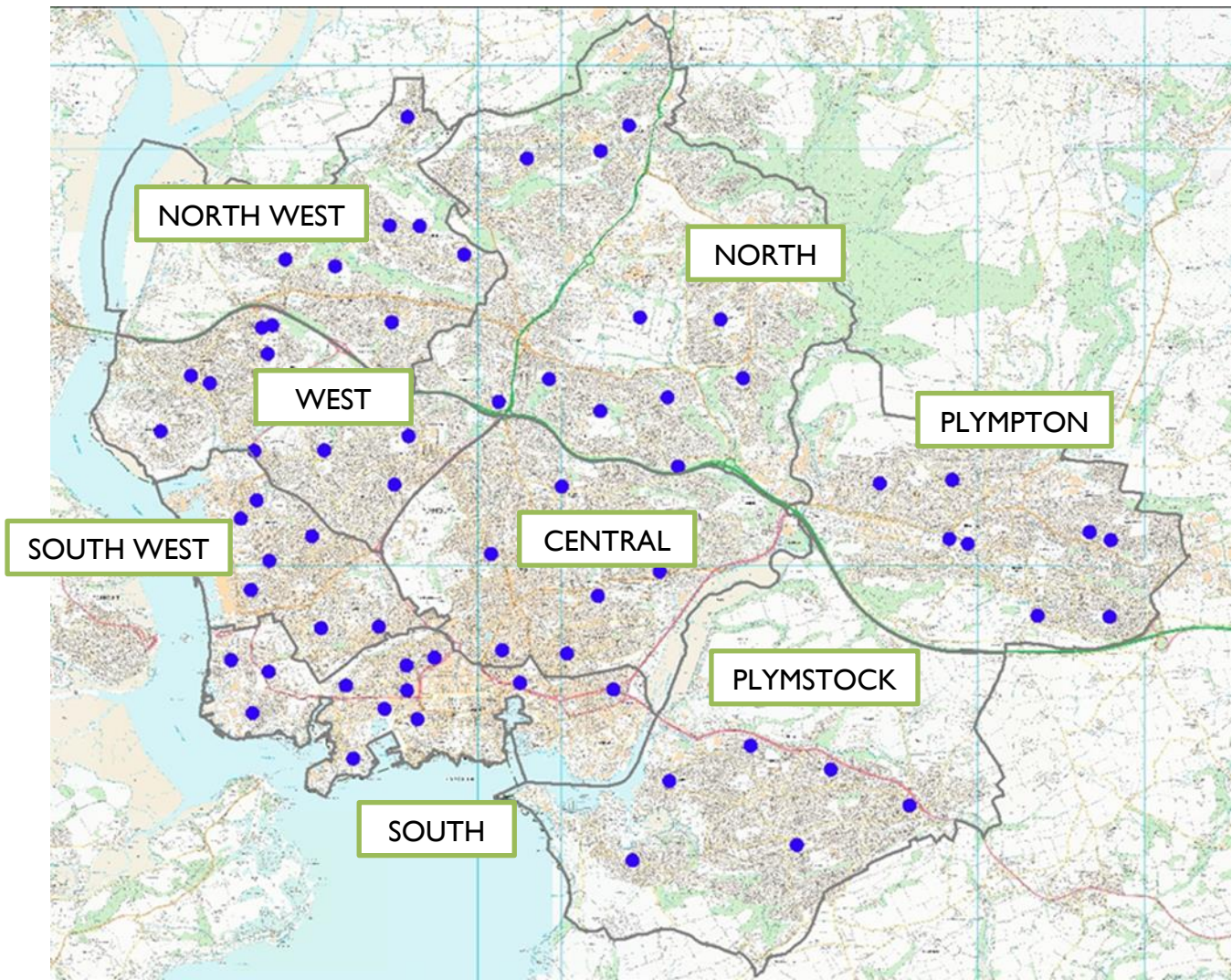
Surplus	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Average
CENTRAL	36%	24%	37%	41%	34%	30%	16%	31%
NORTH	11%	12%	5%	10%	9%	9%	14%	10%
NORTH WEST	19%	18%	21%	16%	15%	11%	8%	16%
PLYMPTON	27%	25%	21%	21%	14%	15%	6%	18%
PLYMSTOCK	20%	27%	25%	12%	12%	6%	9%	16%
SOUTH	18%	15%	19%	5%	6%	13%	7%	12%
SOUTH WEST	25%	28%	23%	25%	24%	24%	29%	25%
WEST	11%	20%	13%	13%	9%	5%	10%	12%
AVERAGE	21%	21%	21%	18%	15%	14%	12%	

2 - Current numbers admitted to and NOR as of 05/04/2024

Surplus	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Average
CENTRAL	5%	7%	1%	4%	2%	2%	6%	4%
NORTH	18%	8%	12%	6%	3%	9%	6%	9%
NORTH WEST	25%	15%	12%	12%	5%	12%	5%	12%
PLYMPTON	19%	17%	16%	8%	4%	6%	4%	11%
PLYMSTOCK	17%	15%	18%	4%	6%	13%	7%	12%
SOUTH	23%	6%	5%	6%	1%	2%	4%	7%
SOUTH WEST	9%	19%	7%	5%	0%	1%	7%	7%
WEST	22%	12%	11%	9%	11%	12%	13%	13%
AVERAGE	17%	12%	10%	7%	4%	7%	6%	

**Change since admission

CITY	4%	9%	10%	11%	11%	7%	6%	
	18%	12%	10%	7%	4%	8%	7%	9%



SECONDARY

Secondary numbers on roll are monitored and forecasted numbers are based on looking at the city as a whole. Splitting the city in line with the primary PPA's means that some areas end up without a secondary school within its boundaries. In addition to this, past analysis shows that parents are more likely to accommodate a further distance of travel in order to get a place in the secondary school they want, therefore it makes sense to plan for secondary places as an entire area.

City	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Current NOR	3268	3186	3100	2973	2868
Current Admission Number	3226	3177	3109	3035	2959
Current Surplus	-1.3%	-0.3%	0.3%	2.0%	3.1%
NOR as of Jan	3239	3048	2973	2774	2557
PAN at admission	3218	3296	3271	3281	3201
Expected Surplus	-1.6%	3.3%	5.2%	9.4%	10.4%

School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Average
All Saints CE Academy Plymouth	-5%	1%	1%	1%	0%	-1%
Coombe Dean School	0%	-1%	2%	-1%	13%	3%
Devonport High School for Boys	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Devonport High School for Girls	0%	0%	1%	-2%	-2%	-1%
Eggbuckland Community College	-3%	0%	0%	3%	8%	2%
Hele's School	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%
Lipson Co-Operative Academy	-13%	-14%	-1%	1%	1%	-5%
Marine Academy Plymouth	0%	10%	2%	19%	5%	7%
Notre Dame RC School	0%	1%	0%	4%	2%	1%
Plymouth High School for Girls	-1%	1%	0%	11%	3%	3%
Plymstock School	0%	0%	2%	0%	5%	2%
Plympton Academy	0%	0%	2%	1%	4%	1%
Sir John Hunt Community Sports College	1%	0%	3%	7%	10%	4%
St Boniface RC College	-1%	0%	0%	3%	14%	3%
Stoke Damerel Community College	-1%	0%	1%	1%	-1%	0%
Tor Bridge High School	-2%	-2%	-9%	-5%	-5%	-5%
Millbay Academy	1%	-4%	-2%	0%	-4%	-2%
UTC Plymouth	0%	0%	2%	-10%	-12%	-3%
Scott Medical and Healthcare School			0%	5%	4%	3%
CITY	-1%	0%	0%	2%	3%	1%

2 - Pupil numbers 2010-2024 & overall forecasts

PRIMARY

Pupil numbers in Plymouth primary schools between 2009/10 and 2017/18 grew steadily, driven by an increase in live births since 2002. The total number of Primary school children in Plymouth rose from 17,720 in January 2010 to 20,882 in January 2018, an increase of 16%.

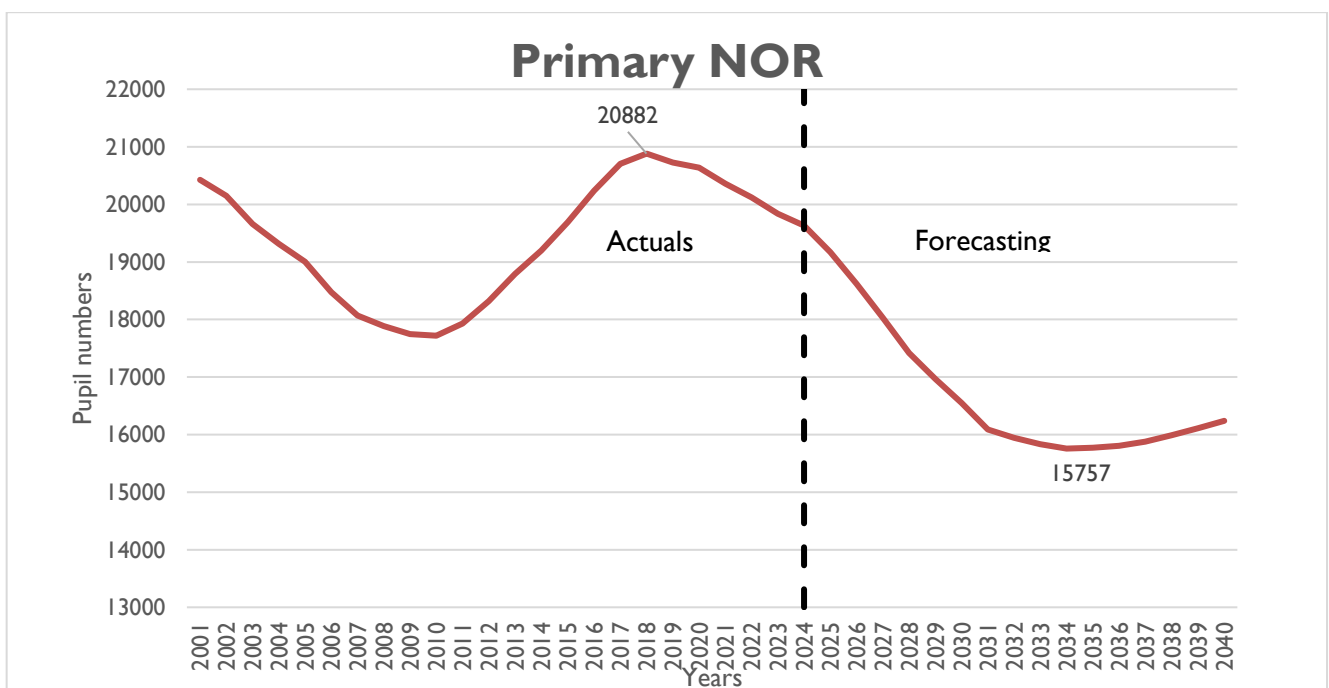
As a result, Basic Need funding was provided to the LA and a number of projects were undertaken to increase the number of primary school places available, which included the creation of new schools, whole school rebuilds, expansion of schools and work to accommodate bulge classes. Details of these projects will be provided within the analysis of each primary locality

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 have been below 3000, with last academic year's (2022/23) birth total being the lowest recorded just over 2400 (2417)

In line with what we know about live birth data it is expected that pupil numbers joining school in reception, will continue with the decline that began in 2018/19. From the peak of pupils across the entire primary cohort (20882) in 2017/18 the decline will continue up to the forecast point of the live birth data we have (those born in 2022/23 looking to join school in 2027/28) and will be around 17,400. Current birth data we have for the academic year 2023/24, at the moment, is not indicating that there will be an uptick in pupil numbers for those looking to joining in 2028/29.

There will be declines in pupil numbers across the city; in 2027/28 we will see a reduction of 13% on the cohort in 2023/24. There will be reductions in all our primary planning localities, however the south west and west localities at present appear to be the localities which will see the biggest reduction in numbers

In September 2023, Y6 was the last of the 'above 3000 pupils' cohorts in primary; from this point up to when the current reception year group leaves primary, year group cohorts are forecast to be between 2200 and 2800.



SECONDARY

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 climbing. This follows on from a prolonged decline in numbers over a 15 year period. This was primarily dealt with by secondary schools agreeing to reduce the numbers they admit, with the intention to increase their numbers again once numbers rose.

It is expected that in line with the primary growth seen prior to 17/18, and a current trend of increasing numbers coming from other LA's in year 7, Secondary school numbers will continue to grow until 2026/27. This will see the seven largest cohorts to start school since September 2010, in year's 7 to 13, and will total just over 18,200 pupils, a 12.6% increase on 2017/18. Currently there are around 17,500 pupils in our secondary schools.

As numbers began to increase in secondary schools and when looking at future forecasting, there are some legacy issues that need to be recognised.

- During the period of time that secondary school numbers were in decline and up to the academic year 2023/24, all but one of our secondary schools converted to academy status; with the remaining maintained school continuing to pursue conversion. Following conversion, most academies have further reduced the number of pupils they will actually admit (which they are entitled to do), as a reaction to falling numbers on roll. Most schools who reduced numbers, have been reticent about returning to offering numbers that were once accommodated; citing changes in building use, staff restructures and reorganised curriculums, as reasons for not returning to previously admitted numbers. As the LA, the figure reported to the DfE has to be the capacity numbers that are detailed in an academy's funding agreement. Therefore the LA know that there is physical capacity available which it cannot access and has no power to instruct an academy to take additional numbers. A knock on from this also is that where schools have closed particular sections or parts of their building as a result of falling numbers, these have fallen into a state of disrepair and often will site this as a reason for not expanding their numbers or will request funding as a condition of doing so.
- The two original schools which were sponsored to become academies in 2010/11 as a result of falling standards, had extensive rebuilds or remodelling as part of their support packages. Both these schools used to take higher numbers of children, but now do not have the physical space to return to their previous admission figures.
- During the period of decline, three KS4 establishments and an all-through free school opened. This increased competition amongst schools for a declining number of pupils. There was increased amount of surplus in Years 9, 10, 11 and more options for parents to consider, which impacted the schools chosen for Y7. It is felt that previous collaborative approaches and relationships between secondary schools which used to exist, were eroded as a result.
- The growth in numbers when pupils were in Primary school was recognised by the DfE and the LA received significant BN funding to provide places for these pupils. Up to the present, this funding has not been replicated to provide for secondary places. This is due to the perception that we have a large secondary school estate based on capacity figures in Academy funding agreements, when in reality our schools are unwilling to provide this number of places. This problem has been exacerbated by the creation of KS4 establishments for years 9/10 upwards and the low numbers recently seen in sixth form provision. For many years, sixth form space was not taken into account when looking a

capacity figures, but since this introduction, Plymouth appears to have more space for its lower years groups; which is actually specifically allocated space for Sixth form students i.e. purpose built blocks or centres.

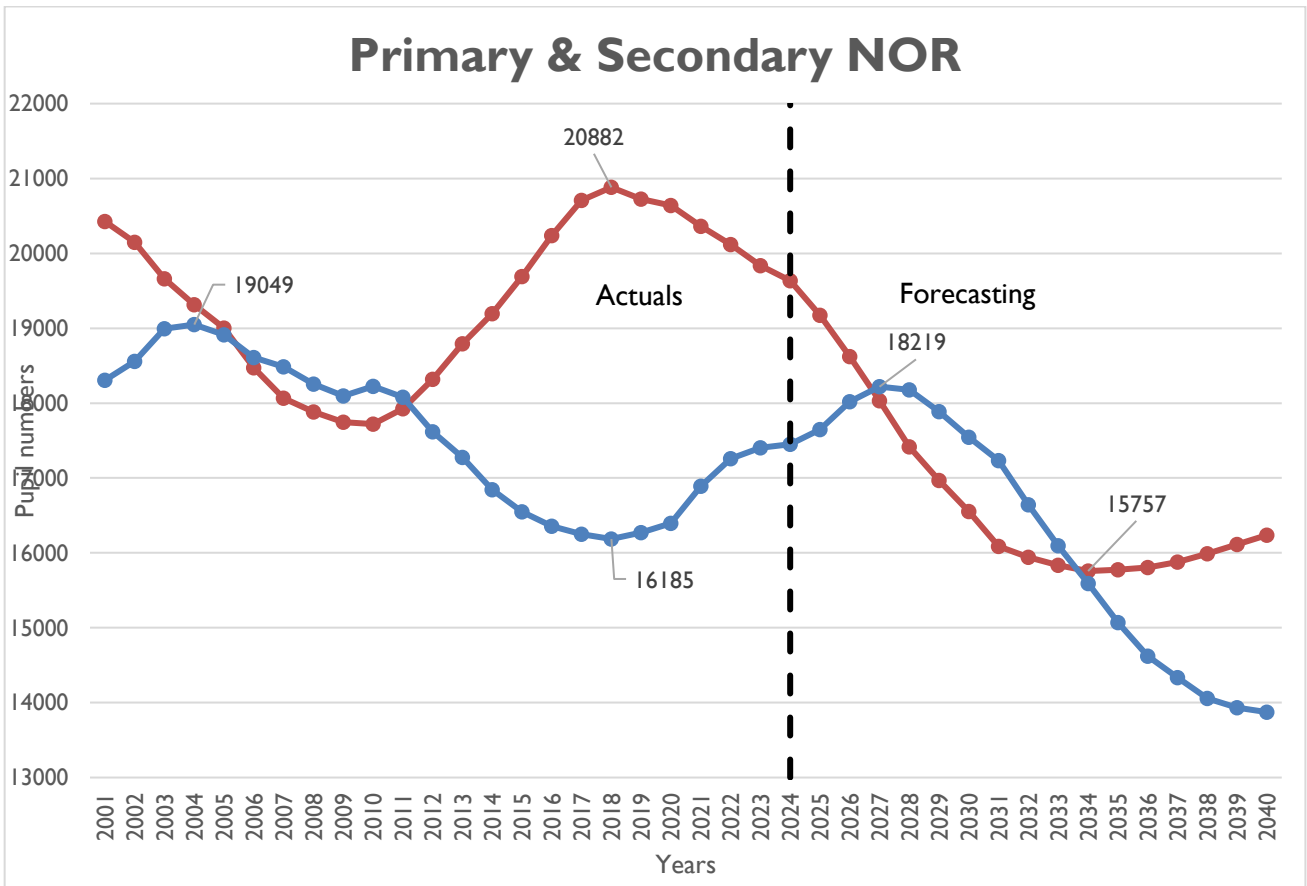
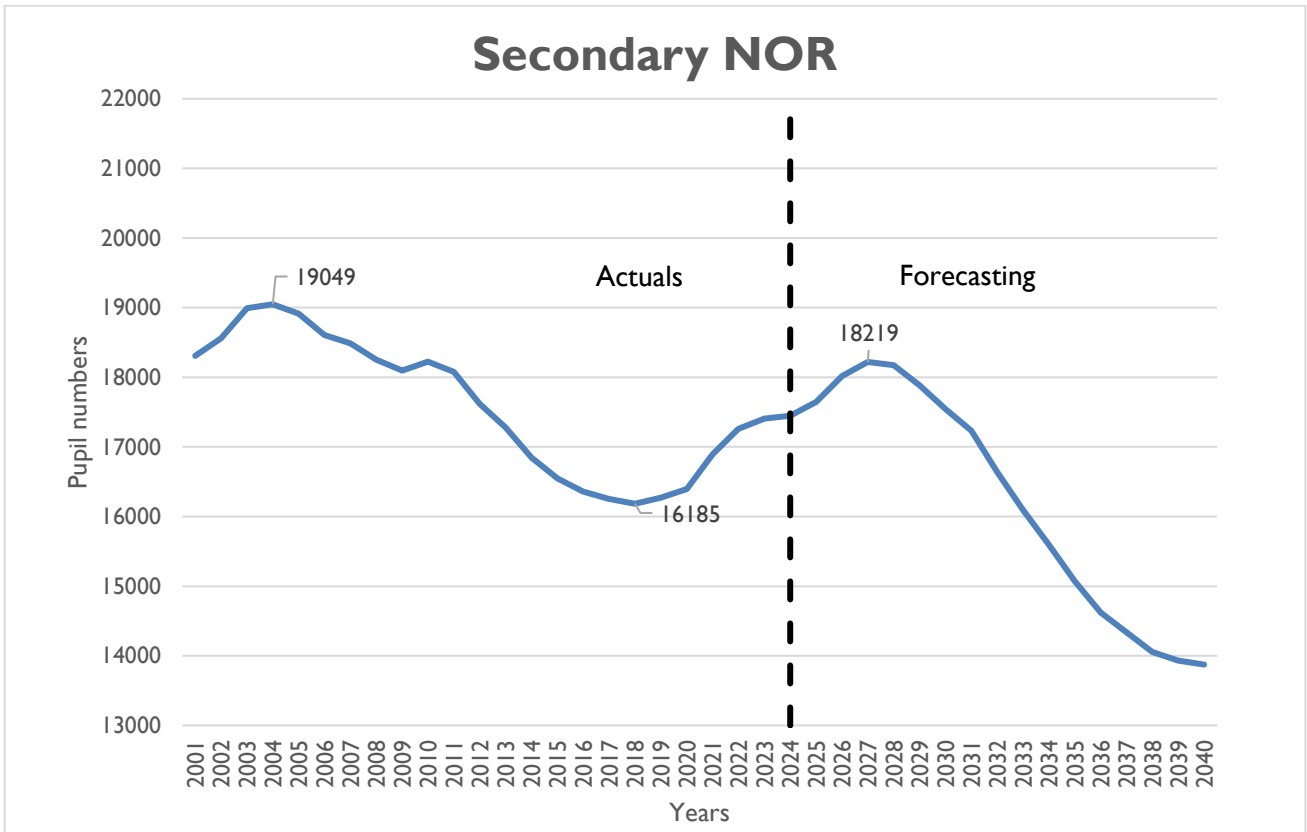
The growth in secondary numbers since September 2018 has been dealt with by negotiating additional places with our secondary schools. As there has not been funding to offer as an incentive, the LA has only been able to increase secondary places to cover the minimum places required and most have not been permanent increases. There have been a number of temporary increases since September 2017, both on negotiation with the LA and through a school's own volition, for particular academic year groups. However, once the year group has moved past the point of entry year group, many have then capped the number they will admit to, to the number that is on roll at that point. This therefore removed any surplus capacity potential.

Capping or restricting the numbers that will be admitted, is a practice that has been implemented by the majority of secondary schools since numbers began to increase. Places are limited with surplus percentages all below the desirable 8 % in all year groups. All current year groups have below 4% surplus. Year's 7 and 8 continue to be the worst affected year groups, where it appears that there is negative surplus due to school's capping at a number they intend to "work back to", for example they have 250 on roll, but will cap at 240 and not admit any one until the number drops below 240. This will be the same for the next 2-3 years for these specific year groups (as the problem is eased once cohorts hit Y9)

Some secondary schools have recognised the growing numbers coming and have chosen to determine higher PAN's for 24/25 (the current point up to which a PAN can be determined). Others have chosen to take over PAN in various years since 2018/19, once they have an indication of the number likely to be allocated for the coming Y7 in September. These are choices they are making through their own decision making processes and often not on consultation with the LA. Once a cohort is past normal point of entry, they continue to cap numbers they are willing to admit, often now citing "challenging cohorts" as the reason to limit the number they will take.

As an LA it is understood that there are pressures facing our schools with regard to finance and budget, the instability created from the in-year movement of pupils and the recruitment and retention of staff, however as an LA we are continuously impeded in carrying out our statutory duty of being able to provide the required school places.

As the birth rate has been in decline and primary numbers have been declining since 2017/18, what had previously been envisaged as a continuous growth of secondary places, now appears to be a bulge. However, there will still be a pressure to provide enough places until 2026/27 which will require negotiation. Following this, the decline of secondary numbers will need to be addressed once again.

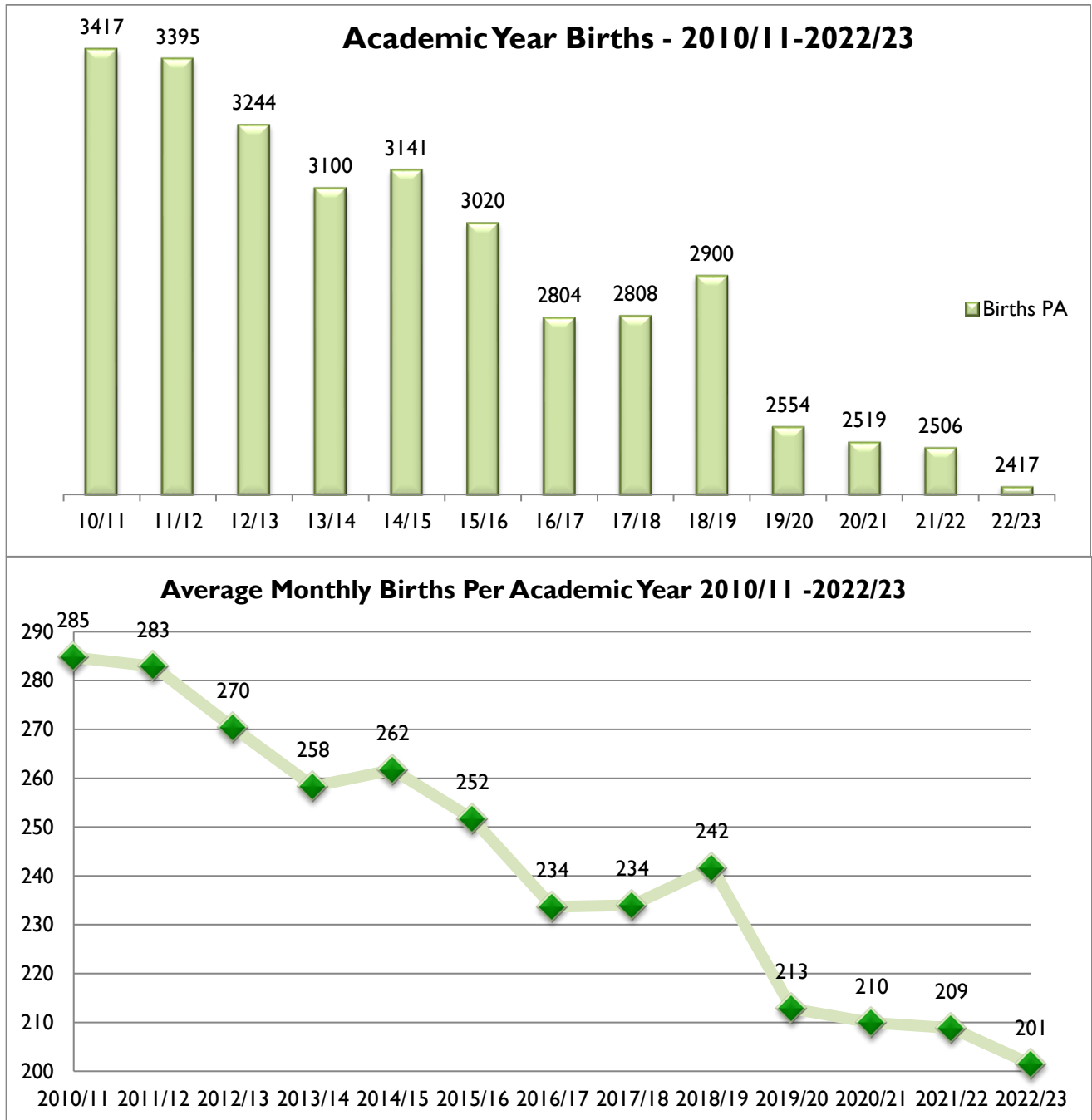


3 - Primary and Secondary Forecasts

BIRTH DATA

The number of live births in Plymouth for calendar year 2022 were 2415. Over the last ten years, the number of births have fallen from a peak in 2012 of 3459.

When collated in academic years, the birth figures are as below:



Looking forward, the predicted number of births is calculated using the ONS statistical releases for the 2011 national census by quinary age group for females between the aged of 20-34 in Plymouth as a base point. This is then combined with the ONS mid-year estimates following 2011 (which is released up to 2023). These figures are then compared to the historic live birth data in Plymouth to produce an average % of births to mothers. This is then applied to the 2018 based subnational population projections (latest released) to produce the expected number of live births per calendar year.

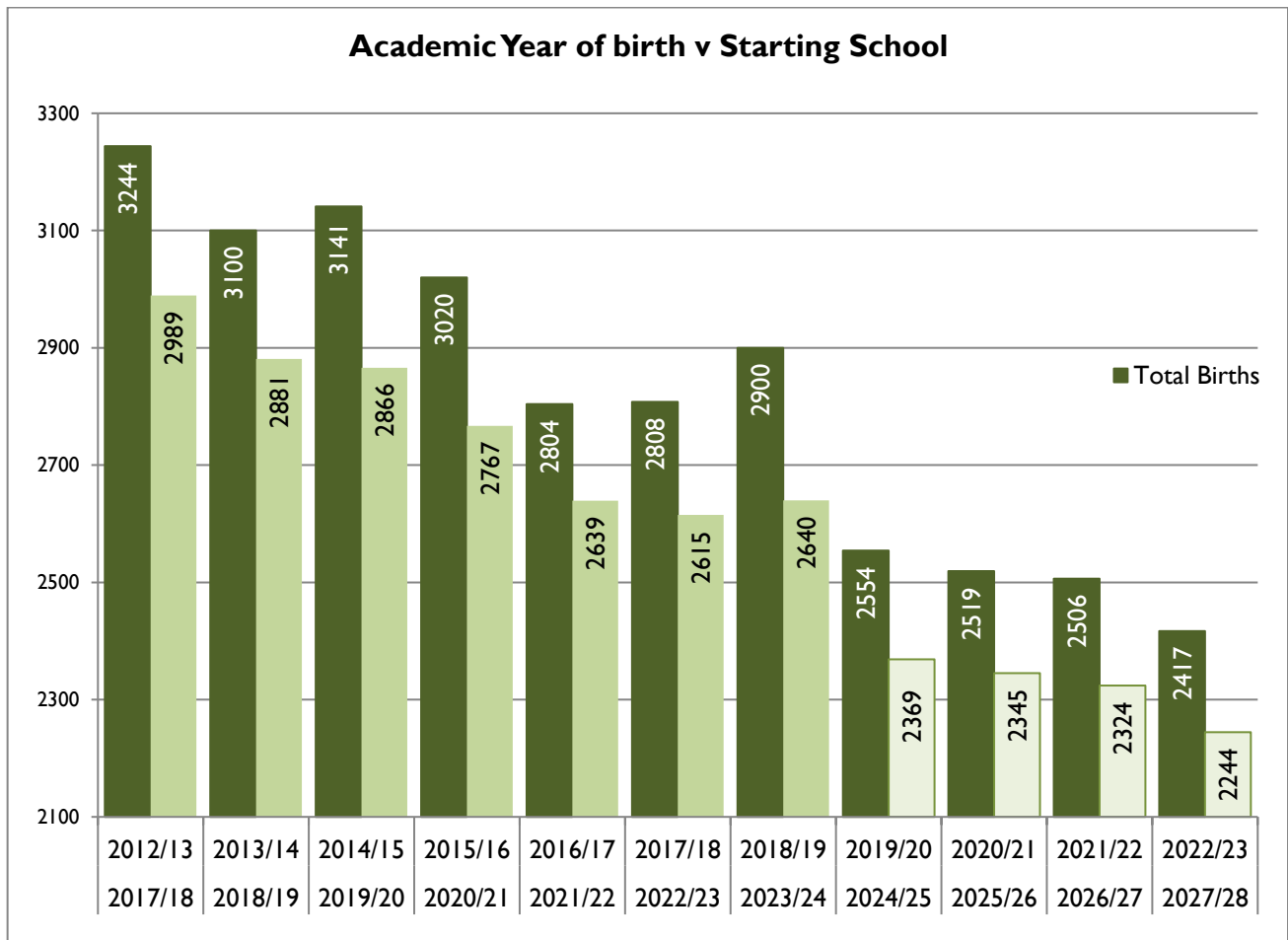
Subnational population projections from the ONS are still based on 2018 data. Despite having 2021 census data available, subnational projections have not been updated since 2018. This was due to the impacting factors of the COVID pandemic and the UK’s exit from the European Union. Updated subnational population projections are expected by 2025. Mid year estimates for 2022 have been calculated by the ONS and have been incorporated in our forecasting.

The population of females ages 20-34 in Plymouth

- In the 2018 projections it was estimated there were to be 27714 women in 2021.
- The 2021 census provided information that there were 29131 women
- The mid year estimate for 2022 put the number of women at 28911.

As there is a variation between the most recent numbers provided, an average has been taken to apply to the forecasts for 2023. From 2024 onwards, the projected numbers from the 2018 calculations are returned to (in light of the lack of any updated numbers). It will be interesting to see how the ONS will interpret this and what impact this will have on our population projections following the incorporation of 2021 census data. The LA will need to be ready to react to a likely change in numbers.

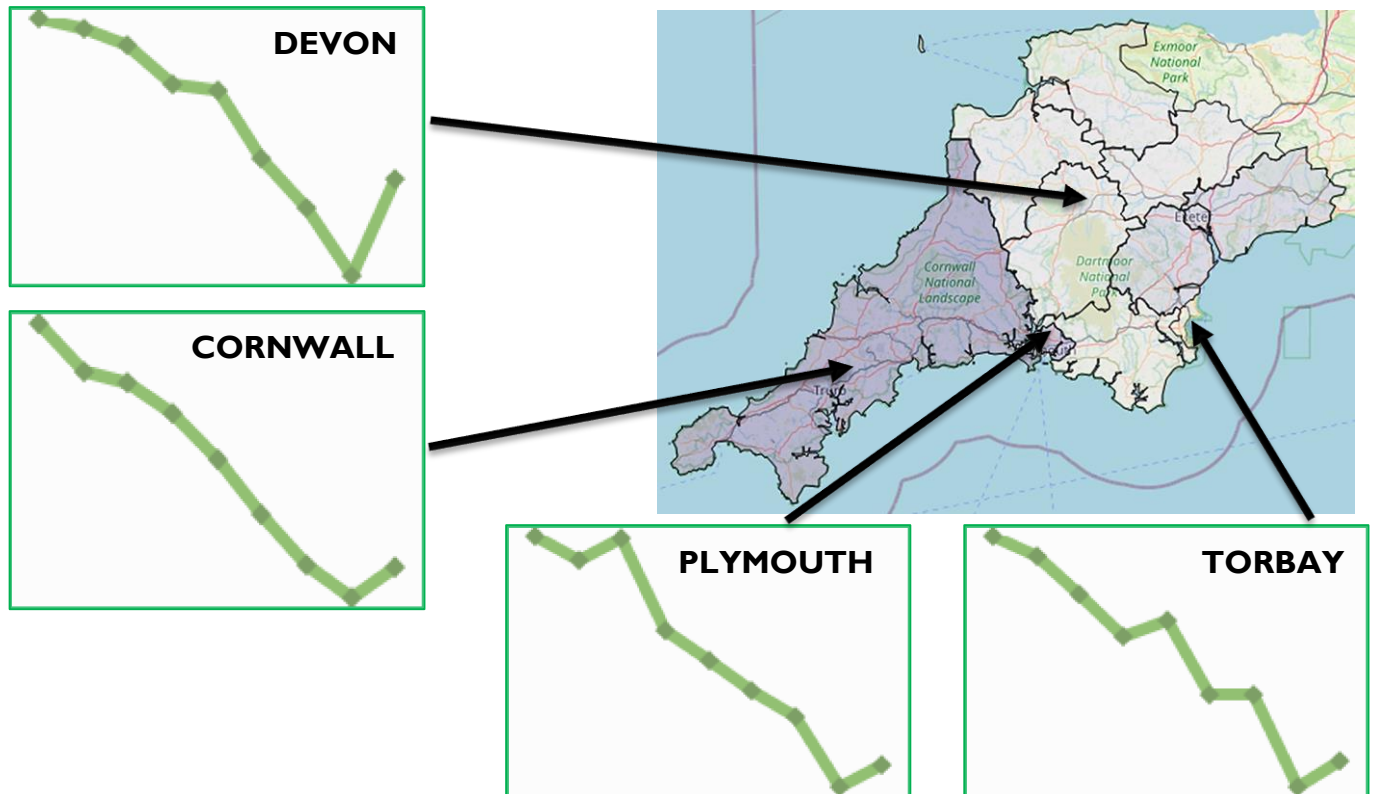
By looking at an academic year percentage rate of births for the corresponding school year, we are able to estimate the number of pupils who will potentially be looking for school places in the following four years as below. There is around about a 92% transfer rate of births to school places:



NEIGHBOURING LA'S AND NATIONAL BIRTH RATE

Births in neighbouring LA's and nationally are following a similar pattern to that seen in Plymouth; that overall since 2013, the birth rate has declined.

Birth data from the ONS* shows data in calendar year, which is showing all areas with an uptick in 2021, following a steady decline from 2013.



*Sparklines created from ONS NOMIS table; Live Births in England and Wales (down to Local Authority areas); fertility age 20-34; years 2013-2021

2021 is showing a larger number of births than previous years for Plymouth and its neighbouring three LA's. However the table below includes the figure from the ONS's annual summary statistics of live births, stillbirths and fertility rates for 2022.

One of the six main points that the publication makes is:

“There were 605,479 live births in England and Wales in 2022, a 3.1% decrease from 624,828 in 2021 and the lowest number since 2002; the number remains in line with the recent trend of decreasing live births seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.”

[Births in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/births-in-england-and-wales)

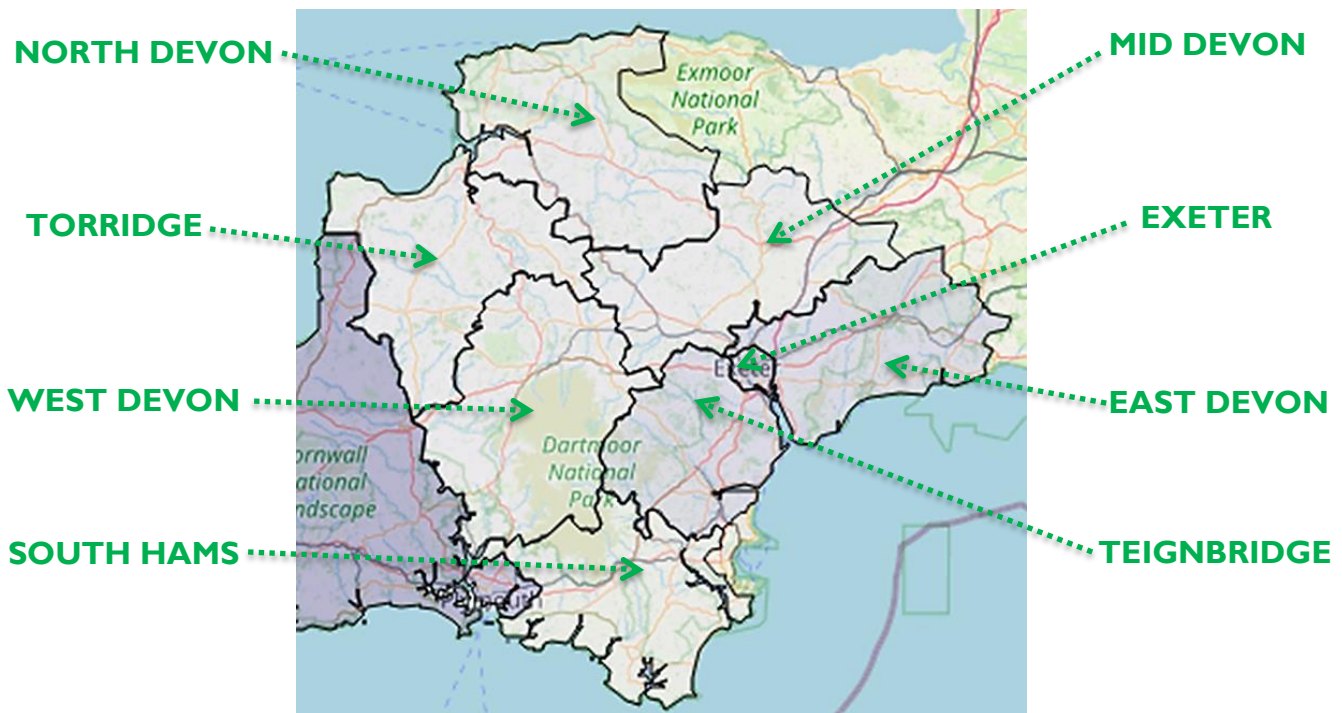
Although this release has not broken birth data down to age of mother, all areas are showing a decline on 2021 figures, which will only be smaller once we specify age ranges.

When we look at Devon broken down by district, we can see that the districts that are most likely to impact Plymouth, West Devon and South Hams, follow a similar pattern to Plymouth, with the % drop from the largest number of births in period 2013-2022 to the smallest being:

- **Plymouth:** -23.8%
- **South Hams:** -20.8%
- **West Devon:** -21.6%

AREA	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Drop from 2021-2022
Cornwall	5581	5425	5393	5294	5152	4979	4814	4715	4811	4456**	-355
East Devon	1107	1166	1180	1139	1171	1157	1147	1128	1269	1122	-147
Exeter	1384	1346	1322	1292	1329	1196	1170	1143	1173	1107	-66
Mid Devon	783	805	803	737	779	752	778	743	703	628	-75
North Devon	954	933	868	946	901	840	820	782	825	773	-52
South Hams	648	702	677	599	621	615	634	556	641	575	-66
Teignbridge	1206	1169	1177	1155	1150	1177	1134	1056	1098	1015	-83
Torrige	630	565	614	632	557	565	496	523	516	512	-4
West Devon	473	467	454	464	432	410	371	389	419	400	-19
Plymouth	3163	3101	3160	2912	2832	2754	2683	2497	2556	2409	-147
Torbay	1474	1443	1380	1314	1339	1220	1220	1074	1114	1010	-104
England	664517	661499	664399	663157	646794	625651	610505	585195	595948	577046	-18902

** the figure for Cornwall in 2022 includes the births of those in the Isles of Scilly



PRIMARY

In line with the declining birth rate, the table below shows the birth rates across the localities over the past 17 years, with rag rating applied to the year with the highest to lowest births. This shows that all localities have experienced reductions as indicated above

Locality Births	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Central	538	589	622	499	531	552	475	498	512	468	455	428	424	418	428	403	413
North	458	457	458	419	499	490	500	465	442	431	390	407	425	370	377	384	369
North West	437	414	386	423	427	419	435	406	367	337	336	330	296	287	319	286	275
Plympton	344	323	341	365	356	331	317	272	305	312	231	246	282	262	256	245	226
Plymstock	227	234	233	228	279	235	258	219	234	253	207	231	229	217	197	192	199
South	358	377	362	404	412	458	425	403	435	397	387	378	374	314	311	293	325
South West	336	306	366	375	344	365	320	305	315	294	280	253	287	233	212	260	206
West	461	496	458	471	475	476	457	464	466	449	454	430	399	346	340	373	327
	3159	3196	3226	3184	3323	3326	3187	3032	3076	2941	2740	2703	2716	2447	2440	2436	2340

Available places

Figures for Normal Point of Entry (Reception) are shown below for the academic year 2024/25 and what will likely happen from 25/26 moving forward:

Locality	NPE - Academic Year 24/25 (Based on determined PAN)	NPE - Academic Years 25/26 onwards (Based on "built to" capacity or normal operating method/FA)	Additional information/ Reason for number change
Central	390	420	Salisbury Road have a built capacity of 90 per year group through a BN expansion – however have determined a PAN of 60 for the past four years. It is likely this will continue, but this has not yet been confirmed.
North	645	645	
North West	365	365	
Plympton	360	420	Woodford has a built capacity of 90 per year group through a targeted basic need expansion – however have determined a PAN of 60 for the past seven years. It is likely this will continue but this has not yet been confirmed
Plymstock	330	330	
South	452	467	Mount Wise has a built capacity of 60 per year group through a BN expansion – however have determined a PAN of 30 and then 45 for the past five years. It is likely this will continue but this has not yet been confirmed

South West	240	240	
West	520	530	Plaistow Hill Infant and St Budeaux Junior both became primary schools from September 2023, taking a joint overall capacity of 60 per year group to 30 per year group for each school. This was planned for on a staggered approach so 24/25 has had both schools determine a PAN of 20 with an expected move to 25 the next year (25/26) and 30 the following (26/27). However depending on application numbers either school could amend their approach to becoming a IFE primary.

The following tables show the capacity of our primary localities for the next four years forecasts and following notes apply:

- Four years has been examined as we have complete academic year birth numbers for the corresponding year groups.
- The figures next to the name of each school is the average whole school forecast over the next four years, when analysing forecast NOR against either a confirmed PAN or the figure on a funding agreement//net capacity figure. Red figures indicate a surplus of more than a quarter of a school's capacity.
- Schools which have negative capacity are those that tend to go over 30 per class once pupils are in KS2 (no longer have infant class size restrictions).
- 'Full to capacity' indicates those schools who have less than 5% capacity.
- Consistently oversubscribed – Oversubscribed for at least five of the last seven years (7 years representing the current cohorts in the school)

Central

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	390	346	342	372	377	384	382	360	2563
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	375	375	375	394	388	394	390	2691
		358	350	373	382	384	387	365	2599
2025	390	366	351	346	373	379	390	383	2587
2026	420	353	367	351	346	373	382	390	2563
2027	420	347	354	367	354	347	373	386	2527
2028	420	330	348	355	364	353	348	372	2470

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
11%	12%	5%	10%	9%	9%	14%	10%
5%	7%	1%	3%	1%	2%	6%	3%
6%	10%	11%	4%	10%	7%	9%	8%
16%	6%	10%	11%	4%	9%	7%	9%
17%	16%	6%	9%	11%	4%	8%	10%
21%	17%	16%	7%	9%	11%	5%	12%

3159	Compton CE Primary	-2%	2640	Laira Green Primary	37%	3777	High View Primary	2%
2671	Lipson Vale Primary	4%	2010	Hyde Park Infant	8%	2008	Mount Street Primary	0%
2636	Hyde Park Junior	6%	3774	Salisbury Road Primary	21%			

A locality with many popular schools and where the number of schools is relatively small in comparison to some of the other localities. However, these schools do draw pull pupils from other localities. Many schools are on constrained sites which had limited capacity for expansion in previous considerations. There is a lack of physical space and no available build site for a new establishment should one be needed.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-4.6%
Consistently oversubscribed	High View and Compton CE
Full to capacity for next four years	High View, Compton CE, Lipson Vale, Mount Street
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salisbury Road Primary – BN expansion project in 2012/13 to move from a 2FE to 3FE. Lipson Vale Primary – BN project in 2012/13 to move the school to a full 2FE school from offering 55 places per year, through remodelling and small expansion of particular classrooms. Laira Green – BN funding provided to accommodate a bulge year in 2014/15, which has now left the school. Compton CE – Had a project in 2010/11 to support their move of 50 per year group to 60 – not part of BN
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salisbury Road have taken 60 at NPE for the last four years. Laira Green have requested to lower their PAN from 45 to 30 – but the LA has so far declined as capacity within older year groups is limited

North

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	645	520	532	507	539	546	572	595	3811
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	645	585	585	583	566	632	634	4230
		529	541	514	548	550	576	598	3856
2025	645	459	520	534	508	535	548	572	3676
2026	645	467	457	520	526	499	532	549	3550
2027	645	473	465	455	515	519	496	529	3453
2028	645	461	472	465	452	508	518	495	3370

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
19%	18%	21%	16%	15%	11%	8%	16%
18%	8%	12%	6%	3%	9%	6%	9%
29%	19%	17%	21%	17%	15%	11%	19%
28%	29%	19%	18%	23%	18%	15%	21%
27%	28%	29%	20%	20%	23%	18%	24%
28%	27%	28%	30%	21%	20%	23%	25%

2004 Austin Farm Primary	49%	3770 Beechwood Primary	38%	2703 Egguckland Vale Primary	21%
2009 Tor Bridge Primary	16%	2730 Leigham Primary	26%	2677 Manadon Vale Primary	2%
3769 Oakwood Primary	33%	3162 St Edward's CE Primary	9%	2708 Thornbury Primary	18%
2702 Widewell Primary	6%	2681 Widey Court Primary	15%	2002 St Matthew's CE Primary	29%

A large locality with two of the city's five 3FE primary schools. A large housing development (which is still being built) meant that the LA sought Targeted Basic Need in preparation for the increase in pupil numbers. The reduction in pupil numbers over the next five years is in line with the overall city decrease and similar to the decrease seen in the North West.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-17.1%
Consistently oversubscribed	Manadon Vale
Full to capacity for next four years	Manadon Vale
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Matthew's CE Primary – new 3FE school built in response to a large housing development at Derriford. Opened Sept 2015. Original plan was to split the funding between a new 2FE school and increasing Widewell from 1FE to 2FE. However, Widewell withdrew from the process when a requested rebuild was declined for an expansion of the current building. Therefore, St Matthew's became a 3FE Oakwood Primary – Following academisation, took the decision to move from a 1.5FE to a 2FE school, by reconfiguring its own space. Funding agreement has been updated to reflect the 420 capacity. Austin Farm Primary – received BN funding to reconfigure internal space, to support the reduction from a 1.5 FE to a 1FE to prevent the possibility of the school becoming unsustainable.
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Matthew's CE – Contacted the LA to request determine a PAN of 60 over 90 to mitigate smaller numbers but understands that it would be requested to return to higher admission numbers should numbers begin to grow again. Year group capping is being implemented in particular year groups at Austin Farm (Y4&5), Beechwood (Y1,3&4), Oakwood (Y1,3&4) and St Matthew's (Y1,2,3&4)

North West

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	365	268	273	288	290	300	298	328	2045
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	365	320	335	340	325	340	350	2375
		277	272	295	298	311	299	333	2085
2025	365	222	274	275	290	292	300	296	1948
2026	365	252	225	274	275	287	291	298	1901
2027	365	225	254	228	272	270	286	288	1821
2028	365	221	227	255	227	269	269	284	1752

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
27%	25%	21%	21%	14%	15%	6%	19%
24%	15%	12%	12%	4%	12%	5%	12%
39%	25%	25%	21%	20%	14%	15%	23%
31%	38%	25%	25%	21%	20%	15%	25%
38%	31%	38%	26%	26%	22%	21%	29%
39%	38%	30%	38%	26%	26%	22%	31%

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 3767 Ernesettle Primary | 17% | 2639 Knowle Primary | 43% | 3161 Mary Dean CE Primary | 15% |
| 3775 Shakespeare Primary | 24% | 3766 St Peter's RC Primary | 52% | 2729 Whiteleigh Primary | 32% |
| 2672 Woodfield Primary | 14% | | | | |

Following a fairly steady level of pupil forecasts, this locality will experience one of the largest reduction of pupils. Whole school forecasts however are levelled by the larger year groups at the top of the school as smaller year groups enter at the bottom. One popular school's decision to expand on top of a previous BN expansion may unfortunately come at the detriment of the neighbouring schools.

Page 52

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-16.1%
Consistently oversubscribed	None
Full to capacity for next four years	None
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ernesettle Primary – BN project to expand the school from a 1FE to 2FE in 2011/12. In 2020/21, following a number of years being oversubscribed the school made the decision to increase again to an intake of 75 at NPE (2.5 FE). The funding agreement has been amended to accommodate 75 pupils in all year groups, however the school has implemented the larger number in intake from the bottom up. Knowle Primary – Condition project undertaken in 2015/16 to rebuild the school and safeguard the 420 places it provides
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year group capping seen in Knowle (Y1,2,3&4) and St Peter's RC (Y1,3,4&5).

Plympton

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	390	311	286	291	343	345	340	354	2270
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	390	345	349	378	363	363	371	2559
		314	287	292	346	349	341	358	2287
2025	360	280	312	287	295	344	348	339	2207
2026	420	303	278	311	290	294	344	347	2168
2027	420	280	301	278	313	289	295	342	2098
2028	420	252	279	301	281	312	290	294	2008

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
20%	27%	25%	12%	12%	6%	9%	16%
19%	17%	16%	8%	4%	6%	4%	11%
22%	20%	26%	24%	12%	11%	6%	17%
28%	23%	20%	26%	25%	12%	11%	21%
33%	28%	23%	20%	26%	24%	12%	24%
40%	34%	28%	22%	20%	26%	25%	28%

2694	Boringdon Primary	14%	3771	Chaddlewood Primary	18%	2705	Glen Park Primary	6%
3760	Plympton St Mary Infant	37%	2699	Old Priory Junior	35%	2695	Plympton St Maurice Primary	22%
2005	Woodford Primary	15%	2707	Yealmpstone Farm Primary	52%			

A popular locality which when numbers were low in the past, has drawn pupils from other localities. In line with the rest of the city, there has been a recent decline in births, however it should be noted that it is a locality that families will move to for both property and school places. The locality borders another LA (Devon) and as such a number of sites which could be developed for housing sit outside Plymouth’s boundary. Therefore, any additional school places would be agreed on consultation with Devon.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-13.1%
Consistently oversubscribed	None
Full to capacity for next four years	None
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodford Primary - expanded with TBN from a 2FE to 3FE school in 2015/16. Significant additional funding was given to the school. Following sponsored academisation, the school has admitted to 60 since Sept 2018. The school has determined its 2024/25 PAN at 60, but without further confirmation the LA forecasts on its expanded capacity. Yealmpstone Farm – expanded with S106 and Basic Need funding in response to Woodford reducing its intake. 2FE first offered in Sept 2020, filling from the bottom up. Plympton St Mary Infant - BN funding in 2012/2013 to accommodate an expansion due to a bulge year of 90 in total. However this didn’t fill and numbers fell once the cohort reached the junior school which meant that expansion work was not replicated in the junior school.
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yealmpstone Farm has consulted to reduce its PAN back to 30, but at present the LA does not back this change. Plympton St Mary Infant has consulted to reduce its PAN to 30 from 60 for September 2024. There is a proposal that Plympton St Mary and Old Prior Junior will reduce their intakes eventually to 30, from the bottom up from Sept 2024 and provision for both schools will operate from the Old Priory site. It is unclear whether the schools will remain separate infant and junior or whether they will amalgamate to form a primary.

Plymstock

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	330	269	279	266	313	311	287	308	2033
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	330	330	330	334	334	334	334	2326
		273	279	271	321	313	290	310	2057
2025	330	285	280	279	275	318	315	292	2045
2026	330	248	287	277	284	278	316	316	2006
2027	330	228	252	283	282	283	279	314	1922
2028	330	258	232	250	288	283	282	279	1872

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
18%	15%	19%	5%	6%	13%	7%	12%
17%	15%	18%	4%	6%	13%	7%	12%
14%	15%	15%	17%	4%	4%	11%	11%
25%	13%	16%	14%	16%	4%	4%	13%
31%	24%	14%	14%	14%	15%	5%	17%
22%	30%	24%	13%	14%	15%	16%	19%

2688 Morley Meadow Primary 2% 2701 Elburton Primary 1% 2006 Goosewell Primary 38%
 2691 Hooe Primary 1% 2693 Oreston Primary 20% 2696 Pophlett Primary 4%

A consistently popular locality that families move to for both property and school places. It has had the smallest reduction of births of all localities. The locality is home to a large housing development within its boundary (Saltram Meadow) and the Sherford development on the locality's outskirts, which is split between Plymouth and Devon LA's. The provision of school places for Sherford has been the responsibility of Devon and has been accommodated through the provision of a new primary school on site.

Page 54

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-9.8%
Consistently oversubscribed	Elburton, Hooe
Full to capacity for next four years	Morley Meadow, Elburton, Hooe, Pophlett
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pophlett Primary – received S106 and BN funding to expand from 1FE to 2FE in 2016/17. Initially a temporary expansion, to bridge the gap whilst a large housing development with its own proposed primary school was developed. However, due to the slow build-out of the development, the expansion was made permanent. Morley Meadow Primary – as the housing development above did not build out to schedule, the proposed primary school was too late in coming forward to accommodate the pupils the development generated. Therefore, Dunstone Primary, which had serious condition concerns, was relocated to the development to fulfil the S106 agreement; built as a 1FE school but with the capability to expand to a 2FE school should additional pupil places be required. Oreston Primary – the school became an academy in Jan 2011 and through its own decision went from offering 45 places to 56 in 2014/15 and 60 places in 2017/18, based on being oversubscribed at those points in time. Although this was not a decision made on consultation with the LA, BN funding was subsequently provided in order to support the demand for places in the locality. Part of the conditions in providing the BN funding was that Oreston were to amend their FA to 60 from 45, a change that is still yet to take place.
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of Plymstock's primary schools are currently implementing caps within any year groups, in fact Elburton and Hooe consistently offer more places in their KS2 classes (2 additional places per year group)

South

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	452	338	326	347	327	356	357	333	2384
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	452	354	378	356	366	375	349	2630
		346	331	358	334	362	368	336	2435
2025	452	273	340	338	349	329	361	354	2343
2026	467	266	273	347	340	351	335	358	2269
2027	467	259	266	280	350	346	356	338	2194
2028	467	269	258	272	282	352	349	356	2138

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
25%	28%	23%	25%	24%	24%	29%	25%
23%	6%	5%	6%	1%	2%	4%	7%
40%	25%	25%	23%	25%	23%	24%	26%
43%	40%	23%	25%	22%	23%	23%	29%
45%	43%	38%	23%	23%	21%	23%	31%
42%	45%	42%	38%	22%	23%	21%	33%

3763 Cathedral School of St Mary	4%	2007 High Street Primary	39%	3761 Holy Cross RC Primary	7%
2682 Marlborough Primary	53%	2674 Mount Wise Primary	43%	2646 Pilgrim Primary	15%
2724 Prince Rock Primary	11%	3160 St Andrew's CE Primary	1%	2001 St George's CE Primary	28%
3765 St Joseph's RC Primary	2%	3759 St Peter's CE Primary	39%	4006 Millbay Academy	85%

This locality is geographically small yet contains the largest number of schools of all the localities. In addition, there are significant differences between the schools with and without surplus. During the increased birth period, the south saw the largest increase of births with the number in 2018/19 being nearly double in comparison with 2006. As such the largest number of expansion projects were undertaken in this locality. Due to the high level of investment, the LA should push to preserve the capacity created here should this be challenged by the DfE or by MATs.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-10.7%
Consistently oversubscribed	St Andrew's CE
Full to capacity for next four years	Cathedral, St Andrew's CE, St Joseph's RC
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prince Rock Primary – BN expansion from 1FE to 2FE in 2011/12 Mount Wise Primary – BN expansion from 1FE to 2FE in 2011/2012. However not all places are being made available and lower PAN's are consistently determined. St Joseph's RC Primary – BN expansion from 17 places per year to a full FE in 2012/13. Despite BN funding, Mount Wise and St Joseph's expansions took into account a large regeneration project in the Devonport area. Pilgrim Primary – BN expansion from 1FE to 2FE in 2013/14 Holy Cross RC Primary – Targeted BN in response to demand, moving the school from a 1FE to 1.5FE school in 2014/15. St Peter's CE Primary – BN funding to move the school from offering 25 places to a full FE 2014/15. BN but also undertaken as part of a move for all primary schools to take full forms of entry (multiples of 30)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth School of Creative Arts - An all-through (5-16yrs) free school opened in 2015/16 with a 2FE primary provision. Concerns regarding standards saw the school become a sponsored academy in a MAT and renamed to Millbay Academy.
<p>Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street and Millbay Academy, both of the same MAT – are operating a merged primary provision with 30 places provided instead of the potential 90. There are concerns regarding how waiting lists operate and how pupils are allocated as there is a demand for places at these schools, however whilst there is such a low demand for places across the locality in general, this is not causing issue or reason for challenge at the moment. • In response to a low take up of places, Mount Wise has determined a smaller PAN (either 30 or 45) for the past four years and has shown past reluctance to offer the built capacity of the school. • Marlborough Primary is capping year groups 1 to 6, Pilgrim has a small cap on year groups 1,2,3 and 6, St Peter’s CE has caps on year groups 3 to 6. These caps whilst beneficial for individual school are causing pressures within specific year groups

South West

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	240	213	193	208	210	218	228	216	1486
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	240	240	237	228	224	231	237	1637
		219	195	224	217	223	230	221	1529
2025	240	154	215	197	208	211	220	230	1435
2026	240	136	157	218	196	207	213	223	1350
2027	240	172	138	161	217	197	209	215	1308
2028	240	139	174	141	160	217	198	213	1242

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
11%	20%	13%	13%	9%	5%	10%	12%
9%	19%	5%	5%	0%	0%	7%	7%
36%	10%	18%	13%	12%	9%	4%	15%
43%	35%	9%	18%	14%	11%	7%	20%
28%	42%	33%	10%	18%	13%	11%	22%
42%	28%	41%	33%	10%	17%	11%	26%

2639	College Road Primary	6%	2665	Drake Primary	35%	2630	Ford Primary	24%
3762	Keyham Barton RC Primary	32%	2683	Morice Town Primary	24%	2657	Stoke Damerel Primary	12%
2659	Stuart Road Primary	19%						

This locality has a fairly small concentration of schools in comparison to its neighbours in the West and South. This locality has experienced the biggest decrease in births from its peak in 2009/10 to last year’s lowest recorded number of births, which is reflected in the largest drop in forecasted numbers from 2023/24 to 2027/28. However there has been a fairly steady level of pupils in the locality, which can be seen in the relatively small number of year group caps.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-20.4%
Consistently oversubscribed	College Road
Full to capacity for next four years	Likely College Road (sits just above 5% capacity estimate)
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stoke Damerel Primary – BN expansion to move from a 1.5 FE to 2FE school in 2012/2013 Stoke Damerel Primary was only school which had the capacity to expand within the locality. Many schools are on constricted sites and/or have older school buildings which would require significant change to alter or reconfigure.
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year group capping is taking place in some schools but aside from Keyham Barton, these caps are minimal. There are small caps at College Road in Yr2,4 & 6 and at Drake in Yr4. Keyham Barton has larger caps in Yr3,4 and 5.

West

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	520	401	417	420	460	444	449	451	3042
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	520	485	472	504	501	516	516	3514
		406	425	422	457	445	453	450	3058
2025	520	330	401	416	426	460	449	449	2932
2026	530	320	329	403	427	422	462	450	2813
2027	540	341	318	331	410	421	424	462	2707
2028	540	315	339	320	337	406	424	424	2565

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
23%	31%	30%	23%	26%	25%	25%	26%
22%	12%	11%	9%	11%	12%	13%	13%
37%	23%	31%	29%	23%	25%	25%	27%
40%	37%	22%	29%	30%	23%	25%	29%
37%	40%	36%	21%	30%	29%	23%	31%
42%	37%	40%	35%	22%	29%	29%	33%

2000	Mayflower Primary	2%	3768	Montpelier Primary	0%	2670	Pennycross Primary	16%
2668	Plaistow Hill Primary	59%	3757	St Budeaux CE Primary	81%	3772	Riverside Primary	46%
2003	St Paul's RC Primary	32%	2660	Victoria Road Primary	22%	2627	Weston Mill Primary	66%
2021	Marine Academy Primary	5%						

This locality maintained a fairly steady level of pupils before seeing a reduction this academic year, which is forecast to continue. It has two of the city's five 3FE primary schools and two historically consistently oversubscribed schools, which attract pupils from outside the locality. There is one very popular school which continuously has a high demand for places, and can be considered to be an outlier in terms of its inclusion in the West locality. However the LA currently uses the boundaries of our local housing development team, and there have always been schools which are considered outliers no matter what boundaries have been used for pupil place planning.

Forecast reduction 2023/24 to 2027/28	-18.0%
Consistently oversubscribed	Mayflower, Montpelier, Marine Academy Primary
Full to capacity for next four years	Mayflower, Montpelier, Marine Academy Primary
Previous expansion/building works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weston Mill Primary – BN expansion moving from a 1.5FE to 2FE, through reconfigured spaces rather than new buildings, in 2011/12 Riverside Primary – BN expansion from 2FE to 3FE, in 2012/2013 Montpelier Primary – minor BN works undertaken in order for the school to take a bulge year in 2012/13, taking 120 pupils Victoria Road – BN project undertaken in order for the school to take a bulge year of an additional 30 pupils (60 total) in 2012/13 Marine Academy Primary – 2FE free school opened in September 2013 Pennycross Primary – BN and S106 expansion (from nearby housing development) to move the school to a 2FE school from 1.5FE.
Action already taken to mitigate decreasing numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weston Mill now caps all year groups to 30 pupils once past reception NPE. They are looking to create a nursery provision within the space they now find themselves with.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaistow Hill Infant and St Budeaux CE Junior who used to offer 2FE combined, have both become 1FE primary schools from Sept 2023. Although the overall number of places offered has not changed, splitting a reduced number of potential NPE pupils (due to a declining birth rate) has not proved beneficial for the junior school who do not have the history of providing reception and KS1 places that the infant school has. In addition to this, as the previous infant school, can not offroll pupils at the end of Y2, the once junior school is disadvantaged in that the number of pupils it used to receive in Y3, is significantly reduced. The sustainability of the previous junior school will need to be closely and consistently monitored. Both schools have reduced the number of NPE places they offer for the first few years of being primary schools, however the lack of trend data and low first choice preferences for each school for Sept 2023 entry, has reduced the forecasts for both schools quite significantly.
--	--

City Average

	PAN	YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
2024	3332	2666	2648	2699	2859	2904	2913	2945	19634
2024 as of today	Admit to On Roll	3317	3034	3061	3117	3067	3185	3181	21962
		2722	2680	2749	2903	2937	2944	2971	19906
2025	3302	2369	2692	2673	2723	2868	2932	2915	19172
2026	3417	2345	2373	2702	2683	2712	2875	2931	18621
2027	3427	2324	2349	2382	2712	2671	2718	2874	18031
2028	3427	2244	2328	2358	2391	2701	2678	2717	17416

YrR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
20%	22%	21%	17%	16%	15%	14%	18%
18%	12%	10%	7%	4%	8%	7%	9%
28%	19%	22%	20%	16%	15%	15%	19%
31%	28%	19%	21%	21%	16%	15%	22%
32%	31%	28%	19%	22%	20%	16%	24%
35%	32%	31%	28%	19%	22%	20%	27%

Page 59

Forecast reduction from 2023/24 to 2027/28 = 13.1%

SECONDARY**Available places**

As secondary places are planned for as an entire city, the following table shows the numbers for Normal Point of Entry (Year 7) for the academic year 2024/25 and what will likely happen from 25/26 moving forward for each secondary school:

DfE	School	Current NPE PAN for 2023/24	Determined/ Agreed intake NPE PAN for 2024/25	Likely NPE PAN for 2025/26 onwards (Based on Funding Agreement/Typical operating style)	Additional information / Reason for change
6905	All Saints CE Academy Plymouth	140	150	180	Determined PAN for 24/25 – 130 Agreed to take additional 20 for 2024/25 Funding Agreement identifies capacity at 180 per year group School used to admit 240 per year group which was dropped in 2009/10 when the school became a sponsored academy and had significant rebuilding/reconfiguration
4181	Coombe Dean School	180	180	180	Funding Agreement - 180
5406	Devonport High School for Boys	180	210	180	Determined PAN for 24/25 – 180 Agreed to take additional 30 for 2024/25 Funding Agreement identifies capacity at 174 per year group, but typical operating style since 2017/18 has been to take 180 at NPE
4152	Devonport High School for Girls	158	158	158	Determined PAN for 23/24 – 128, however admitted 30 over PAN to 158 Determined PAN for 24/25 – 158 Funding Agreement still identifies capacity at 120, but school has indicated it will be taking 158 from this point forward
4185	Eggbuckland Community College	180	210	180	Determined PAN for 24/25 – 180 Agreed to take additional 30 for 2024/25 Funding agreement identifies capacity at 180 per year group (1150 including 250 6 th form), however was amended from 210 per year (1300 including 250 6 th form) in 2016/17. The school's last net capacity assessment prior to academisation was 1486, and up until 2011/12 took 243 at NPE
4179	Hele's School	240	240	240	Funding agreement identifies capacity at 210 per year group, but typical operating style has been to admit 240 per year since 2019/20. Funding agreement should be amended in line with RD guidance

4187	Lipson Co-Operative Academy	180	220	180	Determined PAN for 24/25 – 180 Agreed to take 40 additional for 2024/25 Funding agreement identifies capacity as 1377, which is believed to be the last known net capacity assessment before academisation – this would indicate that 240 could be taken per year, the number the school dropped from in 2009/10
4007	Marine Academy Plymouth	240	210	180	Determined PAN for 24/25 – 210 Funding agreement identifies capacity at 180 per year group (1152 including 252 6th form) School used to admit 240 per year group which was dropped in 2009/10 when the school became a sponsored academy and had significant rebuilding/reconfiguration
4605	Notre Dame RC School	140	140	140	Funding agreement – 140
4155	Plymouth High School for Girls	120	120	120	Funding agreement identifies capacity as 120 per year group. Prior to academisation, net capacity assessments used to fluctuate dependant on 6 th form numbers due to the school having a number of small classrooms, where the number that could be accommodated was below 30
4180	Plymstock School	300	300	300	Funding agreement identifies whole school capacity at 1680. At point of conversion the school admitted 260 per year group and had 380 6 th form places. Moved to 300 places per year group in 2018, first temporarily, then permanently. The school received S106 contribution to add additional accommodation following move to 300 – the secondary allocation from the Saltram Meadow housing development
4178	Plympton Academy	210	210	210	Converted to academy with a whole school capacity of 1350 (210 per year group with 300 6 th form). Admitted 180 from 2014/15 in response to reduced numbers. Increased to 210 in 2019/20 but only as the school was significantly redesigned/developed as part of the Priority Building Schools Programme
4172	Sir John Hunt Community Sports College	150	160	150	Determined PAN in 2024/25 – 150 Agreed to take additional 10 for 2024/25 As a maintained school, net capacity assessments place the school's capacity at 150 per year group, with a fluctuating 6 th form number.

4002	St Boniface RC College	80	80	136	Determined PAN in 2024/25 – 80 Converted to academy status with a capacity of 929 (including 6 th form) as per the last net capacity assessment on the basis that the schools used to admit 136 per year group. Falling numbers saw the school begin to lower the PAN determined to 80, and although it is expected this will continue, the LA must report the funding agreement number.
4190	Stoke Damerel Community College	270	270	240	Determined PAN 2024/25 – 240 Agreed to take an additional 30 for 2024/25 Has taken 270 for the past five years – took 260 in 2018/19 and 270 in 19/20 on request of the LA. All additional 270 admissions were done on their own decision to go over PAN, and not by prior PAN determination 240 on Funding Agreement – minor amendment to FA following an incorrect recording of 6 th form numbers.
4186	Tor Bridge High School	210	210	210	Converted to an academy with a capacity of 1400 (210 per year group with 350 6 th Form) The school was rebuilt as part of a campus reconfiguration which saw three schools brought together on one site. Any capabilities for expansion were valued engineered out during the rebuild.
4006	Millbay Academy	120	120	120	The all-through school was built in 2014/15 with a secondary capacity of 120 per year group. As there is potential for 60 places being filled from primary moving up, the school initially offers 60 places as a determined PAN – However over the past few years, due to a small number in Y6, the school has agreed to take more than 60 at NPE.
4005	UTC Plymouth	120	120	120	As a UTC, the funding agreement states capacity as 650 – 150 places per year group with a 350 6 th form. These are the places available when the KS4 establishment opened from Y10. The FA was not updated when the school moved to a Y9 entry point. The FA's age range was updated when the school moved to a Y7 entry point, but not the capacity figure. Determined PAN for Y7 onwards is 120 in 24/25 and expected to remain as that moving forward.
	TOTAL	3218	3308	3224	
4004	Additional Y9: Scott Medical and Healthcare School	75	75	75	Built to a capacity of 375 when opened in 2017/18 with 75 places in years 9,10 & 11 and 150 places in 6 th form

City

	Y7 PAN	Y9 PAN	7	8	9	10	11	Total
2024	3218	3293	3239	3134	3014	2911	2815	15113
2024 as of today	Admit to		3226	3177	3109	3035	2959	15506
	On Roll		3268	3191	3101	2974	2869	15403
2025	3308	3383	3108	3224	3132	2965	2835	15264
2026	3224	3299	3031	3096	3247	3094	2897	15365
2027	3224	3299	3047	3019	3118	3207	3023	15414
2028	3224	3299	2988	3036	3040	3079	3134	15277
2029	3224	3299	2825	2977	3057	3003	3009	14870
2030	3224	3299	2783	2814	2997	3019	2934	14548

7	8	9	10	11	Total
-1%	5%	8%	11%	12%	7%
-1%	0%	0%	2%	3%	1%
6%	0%	7%	9%	14%	7%
6%	6%	1%	8%	11%	7%
5%	6%	8%	3%	10%	7%
7%	6%	8%	9%	5%	7%
12%	8%	7%	9%	11%	9%
14%	15%	9%	8%	11%	10%

Forecast increase 2023/24 to 2026/27	2%	Forecast decrease 2026/27 to 2029/30	-5.6%
Consistently oversubscribed	Eggbuckland Community College Hele's School Devonport High School for Boys Devonport High School for Girls Plymouth High School for Girls		
Full to capacity for the next seven years (including 23/24) based on PAN determinations for 2025/26 continuing for until 2029/2030	Devonport High School for Boys (Based on 180) Devonport High School for Girls (Based on 158) Eggbuckland Community College (Based on 180) Tor Bridge High (Based on 210) Lipson Co-Operative Academy (Based on 180) Plymstock School (Based on 300) Stoke Damerel Community College (Based on 240) UTC Plymouth (Based on 120)		

The above table indicates that from 2025/26, there is surplus in Y7 for the next 3 years, despite the fact that the percentages are all below the desired 8% surplus. However, this surplus is calculated on the FA's. Based on past determinations, if schools were to determine in line with 2024/25 numbers BEFORE the negotiated increases, the total number of places is more likely to be:

DfE	School	Likely PAN
6905	All Saints CE Academy Plymouth	130 (as per original 24/25 determination)
4181	Coombe Dean School	180
5406	Devonport High School for Boys	180
4152	Devonport High School for Girls	158
4185	Eggbuckland Community College	180
4179	Hele's School	240
4187	Lipson Co-Operative Academy	180
4007	Marine Academy Plymouth	210 (as per original 24/25 determination)
4605	Notre Dame RC School	140
4155	Plymouth High School for Girls	120
4180	Plymstock School	300
4178	Plympton Academy	210
4172	Sir John Hunt Community Sports College	150
4002	St Boniface RC College	80
4190	Stoke Damerel Community College	240 (as per original 24/25 determination)
4186	Tor Bridge High School	210
4006	Millbay Academy	60 (as per original 24/25 determination)
4005	UTC Plymouth	120
	TOTAL	3088

If the total places are initially 3088 before negotiation, the surplus amounts for Y7 are as follows:

	Y7 Surplus
2025/26	1.9%
2026/27	1.3%
2027/28	3.2%
2028/29	8.5%
2029/30	9.9%

- These figures indicate that as a LA over the next three years there will need to be additional negotiation undertaken to ensure that there are enough school places for the current Y5,4, & 3 cohorts when they come to join secondary school.
- This is reinforced by the year-on-year increase seen in pupils moving from Y6 to Y7 – there is typically a net increase of pupils when taking into account those crossing the border from Devon and Cornwall into Plymouth for secondary and those crossing from Plymouth into Devon and Cornwall. However, over the past five years, there has been a year-on-year increase from the previous year. In 2019/20, there was a net increase of 1.2%, in 2023/24 this has increased to 6.9%. Although this has been taken into account for forecasting purposes, the LA needs to keep in mind the potential for a continued increase of additional Y7 pupils.

Should the LA want to try and achieve 8% surplus as a buffer for the years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28, the following numbers of places need to be negotiated:

	Y7 Surplus (based on 3088 places being available)	Additional % required	Additional places required	Additional FE required to cover additional places	Places to be provided	% of year group full	Surplus	Surplus (rounded)
2025/26	1.85%	6.15%	191	7	210	91.89%	8.11%	8%
2026/27	1.30%	6.70%	208	7	210	92.40%	7.60%	8%
2027/28	3.21%	4.79%	149	5	150	92.29%	7.71%	8%

CROSS BORDER MOVEMENT

As a Local Authority with three grammar schools, Plymouth regularly deals with an increased number of children in Y7 in comparison to the number seen in the previous Y6 cohort. Cross border movement is accounted for, regarding the move from Y6 to Y7 within our forecasting, through our comparison of three-year trend data from Y6 to Y7. However, in the last five years, the number of additional pupils in Y7 from the previous Y6 has increased by over 5%. To account for this change, we have altered our methodology so there is the highest weight on the most recent year's data, followed by the second most recent, to the lowest weight on third most recent year.

Year group movement	Additional pupils	% increase on Y6 cohort
18/19 Y6 to 19/20 Y7	36	1.2%
19/20 Y6 to 20/21 Y7	76	2.6%
20/21 Y6 to 21/22 Y7	130	4.5%
21/22 Y6 to 22/23 Y7	125	4.1%
22/23 Y6 to 23/24 Y7	208	6.9%

This increase has reflected the overall growth in Secondary cohorts as a whole and the similar increase in secondary cohorts reported by our neighbouring LA's. This will be monitored, but the change in methodology will also take into account the forthcoming decline in numbers we are expecting in Plymouth, and in line with the decreasing birth rates seen above, the decline we are expecting across the South West region.

The tables below reflect the position of our neighbouring LA's with regard to pupil numbers and capacity. Although the current published data does not reflect the peak of pupils experienced during this period for Plymouth (and therefore doesn't reflect the same period for our neighbours), it does show for Primary,

- The expectation of more surplus places in Primary in 2024/25 for all SW LA's
- That the primary cohort grew between 2009/10 to what we are expecting in 2024/25 for most LA's

- That all LA's are expecting a smaller primary cohort in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24

LA (& England)	Estimated percentage of spare primary places in 2024/25	Actual Primary numbers 2009/10	Forecast Primary numbers 2024/25	Difference from 09/10 to 24/25	Percentage change in primary numbers from 2009/10 to 2022/23	Anticipated change in primary pupil numbers from 2022/23 to 2024/25
Cornwall	16.9	36175	39785	3610	12.4	-2.2
Devon	18.3	49808	54310	4502	11.0	-1.8
Plymouth	22.2	17743	18668	925	11.8	-5.9
Torbay	17.9	8785	8668	-117	8.7	-9.3
England	14.1	3854572	4369366	514794	15.7	-2.0

And for Secondary,

- On the whole, secondary numbers grew from 2009/10 to 2022/23 (Although Devon shows a slight decline, it is forecast to have the biggest growth from 2022/23 to 2024/25 and an overall increase in number from 09/10 to 24/25)
- That all LA's are expecting to have a larger secondary cohort in 2024/25 compared to 2022/23

LA (& England)	Estimated percentage of spare secondary places in 2024/25	Actual secondary numbers 2009/10	Forecast secondary numbers 2024/25	Difference from 09/10 to 24/25	Percentage change in secondary pupil numbers from 2009/10 to 2022/23	Anticipated change in secondary pupil numbers from 2022/23 to 2024/25
Cornwall	10.2	28768	30692	1924	2.1	4.5
Devon	16.6	37748	38441	693	-2.4	4.3
Plymouth	13.7	14494	15158	664	3.0	1.5
Torbay	8.5	7283	8041	758	10.1	0.3
England	9.0	2820511	3213999	393488	10.5	3.1

[Local authority school places scorecards, Reporting year 2022 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Points to note – This is the latest published reported data for 2022. However, Plymouth data included in this report has been analysed and updated as per information we know, as of this year.

All LA's including Plymouth are showing spare secondary places for 2024/25. However, as we have encountered issues with accessing all these places (as detailed above) it is known that this is not a true reflection of the position in Plymouth. Conversations with other LA's has highlighted that this is an experience being faced by other LA's, particularly Devon.

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	14 November 2024
Title of Report:	Q3 2024/25 Performance Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture 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-2024/25(Q2)
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

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	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: 24/01/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing & Cllr Cresswell via email											
Date approved: 24/01/2025											

Q3 2024/25 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

**CONTENTS**

1. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES	2
1.1. REFERRALS & RE-REFERRALS	2
1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED	3
1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN	4
1.4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CHILDREN IN CARE)	6
1.5. CARE EXPERIENCED (ALSO REFERRED TO AS CARE LEAVERS)	8
2. EDUCATION, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS	9
2.1. OFSTED OUTCOMES	9
2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING	9
2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING	11
2.4. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES	12
3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS	13
4. ANNEX 2: OTHER SOURCES OF PUBLISHED INFORMATION	15

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	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
1	Number of referrals received within the last 12 months	3,285	2,415	3,879	518.3 (2023/24)	728.5 (2023/24)	3,310
	Referrals received within the last 12 months - Rate per 10,000 children	616.4	467.7	748.2			637.1
2	Number of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	743	483	780	22.4% (2023/24)	24.4% (2023/24)	867
	% of re-referrals within 12 months (last 12 months)	22.6%	20.0%	20.1%			26.2%

In the 12 months to the end of quarter three, Plymouth progressed 3,310 referrals, this is 569 less than the 12 months to March 2024 but 895 more than the 12 months to March 2023. At a rate per 10,000 children (enabling comparisons against other authorities) Plymouth is reported at 637.1 at the end of quarter three. This is lower than Plymouth's published position for 2023/24 (782.2) and between the statistical neighbour average of 728.5, and the England average of 518.3.

The proportion of re-referrals received (where a referral had been received for the same child in the 12 months prior) has seen an increase (up 0.7pp) in the last quarter. The end of quarter three position was reported at 26.2%, up 6.1 percentage points from Plymouth's published figure for 2023/24. Plymouth is currently at a level higher than the 2023/24 published levels for both its statistical neighbours and the England average.

In the third quarter, there has been an increase in the number of contacts progressed within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), but a decrease in the contacts converted into referrals. Several factors contribute to this trend:

- Agreement with Police: Low-level Public Protection Notices (PPNs) are now returned to the police for monitoring under their 3x3 rule (three occurrences). If a safeguarding concern arises for a child or young person, Children's Social Care (CSC) will be notified.
- Targeted Help Services: There has been an increase in the capacity of Targeted Help services aligned at the 'Front Door' to provide timely intervention for families, as this prevents the need for statutory involvement.
- The trial of the Family Help Model began in November 2024. Although still in its early stages, it has shown that some families benefit from Child in Need (CIN) assessments conducted by the Targeted Support service rather than statutory services. Some families have established good working relationships with Family Support workers, effectively addressing low-level CIN needs.

To monitor the high re-referral rate, we continue to conduct monthly dip sample activities on all re-referrals. This provides the evidence regarding which service area the high rate of re-referrals are coming from and where to focus on. The actions that are being taken to address the rate of re-referrals includes:

- Thorough assessments to consider family history
- Safety plans to be shared with professional network
- Family Group Conference and Family Meetings to be consider before closure to CSC
- Consultation with Targeted Help before case closure

The themes which are seen in re-referrals are discussed at managers meeting and service meetings and taken forward to be used for service learning for all staff.

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED

1.2. CHILDREN IN NEED				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
3	Number of children subject to a Child In Need Plan (snapshot)	965	944	1,379	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	831
	Children subject to a Child In Need Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	181.1	177.1	265.4	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	159.9

Quarter three saw a slight increase (11 children) in Plymouth's 'Child in Need' caseload (which does not include children subject to Children Protection Plans or Looked after Children) when compared to quarter two. However, it is at a level lower than the last three year-end positions. We draw your attention to the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Care Plan (next two sections) which are currently at a higher level than the previous two year-end positions.

As a result of the practice improvement work across the department we have seen a decrease in the number of children open in the department under a Child in Need plan; this is down to the work being undertaken and the close scrutiny of plans by senior management.

- Children who may need intervention following assessment are transferred to Targeted Help from Initial response as opposed to longer-term social care teams
- Children who are on CIN plans with longer-term teams, have their plans reviewed monthly with the Service Manager to assess their suitability.

We know that children who may need additional support benefit from early intervention and this could avoid a move 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 have started to see the impact of this in the volume of referral and subsequent assessments, which is really positive for families as we would want to ensure they receive the least intrusive interventions where possible.

The children social work service has regular Child in Need tracker meetings chaired by the service managers to enable reflective discussions and ensure there is no drift and delay on the support and intervention for families.

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, focused on practice improvement

In November 2024 the Government published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive', which has led to a Families First Partnership reform and a commitment to rolling out family help and multi-agency child protection teams. The approach and practice around how we support children in need is likely to change during 2025/26, as we implement the Government's social care policies.

1.3. CHILDREN SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
4	Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (Snapshot)	326	230	299	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	325
	Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - Rate per 10,000 children	61.2	44.5	57.7	41.6 (2023/24)	54.4 (2023/24)	62.6
5	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Neglect	51.5% (168)	45.9% (107)	50.2% (150)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	50.8% (165)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Physical Abuse	7.7% (25)	6.4% (15)	8.4% (25)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	8.6% (28)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Sexual Abuse	3.7% (12)	4.3% (10)	8.4% (25)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	8.0% (26)
	Category of abuse for current Child Protection Plan: Emotional Abuse	37.1% (121)	43.3% (101)	33.0% (99)	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	32.6% (106)
6	% of children subject to multiple child protection plans - Within lifetime of the child (new plans starting in last 12 months)	27.5% (103)	25.8% (65)	30.1% (112)	24.7% (2023/24)	25.5% (2022/23)	25.6% (114)

At the end of quarter three (31 December 2024) there were 325 children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan. This is a rate of 62.6 children per 10,000 children, which is higher than the published 2023/24 rate of 57.7 (299 children). The rate per 10,000 children is currently 21.0 above the England average and 8.2 above our Statistical Neighbour average.

The proportion of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan within the 12 months up to the end of quarter three (January 2024 to December 2024), who have been on a previous Child Protection Plan in their lifetime was reported at 25.4% (down 4.5 percentage points on 31 March 2024). During the last 12 months, 114 children/young people have started repeated Child Protection Plans (within their lifetime), whilst this is a decrease on the end of 2023/24 position, it remains slightly higher than the published 2023/24 statistical neighbours average of 25.5% and the England average of 24.7% (our comparators saw increases on their previous year positions).

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.

There is also a strong focus on Child Protection Plans over 12 months, with monthly meetings chaired by the Service Manager for safeguarding and the Service Manager for the Children Social Work Service who ensures that there is grip and timely decisions for children.

The department is working with the Plymouth Safeguarding Partnership Board to continue 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. The majority of staff within the Children Social Work service have now attended the assessment training and we continue to ensure that new staff attend the training as part of their induction.

As part of our improvement journey, we are equipping our social workers with a better understanding of the identification of sexual abuse.

Two workshop days were undertaken in November and December with staff across the Initial Response Teams, Children's Social Work and the Children with Disabilities Teams.

- To share the partnership work undertaken to support practitioners working with families where sexual abuse is a concern
- To support staff to develop the confidence and skills to carry out direct work with children where there are concerns of sexual abuse

Further development sessions are planned for February which are being co-delivered with the NSPCC. We are working closely with the Centre of Excellence and the NSPCC to ensure the training is aligned and compliments each other.

The children Social Work Service Manager is also now chairing the child sexual abuse working group and will continue to ensure learning and development is taken back into the monthly Service meetings with staff.

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

				Previous Year & Benchmarking		Current Period	
Ref	Indicator Name	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
7	Number of children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children (Snapshot)	490	500	513	70.0 (2023/24)	94.0 (2023/24)	523
	Children subject to a Care Plan - Looked After Children - Rate per 10,000 children	91.9	96.9	99.0			100.7
8	Number of Looked After Children in an unregistered placement (snapshot)	4	6	9	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	4
9	% of Looked After Children placed outside of the city of Plymouth (i.e., the placement is not within PL1 to PL7 or PL9)	38.0% <small>(23% DfE: +20 miles of LA boundary)</small>	39.9% <small>(25% DfE: +20 miles of LA boundary)</small>	42.7% <small>(23% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	Within boundary not benchmarked <small>17.0% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	Within boundary not benchmarked <small>20.1% DfE: 20+ miles of LA boundary)</small>	42.8% (224)
10	Placement Type: Family Placement (fostering or connected carers)	325	339	368	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	357
	Placement Type: Children's Homes, Residential Care Homes & Residential Schools	56	57	57	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	65
	Placement Type: Hostels & other Supportive accommodation	33	48	47	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	51
	Placement Type: Lodgings or Independent living (16+)	16	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Other Placement	x	5	8	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	x
	Placement Type: Placed for Adoption	24	18	5	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	9
	Placement Type: Placed with Parents	28	32	26	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	32
	Placement Type: Other accommodation - NHS, Family Centres, Parent & Child	7	x	x	Not benchmarked	Not benchmarked	5
Placement Type: Secure Units & Youth Offender Institutions	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 December 2024, there were 523 children/young people who are children in care. This is a net increase of 23 children/young people on the published figure for 2022/23 and 10 more than the published figure of 513 for 2023/24. The average month-end position for the last 12 months is calculated at 521 children/young people.

299 (57.2%) of children in care are placed within the city, the remaining 224 children (42.8%) are placed outside of the city. This is reported at a similar level as our internal figure for 2023/24 (42.7%) but higher than our position at the end of 2021/22 and 2022/23. 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 less than a mile from a child's home address), but it is outside of Plymouth. Using provisional information, approximately 23.3% of children in care are placed more than 20 miles of their home address (122 of 517)

The number of children in unregistered arrangements reduced to four by the end of December with move-on plans in place for two of those. Both have since moved to their registered placements in January 2025. There are currently two children in unregistered placements by OFSTED, however both placements are registered by the CQC.

Work to increase sufficiency to provide the right homes for children in or close to Plymouth and to progress plans for individual children continues to be monitored through Children's Resource Panel and our Family Homes for Plymouth's Children Board. Sufficiency of fostering homes for children and young people remains a challenge both locally and nationally. It is positive that to date 11 new fostering households have been approved by Foster for Plymouth this financial year with a further eight expected to progress to Fostering Panel by 31 March 2025. This represents double the number of households approved last financial year (2023/24) when nine households were approved and an increase on the 15 approved in the previous year (2022/23). The Fostering Summit will take place on 07 February 2025 to co-design the 2025/26 support and retention offer with our foster carers alongside the launch of the high support and emergency fostering offers.

We continue to work creatively through our Brokerage Team and using our STEPS programme to identify family-based placements for the children and young people who are assessed as being ready to move into a family-based placement with careful preparation and matching. One child successfully moved to her new family in early January with another four being progressed through Foster for Plymouth.

The Special Guardianship Support Team continues to reach out to Special Guardians to ensure that they are aware of the new SGO Support Offer. SGO Support has been added as a sixth workstream within the Family Homes for Plymouth Children Board. Work is continuing to explore the financial offer available to Foster Carers who wish to care for a child in care under an SGO, thus enabling the child to exit care.

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

Ref	Indicator Name	Previous Year & Benchmarking					Current Period
		2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
11	% of Care Experienced young people in Unsuitable Accommodation (Statutory Service (aged 18 to 20))	6.1% (11/181) (11% DfE)	4.1% (8/192) (12% DfE)	9.5% (19/201) (15% DfE)	12.0% (2023/24 DfE)	12.4% (2023/24 DfE)	9.1% (19/208)
12	% of Care Experienced young people in Education, Employment and Training (Statutory Service (EET aged 18 to 20))	56.4% (102/181) (49% DfE)	50.0% (96/192) (47.0% DfE)	43.3% (87/201) (45.0% DfE)	54.0% (2023/24 DfE)	52.2% (2023/24 DfE)	46.2% (96/208)

Plymouth's quarter three figures show that the proportion of Care Experienced young people in unsuitable accommodation (9.1%) was lower than both the England average and the statistical neighbour average (as published for 2023/24). The cohort of young people in unsuitable accommodation has improved on our published figure for 2023/24 but is at a level higher than those published for 2021/22 and 2022/23.

The Housing and Preparation for Adulthood meeting ensures that timely plans are in place for young people approaching 18, improving suitability figures and reducing lengthy and costly extensions to children's placements post-18. Robust monitoring of young people over 18 in unsuitable accommodation focuses on support plans and joint efforts with Community Connections to move them into suitable housing, especially when higher support levels are needed to navigate social housing systems and timeframes. The Care Leavers Team collaborates with colleagues through the steering group for the new SHAP-funded housing provision to identify young people in or at risk of unsuitable accommodation who would benefit from the provision when it opens in March/April 2025.

Those in Education, Employment and Training was reported 2.9 percentage points higher than our internal figure for 2023/24. Our DfE published figure of 45.0% for 2023/24 (which has slightly different criteria to our internal reporting), was reported at a level circa 8.9 to 10.7 percentage points lower than the published figures for our comparators.

While still below England and statistical neighbours, there has been a steady improvement in the number of young people recorded as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Focused work has also shown an increase in those moving from NEET to SEET (Seeking Education, Employment or Training) and their progress is monitored through targeted monthly review meetings and implementing an individualised action plan through the Skills Launchpad. A period of enhanced incentivisation for young people moving from NEET to into training or education, even if this is a part time or voluntary experience is being explored to assess whether this improves engagement.

Work continues within the Council, our partners and across the business community to develop supported opportunities for care experienced young people to access work shadowing, work experience, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities. This included a presentation at the Devon Chamber of Commerce City Conversations Event.

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. 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	Q1 2024/25
1	% of all schools judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding	Inspections paused due to COVID	76.0%	77.6%	89.6% (pub. Dec 2023) 90.4% (End of August report)	86.9% (pub. Dec 2023) 86.6% (End of August report)	90.8% (89/98) End of August position
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	90.5% (32,201 / 35,576)

From September 2024, OFSTED no longer provides a one-word judgement on the overall effectiveness of a school. Therefore, the figures will remain static for future reporting until it can be established how OFSTED will be using inspection data for monitoring purposes.

There are 98 state-funded schools in Plymouth and at the end of quarter two for 2024/25, 90.8% of schools are judged as Good or Outstanding. 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 97.4% nationally)
- 65 out of 69 Primary Schools (94.2% compared to 91.6% nationally),
- 16 out of 19 Secondary Schools (84.2% compared to 83.8% nationally), and
- 5 out of 7 Special Schools (71.4% compared to 90.5% nationally).

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING

2.2. ABSENCE MONITORING				Current published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2020/21 Plymouth	2021/22 Plymouth	Plymouth	England	South West	Sept to Dec 2024/25
3	% of overall absence in all schools	4.9%	8.8%	8.2% (Academic Year 2022/23) 8.1% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	7.4% (Academic Year 2022/23) 6.9% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	7.6% (Academic Year 2022/23) 7.4% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	7.7% (View Your Education Data, AYTD 31/12/2024)
4	% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) in all schools	12.9%	28.1%	24.1% (Academic Year 23/24) 23.2% (Autumn & Spring 23/24)	21.2% (Academic year 22/23) 19.2% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	21.3% (Academic year 22/23) 20.3% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	22.5% (Of which 2.8% were severely absent) (View Your Education Data, AYTD 31/12/24)

% of persistent absence (less than 90% attendance) of pupils with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs)	38.8%	45.0%	40.5% (Academic Year 22/23)	36.0% (Academic Year 22/23)	37.8% (Academic Year 22/23)	40.4% (752) (Of which 10.0% (187) were severely absent) (View Your Education Data, AYTD 31/12/24)
			38.4% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	34.8% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	37.8% (Autumn & Spring 2023/24)	

The benchmark 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. There is additional Autumn & Spring Term 2023/24 data now published for benchmarks and characteristic data and is also above.

The data source for absence statistics has been switched from the local information source to the ‘View Your Education Data’ (VYED) website, the DfE site for collating school absence. A recent technical issue with particular school data feeds (which has affected schools across the country) means that currently this is the most reliable data source. However, this data set currently does not include the information from one large secondary school for Plymouth.

VYED presents absence data cumulatively from the beginning of the academic year and therefore the following data represents the period from 01/09/2024 to 31/12/2024.

In the Autumn term of 2024/25:

- The Overall absence rate was 7.7 %.
- The percentage of those persistently absent was 22.5%
- The percentage of those with an EHCP who were persistently absent was 40.4%.

In comparison to the same period in 2023/24, while primary and secondary attendance was slightly higher, special school attendance has fallen. When looking at persistent absence in the same period last year, this has fallen across primary, secondary and special schools

Work continues by the Inclusion and Welfare Service to reduce school absence. Access and Attendance Officers continue to monitor attendance on a fortnightly basis for each school in Plymouth. Schools which appear to be driving low rates of attendance when analysing overall Special school level have been identified and this is being discussed with these schools within School Effectiveness Framework meetings

With regard to the attendance of children with an EHCP, an audit has been undertaken of every child with an EHCP who is also either on a part-time timetable or considered severely absent. This will be completed by the end of January 2025. The School Improvement Team will work with the SEND Service to develop a plan to target schools to ensure that planning for children is robust which will help to improve practice and the rates of attendance for the EHCP cohort.

With regard to the attendance of children with SEN support, the role of the School Improvement Officer for SEND is being developed to enable targeted conversations with schools to improve attendance of children who need SEN Support.

A School Attendance research project has been developed in partnership with Marjon University. This will include a parent survey and a child survey, which will be carried out across the city and will explore the themes of belonging and inclusion in school. The surveys will be launched at the end of February 2025, with the research project concluding in May 2025. The ‘Belonging’ strand lead of the place-based working group has been involved in the development of the surveys and the learning from the project will both feed back into the place-based working group and inform future media campaigns promoting the importance of school attendance.

2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

2.3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING				Previous Year & Benchmarking			Current Period
Ref	Indicator Name	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	England	Statistical Neighbours	Q3 2024/25
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	95.2% (End of December 2024/25)
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	90.4% (End of December 2024/25)

By the end of Q3 (December 2024), 95.2% of 16-and 17-year-olds are in Education Employment and Training. By the end of the Autumn Term of 2024/25, this figure is 2% higher than the figure seen at the end of the academic year 2023/24 (93.3%).

The percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND in Education, Employment and Training at the end of December 2024 is 90.4%. This is 5% higher than the figure seen at the end of the academic year 2023/24 (86.1%).

Continuing the positive engagement of 2023/24, the target for 16- and 17-year-olds with SEND, being in Education, Employment and Training has been raised to 92% for 2024/25. Data is evidencing that the Post 16 team is on target to achieve this. Moving young people from not being in education, employment, and training (NEET) to seeking (SEET), education, employment, and training remains the focus of the team.

As the academic year 2024/25 progresses, the post 16 team continue to widen their offer of extensive support to transition into employment, education or training to groups who may experience disadvantage, which now together with the SEN cohort includes (but not exclusive to) those in care, care leavers, young carers and young parents.

- The numbers of post 16 young people in care in EET is more than double those who are seeking EET or NEET.
- 45% of Care leavers are in EET and when including those seeking EET this increases to 54.3%
- 72% of young carers are in EET, which increases to 80% when including those seeking EET
- 33.3% of young parents are in EET, which increases to 44.4% when including those seeking EET
- Although the funding period for the SEND innovation fund has now closed, the SEND progression fund continues to support more than 250 young people.
- The number of EHCP young people on supported internships continues to grow, moving from 51 in September to 57 by the end of December 2024.

2.4. KEY STAGE 4 OUTCOMES

Ref	Indicator Name	2021/22 Plymouth	2021/22 Plymouth	Current published data & Benchmarking			Current Period
				2023/24 Plymouth	2023/24 England	2023/24 Statistical Neighbours	2023/24 Plymouth
8	Key Stage 4 - % of pupils achieving 5+ in English and Maths	46.0%	41.7% (1,214/ 2,912)	46.2% (1,327/ 2,870)	46.2% (23/24 provisional)	44.4% (23/24 provisional)	46.2% (23/24 provisional)
9	Key Stage 4 - Average Attainment 8 score	47.6 points	44.9 Points (Average score for 2,912 pupils)	46.2 Points (Average score for 2,870 pupils)	46.1 points (23/24 provisional)	44.6 (23/24 provisional)	46.2 Points

Outcomes for the end of Key Stage 4 (the point at which the majority of 15- & 16-year-olds complete GCSEs at the end of their statutory education) are measured primarily through numerical values assigned per GCSE subject (or an equivalent value for a non-numerical qualification outcome such as a 'pass' at BTEC).

For each pupil, for each GCSE subject completed and assessed, a value will be provided between one and nine (nine being the highest achieved level). A 'level 4' is considered to be a 'standard' pass, a 'level 5' is considered to be a 'strong' pass. Attainment 8 is the sum of the eight highest achieved passes by a student; these figures are then averaged per school, per Local Authority and nationally to create performance measures. Further information can be found in Annex I – Indicator Definitions

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2023/24 is showing that 46.2% of all KS4 pupils achieved a strong pass in English and Maths at Key Stage Four. This is a 10.8% increase from 41.7% achieved in 2022/23; 4.5pp higher.

In 2023/24, Plymouth's average for those achieving a strong pass in English and Maths is equal to the National average (46.2%). Plymouth is above the statistical neighbour average of 44.4%

Provisional data released by the DfE for 2023/24 is showing that the average attainment 8 points score for KS4 pupils in Plymouth is 46.2. This is 1.3 points higher than the average in 2022/23 (44.9) This is 0.1 points above the national (46.1 points) and 1.6 points above the statistical neighbour (44.6 points) averages.

In 2023/24, 23.8% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieved 'the basics' (5+ in English and Maths). This is a 28.6% increase from the 18.5% achieved in 2022/23; 5.3pp higher. When compared to the national average Plymouth is 2.2pp lower (26.0%) but 1.3pp higher than the statistical neighbour average (22.5%). Although Plymouth is below the national average of 26% of FSM pupils achieving 'the basics', Plymouth's gap in achievement between FSM and non-FSM pupils has narrowed due to the increased achievement of FSM pupils in 2023/24. In 2023/24 this is 29.0pp (52.8% – 23.8%) compared to 30.1pp (48.6%-18.5%) in 2022/23.

In 2023/24, 6.7% of pupils with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) achieved 'the basics'. This is a reduction of 18.3% compared to 2022/23 (8.2%); 1.5pp lower. This is below the national average of 7% for EHCP pupils, but above the statistical neighbour average of 4.4% for EHCP pupils

In 2023/24, 24.5% of pupils receiving SEN (Special Educational Needs) Support achieved 'the Basics'. This is an increase of 31.0% compared to 2022/23 (18.7%); 5.8pp higher. This is above the national average of 21.6% for SEN support pupils and above the statistical neighbour average of 19.7% for pupils receiving SEN Support.

3. ANNEX 1: INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SERVICES
<p>Referrals & Re-Referrals</p> <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).
<p>Children In Need – CIN</p> <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.
<p>Children subject to a Child Protection Plan - CP</p> <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).
<p>Looked After Children (also referred to as Children in Care) - LAC</p> <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).
<p>Care Experienced (also referred to as Care Leavers)</p> <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.

4. ANNEX 2: OTHER SOURCES OF PUBLISHED INFORMATION

<p>LG Inform</p> <p>The local area benchmarking tool from the Local Government Association</p>	<p>https://lginform.local.gov.uk/</p>
<p>GOV.UK - Explore education statistics</p> <p>Find related information and other statistical services provided by the Department for Education (DfE)</p>	<p>https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/</p>
<p>Children's Social Care - Outcomes and Enablers</p> <p>This dashboard displays data indicators to help both local and central government understand progress towards the outcomes and enablers set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework</p>	<p>https://department-for-education.shinyapps.io/csc-outcomes-enablers/</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	06 February 2025
Title of Report:	Children, Young People and Families Service Q3 Improvement Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture 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

To provide Scrutiny members with an update on improvements in the Children, Young People and Families Service in line with the milestones set out in our three year plan, Achieving Excellence, and in response to the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in January 2024.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. That the improvements and planned next steps are noted.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. None.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Keeping children and young people safe.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

A three-year transformation plan is in place with improvements in the quality of social work practice linked to reducing financial pressures, particularly on the costs of agency social workers and residential placements for children in care.

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.

Improved support to children and families ensures risks are managed effectively and has the potential to impact positively on child poverty.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		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.						
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)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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.							

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: David Haley											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 24/01/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing approved via email											
Date approved: 24/01/2025											

Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress of the plan to improve the quality, timeliness and outcomes for children, young people and families by our children's social care services to December 2024. This plan was developed following the ILACS and to take forward relevant priorities in Achieving Excellence, our strategic plan for Children's Services 2024-27.

1. Priority areas identified in the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS)

The improvements put in place in priority areas following the ILACS, including to Out of Hours services and Local Authority Designated Officer response to allegations against professionals, were confirmed by our Sector Led Improvement Partner (SLIP) in their work presented to the September Improvement Board.

Since this time, following support from our SLIP to review options for further strengthening our out of hours arrangements, a business case has been agreed to consult on implementing an Integrated Front Door, bringing together the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Out of Hours Team to provide an extended offer to families, integrating other children's services and partners front door services in the coming year. The proposed model will use a conversation-based approach and an extended offer to ensure more families access earlier family help reducing the need for statutory social work involvement. Consultation on the proposed approach started on 13th January and will end on Friday 7th February following which a decision will be made about the approach.

A permanent LADO has now been appointed and is taking forward a programme of work further embedding improvements to the advice and support offered to partners in relation to safeguarding allegations against professionals.

2. Front Door

We continue to ensure the improvements put in place in the Front Door since the Ofsted focused visit in December 2023 are sustained. Good progress was confirmed by Ofsted during the ILACS in January and our Sector Led Improvement Partner (SLIP) Dorset in their reports to Board.

The number of referrals progressed by the MASH is being sustained at a lower level (239 in December compared to 443 in Jan 2024) as a result of improvements to early help and targeted help to families. In December, 316 families were receiving support from non-statutory services compared to 235 in May. Only 30% of referrals to the MASH are deemed to require full research by all of the partners, indicating that there is still more to do to ensure families receive the early help support they need. A blueprint for our early help services has been agreed and implementation is progressing with partners to develop a stronger offer to families, including two early multi-disciplinary developments in specific targeted localities of Plymouth.

As a result of staff sickness and annual leave over the Christmas period, MASH contact decisions made within one working day during December deteriorated from usual performance of 80% to 56.4%. The Head of Service is ensuring better response time going forward. In December 73% of referral visits were made within 5 working days and 93% within 10 working days. 75% of strategy discussions were held within one working day. 56 strategy meetings were held during December of which 14 were out of time. For some of these it was not obvious at the point of referral that a strategy meeting was required, this only became apparent following further information being gathered from parents or partners. For others there was a delay in meeting usual timescales as a result of the bank holidays during the month.

The live learning approach remains in place in the Front Door with dip sampling by managers and the Operational MASH Board with a focus on re-referrals, ensuring thorough assessments and that families are fully supported following children's social care ending their involvement. A Practice Week of the Front Door is taking place in the week of 20th January and a thorough programme of quality assurance activity in the week will provide detailed learning about current practice in the service.

Despite improvement work, we remain concerned that the rate of re-referral, 27% in December, has not reduced significantly (64 families and 55 children have been subject to four or more contacts in the last 6 months) and targeted quality assurance to ensure we understand practice in this area and respond appropriately was completed in November. As a result, focused work continues to ensure assessments effectively identify families' needs and families are effectively supported once statutory social work involvement ends. Improvements have included aligning our Targeted Help offer with the MASH and Initial Response Teams to ensure support is in place at an early point, and strengthening the early engagement of early help services in work with families so that families remain well supported when statutory services are no longer involved. In December 249 families were showing sustained improvements compared to 172 in September.

To ensure the capacity with families and their community networks are maximized, we continue to extend the use of family led decision making approaches including family network meetings and Family Group Conferencing (FGC) so that more families are offered a family led support plan when they first need help. Detailed practice guidance for Family Network Meetings is in place and briefings are being held for all teams to ensure that family capacity is fully utilised in all cases, particularly where there is a risk of the child coming into care.

Strategic and Operational MASH Boards continue to ensure strong partnership engagement and oversight of practice and in the analysis of and response to patterns of demand and performance and quality assurance that drives improvement priorities. This includes a programme of partnership dip sampling of priority areas including consent and strategy meetings which is finding appropriate decision making.

3. Timely and effective social work practice when it is needed which keeps children and young people safe and improves wider outcomes.

3.1 All children benefit from a timely and comprehensive assessment

235 assessments were started in December, (98.7% of referrals) and as a result of focused management attention 99% were completed in time in the month (improved from 63.9% in July). We are pleased that as a result of the assessment training programme the Academy have been delivering, audits are identifying more 'good' and 'outstanding' elements in assessments. In September, just under 50% of audits identified comprehensive and detailed assessments and good evidence of multi-agency co-ordination to fully understand children's needs. Continued improvement work will focus on ensuring that families are not subject to repeat assessments without any focused support to bring about change.

Following the quality assurance work earlier in the year development work to strengthen child sexual abuse (CSA) practice in the Initial Response and Children's Social Work Teams has continued to be a priority with a joint service development away day taking place in November including attendance by the CSA Centre for Excellence. We are ensuring all staff are aware of and using the guidance and resources developed by the PSCP on neglect, child sexual abuse, domestic abuse and adolescent safety in their assessments and work with families.

Improvement work has also focused on ensuring effective practice for children in families where domestic abuse is a factor. Quality assurance in November 2024, including a multi-agency practice week focused on domestic abuse, found that in assessments children's histories were explored well and patterns of harm were understood to inform decision making. However, there is more to do to ensure children are always spoken to alone in these assessments, to ensure father's views are fully considered and to ensure safety planning for children is fully recorded.

3.2 All children and young people benefit from high quality planning

We continue to ensure all children have an up to date and high-quality plan, supported by mandatory training from the Academy which has been being delivered since September and all staff are attending. At the end of December 93% of children in need and 94% of children in care have an up-to-date plan. Whilst only 75% of children on a child protection plan had an up-to-date plan, this is due to a delay in getting the records of core groups onto Eclipse following the meetings. 100% of reviews of children on

a child protection plan are on time. At the end of December, 64% of young people open to the Care Leaving Service had an up to date Pathway Plan.

Quality assurance in the last quarter found that just over 40% of children experienced good and outstanding practice with plans being recorded on children's files and some plans are updated following meetings. However, some plans evidence actions that are not clear or specific and are not driving forward outcomes for children. Practice to be strengthened includes having plans that reflect progress made and outstanding actions to be achieved. Without this there is a risk of drift and delay, and it is challenging to evidence what impact children's plans have had upon their lived experiences. This is included in our current Care Planning Fundamentals training programme that all staff are attended.

We have maintained a particular focus on ensuring good assessment and early planning where there are concerns for unborn babies with the Head of Service chairing a partnership panel where pre-birth plans are reviewed closely.

The Care Leavers Practice Week in November identified a number of strengths in our practice with care experienced young people, including evidence of passion and pride in our young people, most visits, assessments and plans being written to young people and risks being identified well and shared with managers appropriately. In addition, there was good evidence of young people being well supported to engage in education, employment and training. However, there was a need to improve how Personal Advisers understand the previous experiences of the young people they are working with and to ensure all young people benefit from a high quality and ambitious Pathway Plan that is developed with them.

To improve the quality of Pathway Plans for children leaving care we have worked with care experienced young people to agree a new format for the plan to ensure children's views and experiences are at the heart of planning and that the plan covers all key outcomes required in preparation for independence. The new Pathway Plan format is now set up on Eclipse and available to practitioners who are now working with young people to review their plan with close oversight of progress from the Head of Service. Further quality assurance is planned to ensure rapid improvements are made.

Children's reviews are taking place in a timely way, quality assurance has identified that over 40% of reviews were identified to be good with meetings being well attended by partners and family members. Development work with our SLIP has informed a programme of improvement work with our Independent Chairs to ensure that children's plans are ambitious and high quality and outcomes are achieved in a timely way.

3.3 All children and young people benefit from purposeful direct work

The Academy has now brought direct work approaches and tools for children and young people of different ages and developmental stages together into a resource bank that is being well promoted to staff. Ensuring direct work and life story work is completed and recorded on Eclipse remains a focus and was included in work on permanence completed with our SLIP in December and will be a key message in the planned 'Safe and Settled Care' events being delivered to staff in the next quarter, learning from the approach taken in Dorset.

The Virtual School is making good progress with the delivery of the Extended offer to ensure improved support to and outcomes for children who have ever had a social worker. The Extended Role Consultant is building relationships with other services within Education, Participation and Skills (EPS), wider Children's Services and other partners such as schools in order to raise the profile of children with a social worker and children and young people in kinship care arrangements. The Extended Role Consultant is collaborating with Social Care Service Managers to carry out quality assurance of children in need and children subject to a child protection plan with a focus on education outcomes, which will lead to the development of training for social workers. In addition, the Extended Role Consultant has linked with the newly formed Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Support Team to provide advice and guidance and will be attending the national kinship charity roadshow to promote the work of the Virtual School and the SGO team. The Extended Role Consultant is also playing an active role in Plymouth's Place-Based planning and has a particular focus on relational practice and the enhanced transitions offer.

The Virtual School training offer is also being developed to improve understanding of meeting the educational needs of children with a social worker and those in kinship care. Sessions will be delivered by partners from Public Health, the SEND Team and Inclusion and Welfare Team and best practice will be shared.

In the next quarter, the Extended Role Consultant will research best-practice in relation to ensuring children with a social worker and children and young people in kinship care achieve the best possible educational outcomes. This will lead to collaborative approaches to embed effective evidence-based practice across Plymouth. The Extended Role Consultant will also make sure that children with a social worker and children and young people in kinship care are discussed at Multi-Academy Trust inclusion meetings. A further area of focus will be ensuring that there are robust and rigorous data collection and monitoring process in place to enable more effective tracking of attendance, suspensions, exclusions and educational progress and attainment to take place. This will lead to timely and effective interventions and strategies being put in place to secure positive outcomes for our children and young people.

3.4 Strengthened relationship-based practice

Caseloads across the service have been sustained within target levels and the reduction experienced in the Initial Response Service will impact on other service areas over coming months.

Service Area	Caseload average July	Range July	Caseloads average December	Range December
ALL CYPFS	18.4	1-91	18.2	1-86
Initial Response Service	18.2	2-27	18.9	1-32
Children's Social Work Service	17.6	2-27	18.8	3-27
Children's Disability Service	22.9	12-33	15.4	1-20
Permanence Service	16.5	6-22	17.4	7-22
Care Leavers	23.3	5-30	26.3	16-32
Fostering Service	18	6-35	18.3	6-36
Safeguarding Service (Independent Chairs)	77.8	55-91	63.1	1-86

Caseloads

Some improvement in social worker retention has been achieved over the past year and as a result of focused work to recruit staff, a slight reduction in the rate of social vacancies has been achieved to 22% (48 vacancies/211 posts). Essential vacancies are covered by agency staff which impacts on relationships with families and creates a financial pressure for the Council. A cross Council group has continued to work actively to recruit more permanent experienced social workers into the service and to ensure we retain and develop our existing social workers. Recruitment activity in the last quarter has included attending a national social work recruitment fair in London, holding bespoke online recruitment events for new staff and our existing agency staff and ensuring we start early recruitment of the next cohort of up to twenty newly qualified social workers who will join us in 2025 to complete their Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE).

There continues to be a strong focus on retention alongside recruitment with improvements made to the career progression framework to support social workers to remain in Plymouth as they become more experienced, and with a review of the Academy offer to ensure the development needs of more experienced staff are well provided for. The Principal Social Worker has been working with a social worker Community of Practice to develop proposals to further strengthen retention approaches

including improved celebration of good practice, reviewing systems and processes to reduce bureaucracy and embedding a restorative learning culture across the service.

In the last quarter there has been good success in recruiting permanent managers into the service with some positive promotions to Team Manager roles and appointments of agency staff to our Local Authority Designated Officer, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Head of Service Front Door roles.

4. Good experiences and progress for all children in care

4.1 Earlier permanence planning

The number of children in care peaked at 530 in May 2024 and has reduced steadily since to 521 at the end of December. We have achieved an increase in the number of children placed with connected carers and an increase in the number of children in in house foster, however as a result of a national shortage of foster carers there has been an increase in the number of children placed in children's homes, many of which are at a distance from Plymouth. The report to Scrutiny on the Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme provides an update to Members on the work that is being progressed to ensure the right children are in care and that more children are in family placements and in settings closer to Plymouth.

The increase in numbers of children experiencing a delay in final hearing dates for legal care proceedings is adding to the number of children in our care. We continue to work closely with the local judiciary to get final hearing dates scheduled so that decisions (including adoption decisions) can be made for these children.

Recent quality assurance of children entering care identified that most social workers know their children well and understood their experiences before coming into care. Practice was evidencing good consideration of family networks to explore options to prevent children from coming into care and to reunify children. However, children are not all being provided with the right home from when they first come into care.

Since the ILACs, we have continued to strengthen our internal tracking to ensure children in long term fostering are matched with their carers more quickly and we have been working with our SLIP to ensure all children benefit from appropriate and early permanence planning. This includes all children who are Placed with Parents and to identify where Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) and reunification should be explored. Quality assurance activity has found that over 70% of children in care are experiencing permanence and over 60% of children experience good living conditions with children identified as living in safe homes and having their needs met. Fifty percent of children are experiencing permanency at home or with alternative care. Good practice identified more consideration being given to family network meetings and plans to support children to remain living in their family homes. Areas to strengthen include more curiosity around parents' histories and lived experiences, a better understanding of adult siblings' histories and experiences of being parented, timelier referrals to services such as harbour or Plymouth Domestic Abuse Service and understand risk to support children to safely remain at home.

Our Family Homes for Plymouth Children is focused on ensuring all children in care have access to a stable family home in Plymouth, from when they first come into care. Learning from Dorset, as part of our practice weeks planned in the Children's Social Work and Permanence Service areas in the next quarter, we will be holding all staff events which will focus on supporting best practice to further improve stability for children in care, improved permanence planning and improving reunification approaches.

4.2 Education and health outcomes for children in care

We have been working closely with Health partners to ensure the physical, emotional and mental health needs of our children in care are well met. In December, as a result of an accelerated improvement plan agreed by health and social care with oversight from the Corporate Parenting Group, 71.4% of Initial Health Assessments were completed within 20 working days of the child coming into care. This is a key improvement to ensure children have their health needs identified and met from when they first come into care.

The Virtual School (VS) has a focused plan in place to improve the educational outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people and good progress is being made. Preparation to begin using 'Welfare Call' has taken place and this will be operational in February. 'Welfare Call' will significantly improve the Virtual School's monitoring of the attendance of children in care allowing for swift action to be taken when needed. The induction and establishment of the new Education Advocates who attend all Personal Education Planning (PEP) meetings, follow up on agreed actions and provide strong advocacy for our children and young people in care is having a good impact. Young people at risk of falling short of achieving a pass in GCSE English and Maths have been identified and Discovery College will access a ten-week Functional Skills package after February half-term. Links with the SEND team have been made to identify improved ways to track and monitor Education Health and Care Plan information for children out of area and annual reviews are being attended throughout the Spring term by Education Advocates.

The attendance of children in care is closely tracked and there is a specific focus on severe, persistent absence and the use of part-time timetables for children in care. In addition, the group of approximately eight (at any one time) children without an educational place remain the focus of regular planning in order to secure provision that meets need. These are usually children who have experienced placement moves impacting on their education provision. We remain concerned about the children under 16 who have no school place, either because they have had multiple and rapid moves of care placement or because there is a lack of suitable SEND placements locally or nationally. We are addressing this for these individual children and in our placement and SEND sufficiency work.

The UASC Offer is in place from the Virtual School and currently 91% of the UASC cohort is in an Employment Education and Training (EET) provision. The Flash Academy offer to young people and carers is being implemented in January. The focus of the spring PEPs will be to plan for access to quality careers guidance and tracking progress towards a broader curriculum. The Virtual School will visit City College in late January to plan the careers advice and guidance approach.

5. Ambition for care leavers and good outcomes

The care leavers practice week in November has informed focused improvement work in the service, particularly to ensure Pathway Plans are in place for all young people and are sufficiently ambitious for all aspects of a young person's life, including their accommodation and education, employment and training.

Our Corporate Parenting arrangements have set out improved ambition and approaches for care leavers to be in education, employment and training. 82% of children in care age 16-17 are currently in education training or employment (EET). A monthly NEET panel is held in conjunction with Skills Launchpad and one of the actions from this was to create themed programmes for young people. The first theme was for those interested in construction and a "Get into Construction" programme has been delivered by the Virtual School in conjunction with Skills Launch Pad and Build Plymouth. Phase two of the "Get into Construction" programme will continue in January with a focus on achieving a Construction Skills Certification Scheme Card (CSCS). The next theme is planned around Hair and Beauty which will include work experience, a customer service qualification and a beauty qualification. Further themed programmes will run during the year based on the need of the cohort. A meeting is scheduled with Plymouth University to plan some raising aspiration events. Pre and post-16 virtual school colleagues will collaborate to plan for the smooth transition of the current Year 11 cohort.

Through partnership tracking of individual children, we have increased the proportion of 18+ care leavers who are now seeking education, employment and training and young people in Y12 and 13 in EET has increased by 3.7% since May 2024. 43.3% of care leavers were in education, employment and training at the end of September (88/203) an increase from 41.1% in August.

6. Leadership and management

6.1 Quality assurance

The timeliness and compliance with practice expectations has improved, overall our quality assurance activity completed during October, November and December identifies that 36% of practice with

children and families is 'good' and 59% 'requires improvement' to be good. Over the last six months, there has been a consistent and positive trend in the improvement of good practice, with a 5% increase achieved in each of the past three-month periods, resulting in an overall 10% improvement. This steady progress demonstrates the effectiveness of ongoing work to improve practice.

However, in the quarter, 20% of individual audit grades highlighted inadequate practice for children and young people primarily due to key issues such as plans not being recorded on children's files (5%), reviews not being conducted as required (5%), a lack of regular supervision and management oversight (5%) and inadequate living arrangements (5%). Actions were identified to resolve these as part of the audit and moderation framework. Leaders for Excellence sessions will be used to reinforce to managers the need for greater attention to recordings, timely reviews and consistent supervision to ensure that children's needs are being properly met and that services are delivered effectively and in line with best practice standards.

Families contacted as part of our audit programme have provided useful feedback with strengths including;

- Feeling listened to.
- Support with accessing health appointments including the dentist.
- Building positive relationships.
- Therapeutic approach from the Edge of Care Team.
- Feeling cared for and cared about.
- Feeling invested in and supported.
- Not feeling judged.
- Support with education and attending school.
- Referrals to services of support including CAMHS.
- Being kind.
- Being invited to reviews and seeing their Independent Reviewing Officer.

Practice to be strengthened identified by children, young people, parents and carers:

- A better understanding of the purpose of having a social worker.
- Children having a better understanding of their plan or what their plan is for.
- Being regularly invited to meetings.
- Feeling listened to.
- Not feeling judged.
- Being seen regularly.

In summary, audits are identifying stronger practice in the identification of risk, permanence planning and involving children, young people and families in decision making. Audits evidence that our social work practice is improving, assessments are becoming more robust and social workers and team managers are making better and more confident decisions for children at risk of significant harm in a timelier way.

As a result of the evidence from quality assurance the following practice areas will be a focus for further improvement in the next quarter;

- Ensuring families always receive effective early help support to prevent their problems from escalating.
- Social work involvement always informed by a thorough assessment which leads to effective intervention to achieve change for the family.
- Assessments always fully consider families histories and previous concerns.
- Physical abuse, neglect and domestic abuse are the main concerns experienced by the children and practice in these areas is not yet consistently good.
- Most children have been known for a significant period prior to coming into care and when they come into care their needs can be complex such that some children are finding it hard to attach to replacement carers leading to placement instability. In addition, children are not always placed with carers who can meet their needs from when they first come into care.

Whilst there has been some improvement to the quality of practice in priority areas, quality assurance identifies that particular areas for further practice improvement continue to be ensuring all our assessments are consistently thorough and that all our planning set out how needs will be met and the outcomes that are needed for children. This will lead to more families having the right support and reducing rates of repeat referrals and the need for repeated statutory interventions. Service redesign and practice improvements are leading to more assertive and earlier decisions for children where statutory help is needed reducing the stop start interventions with families that have been the experience for too many families. However, increasing our capacity to provide support earlier will not have an immediate impact for those children that have already suffered from repeated patterns of harm, and we will continue to work with these children and their families to mitigate this harm.

The focus will continue to be on ensuring that families are provided with the right help when difficulties first emerge, to intervene in a timely and effective way when problems become more complex and to ensure the right placement, stable care and active care planning for children and young people when they do need to be in our care.

6.2 Leadership and management development

The leadership and management development programme for all of our managers and aspiring managers continues to progress well and a more effective 'One Children's Service' approach is in place across the Education and Children's Social Care leadership team impacting on approaches for vulnerable children and children with SEND. Building on the people management short learning sessions for all managers at the start of the year, the longer-term Service Manager and Head of Service development programme involving coaching, action learning and group learning sessions, is now being delivered to develop managers skills across operational and strategic management and to support the development of a high performing workforce in line with our 'High Expectation, High Support, High Challenge' culture. A draft 'Values and Behaviours Framework' was launched at all staff events in October with good support from staff and managers and is now being implemented through supervision, team and service meetings.

Our Leaders for Excellence management development programme for all Team Managers and above in education and social care continues to be well attended with successful sessions held on SEND and on good supervision practices. Further sessions are planned with managers from across children's services including sessions planned on financial management, use of data to drive improvement, change management and managing diversity.

As a result of focused management attention, at the end of November 89% of supervisions were up to date across the service. However, at the end of December, as a result of staff leave over Christmas, this had dropped to 77% and it is a current service priority to ensure supervision is consistently recorded in a timely way for all children. Quality assurance activity continues to focus on the quality of supervision and recent audit work found that more supervisions evidenced reflective discussions than in previous months. In addition, most supervisions identified clear actions to be progressed.

7. Plans for the next quarter

Priorities for further improvement in the next quarter include;

- Further development of our family hubs and the offer from our children's centres to better meet need in local communities and reduce the need for statutory interventions with families.
- Development of a strengthened early help offer with partners, including through emerging pilots in targeted areas of Plymouth.
- Implementation of an Integrated Front Door to ensure more families get the right help when their problems are first identified.

- Continue to maximise the offer of Targeted Help from within our strengthened front door alongside our MASH and Initial Response Teams to provide intensive and focused support to families at the earliest opportunity.
- Simplifying the pathways between Early Help, Targeted Help and Statutory Support to ensure families are better supported when statutory teams no longer need to be involved and ensure that change is sustained.
- Maintaining momentum with the workforce development programme for domestic abuse, assessment and care planning with all social workers and managers attending refreshed training covering the fundamental expectations of practice in these areas.
- Implementing the tools developed by our Plymouth Safeguarding Children Partnership to improve partnership approaches to child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse and adolescent exploitation.
- Ensuring Family Network Meetings are held with all families we work with at an early point to ensure that family and community resources are maximised in the support plan that is developed for a family and to sustain change when practitioners are no longer involved.
- Ensuring all care experienced young people have a high quality, ambitious and impactful Pathway Plan.
- Further improving care leavers engagement in education, employment and training through targeted initiatives.
- Implementing effective approaches to strengthen earlier permanence for children in care, learning from our Sector Led Improvement Partner.
- Ensuring supervision is consistently timely and reflective across the service.
- Sustaining a programme of focused quality assurance activity in priority areas, including practice weeks across all service areas, to evaluate the quality of practice in the Front Door, Children's Social Work and Permanence Service areas.
- Continuing a strong focus on social worker recruitment and retention, including starting early recruitment for our newly qualified workers.
- Delivery of the Leadership and Management Development Programme setting expectations of managers regarding the service improvement and the quality and oversight of practice, and to develop their performance management, financial and leadership skills.
- Continuing to work effectively with our SLIP on key improvement priority areas including redesigning our front door, our family homes programme and our early permanence work.
- Developing a plan for the reform of children's social care in line with the DfE expectations set out in the Families First Partnerships guidance, including our Integrated Front Door development and escalating the development of family help and multi-agency child protection teams.
- Delivery of the Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme which is ensuring children have access to the right family placement in line with their assessed needs from when they first come into care and to ensure that residential provision is only used when it is needed and is high quality, value for money and close to Plymouth.

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting:	06 February 2025
Title of Report:	Family Homes for Plymouth Children
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture 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

This report provides a progress report on the Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme which has been established to transform our practices with children who are at risk of coming into care and to improve practice, placement sufficiency and outcomes for children and young people in care to ensure more children in care are looked after in family homes close to Plymouth.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. It is recommended that the programme is noted.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. None

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Keeping children and adults in Plymouth safe.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Placement costs currently create a significant financial pressure for the Council.

Financial Risks

Placement costs currently create a significant financial pressure for the Council.

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.

The programme is designed to keep children safe in family settings, or other settings when this is required, close to Plymouth.

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		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)						
	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: David Haley											

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 27/09/2024

Cabinet Member approval: Cllr Laing approved via email

Date approved: 24/01/2025

1. Introduction

A growth in demand for children's social care support and children entering care has been seen as a result of experiences of childhood neglect, trauma and disrupted attachments that have often gone unmet for some time. Children with these experiences also often have additional learning needs that may have been unidentified and unmet for some time making their emotional and behavioural needs more complex.

We are committed to placing children in care in settings that are as close as possible to their home area to enable them to maintain family and friendship relationships (where positive), access their social worker and local health and therapeutic services and maintain their school placements to support good outcomes including a supported and local transition to independence. Children and young people in care should grow up in a family setting with foster carers so that they can experience secure attachments and healthy development. Exceptionally, residential children's homes can be appropriate to enable a young person to make progress with their emotional and behavioural needs in order to achieve a planned move back into a family setting.

We are increasing the number of children placed with our own foster carers, but a lack of in-house fostering growth has led to a higher proportion of Plymouth children being looked after with Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers. A lack of fostering growth overall has led to an overuse of residential care and a small number of children experiencing unregulated settings.

There are two dynamics in the system. Firstly, we need to ensure that the right children are in care by ensuring effective support is provided to families when problems emerge to enable children to remain within their families and where children cannot be safely cared for at home ensure that all alternative arrangements within their extended family and friends network are explored. Secondly, when children cannot remain safely within their family and friends' network, we need to be able to provide a care placement which enables the needs identified in the child's care plan to be well met which for the majority is to be in a family home. Failure to place a child in the right placement often results in the child failing to make good progress, placement breakdown and/or manifestations of distress in the child.

This is both a cost and volume pressure. PCC has become reliant on the independent sector for a significant volume of fostering and residential provision. At the same time, the independent sector has demonstrated that it is not able to provide sufficient high-quality and value for money placements to meet the needs of our young people. These dynamics are resulting in children living in placements that are not what is set out in their care plan, and in particular children who should be with foster carers living in children's homes and is creating a significant financial pressure for the Council.

In response to these dynamics a programme of transformation and improvement work is in place, our Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme, to ensure the right children are in our care and to ensure that when children do need to be in care they are in placements that meet their needs, and most children are in family settings close to Plymouth. this paper provides an update on the programme. The Family Homes programme is closely aligned to our wider children's social care improvement work, which is focused on ensuring all children benefit from high quality assessment, planning and interventions to improve outcomes.

2. Levels of need and financial information

The number of children in care peaked at 530 in May 2024 and has reduced steadily to 521 at the end of December. The approved budget for placements for children in care in 2024/25 is £40.087m and at period 9 (December) the annual forecast spend is £45.937m, representing a forecast overspend of £5.850m. This has been a deteriorating position month on month this financial year as the number of children in care placed in residential settings has been increasing due to a shortage of foster placements for children.

As a result of planned practice improvements, we have achieved an increase in the number of children placed with connected carers and an increase in the number of children placed with our Foster for Plymouth carers. However, as a result of a national shortage of foster carers there has been an increase in the number of children placed in children's homes from 50 in September 2023 when budget setting

was undertaken, to 64 at the end of December. Whilst we have a successful block contract with a local provider, providing homes in Plymouth for 16 children, 44 children in care are in children's homes at a distance from Plymouth. In addition, the average weekly cost of a child in a residential placement has risen to £7,523 per week from £6,906 per week in September 2023.

In addition, because of the overall shortage of fostering and residential placements, a small number of children have experienced very high-cost illegal arrangements, being placed by Plymouth in arrangements that are not registered with Ofsted. Although we have only two children placed in unregistered arrangements, and they are in suitable provision but which is registered with CQC not Ofsted, at times there have been up to 9 Plymouth children in such arrangements creating a significant financial pressure for the Council, forecast to be almost £6m in 2024-25.

The table below shows the change in numbers of children in care in different types of placements since budget setting was completed.

Type of Placement	Estimated Numbers Sept 23	Existing Budget £m	Month 8 Forecast £m	Actual Numbers Month 9	Month 9 Forecast £m	Variance to Month 8 £m	Variance to Budget £m
External Residential	50	15.248	18.650	64	19.034	0.384	3.786
Unregistered	6	3.387	6.043	4	5.933	-0.110	2.546
External Fostering	158	9.251	8.880	154	8.88	0.000	-0.371
In-House Foster Care	126	2.855	2.855	150	2.855	0.000	0.000
In-House Connected Carers	42	0.952	0.952	49	0.952	0.000	0.000
External Supported Living	41	3.758	3.600	46	3.648	0.048	-0.110
Other Placement Settings - Children in Care	65	1.274	1.274	55	1.274	0.000	0.000
TOTAL CHILDREN IN CARE	488	36.725	42.255	522	42.575	0.321	5.850

3. The Family Homes for Plymouth Children Programme

Our programme of work to ensure children in care have a home that meets their needs and that wherever possible children grow up in families local to Plymouth is called 'Family Homes for Plymouth Children.' It has several elements:

Family Homes for Plymouth Children



High Expectations, High Support, High Challenge

6. Improved support to Special Guardians and kinship carers.

Objective: more children leave care to well supported Special Guardianship arrangements.

1. Market development close to Plymouth – tactically grow the independent sector residential and fostering markets.

Objective: Publish and implement our updated Sufficiency Strategy and target growth across residential and fostering providers. Strengthen our Brokerage function to improve access to quality placements.

5. PCC to become a provider of residential care.

Objective: improve placement choice ensuring all children are looked after in a high-quality setting which meets their needs close to Plymouth wherever possible.



2. STEP children from residential care into family placements

Objective: Reduce unplanned admissions. Evidence based approaches to support children to STEP from residential to family care at the right time.

4. A clear and confident approach to reunification to identify and support children to return home from care safely.

Objective: develop and implement a focused approach to ensure children are supported to return home to their families care when this is safe or them

3. Foster for Plymouth growth and development of offer in line with priorities in our Sufficiency Strategy.

Objective: develop the intensive and specialist offer and implement an improved offer for foster carers, including through the Mockingbird model, to increase and achieve a net-gain of Foster for Plymouth Foster Carers, provide children with the right home when they first come into care.

In summary, key planned outcomes of the work include;

- Improving practice to keep more children at home and utilising family options when children do need alternative care, including further developing the use of family led decision making models to build family capacity so that children can remain cared for within their friends and family network.
- Growing the local independent sector market to increase local supply of both residential and foster care in line with our Sufficiency Strategy.
- Strengthening our brokerage function so we maximise our capacity to identify the right placement at the right price for all children from when they first come into care.
- Using an evidence-based approach to identify children ready to move on from residential settings and to 'STEP' children from residential settings to foster placements in a timely, managed and well supported way.
- Recruiting more foster carers for our in-house fostering service, 'Foster for Plymouth' and supporting more of our carers to be able to look after children with more complex needs or challenging behaviours.
- Supporting children who have been in care for some time to be reunified with their birth families when it is identified that there have been significant changes in the family.
- PCC considering becoming a direct provider of residential care for children and young people.
- Ensuring we are getting value for money from our placement spend, including maximising contributions from partners for eligible children with more complex needs.
- Improving support for kinship and Special Guardianship carers so that more children can leave care successfully through these routes.

3.1 Market development

To improve the range of high-quality residential placements and foster care closer to Plymouth we have:

- Strengthened how we work with fostering and residential providers in the region and elsewhere, in line with the objectives set out in our Sufficiency Strategy to support them to develop more provision in Plymouth.

- Improved our brokerage capacity so that we maximise available placements local to Plymouth for our looked after children.

Our Sufficiency Strategy has been updated for publication to the market setting out an updated needs analysis of the children we need care for and specific priorities where we would encourage the independent sector to develop more local provision. This currently includes provision for children with more complex emotional and behavioural needs and provision for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. A dedicated Commissioning Lead has identified tactical opportunities for local providers to develop more provision in line with local need and is working with specific providers to ensure more high-quality provision is in place.

The capacity in the children's Brokerage Team has been increased to improve our ability to utilise intelligence about providers to source the right placement for children from when they first come into care. The team have a programme of work in place to fully utilise existing frameworks of preferred providers as well as to identify specific provision in line with specific children's needs, such as our children who have plans to STEP them down from residential care.

3.2 Foster for Plymouth Growth

So that more of our children in care can live with our foster carers close to Plymouth, we have:

- Introduced an improved offer for our foster carers based on what our foster carers told us at the 2024 Foster Carer Summit. The improved offer covers both enhanced financial and practical support alongside practice improvement work for our workforce which foster carers will be part of delivering. This has included foster carers not being exempt from Council Tax.
- Ramped up our marketing and recruitment work to attract new carers, including being part of the South West Regional Hub and having an increased presence with community groups, faith groups, businesses and partners (currently including Dartmoor Zoo) and across Plymouth to widen the understanding of fostering and encourage applications to foster from diverse experiences and communities.
- Improved our support to carers to enable them to care for children with more complex needs, including those stepping out of residential, through introducing a 'Mockingbird' model of support, emergency foster care model and a model for the bespoke package of support for young people stepping out of residential.
- Held an annual Foster Carer Summit to uphold our commitment to review the support and retention offer regularly with our foster carers. The next one is being held in early February.

Our Foster Carer Ambassadors fed back that the new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers 2024/2025 is a fair and comprehensive offer and shows exemplary intentions. They feel that this will ensure that support is implemented and enable them to hold the Local Authority and partners to account if this is not achieved. They have also shared that through this process and in the implementation of the new financial offer as well as the support and retention offer, they have felt listened to, heard and respected. They have seen senior leaders and elected members take notice of their expert knowledge and make meaningful change as a result, for which they have expressed their thanks.

Fostering South West represents a partnership of 15 Local Authority Fostering services across the south west of England collaborating to actively recruit essential prospective foster carers. The Hub is funded by the DfE and brings together a collective in-depth experience and knowledge of their local communities, the needs of families, children and the young people in their care. The Hub is committed to work together and share resources to give foster carers and children in care the best possible experiences of fostering with their Local Authorities. The Fostering South West Hub went live on the 28th April 2024 after a period of collaborative design and implementation, with the formal launch event taking place on 5th November 2024. Fostering South West works in partnership with the Local Authority where prospective carers live or where they have indicated they wish to foster to ensure that from initial enquiry to assessment and beyond, they have the information they need and feel supported in their

journey. Through collaboration, the aim of the Hub is to grow the number of fostering households through shared marketing and recruitment activity, taking advantage of a dominant market presence in the south west. The focus is on the difference that Local Authority Fostering Agencies can make to the vulnerable children and young people in need in local communities. Foster for Plymouth have been actively involved in the Hub design, set up, implementation and review.

The implementation of the Hub in April 2024 coincided with Foster for Plymouth's launch of the improved Financial Offer, which was accompanied by a significant amount of marketing activity and attracted local press coverage. As such the uplift in fostering enquiries this financial year could be attributable to one or both of these activities. However we can see this increase has been sustained throughout the financial year. In terms of the positive impacts of a regional approach and the national voice of Hubs across the country using the term "Foster for Your Local Authority", this is clearly having an impact. It is a powerful message and one we certainly are proud to be part of.

As part of the DfE funding related to the Regional Fostering Hub, Plymouth City Council received funding to implement their first Mockingbird Constellation. Mockingbird is a global award winning programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK. It delivers sustainable foster care through an evidence-based model structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community. Each constellation is led by a hub home carer and liaison worker, the constellation offers vital peer support and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships and permanence.

The Liaison Worker is now in post, the Hub Home Carers have been recruited and trained allowing the constellation to be launched on Friday 1st November 2024 with a celebratory event with Foster Carers, Children and Young People kindly hosted by Hellermann Tyton. Plans are in place to implement two further Mockingbirds during 2025-26.

In order to attract prospective foster carers and encouraging those already fostering for IFAs to transfer to the Local Authority we have increased our marketing activity and developed this in line with feedback from prospective foster carers and our fostering community about what engaged them and attracted them to apply. We know that the journey to becoming a foster carer is a long one, people may consider fostering for a long time before making an enquiry and indeed may start the journey more than once. The most effective marketing will provide a 'drip feeding' approach, ensuring that anyone who might consider fostering is regularly reminded of the rewards, the support available and of who to contact. Targeted marketing is effective in this regard, and this is effectively used through social media channels.

What is really clear from those prospective foster carers who continue through assessment to approval, is that word of mouth and the voices of children, young people and foster carers are our most powerful marketing tool. The improved financial, support and retention offers ensure that foster carers feel supported, valued and pass on that positivity to others. Foster carers are also rewarded with a thank you when someone they recommend is approved, a small but important token of our appreciation.

Working with representatives from four local businesses, the Foster for Plymouth Team are developing an even more ambitious marketing strategy and plan for 2025/2026. This will be an invest to save proposal as a wider reach will draw more applicants but require investment in marketing and staff resources. Within this we aim to establish a care experienced digital marketing apprenticeship within the Foster for Plymouth team, which will enhance the marketing activity and offer a unique opportunity to a care experienced young person.

Maximising our marketing activity depends on our reach. Through our networks we have engaged a range of local businesses and our partners to spread the word about fostering in their workplaces, public places and communities. A calendar of engagement activities is in place and is growing as our network grows.

This year Foster for Plymouth joined a growing partnership of Councils and Children's Trusts across the Country to produce a short film promote local authority fostering. This is nationally and professionally

produced film which was launched nationally on 17th October 2024 at the Everyman Cinema in Birmingham. Through the collaboration, each participating Local Authority is provided with a branded copy of the film, some short clips and stills to use in their own marketing campaigns. "Everything" follows a fostering family and celebrates the long term impact that fostering can have for everyone involved and the importance of relationships and connections that can be lifelong. Foster for Plymouth hosted a Premiere of the Film on 18th October 2024, following up on the national launch. During the event the film was screened and guests from the fostering community, children's social care, partners and local businesses were privileged to hear from a group of care experienced children and young people as well as Foster Carers and the Fostering Team. Guests were provided with a bag of promotional materials to take away and time for networking.

The Foster for Plymouth social media launch took place at the end of the event and the film is being widely shared across social media channels. Plymouth Arts Cinema have kindly agreed to share a version of the film within their trailers and Dartmoor Zoo have agreed to include our campaigns on their screens within their café area. In the first 10 days of sharing the film this has already directly resulted in 4 enquiries from prospective foster carers. The Foster for Plymouth website and social media platforms were upgraded ahead of the film launch to ensure we had the correct foundation for the videos to launch and for prospective foster carers to land on an up to date, professional website.

3.3 STEPping children from residential care to family settings

So that we realise our commitment to children growing up in families, we are:

- Challenging practitioners to be more ambitious for children in care to grow up in a family utilising an evidence-based tool (which evaluates children's needs by understanding behaviour, emotional wellbeing, risk to self and others, relationships and Indicators of psychiatric or neurodevelopmental conditions) to inform our assessments and identify children and young people who are ready to step out of residential care into family settings and to ensure that this happens a timely way.
- Ensuring our care planning for children supports children to be cared for in a family home.
- For our older young people who are in residential children's homes, this includes consideration of moving into supported accommodation to prepare for independence or focus on a transition to adult services.
- Meeting weekly as a management team, alongside the weekly Children's Resource Panels, to review progress of identified STEPs children and young people, review any children or young people who have recently moved into residential and review the circumstances of those previously not deemed ready to step out so as to ensure that the searches for family based care happens without delay.

As a result of challenges in the sufficiency of family homes over recent years, we have not been as ambitious for children in care to be in family homes as we should be. The STEPS approach is challenging this including using an evidence-based approach to assess children in residential care and identify those who may be suitable for family homes. The approach includes writing updated profiles and pen pictures which focus on the child's strengths, needs and the desired outcomes. These are used to engage with Foster for Plymouth and IFAs on our peninsula framework and the wider IFA market nationally, where this is appropriate for the child's care plan, to identify Foster Carers committed to a planned transition for the child out of residential. The Placement Request Forms are launched to our framework IFAs for children who can live in the South West region and the Brokerage Team are holding programme of conversations with off framework IFAs, including for children where we are searching for a family outside of the south west.

Despite our ambition for children to be in family homes and active searching for foster carers for around 20 children in residential settings this year, limited placement sufficiency both in the independent and in house fostering sectors has significantly impacted our ability to progress plans and achieve the target dates and associated savings anticipated. Over the past two years there has been a reduction of

approximately 2000 foster carers nationally, partly as a result of the impact of the pandemic on family's capacity to free up a bedroom for fostering.

At the current time, there has been a greater level of success in progression of STEPs plans into in house fostering than IFAs and for some of our older young people, greater benefits have been realised from progressing step forward to supported accommodation. One child in the STEPs programme was successfully placed with foster carers this month and four children and young people have an identified in house fostering match which is being progressed, one child is expected to move by the end of January 2025, two siblings are expected to move by the end of March 2025 and the other child has a longer term plan due to the need to undertake sibling assessments and transitions, however there is a clear plan in place.

In addition to the five children and young people above, there are fourteen children and young people currently placed in residential children's homes who are being actively worked through the STEPs programme or for whom step forward planning was already in place to move from those settings to family home so a more suitable provision. Searches are active for all of these children and young people, however there are no current expressions of interest or placement offers for them. A further thirteen children and young people have been identified by the teams as being suitable to step out of residential in the next six months, these children and young people have all been booked in to Children's Resource Panel over the next three weeks to formalise the plan and timeframes for actions to achieve this.

Creative ways are being pursued to support the children and young people who have been identified for STEPS to refamiliarize themselves and build trust in living with a fostering family as well as supporting Foster Carers to think differently about their capacity to offer a child a home from residential. This includes one of the young people being included in the Mockingbird Constellation and those where a local family is being explored being invited to Foster for Plymouth Social Committee events.

3.4 Reunifying children with their birth families and wider networks

Reunification is when a child returns home from a period of being in care and is the most common way for children to leave care in England. Children in care should always be supported to maintain connections with their family networks as these are often their lifelong links. Many children may experience a short episode of care and return to their families once it is assessed as safe for them to do so. However, reunification refers to when children have had a long-term care plan, but where there are changes in the child and/or family's circumstances which enables a safe return home to be considered. To ensure we identify opportunities for children to return to their birth families when they have been in our care for some time and this can be achieved safely, we are:

- Supporting children to maintain lifelong links with their birth families.
- Making sure that we continuously review changes in children's circumstances that may make reunification possible.
- Refocusing our Targeted Help offer to provide intensive assessment and support to enable more children to return home from care to their birth families.

The Edge of Care Team have developed a model of practice which supports children to return home from care in a planned and supported way when it is safe for them to do so is part of our Family Homes for Plymouth Children programme. This model sets out a practice framework based on good practice toolkits, which addresses these challenges. The framework is a resource to support practice improvements for children returning home from care and to support practitioners and managers with professional judgement to complex decisions about whether a child should return home from care and what support will be needed to ensure that reunification is safe and successful. It provides a structure for analysing risks to the child based on robust evidence. It supports families and workers to understand what needs to change, to set goals, access support and services and review progress. It builds on and complements the existing work that practitioners are already doing with these children and their families, rather than replacing it.

Children in care who may be suitable for planned work to consider a reunification plan are currently being identified and dedicated resource to support the detailed assessment and careful planning and support to families that is needed to ensure reunification is done safely and successfully is being agreed.

3.5 PCC becoming a provider of residential care

To increase the quality and availability of residential care for children local to Plymouth, Plymouth City Council is becoming a provider of residential care across a number of types of provision including short breaks for disabled children, short term intervention to return young people back home or support them into independence and longer-term residential children's homes for children with complex needs.

Positives of developing local in house residential children's homes includes;

- Ability to support children with local education and health services.
- Improved potential to achieve step down to fostering and reunification to families when children are in Plymouth.
- Reducing the average length of time children spend in residential.
- Improved experiences from children experiencing fewer moves.
- Improved family time for children to maintain links and relationships with their families where possible.
- Better quality assurance, scrutiny and consistency of care when delivered in-house and close to Plymouth.
- Potential savings from preventing a child moving into an unregulated arrangement which can cost us £12,000 a week.
- Savings from social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers not having to visit children at a distance from Plymouth. £100k additional expenditure has been allocated to Social Worker travel costs in recent years as a result of increased numbers of children being placed at a distance from Plymouth.

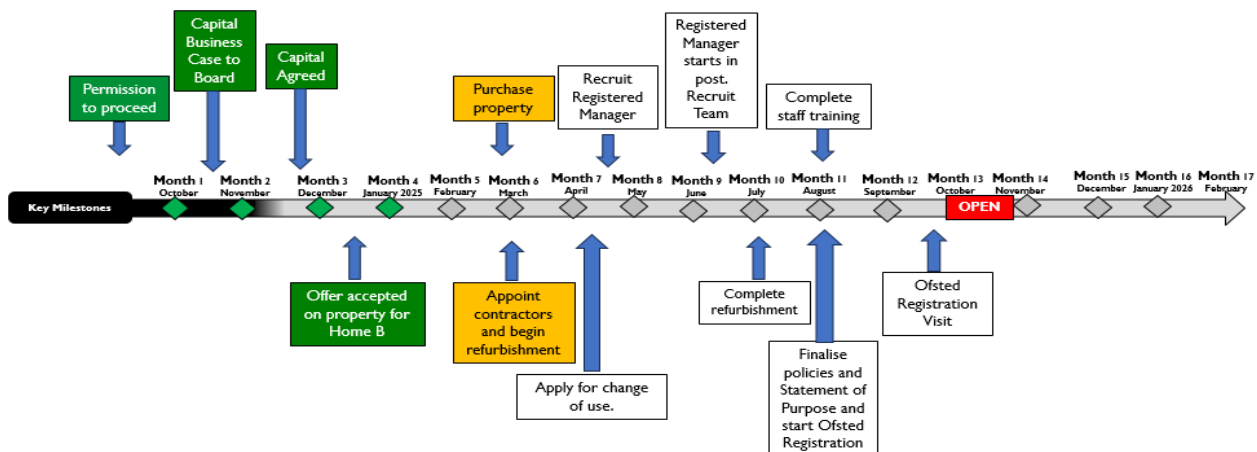
Capital has been agreed to purchase two houses in Plymouth and to develop them as the first homes for six children (three in each) between 8 and 16 years old. The children's homes are being developed to resemble family life as far as possible. An offer has been accepted on one property just before Christmas, and work is progressing to ensure the location is suitable and with a view to the home being refurbished and registered with Ofsted prior to opening towards the end of the year. Viewings are currently taking place for the second property. A key risk will be recruiting the managers and staff team with the required skills and experience and work is starting early with HR-OD colleagues to plan and deliver an effective recruitment campaign.

Capital has also been allocated to undertake a feasibility study of the suitability of an existing PCC building, Colwill Lodge, as a residential short breaks provision for children with disabilities which will be designed to support families and prevent children from needing to come into high cost residential provision. The feasibility study is due to be completed by the end of February to support a detailed business case to be considered for the capital investment that will be needed to refurbish the building.

Finally, we are currently working with ICB colleagues to consider a joint bid to the DfE for an allocation from a current capital scheme to support residential developments for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs who are at risk of placements requiring a deprivation of liberty.

Opening children's homes is a complex process and as well as the recruitment of staff, the requirement to register with Ofsted is identified as a risk to timescales as delays in Ofsted's response are being experienced nationally.

Residential Children's Homes Indicative Timeline



3.6 Support to special guardianship and kinship carers

The objective of this strand of work is to support more children to be with kinship carers, family or friends who step in to care for a child when their parent isn't able to, rather than the child coming into care. In addition, we are developing practice to enable more children in care to leave care through a Special Guardianship route.

To prevent children from being in care unnecessarily, there is a need to improve the identification of and support to kinship carers and Special Guardianship carers, this includes ensuring financial support is equitable to foster carers so that kinship carers are well supported when a child would otherwise have come into care and carers do not lose out when their child leaves care through a Special Guardianship arrangement.

During 2024-25 a new Special Guardianship and Kinship Carer Support Team was implemented and has been identifying best practice in this area, as well as putting in place a stronger support offer to carers, including confirming contributions from key partners such as Health and the Virtual School. We have been identifying kinship carers across Plymouth who were previously unknown to us and developing peer support networks with two already in place within Family Hubs. In addition, a Special Guardianship Support Plan approach has been developed ready for implementation with all cares to set out the support plan for a child before the order is made.

A Special Guardianship Policy has been agreed and is being implemented ensuring Special Guardians are well supported to meet children's needs, and a policy setting out the financial support that will be provided is being finalised for implementation early in 2025-26.

Other priorities for the team this year include;

- Further strengthening partners understanding of and offer of support to kinship carers and special guardians.
- Introducing mandatory SGO workshops for all carers being assessed in care proceedings so they can make informed choices.
- Ensuring all children benefit from high quality life story work which enables them to understand their life story.
- Implementing a structured approach to support planning for carers and strengthening support plans.
- Improving support to Special Guardians with children's family time with their birth families.

- Implement support arrangements for specific groups of carers, including through Pause (birth mothers), Adopt South West (developing a youth group) and support for birth children of Special Guardianship carers.
- Strengthening the short breaks offer for carers.
- Extending the Mockingbird model to include identified Special Guardianship carers in line with their support plan.
- Provide consultation and advice to carers considering Special Guardianship
- Developing more support networks for kinship and Special Guardianship carers.
- Develop a regular newsletter and reference group for carers.

4. Planned Programme outcomes

The planned outcomes of the programme are;

- Fewer children will be in care.
- When children do need to be in care, more children will be looked after by kinship or connected carers and more children will leave care to Special Guardians.
- More children will be looked after in foster care close to Plymouth, and a higher proportion of children in foster care will be in placements provided by our in house fostering service Foster for Plymouth.
- Fewer children will be looked after in residential settings and when they do need to be this will be time limited to achieve specific outcomes which will support a child to move into a family setting.
- Children will be provided with the right setting to meet their need from when they first come into care leading to improved placement stability.
- Children in care will be looked after close to Plymouth.
- The average cost of care will reduce.

5. Case studies;

R's Journey; R is a 10 year old girl who was placed in a residential children's home in May 2021. As a suitable foster family was not identified for R, she was moved back to Plymouth into one of the local residential children's homes to allow us to search locally for a family home for her. Following engagement discussions with IFAs on our peninsula framework, the brokerage team received an offer from experienced IFA Foster Carers and this was deemed by R's Social Worker to be a very good match. R is now in a period of transitions, at her first meeting with her new Foster Carers she said "*Darren has done good, he's found me a good one*". Due to a family commitment, R will move at the beginning of January 2025 but she will be having her own Christmas with them before Christmas too.

B's Journey; B is a 12 year old boy who was placed out of city in a residential children's home in November 2023 when his long term foster placement disrupted and no fostering home was identified for him. Through the STEPS work, experienced Foster for Plymouth Foster Carers have been identified and they are keen to offer B a long term home. B does not want to move unless he can move back to Plymouth as he has strong family connections here. The identified Foster Carers are close to Plymouth and will be able to support his family relationships as well as maintaining the relationship with his former foster carers who still look after his brother. B's Social Worker took the Foster Carers to visit B this week and this went really well and the plan now is that he will visit their home when he comes to Plymouth for family time. If this progresses well, B will move by the end of January 2025. We are working closely with the Virtual School to ensure his education is not disrupted.

This page is intentionally left blank

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	06 February 2025
Title of Report:	Young Female Violence Prevention Programme
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
Contact Email:	martine.aquilina@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Scrutiny Board to enable them to scrutinise and provide challenge in relation to a rise in Young Female in the City.

Recommendations and Reasons

For the Scrutiny Panel to note the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This report directly links to The Plymouth Plan 2014-2034 'to create the conditions where children, young people and families can thrive, assisting them to build resilience through the early development of good physical and emotional health and by equipping young people and parents with the skills to improve their wellbeing'.

A Bright Future 2021-2026 states that 'As partners, we want to make sure all children and young people in Plymouth have a Bright Future, supported by a system which works seamlessly to spot difficulties early, responds quickly and effectively, and makes sure that help is there for as long as it is needed'.

The Youth Justice Plan 2025 vision is to 'To develop a youth justice system in Plymouth that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. Diverting Children early will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims in the city.'

Implications for the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There is no financial implication

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.

[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	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: David Haley

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 24/01/2025

Cabinet Member approval: *Cllr Laing via email*

Date approved: 24/01/2025

1. Executive Summary

At the request of the Scrutiny Panel, this briefing report has been prepared to provide assurance on how we understand, address and respond to the recent increase in violent offences committed by young females in our city.

2. What we know about female children and their violence Plymouth

Nationally there has been a spike in violent offences being committed by girls.

In October 2024 we noted that the number of girls committing violent offences had nearly doubled, from 20% of the whole cohort of children pre-pandemic to 38.5% in October 2024 This represents 19 children in total.

To understand this further, we have worked closely with our police colleagues who noted a similar increase in the pattern of offending and reported an increase of 35% in the same period (the difference in the figure is due to police recording all crime reported in the city whilst the Youth Justice Service only report those children who live within the city.)

The Probation Service have also reported an increase in female violence under the age of 25.

Positively, since the peak of 19 in October 2024, as of January 2025 we have 14 girls supported by the service, with only one girl re-offending since intervention started.

3. Patterns of aggression and violence between children

In terms of serious youth violence in the City, the picture is mixed. There has been a welcome decrease of 6% year on year in the number of boys committing violence offences which result in a statutory intervention from the Youth Justice Service. Whilst we continue to see boys being criminally exploited and forced into criminal acts including violence, as a Partnership, we have been working closely with Police to disrupt this and as a result we are seeing a reduction overall. In addition, knife crime involving children in the city remains substantially below the national average.

However, as stated we have seen an increase in girls in the Youth Justice System, when compared to the pre-pandemic cohort, the majority of whom are committing violent offences. To address these concerns, we have worked closely with our partners to understand the reasons behind this increase so that we can target our support and intervention appropriately.

Whilst we continue to see a pattern of violent offences that occur within the home, between children and their parents/carers or siblings, or commonly disputes between peers / friends that results in fights, the more concerning offences we have seen are groups of young females assaulting strangers and recording the event for social media. The violence is pre-meditated and the children we have / are working with have reported being involved either because they fear being expelled from the group or getting recognition or 'kudos' from the online audience. The platforms most used are TikTok and Telegram, both based outside of the UK and the videos and images are uploaded to a closed group making it hard for agencies to access and identify those involved.

The average age of the girls we are working with is 15 years and 9 months and not surprisingly we are seeing a link between the children involved both as victims and perpetrators and increased missing episodes raising the risk of exploitation.

Unlike the spike we witnessed in violence involving boys in 2022, we can find no links to adults, county lines or substance use. However, we cannot rule this out and we need to continue to develop trusting relationships with this cohort to gain a better understanding of the behaviour and how we can support these children to make better and more positive choices in the future.

4. Interventions to address female violence

Nationally, violent offences committed by girls is increasing, however, to date there are no accredited interventions available. As a result, the Youth Justice Board called a meeting in December 2024 to identify areas of good practice and how to address the concerns that have been identified. A working group, which Plymouth is a part of, has been established to look at best practice nationally and internationally, develop specific evidence-based interventions and build a national picture.

Locally, due to the findings of the Youth Justice Service and the Police, the Safer Plymouth Executive is in the process of commissioning Plymouth Argyle Trust to work with schools in the areas where need is identified to work with children to educate and raise awareness around violence committed by girls.

Plymouth Argyle Trust employs a range of youth workers and practitioners that offer education and support to children. We know that some children and their parents will be reluctant to engage with statutory partners or feel judged or a level of stigma with being associated with Children's Services whereas Plymouth Argyle are a much-loved organisation that will be able to reach and engage a larger cohort.

We will develop this approach to engage large groups of girls in schools to educate them on the effects of their behaviour on the victims as well as the consequences of being involved in the criminal justice system. By working with the schools, we will gather a wider spectrum of children's views on why this behaviour is occurring and how to address it to supplement the views of those children who have committed the offence.

Whilst we have been working with partners to support the implementation of the above programme Plymouth Youth Justice Service has also continued to work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads to raise awareness of the incidents of violence and the use of social media. We know that some schools have taken direct action by addressing the rise of violent offences with their children. Equally, the School Link workers from PCC Targeted Support Team have been supporting the service by raising and addressing this issue in the schools not directly impacted.

The service continues to work directly with each child involved, building relationships to ensure meaningful engagement that not only focuses on the behaviour, but also understanding the root cause of it that enables us to consider the wider implications and address any welfare concerns. PYJS works closely with Children's Services, education providers, police and health to create a team around the child and their family to support a shift to more pro-social behaviour, raise aspirations and improve long term outcomes.

As stated above, girl violence is increasing nationally, and Arsenal and Wolverhampton Football clubs have been commissioned to work with girls who commit violent offences in their areas. Both are offering different interventions to Plymouth Argyle and all three will be feeding back to the Youth Justice Board to develop best practice moving forward.


5. Conclusion

Whilst the spike we have seen is concerning, it should be acknowledged this has happened over a relatively small period, the numbers are relatively small and the response from ourselves and partners has been timely. We are already seeing the numbers of girls open to the Youth Justice Service decrease (from 19 girls open on 01 October 2024 to 14 girls open on 01 January 2025) and to date only one of the children has committed a further violent offence. Re-offending rates in Plymouth continue to be below the national average and one of the lowest in the country.

However, as stated above, this is a trend seen nationally and we will continue to engage with the Youth Justice Board to develop interventions and strategies to address this behaviour whilst also finding creative and innovative ways to work with schools and partners to intervene at the earliest opportunity and prevent children in Plymouth entering the criminal justice system.

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel – Tracking Decisions 2024/25

	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
13)	Officers to revisit the attendance campaign work and spread wider	<p>Date: November 2024</p> <p>Progress: The Strong Start to September attendance campaign was a low-key alternative to a bigger campaign. In partnership with Plymouth Marjon’s university, the citywide parent and child survey on school attendance is confirmed to go ‘live’ at the end of February 2025. The learning from the research will inform a bigger attendance campaign which will launch in the summer term.</p> <p>This action would be marked as complete.</p> <p> Strong Start to September campaign</p> <p>Officer: Isabelle Kolinsky</p>
14)	CAMHS waiting times would be provided to Councillor McLay.	<p>Date: November 2024</p> <p>Progress: Awaiting an update from Health on CAMHS waiting times.</p> <p>Officer: Health</p>
15)	Councillors would be provided the policy on Free School Meals and Bus Pass entitlements.	<p>Date: January 2024</p> <p>Progress: Free School Meals was added to the work programme.</p> <p>Update sought from the officer in January.</p> <p>Officer: Beverly Kerswell</p>
16)	A Councillor briefing session on home education would be arranged	<p>Date: November/December 2024</p> <p>Progress: Briefing held on 05 December 2024 and this action is complete.</p> <p>Officer: Jake Metcalfe</p>

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel – Tracking Decisions 2024/25

17)	The Chair of the Plymouth Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board would write to faith groups in the city to be part of the Board.	<p>Date: 6 February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Complete.</p> <p>Officer: David Haley</p>
18)	A whole Council Councillor briefing would be arranged on early help in Plymouth.	<p>Date: 06 February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Action to be completed by the end of the municipal year.</p> <p>Officer: Jake Metcalfe</p>
19)	Councillors of the Panel would be invited to be introduced to the detached youth service team before receiving a briefing and then having the opportunity to go out with them and be part of some of the work undertaken.	<p>Date: 06 February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Attempts made to find a date have been made, action to be completed by the end of the municipal year.</p> <p>Officer: Jake Metcalfe</p>
20)	Education officers would advise how protected playing fields were, to allow for the provision of physical education.	<p>Date: February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Response to be provided to Members of the Panel by the end of February 2025.</p> <p>Officer: Lisa Linscott</p>
21)	Three-year trend data of absence categorisation would be provided to Scrutiny Members	<p>Date: February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Report to be provided to Members of the Panel by the end of February 2025.</p> <p>Officer: Isabelle Kolinsky</p>
22)	Data on how long a child/young person would wait for a school place would be provided to the Panel. Cllr McNamara would be provided data of how many children were waiting at the upper end of the wait time.	<p>Date: February 2025</p> <p>Progress: Report to be provided to Members of the Panel by the end of February 2025.</p> <p>Officer: Isabelle Kolinsky</p>

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel – Tracking Decisions 2024/25

Recommendations:

1)	For Plymouth City Council to collaborate with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in the delivery of in house residential provision.	Plymouth City Council and Rotherham City Council collaborated in December 2024. David Haley (DCS) also met with his equivalent in Rotherham to understand challenges faced in the delivery of in house residential provision.
----	---	---

This page is intentionally left blank

Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

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	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
	Childrens 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 in Plymouth	20 mins	Report on the numbers of children and young people being increasingly electively home educated. To include reasons and what the Local Authority was doing to ensure children and young people were receiving a good education.	Isabelle Morgan
	Family Homes for Plymouth Children	20 mins	To understand the programme and how the authority was trying to increase family homes for Plymouth's children.	Temilola Salimon
	Inclusive practice to address exclusions and suspensions in Plymouth	1 hr	MATS to be invited. Youth Parliament (Jenny Way) to be invited and seek children and young people's views.	Lisa Linscott

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for Consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member /Officer
	Plymouth Safeguarding Childrens Board Annual Report	20 mins	Scrutiny to have an update from the Safeguarding Children's Board.	Siobhan Logue
	Early Help Strategy	25 mins	To include information on Family Hubs.	Martine Aquilina
	Children in the criminal justice system	20 mins	How are Children's services engaging with children in the criminal justice system.	Ian Taylor
	CYPFS Transformation Q1		For Scrutiny to evaluate the progress of the improvement plans.	Vivien Lines
14 November	Educational Attainment		To include data on the cared for children cohort.	Jim Barnicott
	Alternative Provision Assurance Report			Jim Barnicott
	Performance Scorecard Q2			Paul Stephens/Susan London
	CYPFS Improvement Plan Q2 Progress Report			Temilola Salimon/Vivien Lines
	Attendance/Children Missing Education and Mobility			Jim Barnicott
	Child Exploitation and the Philomena Protocol		Join up with the Police for this report and to include information such as the Philomena Protocol	Martine Aquilina / Police
06 February	CYPF Transformation Q3 Review		For Scrutiny to review the transformation plan for CYPFS.	Vivien Lines
	Family Homes for Plymouth Children (residential provision)		Residential provision updates	Vivien Lines/Karen Blake

Date of meeting	Agenda item	Priority score	Reason for Consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member /Officer
	Local Area SEND Partnership Improvement Review	5	Hannah P (NHS Devon), Tracy Clasby (Livewell SW) and David Brown (UHP), Rob Williams, Tara and Claire (PPCV)	Lisa Linscott/Caroline Lovell
	Projection of school numbers and capacity	3		Isabelle Kolinsky
	Young Female Violence prevention Programme	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls empowerment programmes (YP views) – • Increasing thread raised within discussions for Child Exploitation 	Martine Aquilina/Ian Taylor
	Transitions to Adulthood	4	Improvement work	Lisa Linscott/Stephen Beet
	Performance Scorecard	3	Standing item	Paul Stephens/Susan London
Items Raised by the Committee to be scheduled for 2024/25				
2024/25	Cost of Living for Education	(4)	Identified for consideration by the Committee at its July 2023 meeting.	Councillor Sally Cresswell
	Youth Justice Annual Report			Ian Taylor
Issues Identified for Select Committee Reviews				
	Emotional Health and Wellbeing of children		Inclusion/Persistent absence/Child death/SEND/EHCP's/Toileting/temp accommodation	

This page is intentionally left blank