

POLICY BRIEF

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

14 September 2022



The information within this Brief is correct at the time of approval for publication and contains relevant policy announcements made by Government and its departments and regulators.

Consultations and Calls for Evidence

A new approach to area SEND inspections

Closed consultation

This consultation sought views on proposed changes to the way Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly inspect local area partnerships to assess how they work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

(Closed 11 September 2022).

Plymouth City Council has responded to this consultation.

Understanding the use of unregistered alternative provision

Open consultation

The Department for Education (DfE) are seeking views to better understand how unregistered alternative provision is commissioned and delivered. The findings from this consultation will be considered when designing the new national vision and delivery model for the SEND and alternative provision system outlined in the [green paper](#). (Closes 30 September 2022)

The Council will be responding to this consultation.

Early years funding formulae

Open consultation

The Department for Education (DfE) are seeking views on proposed updates to the early years funding formulae, and maintained nursery school supplementary funding. (Closes 16 September 2022).

A response to this consultation is being prepared.

Supporting schools that are not making necessary improvements

Consultation response

In order to support schools that are not making necessary improvements, government proposed to make all schools with two consecutive Ofsted judgments of below 'Good' eligible for intervention.

Following the consultation, the Secretary of State has chosen to update existing coasting schools regulations so that schools judged less than Good in their two most recent Ofsted inspections schools will now be covered by the coasting definition. Schools that meet this definition are referred to as 'schools that are not making necessary improvements' and they will now be eligible for intervention action to support them to improve. Once eligible, the relevant Regional Director (RDs, formally known as regional schools commissioners) will assess each school on a case by case basis and take into account any representations the school (and other interested stakeholders) wish to make, before deciding whether intervention and further support are necessary. The Secretary of State's

policy is that this support can generally best be provided by ensuring that all schools with consecutive less than Good judgements are part of a strong multi-academy trust.

As a result, the [statutory guidance](#) on local authorities' and regional schools commissioners' responsibilities relating to schools and PRUs causing concern has been updated to reflect the new measures and these changes came into effect on 01 September 2022.

[Changes to Social Work England's regulatory framework](#)

Consultation Response

This consultation sought views on proposed technical changes to the Social Workers Regulations 2018. As a result, a small number of technical changes will be made and these are detailed in the consultation response.

Date of announcement /publication	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Government Policy / Legislative Announcements:	
04 July 2022	<p>Drive to reduce the cost of childcare for parents</p> <p>The government has announced a package of measures to increase childcare support for parents, boost the number of childminders and drive take up of childcare offers, to address rising costs. To drive down costs for providers and parents, a new childcare regulatory changes consultation (closes 16 September 2022) will look at increasing the number of children that can be looked after by each staff member in early years settings. It will propose changing staff-to-child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for 2-year-olds, giving providers more flexibility in how they run their businesses while maintaining safety and quality of care. The government will also increase choice and affordability for parents by taking action to open up the childminder market.</p>
19 July 2022	<p>National funding formula for schools and high needs</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) has published details of the funding system for schools and high needs for the year 2023 to 2024. This is the second year of the three-year funding settlement.</p> <p>Final allocations of schools, high needs and central schools services funding for 2023-24 will be calculated in December, based on the latest pupil data at that point, when government will announce local authorities' Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations. Local authorities will continue to use that funding to determine final allocations for all local mainstream schools.</p> <p>Following last year's consultation on Completing our Reforms to the National Funding Formula (NFF), the DfE has confirmed that it will move forward with its plans to implement a direct NFF, whereby funding will be allocated directly to schools based on a single, national formula. As set out in the consultation response, there will be a gradual approach to transition to avoid any unnecessary or unexpected disruption to schools. Local authorities will be required to start bringing their own formulae closer to the schools NFF from 2023-24.</p> <p>A consultation on implementing the direct national funding formula closed on 09 September 2022.</p>

	<p>Plymouth City Council responded to last year's consultation and have also responded to the most recent consultation. The Council supports the majority of the proposals with the exception of updating the growth fund methodology to include falling pupil numbers as local authorities are likely to receive less growth funding under this approach. The timing of the change is also disadvantageous as it is proposed to happen at a time when further restrictions will be placed on growth funds and local authorities have not been provided with enough detail at this stage to determine whether the proposals are affordable within current growth allocations.</p> <p>The Council has also questioned the proposal to remove the publication of Primary and Secondary units of funding along with the December DSG allocations for the schools block. This information should continue to be published at local authority level to aid benchmarking work and help authorities understand their total DSG allocation. Without this information, local authorities are unable to account for the schools block DSG within their statement of accounts, which is a statutory accounting requirement.</p>
02 August 2022	<p><u>£368 million fund to improve youth services in underserved areas opens for bids</u></p> <p>The Youth Investment Fund, designed to create, improve and expand local youth facilities and services has opened for bids from 45 local authorities and more than 600 district wards in some of the most deprived areas in England. It will provide funding to build or refurbish up to 300 youth facilities over the next 3 years, providing safe spaces in which young people can socialise and participate in a wide range of activities, including those designed to help support them into employment. All Plymouth Wards are within scope for the scheme.</p> <p>We have submitted an Expression of Interest to the Social Investment Business, who are managing this Government grant on behalf of DCMS and are currently waiting for a response. This is really the first formal step in the process. If we are successful, we are proposing to start on identified sites in the next financial year.</p>
08 August 2022	<p><u>Family hubs and start for life programme: local authority guide</u></p> <p>Information and guidance has been published for the local authorities pre-selected to take part in the family hubs and start for life programme which includes Plymouth City Council. <u>Selection and funding methodologies</u> are also available.</p> <p>Plymouth is one of 75 LA's eligible for automatic funding to set up and deliver family hubs from April 2023. We are working with the dedicated Regional Delivery Team at DfES to progress this. We need to submit our application by the end of October 2022 and our detailed action plan by December 2022. The programme focuses on improving the Start for Life for expectant parents and parents of children aged 0-2, as well as supporting the delivery of 0-19 Family Hubs, so that all families will benefit from more joined up services. The funding includes specific requirements around improving the</p>

	home learning environment for families, to support children to be better able to communicate and engage with education as they grow up. It also includes funding to support parent relationships and parental emotional and mental health.
Ofsted Announcements:	
08 July 2022	<p>What types of needs do children's homes offer care for?</p> <p>A new report from Ofsted suggests that children in the care system are often placed in homes far away from their families because of a lack of suitable places near to where they live. Children with mental health problems, or experience of abuse and neglect, are likely to be living the furthest away from their home prior to coming into care, and above the average distance of 36 miles.</p>
11 July 2022	<p>Changes to inspection handbooks for September 2022</p> <p>Ofsted have published updated early years, schools and further education and skills inspection handbooks which is standard practice to ensure they are up to date. The changes will take effect from the start of the new academic year. The main changes to be aware of include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of COVID-19 • Transitional arrangements • Graded and ungraded inspections • Enhanced inspection of colleges
27 July 2022	<p>Ofsted: Concerns over damaging impact of staff shortages on children's social care</p> <p>Ofsted has published a report on the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's social care. The report finds that the pandemic has exacerbated long-standing staffing challenges in children's social care, which has serious consequences on the number of suitable children's home places available and the different needs staff are able to support. As a result, some children are living in places where their needs are not being met, and in some cases are being placed in unregistered homes, without regulatory oversight. High numbers of agency social workers and high caseloads are also preventing purposeful work with children and families. Pre-existing gaps in in-patient and community-based provision for children with mental health needs have grown, and children's needs have become more complex.</p> <p>The report also raises concern over the escalating cost of living for families, which is already having an impact on children's services. Local authorities suggest that that greater financial strain on families may lead to higher numbers of children in need and child protection cases, which would further exacerbate existing sufficiency and workforce issues.</p>
For information:	
	<p>Cost of school uniforms</p> <p>New statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms was published in November 2021. This means that schools and their governing boards must have regard to it when developing and implementing their school and trust uniform policies. It should be read alongside the non-statutory guidance on school uniforms.</p>

	<p>The aim of the guidance is to ensure that school uniform is affordable and a set of actions for schools is outlined including publishing a uniform policy, keeping branded items to a minimum and making second-hand uniforms available for parents to acquire.</p> <p>Following the publication of this guidance, all schools were expected to review their current uniform policy to determine if any changes are required.</p> <p>Governing boards are expected to be compliant with much of this guidance by September 2022. The exceptions to this would be where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this would breach a pre-existing contract or informal agreement with a uniform supplier (particularly when the supplier may already have stock) • a school will need to run a competitive tender to set up a new contract for their uniform <p>The following actions should have taken place before parents purchased or acquired uniform items in summer 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes to the uniform policy which do not fit with these exceptions, such as removing an unnecessary branded item • publishing the uniform policy on the school's website and ensuring it is easily understood • making sure that second-hand uniforms are available to acquire (either from the school directly or from an established scheme)
	<p><u>Early years stronger practice hubs</u></p> <p>New guidance has been published for early years practitioners applying to become a stronger practice hub. Early years stronger practice hubs will launch in November 2022. They will provide advice, share good practice, and offer evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners.</p>
01 August 2022	<p><u>Local skills improvement plans</u></p> <p>The DfE has published statutory guidance for the development and review of local skills improvement plans (LSIPs). It sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the process for developing and reviewing an LSIP, which is led by the designated Employer Representative Bodies (ERB) and in which relevant providers must co-operate • the duties placed upon relevant providers once there is an approved LSIP in place