

# Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

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**Tuesday 19 March 2024 at 2.00 pm**

**To be held in the Town Hall,  
Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH**

**The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend**

## **Membership**

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Councillor Dawn Dale  
Councillor Maroof Raouf  
Councillor Mohammed Mahroof  
Councillor Dianne Hurst  
Councillor Nighat Basharat  
Councillor Jayne Dunn  
Councillor Maleiki Haybe  
Councillor Ian Horner  
Councillor Ann Whitaker

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## PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

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The Education, Children and Families Policy Committee discusses and takes decisions on:

### Education and Skills

- Schools
- Mainstream and specialist education (early years, children and young people)
- Learning and Skills policy, programmes and interventions (children and young people)

### Children and Families

- Children and family support and social work
- Fostering and adoption
- Children in care, care leavers and corporate parenting
- Residential services
- Youth justice
- Child safeguarding

Meetings are chaired by the Committee's Chair, Councillor Dale.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk). You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked \* on the agenda. Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Policy Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the [Council's webpages](#) or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

Policy Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last on the agenda.

Meetings of the Policy Committee have to be held as physical meetings. If you would like to attend the meeting, please report to an Attendant in the Foyer at the Town Hall where you will be directed to the meeting room. However, it would be appreciated if you could register to attend, in advance of the meeting, by emailing [committee@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:committee@sheffield.gov.uk), as this will assist with the management of attendance at the meeting. The meeting rooms in the Town Hall have a limited capacity. We are unable to guarantee entrance to the meeting room for observers, as priority will be given to registered speakers and those that have registered to attend.

Alternatively, you can observe the meeting remotely by clicking on the 'view the webcast' link provided on the meeting page of the [website](#).

If you wish to attend a meeting and ask a question or present a petition, you must submit the question/petition in writing by 9.00 a.m. at least 2 clear working days in

advance of the date of the meeting, by email to the following address:  
[committee@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:committee@sheffield.gov.uk).

In order to ensure safe access and to protect all attendees, you will be recommended to wear a face covering (unless you have an exemption) at all times within the venue. Please do not attend the meeting if you have COVID-19 symptoms. It is also recommended that you undertake a Covid-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Test within two days of the meeting.

If you require any further information please email [committee@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:committee@sheffield.gov.uk).

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## FACILITIES

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There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

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**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA  
19 MARCH 2024**

**Order of Business**

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**Welcome and Housekeeping**

The Chair to welcome attendees to the meeting and outline basic housekeeping and fire safety arrangements.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

**2. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting

(Pages 7 - 10)

**4. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

(Pages 11 - 20)

**5. Public Questions and Petitions**

To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public.

(NOTE: There is a time limit of up to 30 minutes for the above item of business. In accordance with the arrangements published on the Council's website, questions/petitions at the meeting are required to be submitted in writing, to [committee@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:committee@sheffield.gov.uk), by 9.00 a.m. on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024).

**6. Members' Questions**

To receive any questions from Members of the committee on issues which are not already the subject of an item of business on the Committee agenda – Council Procedure Rule 16.8.

(NOTE: a period of up to 10 minutes shall be allocated for Members' supplementary questions).

**7. Work Programme**

(Pages 21 - 34)

**Items for Noting**

8. **2023/24 Q3 Budget Monitoring** (Pages 35 - 50)

**Formal Decisions**

9. **School Calendar 2025/26** (Pages 51 - 66)
10. **Commissioning of a Social Care Case Management System** (Pages 67 - 80)
11. **Review of Fostering Payments** (Pages 81 - 112)
12. **Renewal of Contract with Nexus Multi-Academy Trust to Deliver the Medical Needs Education Service** (Pages 113 - 124)

**Items for Noting**

13. **Annual Update of the Building Successful Families Programme** (Pages 125 - 154)
14. **Pupil Outcomes in Sheffield School Settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield Commission** (Pages 155 - 170)
15. **Update on the Development of a Children's Services Belonging Framework** (Pages 171 - 192)
16. **An Update on Work Related to Race Equality by Children's Services** (Pages 193 - 204)
17. **The Creation of a Task and Finish Group to Oversee Work to Develop Practice and Policy in Relation to Home to School Transport** (Pages 205 - 214)
18. **Update Report from the Strategic Director of Children's Services** (Pages 215 - 224)

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## ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

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If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its Policy Committees, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period\* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

\*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
  - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
  - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
  - the landlord is your council or authority; and
  - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
  - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
  - (b) either -
    - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
    - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.



Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from David Hollis, Interim Director of Legal and Governance by emailing [david.hollis@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:david.hollis@sheffield.gov.uk).

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**Education, Children and Families Policy Committee**

**Meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Dawn Dale (Chair), Mohammed Mahroof (Group Spokesperson), Mike Chaplin (Substitute Member), Karen McGowan (Substitute Member), Ann Whitaker, Maleiki Haybe, Ian Horner and Paul Turpin (Substitute Member)

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Councillors Nighat Basharat, Jayne Dunn and Maroof Raouf sent their apologies. Councillors Mike Chaplin, Karen McGowan and Paul Turpin attended as substitutes.

**2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

2.1 The Chair reported that two appendices relating to item 12 were not available to the public and press because they contained exempt information described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. Accordingly, if the content of those parts of the report were to be discussed, the public and press would be excluded from the meeting.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee, held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2023, were approved.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

5.1 No public questions or petitions were received from members of the public.

**6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

6.1 No Members' questions were received on this occasion.

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME**

- 7.1 The Committee received the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme is to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this Committee, other committees, officers, partners, and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee. Changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, had been made in consultation with the Co-Chairs, Deputy Chair and Group Spokesperson, via their regular pre-meetings, and these were set out at the beginning of Appendix A of the report.
- 7.2 Members raised the issue of School Admissions, an item which was due to come to Committee in February. They stated that feedback had been given by parents that the information available on this subject could be improved. Councillor Dale stated she would be willing to set up a Task and Finish Group on this subject. Councillors Ann Whitaker, Nighat Basharat and Maroof Raouf volunteered to be on this group.
- 7.3 Members asked whether Race Equality had been placed on the agenda for next year's Policy Committee meetings. The Chair confirmed this would be looked at and stated that the Strategic Director of Children's Services would provide updates in their regular Update Report item.
- 7.4 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed, including the additions and amendments identified in Part 1.

## **8. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which sought approval to determine the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26, including the oversubscription criteria and co-ordinated admission schemes for primary and secondary schools.
- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:
1. The oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2025/26 (including for external Sixth Forms)
  2. Proposed Admission Numbers for 2025/26
  3. The statutory Primary and Secondary co-ordinated admission schemes for 2025/26
- 8.3 **Reasons for Decision**
- 8.3.1 The recommendation to approve the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26 will ensure that the Authority carries out its statutory duty to consult and determine its admission arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year, including:

1. The oversubscription criteria (Including external Sixth Forms)
2. The proposed Admission Numbers
3. The statutory Primary and Secondary co-ordinated admission schemes.

#### **8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 8.4.1 The Admissions Review was a City-wide consultation which asked whether the current admission arrangements were still supported and were still fit for purpose. There continues to be a high level of support for the current arrangements and the current arrangements continue to deliver a high level of preferences met.

For the 2023 intakes for example a total of 95.34% were offered their first preference primary schools compared to a national average 92.5%. A total of 99.08% were offered one of their three preferred schools. For Year 7 admission to Secondary school 88.46% were offered a preferred secondary school compared to a national average of 82.6%. A total of 96.29% were offered one of their three preferred schools.

#### **9. 16-25 YEARS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION SERVICE COMMISSION**

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out the statutory duties, provided an overview and sought approval from the Education, Children and Families Committee for the recommission of the 16-25 Supported Accommodation services.

- 9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

- approves the commission of a 16-25 years Supported Accommodation Service from external providers, with an estimated cost of £33.1 million over a period of 4.5 years, as set out in this report.

#### **9.3 Reasons for Decision**

- 9.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the requirements to support Looked after Children and Care Leavers as contained in The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.
- 9.3.2 The Council's existing framework contract for the delivery of the service will expire on 30th September 2024.
- 9.3.3 The Council wishes to re-commission the existing service for 4.5 years (1st October 2024 until 31st March 2029) with an estimated cost of £33.1 million.
- 9.3.4 Any re-commissioning of the service will seek the procurement and award of a 4.5-year contract in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Contracts Standing Orders.

#### 9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 Do nothing - which we cannot as the provision of this Service is a statutory duty; therefore, we must deliver it.
- 9.4.2 Deliver the service in-house – we currently do not have the expertise or capacity to deliver the service in-house.
- 9.4.3 Do our own tender - which would be a collaboratively procured approach on the open market, through an open tender, as this would maximise the interest and competition and thereby return the most economically advantageous tender.

### 10. **PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25**

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out the key priority areas for capital investment for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee and provides an overview of potential projects and priorities for the years 2024 to 2029, with an overview of anticipated developments and challenges up to 2052.

10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

1. Endorse the proposals set out in this report.
2. Note that the proposals will now be included in the draft Capital Strategy to be submitted to Full Council for approval in March 2024 and, if approved:
  - a) Officers will work with Members to consult with relevant stakeholders (including with partners, staff, trades unions [if required] and in respect of equalities and climate change) on the proposals in this report to inform final project proposals;
  - b) Officers will work to develop any necessary detailed implementation plans for the proposals in this report so that the proposals can be implemented as planned; and
  - c) Approval for detailed proposals will be sought as part of the monthly capital approval cycle by the Finance Committee.

#### 10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 10.3.1 Members are asked to note the unsustainable financial position highlighted by the medium-term financial analysis presented to Strategy and Resources Committee in September 2023.
- 10.3.2 This report and its recommendations set out how capital projects can continue to be developed and delivered, despite the limited resources available and continue to deliver quality infrastructure for the people of Sheffield.

#### 10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. Committee is invited to comment upon and endorse the current proposals to form part of the Council's wider Capital Strategy for 2024/25.

## **11. EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE CLIMATE STATEMENT**

11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which aimed to do the following:

1. Respond to the Annual Climate Progress Report 2022/23 in a timely manner.
2. Restate the cross-party council commitment to taking what action we can to address the climate emergency, adapt our city and council for a changing climate and reduce emissions to achieve our ambition to be a net zero city and council by 2030.
3. Increase understanding of the impact climate change will have on committees, the opportunities that tackling climate change offers, and the contribution to climate and net zero action each committee is currently making and needs to make moving forward.

11.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

- (a) consider and, if not previously agreed, agree (with or without amendments) their respective statement to ensure that the proposed actions contained in such statement are reflected in their Work Programme.

### **11.3 Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 It is important that the response to the Annual Climate Progress Report is open and transparent in setting out the challenges which the local authority faces in making progress and clarifies future expectations on the part we all have to play in addressing climate change.

11.3.2 Committee do not currently have specific strategic goals for climate. The process required to develop these, and have the statements approved to be read at each committee meeting meant that option 5.2 was not feasible with the available resource and timeframe.

### **11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Not providing committee climate statements considered due to the resource required to collate.

11.4.2 Providing more detailed Committee Climate Statements that provided an overview of strategic climate goals, with each Chair then reading the committees statement publicly at their respective committee meeting following release of the report.

## **12. THE CHILDCARE REFORMS (SPRING BUDGET 2023)**

12.1 The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided Members with an overview of the Childcare Reforms announced in the Spring Budget 2023, sought approval for the Local Authority's next steps in delivering the requirements of the Childcare Reforms and sought delegations for the agreement to proceed to develop delivery plans in accordance with the Department for Education guidance and implement these.

12.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report regarding childcare provision and the Childcare Reforms announced in the Spring Budget 2023
- Approved the Council proceeding to develop the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan and the Wraparound Delivery Plan as set out in the report
- To the extent that they require decisions not covered by existing officer delegations, delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Children's Services to: a. agree and implement the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan as set out in sections 2.4 and 4 of this report; b. agree and implement the Wraparound Delivery Plan (subject to Department for Education's approval), as set out in sections 3.4 and 4 of this report; c. allocate grant awards above £50,000 from the Wraparound grant funding of £2.678m where set out in the Wraparound Delivery Plan and in accordance with section 4.5.2 of this report; and d. agree the strategy for the allocation of the capital Childcare Expansion Grant of £849,000 for Extended Entitlement and Wraparound Care provision prior to allocations being submitted for approval by the Finance Committee (as part of the Local Authority's Capital Approvals Process) as set out in section 4.5.3 of this report.
- Note the decisions at 3) above will only be exercised by the Strategic Director of Children's Services pursuant to the Childcare Reforms Governance Board's process as set out in section 5 of this report.
- Note that the Local Authority Delivery Support grant of £102,000 is to be retained centrally by the Local Authority, in accordance with the grant terms, to cover administrative costs for the implementation of the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan as set out in section 4.5.1 of this report.
- Note that £294,000 (11%) of the Wraparound grant funding is to be retained centrally by the Local Authority, in accordance with the grant terms, to cover administrative costs for the implementation of the Wraparound Delivery Plan as set out in section 4.5.2 of this report.
- Note that a further update paper on the Childcare Reforms will be presented at a future Committee.

### **12.3 Reasons for Decision**

12.3.1 Due to the short timescale for the implementation of the Childcare Reforms programme it is proposed that the Local Authority proceeds to implement option



2 above. By agreeing the approach to deliver the Childcare Reforms, as set out in this report, this will enable the Local Authority to commence the implementation process whilst the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan and the Wraparound Delivery Plan are being finalised, which will ensure timely compliance with the Government's requirements. Further updates will be provided to the Committee in a future report.

#### **12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

12.4.1 Do nothing – this is not a viable option as the Local Authority would be in breach of its statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents/carers, or parents/carers who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14, or up to 18 for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Doing nothing would mean that the Local Authority's existing childcare provision will be insufficient to meet the demands of the first phase of the roll out, which comes into effect in April 2024 (parents/carers are able to apply for this from 2 January 2024) as well as the second phase which is to be implemented in September 2024.

12.4.2 Proceed to implement the Childcare Reforms – as set out in the Recommendations section of this report. This option allows the Local Authority to start the implementation process, meet its statutory duties and be compliant with the Government's requirements.

### **13. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN**

13.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26. The report was outlined as follows:

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe the collective responsibility to provide care for and support children in our care and our care leavers to ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26 demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that the life chances of every child and young person in its care are improved in line with their peers. We will act as strong advocates to ensure their needs are met in the best way possible, and to prioritise access to resources. We believe that every child and young person in Sheffield should have the best possible start in life and the opportunity to thrive. We want to ensure that care experienced children and young people receive the right support, at the right time and in the right place.

When providing a service for our children and young people in care, we will challenge ourselves by asking, 'would this be good enough for my child?'

This strategy outlines our commitment to ensure that children are at the centre of our practice, that they feel safe and secure, have stability in their lives, that they are emotionally well and that we help them to achieve their full potential by supporting them in fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations.

13.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

1. Approve the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26 as set out at Appendix 1.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

13.3.1 Approval of Corporate Parenting Board to undertake the monitoring and oversight of progress against the delivery plan, and annual review of the aspirations, will ensure consistent oversight of the delivery of the strategy and escalation as appropriate if issues arise.

13.3.2 We are accountable for the delivery of our strategy to: - Sheffield Children in Care Council and Sheffield Care Leavers' Union - Young People's Reverse Scrutiny Panel - Sheffield Corporate Parenting Board

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

13.4.1 Alternative option not to approve the new Strategy, is rejected. This would mean the Council does not have an accurate and up to date strategy that sets out its commitment in line with the corporate parenting duty. Governance of the delivery of the strategy will not be articulated and understood and may result in failure to escalate issues as they arise.

**14. SEND SEF AND TRANSFORMATION WORK**

14.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an overview to the Education Children and Families Policy Committee of the Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Self Evaluation Framework.

14.2 The Committee noted the report.

**15. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

15.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided a Strategic Director's update on the performance and governance of Children's services, including progress in meeting DCS (Director of Children's Services) accountabilities and delivering on our statutory requirements. It also provided an update regarding progress in relation to the Council's Delivery Plan, key strategic events and issues on the horizon.

15.2 The Committee noted the report.

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## **Report to Education, Children and Families Policy Committee**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Report of:** Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

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**Subject:** Committee Work Programme

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**Author of Report:** Fiona Martinez, Principal Democratic Services Officer

[fiona.martinez@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.martinez@sheffield.gov.uk)

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### **Summary:**

The Committee's Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This aims to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee.

Any changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, have been made in consultation with the Co-Chairs, and the document is always considered at the regular pre-meetings to which all Group Spokespersons are invited.

The following potential sources of new items are included in this report, where applicable:

- Questions and petitions from the public, including those referred from Council
- References from Council or other committees (statements formally sent for this committee's attention)
- A list of issues, each with a short summary, which have been identified by the Committee or officers as potential items but which have not yet been scheduled (See Appendix 1)

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting.

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## **Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
2. That consideration be given to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1;
3. That Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme

**Background Papers:** None

**Category of Report:** Open

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## **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

### **1.0 Prioritisation**

1.1 For practical reasons this committee has a limited amount of time each year in which to conduct its formal business. The Committee will need to prioritise firmly in order that formal meetings are used primarily for business requiring formal decisions, or which for other reasons it is felt must be conducted in a formal setting.

1.2 In order to ensure that prioritisation is effectively done, on the basis of evidence and informed advice, Members should usually avoid adding items to the work programme which do not already appear:

- In the draft work programme in Appendix 1 due to the discretion of the chair; or
- within the body of this report accompanied by a suitable amount of information.

### **2.0 References from Council or other Committees**

2.1 Any references sent to this Committee by Council, including any public questions, petitions and motions, or other committees since the last meeting are listed here, with commentary and a proposed course of action, as appropriate:

2.2

None received

### **3.0 Member engagement, learning and policy development outside of Committee**

3.1 Subject to the capacity and availability of councillors and officers, there are a range of ways in which Members can explore subjects, monitor information and develop their ideas about forthcoming decisions outside of formal meetings. Appendix 2 is an example 'menu' of some of the ways this could be done. It is entirely appropriate that member development, exploration and policy development should in many cases take place in a private setting, to allow members to learn and formulate a

position in a neutral space before bringing the issue into the public domain at a formal meeting.

### 3.2 Training & Skills Development - Induction programme for this committee.

Title	Description & Format	Date
None to report		

## Appendix 1 – Work Programme

### Part 1: Proposed additions and amendments to the work programme since the last meeting:

New Items	Proposed Date	Note
<b>NEW:</b> Pupil Outcomes in Sheffield School Settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield Commission	March 2024	To provide the Committee with an update on the Pupil outcomes in Sheffield School settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield Commission.
<b>NEW:</b> Review of Fostering Payments	March 2024	Sheffield City Council are committed to expanding our in-house fostering service whilst continuing to work in partnership with the independent fostering sector. To be able to operate competitively Sheffield City Council need be able to pay allowances in recognition of the need to recruit and retain experienced carers able to commit to the varied challenges of the fostering task. The fostering payment scheme is a reflection of the real need within Sheffield City Council to retain skilled and experienced carers and reward carers for their loyalty and commitment.
<b>NEW:</b> Commissioning of Social Care Case Management System	March 2024	In 2017 the Council Carried out a procurement exercise to replace its Social Care System. The Liquidlogic system was selected. The contract had a term of 5 years with the option to extend by 2 years. This option was exercised in 2022. The service will come to an end on 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2024.
<b>NEW:</b> The creation of a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop the new Homes to School Transport Strategy	March 2024	This report seeks approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group overseeing work and review the Homes to School Transport policy. Membership will be drawn from the Education Children and Families Committee.
Rescheduled Item	Proposed Date	Note
<b>MOVED:</b> All Age Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing	June 2024	Moved from March to June

### Part 2: List of other potential items not yet included in the work programme

Issues that have recently been identified by the Committee, its Chair or officers as potential items but have not yet been added to the proposed work programme. If a Councillor raises an idea in a meeting and the committee agrees under recommendation 3 that this should be explored, it will appear either in the work programme or in this section of the report at the committee's next meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.



<b>Topic</b>	
<b>Description</b>	
<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	
<b>Item suggested by</b>	
<b>Type of item</b>	
<b>Prior member engagement/ development required</b> <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 2)</i>	
<b>Public Participation/ Engagement approach</b> <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	
<b>Lead Officer Commentary/Proposed Action(s)</b>	

### Part 3: Agenda Items for Forthcoming Meetings

Meeting 6	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	2pm				
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Type of item</b> <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	<b>Prior member engagement/ development required</b> <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	<b>Public Participation/ Engagement approach</b> <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	<b>Final decision-maker (&amp; date)</b> This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer
2023/24 Q3 Budget Monitoring	Budget Monitoring	Jane Wilby	Monitoring			Education, Children and Families

Renewal of contract with Nexus multi-academy trust to deliver the Medical Needs Education Service	The recommissioning of our Medical Needs Education contract which provides education for children medically unable to attend school.	Emma Bryant/Polly McKinlay	Decision	None considered.	We will be undertaking consultation with Sheffield Parent Carer Forum as well as with the children and their families who attend Chapel House.	Education, Children and Families
Update on the Development of a Children's Services Belonging Framework	<p>This paper provides an update about our work to develop a Belonging Framework.</p> <p>As a reminder, we are developing a Belonging Framework because we want to improve the outcomes of children and young people in Sheffield and support their transitions into adulthood – for all our children.</p> <p>To ensure we remain child-centred and family focussed, we want to put belonging at the heart of all we do.</p>	Andrew Jones /Joe Horobin	Strategy/Policy and Development	Member briefing	To work with Community Youth Services and others in the coming weeks and months to engage children and young people. We will also work with schools and other stakeholders to discuss Belonging and seek views.	Education, Children and Families

An update on work related to Race Equality by Children's Services	The purpose of this report, is to demonstrate the work of Children's Services in matters of race equality within the service and with our customers since presented at last committee in November 2023.	Meredith Teasdale	Performance and Monitoring	There is no consultation needed this demonstrating steps taken from the previous committee in November 2023.		Education, Children and Families
Annual update of the Building Successful Families programme	The report is to provide an annual update to the Education, Children and Families Committee on the Building Successful Families (BSF) programme, referred to nationally as the Supporting Families programme. To request that the Education, Children and Families Committee receives and notes the 2024 annual report of Building Successful Families (BSF).	Emily Ward/ Amy Buddery	Performance and Monitoring	Briefings with the Chair, Vice Chair and Spokesperson of the Education, Children and Families Committee will be undertaken in January/February 2024		Education, Children and Families
Update report from the Strategic Director of Children's Services	To provide a Strategic Director's update regarding the performance and governance of Children's services, including progress in meeting DCS (Director of Children's Services) accountabilities and	Meredith Teasdale	Performance monitoring and other	N/A	N/A	Education, Children and Families

	delivering on our statutory requirements. It also provides an update regards progress in relation to the Council's Delivery Plan, key strategic events and issues on the horizon.					
School Calendar 2025/26	<p>The Local Authority is required to consult annually and determine the school term dates for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.</p> <p>Schools that are their own Admission Authority usually follow the City Council model calendar but are free to set their own. Religious schools sometimes operate different dates around Easter.</p> <p>To ensure that the City Council is carrying out its statutory duty to set a school calendar for the 2025/26 academic year.</p>	John Bigley	Decision	Member Briefing		Education, Children and Families

<p><b>NEW:</b> Review of Fostering Payments</p>	<p>Sheffield City Council are committed to expanding our in-house fostering service whilst continuing to work in partnership with the independent fostering sector. To be able to operate competitively Sheffield City Council need be able to pay allowances in recognition of the need to recruit and retain experienced carers able to commit to the varied challenges of the fostering task. The fostering payment scheme is a reflection of the real need within Sheffield City Council to retain skilled and experienced carers and reward carers for their loyalty and commitment.</p>	<p>Isobel Fisher</p>				<p>Education, Children and Families</p>
<p><b>NEW:</b> Pupil Outcomes in Sheffield School Settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield Commission</p>	<p>To provide the Committee with an update on the Pupil outcomes in Sheffield School settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield Commission.</p>	<p>Pat Butterell / Stephen Betts / Bob Cuff</p>	<p>Performance and Monitoring</p>	<p>There is no consultation required as this is sharing existing data of school performance with members.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families</p>
<p><b>NEW:</b> Commissioning of Social Care Case</p>	<p>In 2017 the Council Carried out a procurement exercise to replace its Social Care</p>	<p>Dominic Sleath</p>	<p>Decision</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Education, Children and Families and</p>

Management System	System. The Liquidlogic system was selected. The contract had a term of 5 years with the option to extend by 2 years. This option was exercised in 2022. The service will come to an end on 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2024.					briefing to Adult Health and Social Care
<b>NEW:</b> The creation of a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop the new Homes to School Transport Strategy	This report seeks approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group overseeing work and review the Homes to School Transport policy. Membership will be drawn from the Education Children and Families Committee.	Meredith Teasdale	Other	N/A	N/A	Education, Children and Families
Standing items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public Questions/ Petitions</i></li> <li>• <i>Work Programme</i></li> </ul>					

Items which the Committee has agreed to add to an agenda, but for which no date is set.						
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item <i>Decision/Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development)/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>	Prior member engagement/ development required <i>(with reference to options in Appendix 1)</i>	Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 2)</i>	Final decision-maker (& date) This Cttee/Another Cttee (eg S&R)/Full Council/Officer

<b>NEW:</b> Developing an Integrated Resource at Broomhall Nursery	Awaiting narrative	Zanib Mushtaq/Matt Peers				Education, Children and Families
<b>NEW:</b> Commissioning of Short Breaks Framework	Awaiting narrative	Amy Buddery/Becky Towle				
<b>MOVED:</b> All Age Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing	Awaiting narrative	Tim Gollins/Amy Buddery/Louisa King				Education, Children and Families and Adult Health and Social Care

## **Appendix 2 – Menu of options for member engagement, learning and development prior to formal Committee consideration**

Members should give early consideration to the degree of pre-work needed before an item appears on a formal agenda.

All agenda items will anyway be supported by the following:

- Discussion well in advance as part of the work programme item at Pre-agenda meetings. These take place in advance of each formal meeting, before the agenda is published and they consider the full work programme, not just the immediate forthcoming meeting. They include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers
- Discussion and, where required, briefing by officers at pre-committee meetings in advance of each formal meeting, after the agenda is published. These include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers.
- Work Programming items on each formal agenda, as part of an annual and ongoing work programming exercise
- Full officer report on a public agenda, with time for a public discussion in committee
- Officer meetings with Chair & VC as representatives of the committee, to consider addition to the draft work programme, and later to inform the overall development of the issue and report, for the committee's consideration.

The following are examples of some of the optional ways in which the committee may wish to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged and informed prior to taking a public decision on a matter. In all cases the presumption is that these will take place in private, however some meetings could happen in public or eg be reported to the public committee at a later date.

These options are presented in approximately ascending order of the amount of resources needed to deliver them. Members must prioritise carefully, in consultation with officers, which items require what degree of involvement and information in advance of committee meetings, in order that this can be delivered within the officer capacity available.

The majority of items cannot be subject to the more involved options on this list, for reasons of officer capacity.

- Written briefing for the committee or all members (email)
- All-member newsletter (email)
- Requests for information from specific outside bodies etc.
- All-committee briefings (private or, in exceptional cases, in-committee)
- All-member briefing (virtual meeting)
- Facilitated policy development workshop (potential to invite external experts / public, see appendix 2)
- Site visits (including to services of the council)
- Task and Finish group (one at a time, one per cttee)

Furthermore, a range of public participation and engagement options are available to inform Councillors, see appendix 3.



## **Appendix 3 – Public engagement and participation toolkit**

### **Public Engagement Toolkit**

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its ‘menu of options’ for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what’s worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop. The toolkit includes (but is not be limited to):

- a. Public calls for evidence
- b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as ‘hackathons’) led by committees
- c. Creative use of online engagement channels
- d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities
- e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development
- f. Citizens assembly style activities
- g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)
- h. Committee / small group visits to services
- i. Formal and informal discussion groups
- j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)
- k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.

This public engagement toolkit is intended to be a quick ‘how-to’ guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

**There is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee’s work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.**

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## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Philip Gregory,  
Director of Finance and Commercial Services

**Tel:** +44 114 474 1438

**Report of:** *Philip Gregory, Director of Finance & Commercial Services*

**Report to:** *Education, Children & Families Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *19<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

**Subject:** *2023-24 Q3 Budget Monitoring Report*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

*This report brings the Committee up to date with the Council's General Fund revenue outturn position for 2023/24 as at Q3.*

### Recommendations:

#### The Committee is recommended to:

Note the updated information and management actions on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn as described in this report.

**Background Papers:**  
[2023/24 Revenue Budget](#)

<b>Lead Officer to complete: -</b>		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Philip Gregory, <i>Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i>
		Legal: <i>Sarah Bennett, Assistant Director, Legal Services</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Adele Robinson, Equalities and Engagement Manager, Policy, and Performance.</i>
		Climate: n/a
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Philip Gregory, Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Zahira Naz, Chair of the Finance Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Philip Gregory</i> <i>Jane Wilby</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Director of Finance and Commercial Services</i> <i>Head of Accounting</i>
	<b>Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	

## 1. PROPOSAL

1.1. This report provides an update on the current outturn position for Sheffield City Council's revenue budget for 2023/24.

### 2023-24 Q3 Financial Position by Directorate

1.2. At the end of the third quarter of 2023-24, the Council's revenue budget shows a forecast overspend of £16.7m. This was an improvement of £700k from the previous quarter's outturn position.

Full Year £m	Q3 Outturn	Budget	Q3 Variance	Q2 Variance	Move ment
Neighbourhood Services	148.9	146.8	2.1	3.3	(1.2)
Adults	146.7	144.2	2.6	3.4	(0.8)
Children's	142.5	131.3	11.2	8.8	2.4
City Futures	49.2	48.8	0.4	1.0	(0.6)
Strategic Support	15.0	10.6	4.5	4.4	0.0
Public Health & Integrated Commissioning	12.8	11.2	1.6	1.8	(0.2)
Corporate	(498.4)	(492.9)	(5.5)	(5.2)	(0.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>

1.3. This overspend is due to a combination of factors. Agreed Budget Implementation Plans ("BIPs") are not forecast to fully deliver within the year. There are underlying cost and demand pressures faced by services that are partially offset by one-off items. These "one-offs" consist of grant income, draws from specific reserves or provisions and income from central government or external sources.

Full Year Variance £m	One-off	BIPs	Trend	Total Variance
Neighbourhood Services	(4.7)	2.9	3.9	2.1
Adults	(11.2)	3.5	10.3	2.6
Children's	(5.0)	4.0	12.2	11.2
City Futures	(0.1)	0.4	0.1	0.4
Strategic Support	(1.1)	0.1	5.5	4.5
Public Health & Integrated Commissioning	(0.5)	0.0	2.0	1.6
Corporate	0.0	0.0	(5.5)	(5.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(22.7)</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>16.7</b>

1.4. In 2021/22, the Council set aside £70m of reserves to manage the financial risks associated with delivering a balanced budget position. Overspends against general fund budgets in 2021/22 and 2022/23 have meant we have drawn almost £40m from this reserve to date. Current overspends of £16.7m would deplete this reserve to just £14m for budget overspends for 24/25 and beyond. Given this challenging position and likely requirement in the next few years to draw on this reserve, a further £12.5m has been identified from a one-off surplus from our collection fund. This is subject to approval at full council on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

## 1.5. 2023-24 Q3 Financial Position by Committee

1.5.1. The major budget risk areas are in Childrens & Adults Social Care and in Homelessness services:

Full Year £m	Q3 Outturn	Budget	Q3 Variance	Q2 Variance	Movement
Adult Health & Social Care	154.6	152.5	2.1	3.1	(1.0)
Communities Parks and Leisure	46.8	47.1	(0.4)	0.8	(1.2)
Economic Development & Skills	11.1	11.1	0.0	(0.0)	0.1
Education, Children & Families	145.6	132.4	13.2	10.9	2.3
Housing	11.1	8.2	2.9	3.2	(0.3)
Strategy & Resources	(462.7)	(462.5)	(0.2)	0.6	(0.8)
Transport, Regeneration & Climate	43.6	43.6	(0.0)	(0.0)	0.0
Waste & Street Scene	66.6	67.6	(1.0)	(1.1)	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>(0.7)</b>

1.5.2. In 22/23, the Council's overspend improved by over £14m from the first quarter's forecasts to final outturn. This was mainly due to additional income received rather than underlying improvements in budgets and cost reductions. Whilst there is a likelihood we may receive some additional government funding in the final quarter of 2023/24, it is unlikely we will see an improvement on this scale.

Many underlying budget issues in social care services still remain and this is reflected in the current forecast position.

1.5.3. Most of the overspend is due to underlying cost and demand pressures in services. We estimate that £28.5m is embedded in the baseline costs but is somewhat mitigated by one-off income:

Full Year Variance £m	One-off	BIPs	Trend	Total Variance
Adult Health & Social Care	(11.5)	3.5	10.1	2.1
Communities Parks and Leisure	(0.2)	0.1	(0.2)	(0.4)
Economic Development & Skills	0.1	0.0	(0.1)	0.0
Education, Children & Families	(5.2)	4.0	14.4	13.2
Housing	(1.7)	0.2	4.4	2.9
Strategy & Resources	(3.6)	2.8	0.6	(0.2)
Transport, Regeneration & Climate	0.0	0.1	(0.2)	(0.0)
Waste & Street Scene	(0.6)	0.3	(0.7)	(1.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(22.7)</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>16.7</b>

1.5.4. Balancing the General Fund 2023/24 budget was only possible because the Council identified £47.7m of savings:

**General Fund Budget Implementation Plans (in £m)**

Committee	Total Savings	Financial Savings Deliverable in Year	In Year Gap	Financial Savings Deliverable Next Year (Slippage)	Undeliverable Savings
Adult Health & Social Care	31.6	28.0	3.5	3.5	0.0
Comm, Parks & Leisure	2.0	1.9	0.1		0.1
Economic Dev & Skills	0.5	0.5	0.0		0.0
Ed, Children & Families	6.9	2.9	4.0	0.3	3.6
Housing	0.6	0.5	0.2		0.2
Strategy & Resources	4.1	1.4	2.7	2.5	0.2
Transport, Regen & Climate	0.8	0.7	0.1		0.1
Waste & Street Scene	1.1	0.8	0.3		0.3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>

The current forecasts show £10.9m savings plans are undeliverable this year. This represents a delivery rate of 77% against target with a further 14% set to be delivered in the following year.

In 22/23, less than 65% of savings targets were delivered. Whilst we are improving upon overall delivery performance, we are still falling short of targets meaning further draws could be required from our reserves to meet these overspends if they are not managed and mitigated. Delivering in year budgets must be a key focus for all services for the Council to retain financial sustainability.

- 1.5.5. Inflation is continuing to fall; from April 2023 CPI at 7.8% to 4.2% in December (month 9). Whilst we are seeing some stabilisation in the cost base, the fall in inflation does not mean that our costs will now reduce, higher costs are now embedded in baseline expenditure. There is an increased demand for services alongside cost pressures in social care, home to school transport and homelessness services.

**1.6. Key Committee Overspends:**

- 1.6.1. **Adult Health and Social Care are forecast to overspend by £2.1m** The main area of overspend in the service sits in staffing budgets. The high cost of packages of care put in place during covid increased our baseline costs and this carries into 23/24. Work to review packages of care has continued throughout 23/24 which has helped to reduce baseline costs in Homecare. This work and one-off funding has mitigated the position again this year leaving a £0.5m overspend in the purchasing budgets. However, there remains an underlying pressure of around £10m, a significant aspect of which is within Learning Disabilities, plus £3.5m savings undelivered in 23/24 which will need to be resolved through the Recovery Plan for 2024/25. This was presented to Committee 31 January 2024 detailing how underlying issues, which are estimated at around £17m including additional staff pressures, will be addressed. Action owners and responsible Assistant Directors are currently working through implementation plans to ensure the requisite staff capacity and any additional resources are made available.

- 1.6.2. **Education, Children and** The key overspends in the service relate to placements with external residential placements a particular issue which are

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**Families are forecast to overspend by £13.2m**

forecast to overspend by £6.7m. The average placement cost has increased to £5,800 per week but due to a limited number of places in the city, placements for the most complex children can cost much more. Actions are being taken to ensure that costs for placements are being met by all elements including education and where possible health. High-cost placements are also being reviewed.

The savings proposal for £1.6m to increase fostering placements this year is forecast to not be delivered. Marketing is taking place, but our number of foster carers remains static. Nationally this has been an issue since the pandemic as older foster carers decided to exit the market and there has not been the like for like recruitment to new foster carers. Overall looked after children numbers have remained stable with increased demand being met, where possible, through family based placements.

Further demand in home to school transport costs are forecast to create a £3.6m overspend against budgets this year. Since the start of the new school year, the overspend has increased due to a further 180 children now requiring transportation to school. Sheffield City Council are now supporting over 2,365 children with transportation to school, this has increased by almost 1,000 children in 4 years, and demand is forecast to continue to increase. An overarching SEND review, including Home to School Transport, is currently underway. Outcomes from the review will bring about longer-term changes to reduce pressures but the underlying cost base will be difficult to reduce due to the rising demand for the service.

Integrated Commissioning budgets are forecast to overspend by £2m in recognition of the unachieved saving from 2022/23 relating to leveraging additional funding from Health partners.

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**1.6.3. Homelessness support in temporary and exempt accommodation is forecast to cost the Council £8.4m**

The Government does not fully subsidise all housing benefit payments made by the Council even though it sets the rules that determine the amount the Council has to pay. In 2022/23, the Council incurred a loss of £5.9m as a result of the legislation relating to temporary homelessness and supported accommodation. The Council is essentially bridging the gap between the amount the accommodation costs to procure and the amount we are able to recover via housing benefits.

In 2023-24, this is forecast to cost the Council £4.5m for temporary accommodation and £3.5m for supported accommodation. The shortfalls are split between the Housing General Fund and Strategy and Resources budgets respectively.

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**The Budget Implementation Group**

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**1.6.4. A working group is in place to drive**

A senior officer working group has been established to help drive delivery of the budget. The purpose of the Budget Implementation Group (BIG) is to improve the delivery of the



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<b>improvements in budget delivery</b>	Council's annual Revenue Budget (both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account), challenge and drive delivery of the Budget Implementation Plans (BIPs) and make recommendations for the allocation of transformation funding. It will look to facilitate Council wide learning. The group is jointly chaired by the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Chief Operating Officer. The group has a nominated core member from each Directorate.
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### **Transformation Funding**

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1.6.5. <b>The Council identified £4m to support transformation activity</b>	As part of 2023-24 budget setting, the Council identified a £4m fund that would be used to support programmes of transformational change in the organisation, expedite the delivery of savings plans or support where delivery of savings has become "stuck". The "BIG" group has provided advice, challenge, and recommendations for allocation of the transformation funding to the Council's Performance and Delivery Board.
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In August 2023, the Performance & Delivery board approved bids to support delivery of programmes in Adult Social Care, Housing, Children's services, ICT, HR, and Organisational Strategy to build upon the Future Sheffield programme. These key projects are working to stabilise the organisation and bring budgets back to a steady footing for the future. Each programme of work is being monitored, and progress reported to the Council's Performance & Delivery board to ensure activity remains on track. Overall performance will be reported to the finance committee as part of in-year budget monitoring briefings, with relevant policy committees overseeing progress on programmes in their areas.

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### **Medium Term Financial Analysis (MTFA) & 2024/25 Budget**

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1.6.6. <b>By law, the council must set a balanced budget</b>	The Council is facing a challenging financial position. The Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 <sup>th</sup> September received the Council's Medium-Term Financial analysis, highlighted the financial pressures facing the Council over the coming 4 years and the potential gap of £61.2m in resources.
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Each Committee has worked to reach savings targets to achieve a balanced budget for 2024/25. On February 21<sup>st</sup> 2024, the Strategy and Resources committee recommended the budget to full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

For 2024/25 we are forecasting pressures of £79m for Committees budgets. These pressures result from rising demand for services but also significant increases in contract and price inflation due to the current economic backdrop. Approximately £49m of these pressures relate to Social Care Services. Through our 2024/25 Business Planning Process, Committees managed to identify £8m of savings to help deliver the balanced budget. Delivery of these savings will require steadfast commitment, and targeted resources from the Council to be successful.

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In addition to these savings, increases in Business Rates income and associated grants, uplifts to sales fees and charges where appropriate, additional funding from government (mainly ringfenced to social care) along with the difficult decision to increase Council Tax by 4.99%, means we are able to set a balanced budget for 2024/25.

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## 23-24 Q3 Committee Budget Outturn Position

### 1.7. Education, Children & Families Committee - £13.2 overspend

1.7.1.	The Education, Children & Families General Fund is overspent by £13.2m	Full Year £m	Outturn	Budget	Variance
	<b>Children &amp; Families</b>		121.0	113.6	7.4
	<b>Education &amp; Skills</b> (Access and Inclusion; Business Support; Operational and Portfolio Wide Budgets; School Budgets; Schools and Learning; SEN, EMTAS)		20.6	16.8	3.8
	<b>Integrated Commissioning</b> (Commissioning; Children's Public Health; Early Help and Prevention)		4.0	2.0	2.0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>145.6</b>	<b>132.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>

The EC&F committee budget is set to overspend by £13.2 as at Q3, this position has worsened by £2.3m since the Q2 outturn position; £1.9m worse in children & families, primarily placements and our in house residential facility and a further increase in home to school transport costs of £0.5m.

1.7.2.	The 2023/24 settlement provided additional "one-off" funding for social care	Full Year Variance £m	One-off	BIPs	Trend	Total Variance
	<b>Children &amp; Families</b>		(5.0)	3.5	8.8	7.4
	<b>Education &amp; Skills</b> (Access and Inclusion; Business Support; Operational and Portfolio Wide Budgets; School Budgets; Schools and Learning; SEN, EMTAS)		0.0	0.4	3.3	3.8
	<b>Integrated Commissioning</b>		(0.2)	0.0	2.2	2.0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>(5.2)</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>

In February 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) approved the 2023/24 settlement for Local Government. Included within the Settlement were some funding and taxation commitments for 2024/25. These included details of Council Tax thresholds and additional funding for social care.

Beyond 2024/25 the picture is less clear. However, there is a general acknowledgement that due to fiscal constraints, there will be very little, if any, increase in public sector spending in unprotected services such as Local Authorities over the remaining period of the Medium-Term Financial Analysis. This settlement has been treated as "one-off" in year due to future uncertainty.

In January 2024 the Government made a statement to announce additional measures for local authorities, worth £600 million. This included £500 million of new funding for councils

with responsibility for adults and children's social care, distributed through the Social Care Grant. There has been an allocation of £5.6m for Sheffield that will be applied against current spend within the Children's directorate budgets in 2024/25.

1.7.3. **Budget Savings (BIPs) £m**

Service	Financial RAG	Total Savings	Savings Deliverable in Year	In Year Gap	Savings Deliverable Next Year	Undeliverable Savings
CHILDREN & FAMILIES	Red	4.6	1.3	3.3	0.3	3.0
	Amber	0.2		0.2		0.2
	Green	1.2	1.2	0.0		0.0
<b>CHILDREN &amp; FAMILIES Total</b>		<b>6.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>
EDUCATION & SKILLS	Red	0.4		0.4		0.4
	Amber	0.1	0.0	0.1		0.1
	Green	0.4	0.4	0.0		0.0
<b>EDUCATION &amp; SKILLS Total</b>		<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>		<b>0.4</b>
INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING	Green	0.1	0.1	0.0		0.0
<b>INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING Total</b>		<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>		<b>0.0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>6.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3.6</b>

Of the committee's £6.9m Budget Implementation Plans (BIP) £4m are forecast to fall short this year representing a 42% delivery rate.

1.7.4. Details of the BIPs set to fall short of the target are shown below:

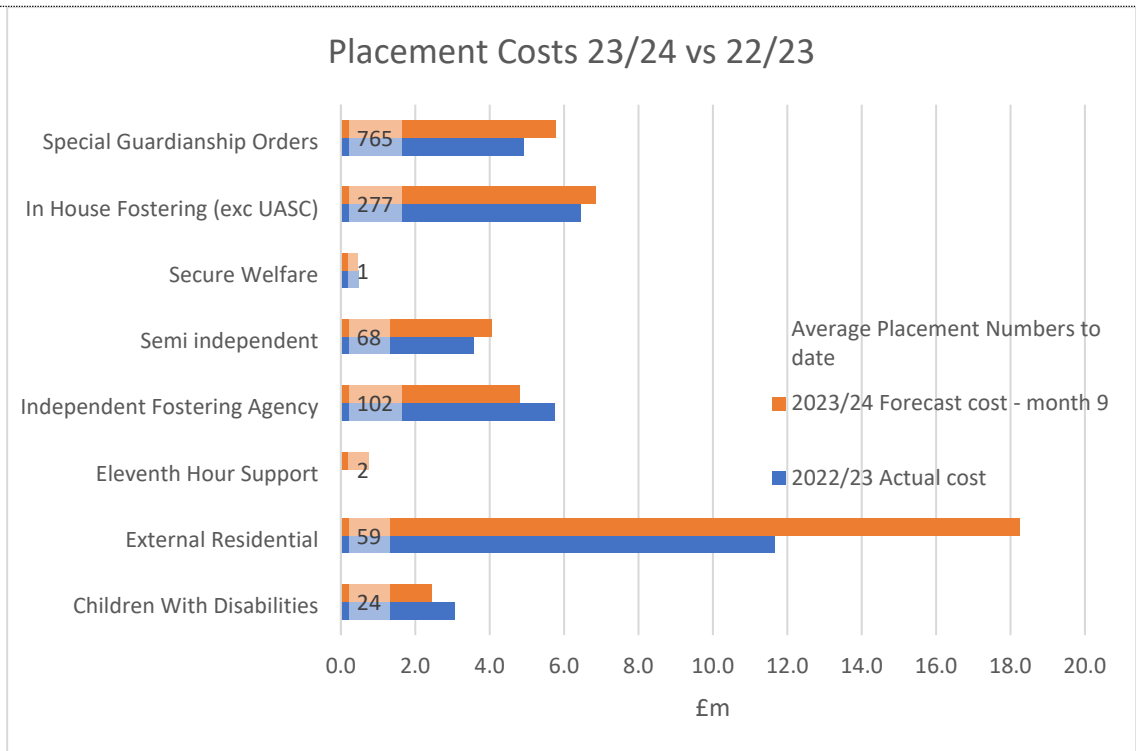
Financial RAG	Description	Total Savings	Savings Deliverable in Year	In Year Gap	Savings Deliverable Next Year	Undeliverable Savings
Red	A targeted campaign to increase numbers of fostering places available by 40 by OCT 2023	1.6		1.6		1.6
	Engage with partner to more cost effective way of working	0.3		0.3		0.3
	Edge of Care Staffing	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	On-call service review	0.3		0.3		0.3
	Rebase the MAST budget	1.2	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
	Review care leaver offer to ensure access to support continues post 21	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0
	Sufficiency and Placement Mix - identify and transition 18 year-old Care expedite transfer to Council / Social Housing	0.5		0.5		0.5

	Decentralise funding to increase efficiency	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
<b>Children &amp; Families Total</b>		<b>4.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Red	Max opportunities across TS, C&F and SENDSARS for collaboration work to drive efficiencies in Home to School transport	0.4		0.4		0.4
<b>Education &amp; Skills Total</b>		<b>0.4</b>		<b>0.4</b>		<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total RED BIPS</b>		<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>

1.7.5. **Placement costs continue to create overspends for the service** The key overspends in the service relate to placements with external residential a particular issue. These are forecast to exceed the previous year's costs by £7.4m. This sits alongside undelivered targets from the previous year of £2m.

The average placement is £5,800 per week. However, due to a limited number of places in the city, the most complex children can cost much more. Actions are being taken to ensure that the right costs for placements are being met by all elements including education and where possible health. High-cost placements are also being reviewed.

1.7.6.



The chart shows a comparison in costs year on year by placement type. The significant difference is noticeably in our external residential placements which are forecast to cost £18.3m in 2023/24 compared with £11.7m in 2022/23. There has been an increase in the number of placements in external residential this year which is more expensive than other placement types.

1.7.7.	<b>The number of children in care is fairly stable</b>	Even though there is an increase in demand at the front door, we are maintaining our number of children in care that is with a backdrop of increased Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children. The number of looked after children has reduced from 674 (2021), to 666 (2022) to 652 (2023). This is low in contrast to comparators. This impacts on the cost of placements given the cases tend to be more complex and therefore more expensive.								
1.7.8.	<b>We are struggling to recruit foster carers</b>	<p>The savings proposal for £1.6m to increase fostering placements this year is also forecast to not be delivered. Marketing is taking place, but our number of foster carers remains static. Nationally this has been an issue since the pandemic as older foster carers decided to exit the market and there is not the like for like recruitment to new foster carers.</p> <p>Foster placements has dropped from 71.0%to 65.1%, this has caused the major rise to the number of children placed in children’s homes, secure units, and hostels (including semi-independent living) from 19.0% to 25.1%, which is largely higher than comparators (range 12%to 16%).</p> <p>This needs to be seen in the changes to our placement mix- more young people who we look after are young asylum-seeking children – who historically have been less likely to be placed within family-based care. A project is underway to increase Supported Lodgings – which should impact the use of semi-independent living. Whilst we want to increase the offer across the city, we are specifically working to target communities who have expressed an interest in supporting young people from asylum seeking backgrounds and who we have not historically reached effectively.</p>								
1.7.9.	<b>£2m undelivered savings proposal from 22/23 adds to the committee overspend</b>	Integrated Commissioning budgets are forecast to overspend by £2m in recognition of the unachieved saving from 2022/23 which reduced the base budgets this year. The saving related to leveraging additional funding from Health partners.								
1.7.10.	<b>Home to school transport is set to cause a £3.6m overspend this year</b>	<p>Further demand in home to school transport costs are forecast to create a £3.6m overspend against budgets this year. The new school year has increased this overspend with a further 89 children now requiring transportation to school. Sheffield City Council are now supporting 2,365 children with transportation to school, this has increased by almost 1,000 children in 4 years.</p> <p>An overarching review of home to school transport has now commenced to drive actions to reduce costs and no of trips provided. The impact of this work is unlikely to deliver measurable results this year but should reduce the overspend in the longer term.</p>								
1.7.11.	<b>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="667 1973 1015 2002">DSG Full Year Forecast £m</th> <th data-bbox="1086 1973 1190 2002">Outturn</th> <th data-bbox="1238 1973 1334 2002">Budget</th> <th data-bbox="1382 1973 1474 2002">Variance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="667 2013 919 2040">Children &amp; Families</td> <td data-bbox="1142 2013 1174 2040">7.7</td> <td data-bbox="1286 2013 1318 2040">7.7</td> <td data-bbox="1430 2013 1461 2040">0.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	DSG Full Year Forecast £m	Outturn	Budget	Variance	Children & Families	7.7	7.7	0.0
DSG Full Year Forecast £m	Outturn	Budget	Variance							
Children & Families	7.7	7.7	0.0							

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<b>forecast to overspend by £1.0m</b>	<b>Education &amp; Skills</b>	230.3	229.4	0.9
	<b>Community Services</b>	0.6	0.6	0.0
	<b>Integrated Commissioning</b>	4.2	4.1	0.1
	<b>Organisational Strategy P&amp;D</b>	0.2	0.2	0.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>243.0</b>	<b>242.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>

The main cause of overspend in Education & Skills is due to increases in Early Years EHCP plans and Special Educational Needs.

The integrated commissioning overspend relates to back dated costs of increased Medical Services contract.

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## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 The recommendations in this report are that the committee notes their 2023/24 budget forecast position and takes action on overspends.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 There has been no consultation on this report, however, it is anticipated that the budget process itself will involve significant consultation as the Policy Committees develop their budget proposals

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### 4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. It is expected that individual Committees will use equality impact analyses as a basis for the development of their budget proposals in due course.

### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The primary purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the City Council's revenue budget monitoring position for 2023/24.

### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer of an authority is required to report on the following matters:

- the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of determining its budget requirement for the forthcoming year; and
- the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 4.3.2 There is also a requirement for the authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its budget requirement and level of financial reserves.

- 4.3.3 By the law, the Council must set and deliver a balanced budget, which is a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term. This can take into account deliverable cost savings and/or local income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. However, a budget will not be balanced where it reduces reserves to unacceptably low levels and regard must be had to any report of the Chief Finance Officer on the required level of reserves under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, which sets obligations of adequacy on controlled reserves.

### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report. It is expected that individual Committees will consider climate implications as they develop their budget proposals in due course.

### 4.4 Other Implications



4.4.1 No direct implication

**5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

**6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget.

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## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** John Bigley,  
Manager, Admissions & Access, Access & Inclusion

**Tel:** 0114 2734097

**Report of:** *Meredith Teasdale-Dixon, Strategic Director of Children's Services*  
**Report to:** *Education, Children & Families Policy Committee*  
**Date of Decision:** 19 March 2024  
**Subject:** School Calendar 2025/26

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA	2500	
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>		

### Purpose of Report:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2025/26 Academic year for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools.

**Recommendations:**

*The Committee is requested to approve:*

The School calendar for the 2025/26 academic year. (Appendix A)

**Background Papers:**

Proposed School calendar – (Appendix A)

Provision for religious observance (Appendix B)

Consultation responses (Appendix C)

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.
	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
	Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	Climate: <i>(N/A)</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b> <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b> <i>Cllr. Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>John Bigley</i>
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Manager, Admissions &amp; Access</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>19 March 2024</i>

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Local Authority is required to consult annually and determine the school term dates for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. Schools that are their own Admission Authority are free to determine their own school calendar but most follow the Council model.
- 1.2 The Local Authority has always worked closely with schools that are their own Admission Authority and its neighbouring Authorities to try and agree the same school calendar for the benefit of parents.
- 1.3 Consistent school calendars are particularly important where school staff work in one Authority but their children attend school in another Authority. This is a common theme that emerges through consultation every year and is something that has been supported by Unions.
- 1.4 The school year must contain 190 teaching days and 5 additional teacher training days. Any Governing Body wishing to determine its own term dates must adhere to this requirement.
- 1.5 There are many issues that are important to a wide range of stakeholders when considering the school calendar. These include the cost of family holidays, the length of some of the terms and the impact of operating a different calendar to neighbouring Authorities on childcare arrangements.
- 1.6 Whilst the Local Authority aims to consolidate its Calendar with neighbouring Authorities this is not always possible. When setting its calendar, the Authority does adhere where possible to a set of principles that have been established across Yorkshire and Humberside Authorities.
- 1.7 Easter Day falls on the Sunday following the first full moon after the first day of Spring, 21 March. This means that Easter can be as early as 22 March or as late as 25 April. If the Easter Break falls in late April this creates a long half term and impacts on Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) preparation, not least because there is also the May Day Bank Holiday. All schools consulted with supported the idea of fixing the Easter Break at the first two weeks of April, irrespective of where the actual Bank Holiday falls. This would allow for more even Spring Terms and also provide a minimum of 3 weeks preparation time for SATS which all schools were supportive of.

A City-wide consultation took place with parents, schools and stakeholders for the 2017/18 calendar. There were 1200 responses received. **71%** of those responding preferred the fixed Easter model. The Council has operated a “fixed Easter” Calendar each year since 2018. Effectively this means that the Easter break takes place over the first two weeks of April. The Council has agreed a Fixed Easter school calendar every year since

2017/18. The Easter Bank Holidays in 2026 actually fall on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April which fit with the proposal to fix Easter in the first two weeks in April.

## 2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

### 2.1 Thriving neighbourhoods and communities

A common school calendar supports families with primary and secondary aged children and reduces the need for children to be taken out of school during term time for the purposes of holidays. A common school calendar across the City supports teachers and non-teaching staff.

### 2.2 As an in touch organisation

The school calendar can impact on communities in different ways, both in : and with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority has consulted widely stakeholders and wants to hear the views of all stakeholders to arrive at 1 effective and consistent school calendar.

## 3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

### 3.1 The Authority carried out a consultation process for the 2025/26 school calendar from 8 January to 23 February 2024.

Consultation took place with:

- All Headteachers
- Chairs of Governors
- Parents (via schools and the Council Website)
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Teaching and non-teaching Trade Unions
- Other stakeholders

The proposed calendar was also posted on the City Council Website.

### 3.2 In response to the proposed calendar for 2025/26, 2 responses were received from the following:

	Primary	Secondary	Other	Total
In Support	0	2	0	2
Against	0	0	0	0

Responses to the consultation are provided at **Appendix C**

### 3.3 As with the consultation for the 2024/25 calendar (4), there have been very few responses received to the proposed calendar. The Authority is keen to hear from all stakeholders on the school calendar. Direct communication was sent to Headteachers and Governors by the Director of Children's Services on 8 January 2024 to highlight the consultation for 2025/26. All schools are asked to signpost parents to

the consultation. The consultation was also placed on the Council's website. Responses are pro-actively sought. The fact that there are only a small number of responses received is indicative that the majority of consultees are happy with the proposed calendar.

3.4 Neighbouring Authorities have also been consulting on both the traditional model and the fixed Easter Model. School calendars have been determined as follows:

	<b>October half term</b>	<b>Christmas</b>	<b>February half term</b>	<b>Easter</b>	<b>Spring Bank</b>
Sheffield	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Derbyshire	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Doncaster	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Rotherham	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May
Barnsley	27 October – 31 October	22 December – 2 January	16 - 20 February	30 March – 10 April	25 - 29 May

## 4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

### 4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights provision for schools to make arrangement for religious observance in order to respond to different community requirements. **(Appendix B)**

### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications to this report.

### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Failure to set a calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled, Community Special Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools would breach the statutory duty set out in section 32 of the Education Act 2002, as amended. There are no other legal implications.

### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no climate implications to this report.

## 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 In response to the overwhelming support for fixing the Easter Break during the 2017/18 consultation process and in subsequent years the Authority has only consulted on this single model for 2025/26.

## 6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that **Appendix A** be approved as the model school calendar for the 2025/26 academic year. The calendar applies to all Community schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools, Community Special Schools and maintained nursery schools. Voluntary Aided Schools, Trusts and Academies that are their own Admission Authority are recommended to adopt the model calendar to promote consistency across the City.
- 6.2 It is likely that Church Aided Schools will have their Easter Break around the religious festival. This has always been the case and Aided Schools will continue to set their own dates at Easter.
- 6.3 There was overwhelming support for fixing the Easter break at the beginning of April when the proposal was first consulted upon for the 2017/18 school calendar. It is accepted that there are many different views and opinions on the school calendar. The purpose of the consultation was to invite opinion and comment from all stakeholders. There have not been many responses to the proposed calendar, nor has there been any strong opposition to the proposed calendar for 2025/26 which indicates that the support expressed under last year's consultation continues.



## SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

### PROPOSED SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE 2025/26 ACADEMIC YEAR For community and voluntary controlled primary, secondary and special schools

#### September (22 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

#### October (18 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

#### November (20 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

#### December (15 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

#### January (20 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

#### February (15 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

#### March (20 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

#### April (14 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

#### May (15 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

#### June (22 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					


#### July (14 days)

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

#### August

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

 Denotes School Holiday

 Denotes Bank Holiday

195 days – including 5 days to be taken as professional development days for teaching staff

Denotes Bank Holiday

DRAFT



## **Framework for Religious Observance within the statutory School Calendar**

### **Background**

This briefing note is intended to provide schools with the flexibility to recognise and observe religious festivals other than those recognised within the school calendar where large numbers of parents, pupils and staff wish to take time off school whilst providing the full statutory number of days education. This guidance is not intended to be prescriptive and enables schools to consider their own circumstances. There are however specific statutory requirements that must be delivered.

When considering whether to close the school for religious observance the school must make a balanced assessment of the potential impact on the whole school population, especially for those pupils and parents that may not be of the religion for which the festival is relevant.

### **The School Calendar**

The City Council sets the school calendar for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. Schools that are their own Admission Authority are free to set their own calendar.

All schools must provide 190 days education in the school year. In addition there are also 5 professional development days which schools can schedule as full days or disaggregate them to twilight sessions.

The Calendar that is agreed by the Local Authority ensures that there are 190 teaching days in the school year.

### **Exceptions to the Published School Calendar**

If any school wishes to close for religious observance on a day that is identified as a normal school day it must ensure that the following actions are carried out:

1. Parents and staff are fully consulted in good time in case alternative child care arrangements have to be made.
2. If any day or days that the school is closed for religious observance are not taken as professional development days, they must be made up elsewhere in the school calendar to ensure that 190 teaching days are provided.

3. If any day or days that the school is closed for religious observance are taken as professional development days, this time must be made up to ensure that the 5 days requirement is met.
4. Time off arrangements for both teaching and support staff in the school are granted fairly in accordance with the school's policy for granting time off for religious observance. Please refer to the model policy available from the Schools Human Resources Team.

## Results of the Consultation on the Proposed School Calendar for 2025/26

### 1. Background

1.1 The Local Authority is responsible for setting the school calendar for Community and Voluntary Aided Schools. The consultation took place between 8 January to 23 February 2024 with the following stakeholders:

- Parents & Carers (Via Schools)
- Headteachers
- Governors
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Other stakeholders

The proposed arrangements and consultation arrangements were also posted on the Council's website.

### 2. Number of responses

2.1 A total of 2 responses were received from the following stakeholders:

- 2 School in favour of the proposed calendar
- 0 School was against the proposed calendar
- 0 Other stakeholders were in favour of the proposed calendar
- 0 Other stakeholders were against the proposed calendar.

#### 2.2 School Responses in Favour

2.2.1 There were 2 secondary school responses in favour of the proposed calendar.

#### 2.3 School Responses Against

2.3.1 There were no responses received opposing the proposed calendar.

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## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** School Calendar 2025/26

**EIA ID:** 2500

**EIA Author:** John Bigley

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**Proposal Outline:**

The Authority is required to consult upon and set its school calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled and maintained Special Schools each year in accordance with Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. There is no national model calendar. The Authority makes every effort to consolidate its calendar with neighbouring Authorities and other Sheffield Admission Authorities but this is not always possible. A thorough consultation was undertaken for the 2017/18 calendar and there was overwhelming support (over 70%) for fixing the Easter break at the beginning of April. Fixing the Easter break means that there will be more even half terms and this was a key issue for those responding. The Easter bank holidays in 2025 are on Friday 3rd April and Monday 6th April. Sheffield's proposed Easter break will begin on Monday 30 March with schools returning on Monday 13 April. The proposed Easter break will therefore incorporate the statutory bank holidays. The proposed calendar will also ensure that Sheffield is in line with other neighbouring Authorities, Rotherham, Doncaster and Derbyshire. Barnsley has not consulted at the time of writing. By creating more even half terms, this also supports longer preparation time for SATs in early May

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 25/26

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Andrew Jones

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**Service Area:**

Access & Inclusion  
**Page 63**

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EIA Start Date: 12/19/2023

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Lead Equality Objective: Leading the city in celebrating and promoting inclusion

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Equality Lead Officer: Bashir Khan

## Decision Type

Committees: Policy Committees

- Education, Children & Families

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Education (Children's Services)

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EIA is cross portfolio: Yes

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EIA is joint with another organisation: No

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## Overview of Impact

**Overview Summary:** An Equality Analysis has considered the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Authority is required to consult upon and set its school calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled and maintained Special Schools each year in accordance with Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. The Authority makes every effort to consolidate its calendar with neighbouring Authorities and other Sheffield Admission Authorities but this is not always possible. It is not possible to secure 100% agreement on the school calendar as there are many stakeholders with different priorities but this calendar does comply with neighbouring Authorities whenever possible. The strong level of support for fixing the Easter break



means that the Authority has responded to the wishes of the majority of respondents. Approval of the proposed calendar will ensure that the Authority fulfills its statutory duty and that schools and parents have access to a confirmed calendar in good time. Church Aided schools will continue to set their own Easter Break around the religious festival. Additional guidance is provided with the Calendar with regard to flexibility to accommodate religious festivals.

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Impacted characteristics:

- Other

## Consultation and other engagement

## Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:

No

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Impact areas:

## Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required:

Yes

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Review Date:

12/19/2024

## PART B - Full Impact Assessment

Other

Staff Impacted: No

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: It is important where possible to try and agree common term dates especially where some parents work in a different authority to where their children attend school so that they do not have to make child care arrangements.

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan: Catholic and Anglican Schools always arrange the easter holiday around the religious festival. There is also advice on how schools can accommodate other religious holidays. This promotes the right to celebrate religious festivals within the school calendar framework.

Action plan evidence:

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures: No

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date: 12/19/2024



## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Dominic Sleath,  
Head of Service – ICT&DI

**Tel:** 07990791326

**Report of:** *Meredith Dixon-Teasdale, Strategic Director of Children’s Services*  
*Alexis Chappell, Strategic Director of Adult Care and Wellbeing*

**Report to:** *Education, Children and Families Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *18th March 2024*

**Subject:** *Commission of Social Care Case Management System*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (2566)				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

### Purpose of Report:

This report sets out the importance of the Social Care Case Management System and seeks approval to Commission a Social Care System in order to ensure service continuity.

This report also sets out the estimated costs of the system over the maximum contract period.

**Recommendations:**

That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee approves the commission of a Social Care Case Management System from an external provider for a period of up to 8 years and estimated value of £3.1 million.

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman / Kay Handley</i>
		Legal: <i>Richard Marik</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
		Climate: <i>Dominic Sleath</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Dominic Sleath</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> Head of Service, DI&ICT
	<b>Date:</b> 6/3/2024	

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 It is proposed that the Council commission a Social Care Case Management System (System) from an external provider for a period of up to 8 years and estimated value of £3.1 million.

### Background

- 1.2 System C provide the current System (the Liquidlogic system). The software consists of the Adults System (LAS) and the Childrens System (LCS) along with an Early Help Module (EHM) as well as a finance system (ContrOCC). The system is hosted by the supplier in their data centres and accessed by Social Care staff in the Council.
- 1.3 The current contract for the Social Care Management System ends 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

### Social Care System

- 1.4 The System facilitates the work of Social Care Services for Adults and Children and is used by over 3,000 Council Officers, covering 70 services.
- 1.5 The System is the Council's key Line of Business System for Social Care; it holds the records of every adult, child or young person accessing Social Care within the Council jurisdiction and deals with everything from Infant Feeding to End of Life support.
- 1.6 The System is vital for recording and reporting on the Council's statutory duties. It provides information for:
- Children in Need (CIN) census,
  - 903 Children Looked After (CLA) return,
  - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report,
  - Short and Long Term Care (SALT) returns,
  - Client Level Data (CLD) returns,
  - Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC),
  - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) return,
  - Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) return,
  - Adult Social Care Finance return,
  - Personal Social Services Carers Survey.
- 1.7 The System is essential for providing information to OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission, including pre- inspection data such as the Annex A.  
The System enables functions such as Commissioning and Care Provision.

## **Commissioning of new Social Care System**

- 1.8 To prepare for the end of the contract on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024, the Council must commission a Social Care Management System to ensure service continuity - the sourcing of which will be managed by Commercial Services along with the service area input and IT on software requirements.
- 1.9 It is proposed that the new System must have similar capabilities as the current system as a minimum. However, the growth in the number of users over the years has meant that performance has suffered, therefore the system will need to have improved capacity to deal with these issues.
- 1.10 The new System will need to have the capability to meet the changing needs of the Service. The proposed commission of the new service also provides an opportunity to further develop Portal technology that enables professionals in partner organisations to access appropriate information and to enable clients to contribute to their own information.
- 1.11 It is therefore proposed that the Council commission a Social Care Management System from an external provider for a period of up to 8 years to May 2032, for an estimated value of up to £3.1m.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 IT systems are now intrinsic to the efficient delivery of high-quality services.
- 2.2 The System enables the Council to meet its Statutory obligations and continue to provide high quality services in both areas of Social Care as well as enabling Commissioning of Care Services

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 The System is not used by Sheffield citizens, it is a back-office system used to manage critical functions of the Council.  
If public facing Portal technology is introduced this will be one way of contacting the Council and consultation will take place.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

- 4.1.1 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as protected

characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership (discrimination only); pregnancy and maternity (employment only); race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

4.1.2 The project team has drafted and will regularly update an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), to ensure that any negative impacts are mitigated where necessary. This will include ensuring IT software is accessible for users and is compatible with any assistive technology users of the software may have. We will also look at including the use of plain language to mitigate any barriers for those using assistive technology or those where English may be a second language. It is paramount that IT changes made do not result in users being prevented from accessing services. We will also adopt ethical procurement standards as part of our tendering process.

4.1.2 The project will adhere to GDPR standards as we recognise the importance of this when retaining information about our residents of Sheffield. We also recognise this may affect some groups more than others, such as those who are known to us through safeguarding services.

#### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 The current contract is over the 5+2 year term and ends on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024. All permitted extensions have been utilised therefore a new contract is required. Due to the proposed cost a new contract will be required to comply with Council Standing Orders and the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

4.2.2 The current budget for Liquid Logic, held within ICT and Digital Services is approx. £225k per year. The new contract is expected to cost approx. £100k more than this per annum, largely due to additional hosting capacity, infrastructure improvements, plus inflationary uplifts.

4.2.3 For 24/25 the additional cost will be mitigated within the ICT and Digital Services application budget by savings expected on other core ICT applications. From 25/26, the pressure will need to be considered by both Adults and Children's Directorates as part of Business Planning.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Council has a variety of powers and duties in relation to the care of adults and children under legislation including the Care Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989.

4.3.2 The commissioning of the services in this report will go some way to incidentally fulfilling these powers and duties.

4.3.3 The contracting arrangements proposed in this report are permitted by the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 The main impact on CO2 emissions arises from Data Centre processing. There are only a handful of suppliers in the market, and as such we would not expect there to be a significant difference in carbon footprint. We will review climate implications at the point of tendering with the third party.  
As this will be a contract for IT software rather than service delivery the CO2 emissions will be minimal as the software will be managed remotely and periodic account meetings typically via internet and occasionally face to face.

#### 4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 None.

### 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

#### 5.1 **Do nothing.**

The Council requires a Case Management System for Social Care to deliver statutory services. Do nothing means that the current contract ends on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and there will be no software provision. This is not a viable option – the council must have a system in place to execute its duties.

#### 5.2 **Develop our own system.**

This would be a significant undertaking, requiring skills and resources that the Council does not have. Those resources would have to be retained for future updates and functional changes as statutory requirements and business needs changed.

The Council would also have to consider storage and retention of data. Security and role-based access would need to be managed.

#### 5.3 **Further extend existing contracts.**

This is not an option as all available contract extensions have been utilised.

### 6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 This commissioning decision will enable the Council to commence Commercial activity for a new contract commencing from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024 for a maximum duration of 8 years.

- 6.2 This commission will also ensure:

- The continuance of a software solution to manage the Council's key Line of Business System for Social Care.
- The Council meets its statutory duties.
- Back-office functions can continue.



## Climate Change Impact Assessment Summary

<b>Project/Proposal Name</b>	Commission of Social Care Case Managemen
<b>Committee</b>	Education, Children and Families
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for All
<b>Date CIA Completed</b>	06/03/24

<b>Project Description and CIA Assessment Summary</b>	<p>System C provide the current Social Care Man System (LAS) and the Childrens System (LCS) al (ContrOCC). The system is hosted by the suppli The system is accessed by Social Care Services 70 services.</p> <p>The contract expires in May 2024, at which poi external supplier for the provision a Social Care extend, meaning that the Council must procur The current System is hosted by System C, and System C have signed up to the Network Net Z We would expect the provider (in a small and r the basis of a like for like replacement, which is</p>
<b>Rapid Assessment</b>	Does the project or proposal have an impact in sections you have selected here in the assessm
<b>Buildings and Infrastructure</b>	No
<b>Transport</b>	No
<b>Energy</b>	Yes
<b>Economy</b>	No

[Chesterfield Borough Council Climate Impact Assessment Tool provided inspi](#)

<b>Portfolio</b>	People
<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Dawn Dale
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Dominic Sleath
<b>CIA Author</b>	Dominic Sleath
<b>Sign Off/Date</b>	

agement System (the Liquidlogic system). The software consists of the Adults along with an Early Help Module (EHM) as well as a finance system in their data centres.

s for Adults and Children and is used by over 3,000 Council Officers, covering

nt the Council will be required to enter into a new agreement with an Management System. There is no provision within the existing contract to e a System.

the power consumption to do this has carbon footprint implications.

ero Community and have formulated a Carbon Reduction Plan.

monopolistic market) to share similar aspirations. We have judged this CIA on

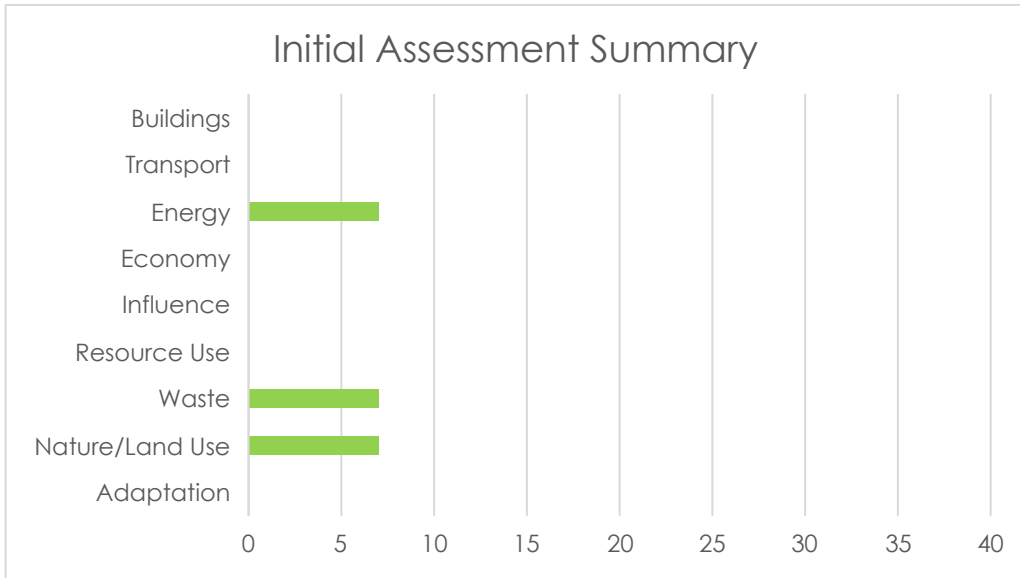
unlikely to make significant improvements to CO2 emissions

n the following areas? Select all those that apply. Only complete the

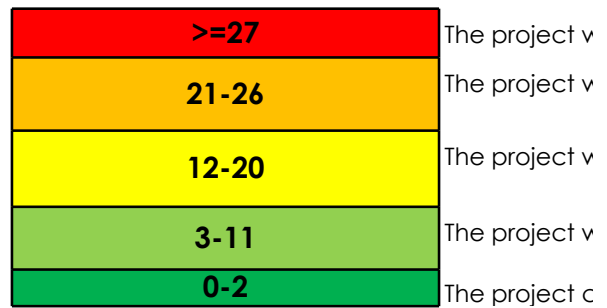
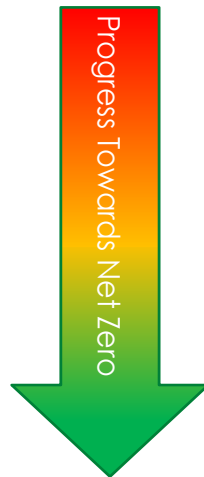
<b>Influence</b>	No
<b>Resource Use</b>	No
<b>Waste</b>	Yes
<b>Nature/Land Use</b>	Yes
<b>Adaptation</b>	No

[ration for this tool.](#)

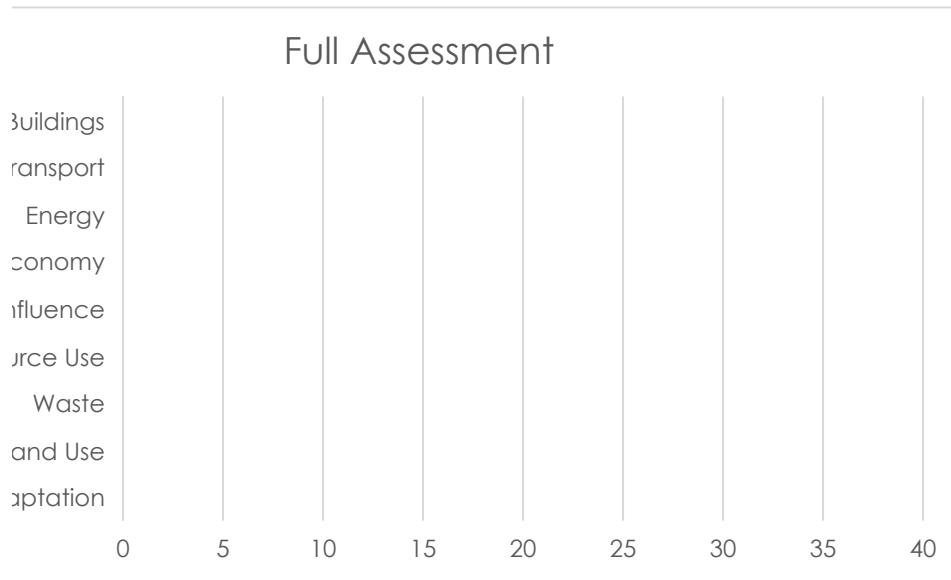
## Initial Assessment Summary



## Full Asse



## Assessment Summary



will increase the amount of CO<sub>2</sub>e released compared to before.

will maintain similar levels of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions compared to before.

will achieve a moderate decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions compared to before.

will achieve a significant decrease in CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions compared to before.

can be considered to achieve net zero CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.

## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Commission of Social Care Case Management System

**EIA ID:** 2566

**EIA Author:** Dominic Sleath

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**Proposal Outline:** In 2017 the Council Carried out a procurement exercise to replace its Social Care System. The Liquidlogic system was selected. The contract had a term of 5 years with the option to extend by 2 years. This option was exercised in 2022. The service will come to an end on 4th May 2024. That the Policy Committee approves the commission of a Social Care Case Management System from an external provider for a period of up to 8 years and estimated value of £2.5 million.

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**Proposal Type:** Budget

**Entered on QTier:** No

**QTier Ref:** #

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**Year Of Proposal:** 24/25

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Meredith Dixon-teasdale

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**Service Area:** TBD

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**EIA Start Date:** 30/01/2024

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**Lead Equality Objective:** Break the cycle and improve life chances

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**Equality Lead Officer:** Bashir Khan

## Decision Type

Committees:

Policy Committees

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio:

Adults and Childrens Social Care - TBD

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EIA is cross portfolio:

Yes

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EIA is joint with another organisation:

No

## Overview of Impact

Overview Summery:

As this is a system replacement project, we must ensure that during requirements gathering, development, testing and training accessibility is given due consideration. As part of any procurement exercise, the preferred supplier must adhere to a range of non-functional requirements and standards relating accessibility and compatibility with assisted technology. For our own staff, it is important that any replacement software remains accessible and accommodates system

- users with specific requirements. This should be a continuation (and hopefully enhancement) of current standards. It is important that a comprehensive support package is offered to staff to ensure they can effectively use the system. The project team will listen to feedback during user acceptance testing, and seek to address user experience issues should they be raised. We shall also seek to provide additional/tailored training to users with specific system issues when required. For the public, it is also not envisaged that there would or should be significant customer facing changes. We will however, test user experience before the system go-live, to ensure the system is accessible and can be navigated by the user. The project team will also explore modifications if issues arise. The system may in the future offer portal technology for online interaction. We will ensure that other channels remain

available, such as telephone contact, so that citizens can continue to access services and do not become a victim of digital exclusion. We will look closely at user accessibility issues including the use of plain language to mitigate any barriers (ie those using assisted technology or those where English may be a second language). It is paramount that IT changes made do not result in users being prevented from accessing services. As a final comment, we will also adopt ethical procurement standards as part of our tendering process.

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**Impacted characteristics:**

- Care Experienced
- Carers
- Disability
- Health
- Age
- Other

**Consultation and other engagement**

**Cumulative Impact**

**Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:**

No

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**Impact areas:**

**Initial Sign-Off**

**Full impact assessment required:**

No

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**Review Date:**

30/01/2024

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan:

Action plan evidence:

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures:

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date:

30/01/2024





## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Isobel Fisher,  
Assistant Director, Children & Families

**Tel:** 07557755548

**Report of:** Meredith Dixon-Teasdale, Strategic Director of Children's Services

**Report to:** Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

**Date of Decision:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Subject:** Review of fostering payments

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA	2507	
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>		

### Purpose of Report:

As part of our sufficiency strategy, Sheffield City Council are committed to expanding our in-house fostering service whilst continuing to work in partnership with the independent fostering sector. To be able to operate competitively Sheffield City Council need be able to pay allowances in recognition of the need to recruit and retain experienced carers able to commit to the varied challenges of the fostering task. The fostering payment scheme is a reflection of the real need within Sheffield City Council to retain skilled and experienced carers and reward carers for their loyalty and commitment.

**Recommendations:**

We recommend that the Committee

1. Agree the Policy on payments for Foster Carers
2. Approve the variation of payments as proposed

**Background Papers:**

None

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Information about payments to in-house foster carers 2023/24

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
		Legal: <i>Patrick Chisholm</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
		Climate: <i>Kathryn Warrington</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Isobel Fisher</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Assistant Director, Children &amp; Families</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>1/2/24</i>	

## 1. PROPOSAL

1.1 As corporate parents our key priorities are;

- Children and young people are nurtured by carers and workers who are well-resourced, valued and supported.
- Carers feel supported and skilled to provide stability for young people through difficult times.

We recognise;

- that high quality local foster care is crucial to achieve better outcomes for children and young people and increased placement stability and choice.
- the skills, experience and commitment of foster carers caring for children and young people
- the role foster carers play in working with families in partnership with SCC

The principles behind the proposed foster care payment scheme long-term are:

- It is simple, fair and easy to understand. This needs to be clearly articulated
- It enables Sheffield City Council to be competitive with local independent fostering agencies and other local authorities.
- It recognises the complex task of fostering other people's children.
- The care payment will meet the Department for Education's national minimum fostering allowance.

The budget setting process is managed in such a way that increases in spend are anticipated and managed.

1.2 To align with our strategic intent and in order to maximise foster carer recruitment and maintain and maximise our current foster carer cohort we propose:

1. We ensure our foster care payments reflect the council priorities on improving education outcomes
2. We review foster care sundries to ensure they remain appropriate and incorporate them to the allowance to ensure simplicity of payment
3. From 2025/6 sundry payments are increased in line with the annual increase to National Minimum Allowances.
4. Level one Skills allowances are not paid until after the foster carers first annual review and completion of National Minimum standards.
5. The levels of Skills payments are not increased at present but are reviewed every two years from 1/4/24 to ensure that Sheffield City Council Offer remains competitive within the market.
6. There is a bonus paid to new foster carers upon first placement post approval and upon completion of the Fostering National Standards within 12 months.

### 1.3 **Sundry payments**

Currently Sheffield pays a range of annual additional payments which cover Birthdays, Celebrations, Holidays, School Uniform, additional clothing, equipment. Although we have increased the fostering allowance and fostering skill payments, we have not increased our sundry payments since 2013. Additional mileage allowance increased from 33p to 45p a mile.

The Fostering Maintenance Allowance is subject to annual review in line National Minimum Allowance as prescribed by Government

To meet our strategic objective of simplified payments, we will wherever possible, simplify the basic allowance and make it all-inclusive to covers all essential day to day costs of caring for a child rather than carers having to negotiate reimbursement of certain costs. This is compatible with payments run by independent agencies. There is now an expectation that carers will budget and manage their money as they do for their own families.

We propose that birthday and cultural celebration allowances increase in line with the uplift in Fostering Maintenance allowance year on year. For 24/25, the additional cost would be £6,000 for birthday and cultural celebrations, and £4,500 to uplift clothing and uniform allowances (paid in emergencies to foster carers).

### 1.4 **Settling in Allowance**

As a result of moving, Discretionary Allowances can be agreed by SFM fostering of no more that £250 to cover emergency clothing or celebration. Expenses can be paid if a child/young person is placed within 3 months before celebrations with the maximum amount of £250 paid if the young person is place in the month of the celebration. This amount would vary depending on when the young person moved in. As an example for a December cultural celebration, we would provide a maximum of October £100, November £175, December £250. The use of a discretionary clothing allowance is already in existence, and using the placement moves from 22/23 as a benchmark we anticipate that this policy will cost no more than £10,000.

### 1.5 **Promoting Education Allowance**

As corporate parents we are unwavering in our commitment to our looked after children's education. In order to do this, we want to support and encourage our foster cares to take holidays in the school holidays. An additional holiday Incentive payment of £250 will added to the current holiday allowance for carers who take their children on holiday in school holidays. There will be no holiday allowance paid to foster carers who remove children from school in term time to take them on holiday.

## 1.6 Technology Support

All secondary school age children should have access to the internet and a basic laptop for homework and communication. It is very rare as a result of working between virtual school, schools and work with foster carers that young people do not have access to a laptop. In order to meet our ambitions for education for all looked after children we propose an allowance to provide equipment for young people who do not have access to their own equipment or to replace equipment which is more than 3 years old of a value up to £500. This will be formalising our current practice, and because of whole of city working for our young people, recent data does not indicate that this will impact very many young people.

## 1.7 Sleeping in allowance

A small number of short-break foster carers receive a sleep-in allowance when the child they care for short breaks requires significant overnight support. It is proposed that this sleep-in allowance is increased to the amount paid to employees of Sheffield City Council who receive a sleep-in allowance- currently £37.00. This would only apply to carers who were providing a short break and not long-term foster carers.

## 1.8 Skill Payments

Our Foster Carer payment scheme also includes a skills payment. The level of fee payment relates to the carers experience and amount of training undertaken and is paid in recognition of the fact that Sheffield City Council needs to be able to have a pool of experienced and well-trained carers able to meet the needs of our children in care.

Foster carers, apart from those that are coming forward to be assessed in relation to specific children, are required to undertake a comprehensive preparation training and assessment process to equip them for the fostering task in line with the requirements under Standard 13 of the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011.

In 2019, a significant overall review of skills payments was undertaken.

1. Payments were significantly increased (see appendix 1).
2. Skills rates were now paid equally per child - Previously rates had been reduced for second and subsequent placements.
3. it was decided to pay the foster skills payment to carers who have successfully undertaken the full recruitment, preparation and approval process.

By way of example of the impact of those changes, for a foster family at level one, who had 2 children, their skills pay increased in 2019/20 by 62%.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 newly approved carers will not be paid a skills allowance until they have completed their fostering standards AND had

their first review. We propose to replace this with a bonus when foster carers take their first child/placement of £1,000 and a second bonus of £1,500 if they complete their fostering standards within 12 months. The Skills payment levels will be subject to review every 2 years (from 1/4/24) to ensure the authority remains competitive- but we note that the increase in skills payment in 2019 was significant, and above inflation. Therefore, the review will not be a commitment to increase in skills payments.

The impact of this in terms of cost is variable as the number of approvals varies. Using 23/24 approvals of 16 foster carers we would not pay £124k in skills fee but would instead pay £40k in bonus. Leaving a net reduction in spend of £84k.

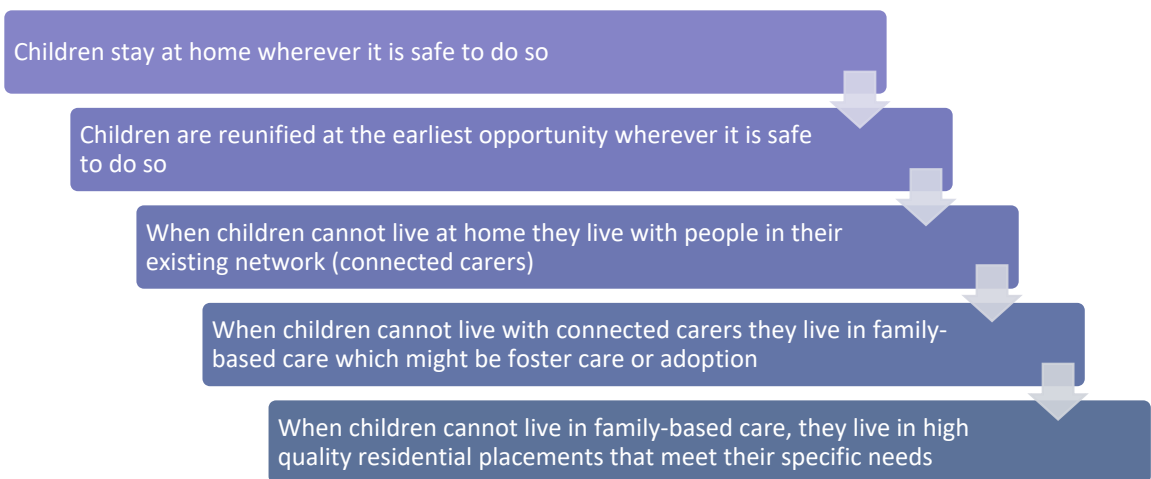
## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

2.1 Central to our Council Plan is Children. We as a city are committed to ensuring that Sheffield is *'a place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future'*

Committee endorsement of the proposal will allow Children and Families to respond to the need to have sufficient foster carers for our young people in particular to the Council plan:

1. Relentlessly promoting education outcomes for looked after Children through providing a holiday allowance that is suitable for taking children away in school holidays
2. Maintaining and growing our inhouse foster carers which will Supporting our looked after children who are placed in foster carer to belong in their communities rather than having children placed out of city
3. Together we get things done: we want to work with our current foster carers to have a clear communication plan for the review of foster carer payments, so that we are clear and foster carers can readily understand their payments and any review process

The review of payments align to our key principles in managing demand and sufficiency in Sheffield as outlined in the diagram below



2.2 Committee endorsement will also allow Children and Families in to progress the response to the sufficiency challenge in particular:

- Changing demographics of children in care
- Increasing complexity of children and young people
- Rising placement costs
- Increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
- National shortage of foster carers leading to increasing numbers of children in residential placements

### 3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 This decision does not require formal consultation. However, we have a range of methods of consulting with foster carers throughout the year. These include

1. Annual Foster carer survey
2. Regular face to face meetings and events with Assistant Director and Service Manager participation
3. Foster carer voices group who feedback directly to the LA
4. Feedback from supervising social workers to management of individual feedback from foster carers

### 4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

#### 4.1 Equality Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Also identified and considered is care experience which is now treated as a protected characteristic in Sheffield.

- 4.1.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and has identified that the changes to the way that we pay our foster carers will impact our foster carers and young people in a range of ways. As of 1/2/24 there are 679 looked after children in Sheffield and 314 of these have a foster placement within Sheffield via the Local Authority. 22/23 data shows that 36% of our looked after children live outside of Sheffield, and therefore outside of their community. In 22/23 65% of looked after children were in a foster placement, compared to 70% nationally.

To provide the right number and type of homes for children and young people the CLA population are monitored to ensure we can meet their varying needs as best as possible, eg identifying and recruiting family based carers from a variety of different backgrounds. In order to do this it is vital that the amount that foster carers are remunerated is sufficient and that the way of communicating how foster carers are paid is clear, transparent and easy to understand so that we can maximise the number of new foster carers that we recruit and also maintain our current cohort of foster carers

- 4.1.3 Education

Looked after children have worse educational outcomes than their non-looked after peers. The promoting of a school holiday allowance will increase all foster carers holiday allowances by £250 per child as long as this is taken during school holidays will support children to better achieve educational outcomes.

The provision of a laptop wherever young people do not have access through the virtual school/their education setting as a policy decision will also have a positive impact on children who are care experienced to give them the best opportunity for education outcomes.

- 4.1.4 Level one Skills allowances are not paid until after the foster carers first annual review and completion of National Minimum standards.

In 2019 Sheffield allowed new foster carers to have their skills payment before they had completed their national minimum standard. We are proposing that this decision is reversed from the 1/4/24 to any new foster carer who makes an enquiry and begins the process. This decision will have a negative financial impact on new foster carers financially who have not yet completed their National Minimum Standards.



This immediate payment of skills payments has resulted in two unintended consequences:

- Firstly, it appears to have demotivated carers to complete the Fostering Standards work in a timely manner, meaning that our foster carers are not getting the skills training as swiftly as they did in the past. This training is critical in supporting the challenging situations that foster carers can face supporting our children
- Secondly it is resulting in significant long term increased spend in situations where connected carers are approved for a short period whilst long terms plans are agreed for children. This creates a massive financial disparity for connected carers in very similar situations.

In order to mitigate the impact we are proposing two new bonuses. £1,000 upon a new foster carers first placement, and £1,500 upon completion of the fostering standards withing 12 months

This will have a positive impact on care experienced children, as having skilled foster carers increases their ability to meet the complex needs of our children.

- 4.1.5 Simplifying foster carer payments and increasing sundry payments in line with the annual fostering payment increase.

#### Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The impact of the proposed changes to allowances is estimated below .

##### **Removal of Skill Payments and Introduction of Year 1 Bonuses.**

To standardise practice with other LA's and Independent Agencies, the payment of a skills payment as soon as a placement has been arranged will be stopped, for all new foster carers from April 2024. Eligibility for skills payments will begin in year 2.

- 4.2.2 Based on the number of new foster carers in 23/24, and assuming a similar level is approved in 24/25, this policy change we would avoid skill payments of £124k.

Instead, a bonus scheme will be introduced, offering a £1,000 payment upon agreement of a first placement. A further £1,500 payment would be made to foster carers completing their Foster Care Standards (training) within 12 months.

Again, based on an assumed 16 new starters, who all agreed placements and completed their training within 12 months, this would cost approx. £40k. If a foster carer chose to take longer to complete their Standards, they would not receive the £1,500 bonus.

- 4.2.3 **Uplifting Sundry Payment by NMA %**

To increase the birthday and celebration allowances, and the uniform/clothing allowances by the same percentage as the National Minimum Allowance uplift

(6.88%) will cost an estimated £8,500 for 24/25, based on the number of current carers claiming these payments, and the current age of children and young people in foster care.

- 4.2.4 To increase the sleep-in allowance for all our current short breaks foster carers who are eligible to receive this payment will cost £1,500 for 24/25.
- 4.2.5 **Introduction of School Holiday Incentive**  
The proposal to introduce an additional payment of £250 for foster carers who opt to take their holiday during school breaks, could cost up to £57k. This has been estimated based on our current numbers and assumes all existing foster carers opted to take up this offer.
- 4.2.6 **Technology Support Fund**  
A fund will be set aside to ensure children in foster care have access to a laptop/tablet. A max of £500 per child/YP could be paid. It is anticipated there will not be many children who do not currently have such access, so provision of £5,000 is proposed.
- 4.2.7 **Settling In Allowance**  
A discretionary fund will be set aside to ensure children/young people are suitably provided for upon moving into a new foster placement. A maximum payment of £250 could be made subject to approval of the Senior Fieldwork Manager in Fostering. The estimated cost of this based on 23/24 is £10,000.
- 4.2.8 The overall impact of the proposed changes to the fostering allowances is neutral. (see table below)

Removal of Skills Fee	-124,000
Foster Bonus	40,000
Sundry Uplift	10,500
Sleeping in Allowance for Short breaks foster carers	1,500
School Holiday Incentive	57,000
Technology Support Fund	5,000
Settling in Allowance	10,000
Total	-0

The revised allowances, after accounting for the NMA uplifts to maintenance payments and sundry allowances are as follows:

Weekly payment for foster carers (excluding skills payment and including the 6.88% uplift)

2024/25 Costs	0-5	5-10	11-15	16+
Weekly Payments				
Maintenance Allowance per week	170	187	213	249
Annual Payments				
Birthday Allowance per year	139	160	235	289
Festival Allowance per year	139	160	235	289
School Holiday Allowance	505	540	695	755

Holiday payments would continue to be paid separately.

The revised weekly maintenance rate per age group would be as follows:

	0-5	5-10	11-15	16+
Maintenance Payments@ 24-25 Rates	175	193	222	260

### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 Local Authorities are required to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for Children in Care within their local area. In 2010 the Statutory Guidance for the sufficiency duty was issued. This guidance is explicit in placing a duty on Local Authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring they include in relevant commissioning strategies their plans for meeting the sufficiency duty.

The sufficiency duty is a measure, which is part of a broad suite of guidance, and legislative provisions introduced to improve outcomes for children in care. Local Authorities should consider the sufficiency duty in tandem with their duties towards children within their area under S17(1), 20, 21, 22C and 23 of the Children Act 1989.

Section 22G Children Act 1989 also imposes a duty on local authorities to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the local authority is able to provide looked after children with accommodation within the authority's area that meets the needs of those children, where circumstances are such that it would be consistent with the children's welfare for them to be provided with accommodation.

In taking steps to secure the provision of accommodation, the local authority must have regard to the benefit of having a sufficient number of accommodation providers in their area and a sufficient range of accommodation in their area capable of meeting different needs.

A failure to meet the general sufficiency duty could result in a legal challenge which could have significant costs implications.

Ensuring that our in house foster carers are appropriately remunerated is critical to our sufficiency duty in so much as

- It will increase the likelihood of foster carers choosing Sheffield as their provider of choice
- It will support the retention of our current foster carer cohort

4.3.2 The proposal is to commence in April 2024. Any increase to sundry payments, and school holiday pay would be put in place from the 1/4/24. However, any person/s who is currently in assessment (not enquiry stage) as a foster carer would not have the skill payment removed from them. This policy change therefore has no direct legal implications as it is a change in policy for new prospective carers rather than the current cohort.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 No direct climate implications arise from this report. The Sustainability and Climate Change Team has been consulted and are in agreement no further action is required on CIA.

#### 4.5 Other Implications

There are no specific other implications for this report

### 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

#### 5.1 **Do nothing**

Our current pay for foster carers puts us as competitive against our regional neighbours. However:

- Foster cares feel undervalued by the Local Authority and resign.
- Negotiation regarding fostering allowances take place on an annual basis – leading to confusion and dissatisfaction.
- Our current policy does not champion our strategic commitments to education and belonging
- Paying skills payment before a foster carer has completed their training has led to
  - demotivated cares to complete the Fostering Standards work in a timely manner, meaning that our foster carers are not getting the skills training as swiftly as they did in the past. This training is critical in supporting the challenging situations that foster carers can face supporting our children
  - Secondly it is resulting in significant long term increased spend in situations where connected carers are approved for a short period

whilst long terms plans are agreed for children. This creates a massive financial disparity for connected carers in very similar situations.

This option has been discounted

5.2 **Increase all skills payments by the same percentage as the annual fostering national minimum allowance**

Our current skills payments are made per child and are competitive against our regional local authorities. Increasing skills payments by 6.8% would cost £175,200.

Fees were increased considerably in 2019, and the decision to pay the full amount per child rather than providing foster carers with a reduction in payment for subsequent children was also introduced.

Increasing the skills fee annually given this significant increase in recent years does not represent good value for money for the council and therefore has been discounted.

**6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers 2023 – 2026 will ensure the Council has set out its commitment in line with its duty to ensure that there is a range of sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care.

Reviewing the foster carer payments is a key part of this strategy to ensure that we maximise family based care for children in Sheffield.

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# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Fostering Service

Information about payments to  
In-house foster carers  
2023/24

**Foster  
Sheffield's  
Future**



[www.sheffield.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/fostering)

Fostering Service  
Level 7, East Wing  
Moorfoot  
Young Street  
Sheffield  
S1 4LP

0114 27 34941



This document is to give you an overview of payments that are made to you as a foster carer. This document will be reviewed annually by Sheffield City Council Fostering Service.

## Beginning your journey: Payments for fostering equipment

When a foster carer is first approved or subsequently approved for additional placements, they can receive a grant to assist them with the purchasing of equipment.

A **maximum grant** of £750 will be paid to foster carers caring for children under 3 years of age.

A **maximum grant** of £400 will be paid for foster carers caring for children over 3 years of age.

Equipment purchased needs to be agreed with either the assessing social worker or the allocated fostering social worker.

**No grants will exceed the maximum allowance.** The replacement of equipment is then to be budgeted from the foster carer's weekly fee.

## Looking after a foster child: The weekly fostering allowance and recommendations on how this payment should be used

The Department for Education sets out the National Minimum Allowance rates that foster carers should receive for looking after a child in their care. This national minimum allowance has been calculated by Central Government on the basis of the minimum amount that any foster carer needs to meet the cost of caring for a foster child.

In Sheffield City Council (SCC) Fostering Service, this payment is called the 'Weekly Allowance' and is in line with the Government set recommendations. Payment of this is made approximately every fortnight in arrears directly into the foster carer's bank account.

Only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Local Authority consider paying an increased Fostering Allowance, which is entirely discretionary and based on the assessed needs of the child.

The weekly 'Allowance' for 23/24

Weekly Allowance Rates		
Age	22/23	23/24
0 to 4	£141	£159
5 to 10	£156	£175
11 to 15	£177	£199
16+	£207	£233

The allowance is intended to cover the following:

- Food
- Toiletries
- Toys and play equipment



- Activities including school trips
- Clothing – see section 3
- Pocket money – see section 5
- Mobile phone top ups
- Bus fares to school
- Contribution to household costs, for example, heating, lighting
- Day to day transport, either by car or public transport
- Family day trips
- Personal allowance for children and young people to participate in hobbies and activities e.g. cinema, swimming, sport.

### Recommended Weekly Pocket Money Rates

**Pocket Money:** All school age children (5 years plus) should receive a minimum weekly pocket money payment. This should be given in cash to the child weekly or a proportion of it, with the rest saved. Pocket money is not to be confused with other expenditure given to the child for activities.

**Savings:** We encourage all young people to save money for their future as this will help them understand about money, establish independence skills, responsibility and help them in their development into adult life. We would expect that you help your child achieve this. Once a child becomes 11 years you should encourage them to start saving a regular weekly amount of their pocket money.

For children who are 11 years + and have been in your care for more than 16 weeks, you are asked to support them to open a bank account for savings. If you are finding this difficult to do, please speak with your fostering social worker or child’s social worker to help you to make this happen.

For any children in a short term or task placement, any money not given in hand will be saved and recorded. The child will then take this money with them when they move on from the placement.

Age:	Pocket money :
5	£2.50
6	£3.00
7	£3.50
8	£4.00
9	£4.50
10	£5.00
11	£6.00
12	£7.00
13	£8.00
14	£9.00
15	£10.00
16+	£15.00

Age:	Minimum Savings:
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	£1.00
12	£1.00
13	£2.00
14	£2.50
15	£3.50
16+	£5.00

\*Please note that Sheffield City Foster Carers looking after a child aged 16 – 18 years currently receive a 16+ allowance of £35.00 per week; £15.00 pocket money and also an allowance of £20.00 to contribute towards the cost of a travel pass and/or any additional requirements as your child develops into independence. This allowance should be discussed at placement planning/pathway planning as to how this is to be paid and used by the young person. We would expect carers to top up where appropriate. Some young people in College may also receive an Educational Maintenance Allowance.

For young people who remain in your care post 18 years, they are entitled to support from the Leaving Care Team and can remain with you under Staying Put arrangements. If this applies to a child in your care, please speak with your fostering social worker who can arrange a meeting with you and the Supported Lodgings coordinator to discuss the package of support that you will be entitled to within this arrangement.

### Extra Curriculum Activities

Sheffield City Council is keen to encourage all children in care to experience a wide range of extra curriculum activities. This can for example include, sport, music, dance lessons. Foster carers will generally be expected to fund such activities from the weekly allowance. All foster carers are expected to promote activities. In exceptional circumstances requests can be submitted to the Fostering Service Manager in relation to financial contribution to activities that have a high cost. These cases will be looked at individually and a contribution may be made. Support carers may be able to request a reasonable sum, for weekend activities.

### Annual payments: holiday, birthday and cultural celebration grants

Holiday	
Age	
0 to 4	£255
5 to 10	£290
11 to 15	£445
16+	£505

Birthday	
Age	
0 to 4	£130
5 to 10	£150
11 to 15	£220
16+	£270

Cultural Celebration	
Age	
0 to 4	£130
5 to 10	£150
11 to 15	£220
16+	£270

***\*These payments are in relation to the child and will be paid annually.***

Holiday payments will be made in June. The holiday payment is used to fund a holiday for the child or pay for alternative extra curriculum activities e.g. over the summer holidays.

Birthday payments will be paid within 1 month prior to the child's birthday. Birthday payments would cover the cost of a young person's present and may also pay for a party. It is acknowledged that young people are unique and what this money contributes towards will be different based on the needs of that child.

The annual cultural celebration payment can be utilized in line with other cultural celebrations at the request of the foster carer in consultation with the fostering social worker but will only be paid once each year and cannot exceed the amount specified.

### Transport Costs

The weekly fostering allowance contains a transport element for day to day journeys e.g. local appointments, day trips, car parking. Exceptions to this will be:

- Regular contact
- School journeys (outside the usual catchment area)
- Other journeys as agreed by the supervising social worker e.g. daily hospital visits, long distance journeys for contact
- Introductions to a new placement/adoption
- Training

**The current rate is 45p per mile.**

### Clothing

An initial clothing allowance is **not paid automatically**. Expenditure will be discussed with the fostering social worker when a child is first placed. Expenditure is then agreed by the Team Manager and approved by the Fostering Service Manager. The **maximum** payment any foster carer will receive in relation to clothing is:

Clothing	
Age	
0 to 4	£100
5 to 10	£150
11 to 15	£200
16+	£250

This payment is only paid when the child/young person is first admitted in to care. The purchasing of additional clothes is then to be budgeted from the weekly allowance.

**Allowances for school uniform:** can be negotiated when a child is first accommodated or when a new placement necessitates a change of school. This will need discussion with the fostering social worker and is not automatically paid. The maximum payment any foster carer will receive in relation to purchasing school uniforms is:

Uniform	
Age	
5 - 10	£100
11 - 16	£175

The further replacement and purchasing of school uniform is the responsibility of the foster carer and should be budgeted from the weekly allowance.

### **Foster Carer ‘skill level fees’: What this means, how it is paid, and how to progress on your fostering journey**

In addition to the weekly allowance for looking after a child in your care, a fostering agency can also pay a skill level fee payment on top of the allowance to recognise a foster carers’ time, skills and experience. In Sheffield City Council, we call this the ‘Skill Level Fee’.

Every foster carer will have been assessed against the Skill Levels criteria, (see appendix 2). A newly approved foster carer will generally be a Skill Level 1 foster carer and can progress as they develop their skills on their fostering journey. The following weekly payments are made in relation to foster carer’s Skill Level and this payment is only made when you have a child in placement.

*\*This payment has been reviewed in 2019, and is now made for every looked after child in placement.*

<b>Age Banded Skill Level Fee per week (paid per child) (Revised April 2019)</b>			
	<b>Age 0 - 4</b>	<b>Age 5 - 7</b>	<b>Age 8+</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	£125	£150	£185
<b>Level 2</b>	£190	£190	£200
<b>Level 3</b>	£210	£210	£210

### **Holiday entitlement and payments**

In Sheffield City Council we are proud that our foster carers act as good parents and wherever possible take children in their care on holidays with them to give them opportunities, fun and new experiences in the same way they would their own children. However there are circumstances when this is not possible, and because of this, foster carers can access up to 14 nights paid holiday per year, i.e. when the foster carer has a holiday without the child and the child is placed with an alternative foster carer or extended fostering family member.

The foster carer will continue to receive their Skill Level payment (i.e. fee) for those 14 days. The foster carer will **not** receive the weekly allowance fee (i.e. the allowance to meet the costs of the child in their care) as this allowance will follow the child.

#### **Please Note:**

It is really important that foster carers planning a holiday without a child who is placed in their care first have a discussion with the fostering social worker **before booking.** This is to ensure that this provision can be provided at that time. We would encourage carers not to take holiday at significant times e.g. child’s birthday, Christmas, significant times of contact.

## Sheffield City Council approved Foster Carers providing holiday care:

The current arrangement for foster carers providing holiday care for children is that they receive the same allowance as 'Family Support Carers,' which comprises the child's weekly allowance and payment of £125, (see section below, "Family Support providing holiday care"). This has been reviewed and from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020 holiday payment will be made up of the carer's skill level fee and the child's weekly allowance and will be paid pro rata. The payment for holiday care is made directly to the foster carer providing the holiday care and comprises of their current skill level fee and the child's weekly allowance (See allowances and fees).

If you are a foster carer who has been approved as a "holiday/support" carer at Skills Level 1 and you are wanting to progress through the skills level, you should speak with your social worker about how you can evidence your skill level progression as you journey through your fostering career. This should be evidenced within your personal development plan, and could include training, attendance at support groups, experience of caring for a range of children with varying complexity of needs, and involvement in the fostering task. We value all our foster carers, and know that here in Sheffield City, many of our holiday/support carers go on to have a long and varied career within fostering; providing a range of placements from holiday care, support care, task centred placements and permanency for many of our children and we welcome you in this fostering journey.

### Family Support providing "holiday care"

In Sheffield City Council we realise there are circumstances where a carer may take a holiday without the child/ren by utilising their own extended family/support network (i.e. stays with a grandparent, auntie etc). We acknowledge that this maintains a 'normal' family experience for that child. In line with best practice, a placement meeting will be held involving the carer, child's social worker, fostering social worker and support carer to draw up an agreed support plan in respect of this holiday care, and agree delegation of responsibility to the foster carer. In this situation, the payment will be made directly to the approved main foster carer to fund this provision.

Family Support Care		
Age	P/Wk 22/23	P/Wk 23/24
0 to 4	£266	£284
5 to 10	£281	£300
11 to 15	£302	£324
16 +	£332	£358

*\*In both circumstance, these breaks will be included within the 14 night allowance and must be agreed with the child's social worker and fostering social*

## **Additional placement support provision: Support Care**

The Fostering Service acknowledges that there will be exceptional circumstances when additional support (i.e. 'Support Care') needs to be negotiated due to the needs of the child/ren within your placement. We thank you for your resilience and ongoing commitment to fostering during these difficult times. There may be occasions when the Fostering Service advocates for this support which might be against your wishes, but this is to support you, your family and the children in your care. There may be occasions when you have discussed the difficulties with your worker and requested this support yourself, and this is okay too.

The Service will work alongside you, together with the Child's Social Worker, Fostering Team Manager and Service Manager to agree a support plan. This will be reviewed as part of your Fostering Annual Review and Child's Statutory Review process. Support Care will not impact on your skills and allowances as the main carers and **will not** be considered as part of your 14 day holiday entitlement.

Carers providing the support care will receive a skill based fee and child allowance which is paid pro rata

## **Day Care**

Foster carers who provide day care for other foster children will receive a standard payment. This is dependent on the duration of the care provided and will be paid at an hourly rate of £4.50 per child.

## **Retainer payments**

In exceptional circumstances a retainer fee may be paid to the foster carer. These will be discussed with the carer and fostering social worker as part of the team around the placement planning, and must be approved by the Team Manager and Service Manager. Retainer fees are paid at £125

These payments will be monitored and reviewed on an agreed time limited period only, by the Fostering Service Manager

## **Out of Hours**

For out of hour's provision an availability fee of £125 will be paid per week. If a child is placed during this time, an allowance and skill fee will be paid and the availability fee will cease.

\*Please see appendix - "Expectations of out of hours foster carer"

## **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) / Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

DLA can only be claimed for children under 16 - anyone over 16 must apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

You are expected to administer the DLA/PIP to promote the welfare of the child and to assist their care. Where possible, it should be paid in to a dedicated bank account in the name of the child.

The child's social worker is responsible for the oversight of its use in partnership with the foster carer and may take a more direct role in administering the account.

Any surplus that is built up remains the property of the child and goes with the child when they leave the placement.

Any mobility allowances should be spent to promoting the child's mobility, for example, taxi fares, bus passes.

This is not a SCC allowance but relates to child's additional needs as a result of their disability. If you feel that the child you are caring for meets the criteria for this allowance you should speak to the child's social work. Further information can be found as [www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children](http://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children)

## **Disability Skill Allowance**

The Fostering Service recognises the additional skills necessary to look after a child that has a disability. The following additional weekly fee payment will be made to the foster carer:

<b>Disability Skill Allowance</b>	
Lower	£20.00
Medium	£40.00
Higher	£60.00

To receive this payment the foster carer must evidence that they are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance payments and this will be reviewed on an annual basis. The payment will depend on the DLA payment and link to the level of payment DLA pay. The foster carer must also evidence that the DLA payment is being spent appropriately or saved for the child.

## **Short Breaks Scheme**

This is the support service offered to children with disabilities. Day care payments will be paid at an hourly rate up to 12 hours of £7.50.

Overnight payments will be:

<b>Short Breaks for Disabled Children Scheme (12 to 24 Hours)</b>				
	<b>0 to 4 years</b>	<b>5 to 10 years</b>	<b>11 to 15 years</b>	<b>16 years and over</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	£46.29	£48.00	£50.71	£54.00
<b>Level 2</b>	£60.57	£62.29	£65.00	£68.29
<b>Level 3</b>	£62.71	£64.43	£67.14	£70.43

***\*A waking night fee of £15 will be paid subject to Team Managers approval.***

## **Refer a Friend**

In Sheffield City Council, we know that the very best ways to recruit foster carers is through the wonderful examples of quality care that our foster carers provide to our children and evidence on a daily basis. We are really proud of you. As foster carers you know what it is that makes a good carer, and your commitment, knowledge, enthusiasm and motivation is what sets you apart.

People interested in becoming carers really want to hear and learn from you. This is also backed up by what research tells us. We need you to help us to recruit more foster carers, and to support our new carers on their learning journey in the fostering task.

In achieving this, any foster carer who refers a friend to the Fostering Service who are then subsequently approved as a Sheffield City Council foster carer, will receive a payment. The payment will be made to the referring foster carer once a child is placed with the newly approved foster carer. This must be for a full time placement. The payment will be £500.

[www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/whyfostercarerscare](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/whyfostercarerscare)-Fostering Network: Why Foster Carers Care.

## **Insurance Claims**

Foster carers will be expected to have the relevant insurance cover for any damage. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that an insurance claim can be made against SCC public liability insurance. Such claims will be considered by the Fostering Service Manager.

All foster carers, where applicable, are expected to have fully comprehensive car insurance. The insurance certificate needs to state the car is used for business use or as a foster carer. It is the foster carer's responsibility to ensure all documentation is kept up to date in relation to cars, e.g. MOT certificate and renewal of insurance. These documents must be available for the fostering social worker to check as part of the Annual Health & Safety Check.



## **Overpayments**

On occasion a foster carer may mistakenly be overpaid. It is the foster carer's responsibility to notify the Fostering Service as soon as possible. An agreement will then be made in regard to repaying the overpayment.

## **Tax, Tax-free earnings and National Insurance**

As a foster carer you are classed as self-employed for tax and national insurance purposes, so you need to register with HMRC. You may also be able to claim a range of benefits.

### **Tax exemption**

There's a fixed tax exemption of up to £10,000 per year (less if for a shorter period) which is shared equally among any foster carers in the same household. This means you do not have to pay tax on the first £10,000 income you make from fostering. You can find further information at: [www.gov.uk/foster-carers/help-with-the-cost-of-fostering](http://www.gov.uk/foster-carers/help-with-the-cost-of-fostering)

### **Tax relief**

On top of the £10,000 exemption, you also get tax relief for every week (or part week) that a child is in your care. This means you do not have to pay tax on some of your earnings over £10,000.

Age of child    Tax relief

**Under 11    £200 per child**

**Over 11    £250 per child**

### **Pensions**

If you foster, you'll be eligible for National Insurance credits, which counts towards your State Pension.

## **Appendices**

### **Out of Hours**

- Provide a 24 hour service to the Emergency Duty Service for the full age range 0 – 18yrs in order to offer placements outside of office hours.
- The expectation that you would be available to take a placement at very short notice, possibly in the middle of the night.
- Accept that information that may not be readily available at the point of placement outside of office hours
- Be able to meet the needs for children from different cultural heritages e.g. dietary requirements, skin / hair care, religious needs i.e. prayer
- Care for children and young people who are in a crisis situation and whose emotional presentation, behaviour or circumstances may be challenging.
- Be available during the daytime as children may or may not be attending school and may need to be accompanied to various appointments.
- Be available, where possible, to take a child / young person to and from school.
- Be available to accept a placement for between 72 hours and up to one week, with flexibility.

### **Parent and Baby**

- Have sufficient accommodation to accommodate a parent and baby placement.
- Understand that the legal situation / financial circumstances may be complex and variable. Both parent and baby may be looked after or it may be only the baby or only the parent.
- Have proven experience and knowledge of child development in order to support and advise appropriately the parent in the care of their child.
- Have proven experience and ability to work effectively with older young people.
- Be able to undertake and complete written assessments specific to the individual circumstances.
- Be prepared, if necessary, to give evidence in court.

## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Foster payment review

**EIA ID:** 2583

**EIA Author:** Kate Dymond

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**Proposal Outline:** To align with our strategic intent and in order to maximise foster carer recruitment and maintain and maximise our current foster carer cohort we propose: 1. We align our foster care payments with council priorities on improving education outcomes. 2. We review foster care sundries to ensure they remain appropriate and incorporate them to the allowance to ensure simplicity of payment. 3. From 2025/6 all sundry payments are increased in line with the annual increase to National Minimum Allowances. 4. Level one Skills allowances are not paid until after the foster carers first annual review and completion of National Minimum standards. 5. Skills payments are not increased at present but are reviewed every two years to ensure that Sheffield City Council Offer remains competitive within the market. 6. There is a bonus paid to new foster carers upon first placement post approval and upon completion of the Fostering National Standards within 12 months.

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 24/25

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Sally Williams

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**Service Area:** Children's

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**EIA Start Date:** 02/02/2024

Lead Equality Objective:

Break the cycle and improve life chances

Equality Lead Officer:

Bashir Khan

## Decision Type

Committees:

Policy Committees

- Education, Children & Families

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio:

Children and Families

EIA is cross portfolio:

No

EIA is joint with another organisation:

No

## Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

The proposal has been designed to meet the ongoing objectives of our sufficiency strategy, and the principles behind the proposal are:

- It is simple, fair and easy to understand. This needs to be clearly articulated
- It enables Sheffield City Council to be competitive with local independent fostering agencies and other local authorities.
- It recognises the complex task of fostering other people's children.
- The care payment will meet the Department for Education's national minimum fostering allowance. The budget setting process is managed in such a way that increases in spend are anticipated and managed. This proposal will have a positive impact on care experienced young people. It will have a positive impact on foster carers who have completed their national minimal standards. The proposed change will have an impact on on potential foster carers who will now not get level 1 skills payment until they have completed their national

minimal standards, but this will align us with other local authorities. The impact of this change is being mitigated by the provision of 2 bonuses for these carers.

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**Impacted characteristics:**

- Care Experienced
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Age
- Race

## Consultation and other engagement

## Cumulative Impact

**Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:** Yes

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**Impact areas:** Year on Year

## Initial Sign-Off

**Full impact assessment required:** Yes

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**Review Date:** 02/02/2024

## PART B - Full Impact Assessment

### Age

**Staff Impacted:**

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

20% of current approved foster carers (excluding those approved as family/friends carers) are over the age of 60. The review of Fostering payments will have a positive impact on any carer who has completed their National Minimum standards, by increasing sundry payments year on year and increasing the payment to take children on holiday during school holidays. For prospective foster carers who have not completed their level 1 national minimum standards, this proposal will align us with other regional authorities and will have a negative financial impact on those individuals. However, this is being mitigated by two bonuses £1000 for taking a first placement and £1500 for completion of Minimum standards in 12 months. Overall this will mean that Sheffield continues to be a very competitive place for financial remuneration for fostering and will therefore overall have a positive impact on making fostering age-friendly. Providing information to foster carers on payments in a clearer more consistent format will ensure that our payments are simple, fair and easy to understand for all prospective and current carers.

## Poverty & Financial Inclusion

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

The review of foster carer payments will have a positive impact on all foster carers who have completed their level one skills payment. Adding £250 per child when foster carers go on holiday in school holidays will benefit all foster carers. Reviewing sundry payments and ensuring that they are increased in line with the fostering National Minimum Allowances will benefit all foster carers. The review will have a negative impact on new foster carers who have not yet made an enquiry as they will not receive the skills payment until they have completed their Fostering Standards. Whilst it is not possible to know who will be impacted, as they have not applied yet, analysis of foster carers who have been approved to foster in since 2022 shows 36% of approved foster carers live in Band A properties, with a further 28% in Band B council tax properties. Council

Tax Valuation Bands have been shown to be a potentially useful measure of individual level socio-economic status and indicators of poverty. Over 1/3 of foster carers are therefore in households where poverty and financial inclusion are a significant factor. Upon taking their first placement they will receive £1000, and upon completing this within 12 months they will receive a £1500 bonus. By adopting a clear approach to payments from 1/4/24 it will reassure foster carers that payments and allowances will be aligned to inflation. It will also provide reassurance and clarity on the frequency of review of the skills payments, and the commitment that we will remain competitive as a fostering service Local Authority.

## Race

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** 75% of our current approved foster carers (excluding those who are friends and family carers are white british) compared to 63% of our looked after children. We are keen to encourage people from across Sheffield's diverse communities to see that fostering is a viable option for them. This proposal will support us to be competitive in terms of payments especially regionally. We have been told by our foster carers that our payments can be confusing. Providing information to foster carers on payments in a clearer more consistent format will ensure that our payments are simple, fair and easy to understand for all perspective and current carers. We are intending that this transparency will enable to to improve recruitment particularly from underrepresented communities.

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

**Outline of action plan:** To mitigate the impact of removing the skills fee for foster carers who have not yet completed the minimum standard payment we are proposing two bonuses. Firstly £1000 upon the first placement, and secondly, £1500 if they complete the standards within 12 months as is expected. In addition the additional bonuses given to foster carers as part of the review will benefit any approved foster carer in the long -term (

increased school holiday payments, increased sundry payments)

**Action plan evidence:**

Evidence used comes from data held on Foster Carers by Children and Families

**Changes made as a result of action plan:**

## Mitigation

**Significant risk after mitigation measures:** No

**Outline of impact and risks:**

## Review Date

**Review Date:** 02/02/2024





## Report to Policy Committee

**Joe Horobin/Polly McKinlay**  
 Director Integrated Commissioning/Strategic  
 Commissioning Manager

**Tel:** 07875 692402

**Report of:** Joe Horobin

**Report to:** Education, Children and Families Policy  
 Committee meeting

**Date of Decision:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Subject:** Renewal of contract with Nexus multi-academy  
 trust to deliver the Medical Needs Education  
 Service

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2618				
Has appropriate consultation taken place? None Required	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Purpose of Report:

This report sets out the proposal to re-commission the Medical Needs Education Service from an external provider. This will be for a 2-year term and with a total value of £3,347,171 over that period.

This report describes the current service provision and the background to the proposed commission of the Medical Needs Education Service.

This report sets out the need for a re-commission of the Medical Needs Education Service.

This report describes the service to be commissioned.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

- 1) Approves the commissioning of a service contract with a term of 2 years from September 2024 and a value of £3,347,171 for the provision of the Medical Needs Education Service from an external provider.

**Background Papers:**

No background papers

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Finance: Anna Beeby
		Legal: Richard Marik
		Equalities & Consultation: Bashir Khan
		Climate: Matthew Peers
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	Andrew Jones
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	Councillor Dawn Dale
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Polly McKinlay	<b>Job Title:</b> Strategic Commissioning Manager, Education
	<b>Date:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2024.	

**1. PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The Medical Needs Education Service is a well-established service which delivers education for up to (currently 100) primary and secondary pupils, the vast majority who access learning in their centre located in

Hillsborough, and around 10% who access at home. This Service is currently delivered by Nexus Multi Academy Trust at Chapel House.

- 1.2 This provision is aimed at those pupils who otherwise would not receive suitable education due to mental health or other medical health needs, This service enables the Council to meet its statutory duty under s19 Education Act 1996 to make provision for the education of pupils who are unable to access school due to illness or medical needs.
- 1.3 The service currently achieves positive outcomes for pupils, who meet targets set for their learning in the majority of cases. Attendance improves for most pupils, despite their health needs – with average attendance going from 3% to 43%. Of those who complete Y11, in 2023 94% achieved appropriate qualifications in English and Maths and 90% progressed to a post-16 education offer. Alongside learning, there is a strong focus on personal development, resilience and well-being, and pupil and family feedback show that this is highly valued, with 80% of students saying they are mostly or always happy with the provision.
- 1.4 Most pupils remain on their school roll and Nexus maintains contact with the pupil's school, with a view to reintegration if the pupil is well enough. In partnership with Commissioning and Attendance & Inclusion, work is ongoing to increase the proportion of pupils who return to school.

## **COMMISSION**

- 1.5 The Council are currently party to a contract for the delivery of the Medical Needs Education Service with Nexus Multi-academy Trust and this is due to expire on 31 August 2024.
- 1.6 The Council therefore proposes to re-commission the service from 1 September 2024 for a cost of £3,347,171 and a period of 2 years from an external provider.
- 1.7 Continuing to provide the service will enable the Council to meet its statutory duty under s19 Education Act 1996 to make provision for the education of pupils who are unable to access school due to illness or medical needs.
- 1.8 Demand for the service is growing and it has now reached maximum capacity. Therefore the service will also be extended from a capacity of 100 to 130 pupils. It is proposed that the new service will have a term of 2 years from September 2024 and a value of £3,347,171.
- 1.9 This figure includes additional funding for the expansion of the service from 100 to 130 places, at a cost of £430,000 over two years and additional funding for a prevention element of the contract at a cost of £26,250 over two years.
- 1.10 This will be mostly funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant. The

additional £430,000 funding element was agreed by Education and Skills Senior Leadership Team on 29<sup>th</sup> February and by Schools Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> February. A small sum of £26,250 over two years will come from the Exclusion Prevention budget and this will fund the prevention pilot.

- 1.11 Schools are charged for the service received by pupils at Chapel House. The age-weighted pupil unit (*AWPU*) is the basic funding that all pupils attract and which is given to schools. The Council invoices schools which have referred children to Chapel House, to claw back the *AWPU* schools have received for a child which no longer attends. It is estimated that an additional £35k per year will be clawed back through the expansion of places.

### **RATIONALE FOR EXPANSION AND REVIEW OF SERVICE**

- 1.12 In Sheffield, non-attendance at school is an issue: 7.2% of sessions were missed in HT1 2023 compared to 4.5% in HT1 2018. This picture is reflected nationally and one of the reasons behind this growth is emotionally based school avoidance, underlying which is an increasing incidence and complexity of mental health issues in children and young people. This was evidenced recently in the House of Commons Education Committee report “Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils”, September 2023.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.13 In connection to this, we are seeing an increased number of referrals (and acceptances) for the services at Chapel House, which are now under intense pressure and as a result, need to expand to accommodate up to an additional thirty children. To accommodate up to thirty additional children, two new classes will be established in the proposed service. This is what the additional £430,000 over two years will pay for.
- 1.14 The Council are also committing to undertake a review of the service, starting in April, to identify how the Council can better manage demand pressures on the service, whether it is being used for the right purposes or whether there are gaps in upstream work that could better meet needs.
- 1.15 The council also intends to establish a prevention pilot as part of the proposed service, working with selected schools to help improve the attendance of pupils who may be at risk of needing a service such as Chapel House.
- 1.16 This is intended to improve the attendance of struggling pupils, by providing them with enhanced self-esteem, increased resilience and coping mechanisms to aid anxiety. Currently, children often reach Chapel House once they have been absent from school for a long time. Identifying and working with these children earlier could help prevent them from spiralling into complete non-attendance, becoming medically

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<sup>1</sup> [Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2023/09/persistent-absence-and-support-for-disadvantaged-pupils/)

unfit for school and needing to attend Chapel House.

- 1.17 The upstream intervention pilot will work with ten students from one school each term, providing a mixture of CBT and talking therapy to build resilience, and activities such as baking to promote social skills and teamwork. The afternoons would be used for graded exposure work and 1-1 sessions, also working with family as needed to rebuild parental confidence in the school. The aim is to improve individual outcomes but also to improve the school's capacity to help future students improve their attendance.
- 1.18 This upstream intervention aspect of the service will last the duration of the service. It will cost £45k per annum (included in contract cost figures above) – or £1.5k per child. This will be partly funded from the expansion of places at Chapel House (given that the number of students increases throughout the year there is some staff capacity at the beginning of year) and partly from a contribution of £26,250 from the exclusion prevention budget, where a saving has been identified from a service being decommissioned.
- 1.19 The intention is that the upstream intervention pilot will work on a “spend to save” basis. The cost of a place to the Council at Chapel House is £8k per annum (with schools paying an additional £6k in AWPU), with average length of stay being 1.2 years. Therefore, if three children from the cohort of 30 are prevented from going to Chapel House under the upstream intervention pilot, the service balances financially as well as achieving benefits for students.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 The proposed commission is in line with the vision for high quality alternative provision described in the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (Department for Education, 2023).
- 2.2 The proposed commission is in line with commitments set by the Council within the Inclusion Strategy to identify needs and put the right support in place.
- 2.3 The proposed commission will support the ambition in the Council's 22/23 Delivery Plan for every young person in our city to get the education that they need to help them succeed, and to be safe and happy. It will also support the strategic goal laid out in the 22/23 Council's Delivery Plan for good transition support to provide young people who have additional needs with the start they need for the future they want.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 Consultation is not required as we are requesting to continue the service.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

- 4.1.1 The provision under this contract enables children and young people experiencing health or mental health issues or pregnancy to access education where they otherwise would not be able to do so.
- 4.1.2 The majority of children needing this service are unable to attend school due to mental health difficulties, and this provision will enable them to continue with their education until they are ready to return to school. Most children accessing the existing service had very low or zero attendance prior to accessing, and in almost all cases their attendance increased significantly.
- 4.1.3 About 30% children needing the service are eligible for Free School Meals, which is above the national average. By providing access to education, the service may have a positive long term impact on financial inclusion for children facing multiple disadvantages.

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 4.2.1 It is proposed that the new service will have a term of 2 years from September 2024 and a value of £3,347,171.
- 4.2.2 This figure includes additional funding for the expansion of the service from 100 to 130 places, at a cost of £430,000 over two years and additional funding for a prevention element of the contract at a cost of £26,250 over two years.

### **4.3 Legal Implications**

- 4.3.1 The Council has duty under s19 Education Act 1996 to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.
- 4.3.2 These arrangements are permitted by the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 and go some way to ensuring the Council can meet its statutory duty.

### **4.4 Climate Implications**

- 4.4.1 We encourage providers to consider the climate impacts of delivering the service (such as use of office space, staff and client travel, energy and resource use) and opportunities to increase awareness of positive climate action, and to take appropriate steps to reduce their impacts in

the delivery of the service.

- 4.4.2 Pupils will be given opportunities to engage with environmental issues. Where appropriate, pupils will be encouraged and supported to use public transport to access the provision, and active travel will be encouraged within the pastoral and well-being curriculum. The Medical Needs Education service is currently based at Hillsborough barracks, which is a relatively central position within the city and well-placed for transport links.
- 4.4.3 Targets for understanding and improving the climate impact of this provision will be included in the new contract.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Not to renew this contract. This option was rejected because it would leave the Council unable to meet statutory duties relating to pupils with medical needs that make them unable to attend school.
- 5.2 Providing the service in-house. This option was rejected as the Council does not have the expertise or staffing required for this delivery and could not mobilise this in time for the start of the contract.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Re-commissioning of the service is the preferred option as it will allow the Council to meet statutory duties in regard to providing education for children and young people with medical needs.

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## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Commission of Medical Needs Education Service

**EIA ID:** 2618

**EIA Author:** Emma Bryant

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**Proposal Outline:** To commission a Medical Needs Alternative Provision (AP) service for a two year term, in order to provide education for children unable to attend school due to medical needs.

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 24/25

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Joe Horobin (NCC)

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**Service Area:** Education

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**EIA Start Date:** 22/02/2024

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**Lead Equality Objective:** Break the cycle and improve life chances

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**Equality Lead Officer:** Bashir Khan

### Decision Type

**Committees:** Policy Committees

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio:

Integrated Commissioning

EIA is cross portfolio:

Yes

Children's Services

EIA is joint with another organisation:

No

## Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

The provision under this contract enables children and young people experiencing health or mental health issues or pregnancy to access education where they otherwise would not be able to do so. The majority of children needing this service are unable to attend school due to mental health difficulties, and this provision will enable them to continue with their education until they are ready to return to school. Most children accessing the existing service had very low or zero attendance prior to accessing, and in almost all cases their attendance increased significantly. About 30% children needing the service are eligible for Free School Meals, which is above the national average. By providing access to education, the service may have a positive long term impact on financial inclusion for children facing multiple disadvantages.

Impacted characteristics:

- Disability
- Health
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion

## Consultation and other engagement

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact: No

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Impact areas:

## Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required: No

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Review Date: 22/02/2024

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan: No mitigations needed as impact of service is positive.

Action plan evidence:

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures: No

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date: 22/02/2024

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## Report to Policy Committee

### Author/Lead Officer of Report:

Emily Ward - Commissioning Officer for Early Years and Early Help

and

Marie McGreavy - Strategic Commissioning Manager for Early Years and Early Help

**Tel:** 0114 205 3931

**Report of:** Joe Horobin, Director of Integrated Commissioning

**Report to:** Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

**Date of Decision:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Subject:** Annual update of the Building Successful Families programme

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <b>2421</b>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:				

**Purpose of Report:** *(Outline the decision being sought or proposal being recommended for approval.)*

This report is to provide an annual update to the Education, Children and Families Committee on the Building Successful Families programme, referred to nationally as the Supporting Families programme.

**Recommendations:**

*It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee*

- continues to endorse the strategic developments across the Early Help system in ensuring that Sheffield retains Earned Autonomy and continues to prioritise Early Help for children, young people, and their families.
- notes the developments and achievements within the Building Successful Families Programme over the 23/24 financial year.
- Approves the proposed financial plan for the 2024-2025 budget of the programme

**Appendix:**

Appendix 1 – the workforce table

<b>Lead Officer to complete: -</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Kayleigh Inman
	Legal: Louise Bate
	Equalities & Consultation: Bashir Khan
	Climate: Victoria Penman
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b> <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b> Briefings with the Chair, Vice Chair and Spokesperson of the Education, Children and Families Committee will be undertaken in January 2024.
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Marie McGreavy</i>
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Strategic Commissioning Manager</i>
	<b>Date:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2024

## 1. PROPOSAL / UPDATE

- 1.1 This report is to provide an annual update to the Education, Children and Families Committee on the Building Successful Families programme, which is referred to nationally as Supporting Families.
- 1.2 The national programme launched in 2012 and has continued to date with various lengths of commission. The latest commission from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is for three years between 2022 and 2025 with two key ambitions:

**1. To see vulnerable families thrive**

**2. To drive system change locally and nationally.**

- 1.3 In May 2023, the Prime Minister announced via a [Written Ministerial Statement](#) that the responsibility for the Supporting Families programme will transfer from the DLUHC to the Department for Education (DfE) as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. This move is intended to ensure that the alignment of the Supporting Families programme and the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme is strengthened.
- 1.4 Sheffield was awarded Earned Autonomy (EA) status in 2018 and this builds on the previous payment by results (PbR) model. EA requires a Local Authority to have met a minimum level of maturity over a number of Early Help system and data markers in return for reduced audit processes and upfront funding which is designed to accelerate system transformation.
- 1.5 In January 2023, Sheffield received notification of successfully retaining Earned Autonomy for 2022-25. This is a significant achievement. However, to maintain this status and the upfront funding we must continue to make measurable progress and continue as a city to prioritise the programme and its aims.
- 1.6 As part of the programme requirements, each Local Authority is expected to meet a minimum number of successful family outcomes, which they evidence through providing families with formal Early Help activity as outlined in the [Supporting Families Outcomes Framework](#).
- 1.7 Sheffield's expected outcomes have increased by 100.2% between the 2022 and 2025 financial year. However, due to being awarded Earned Autonomy status, we are expected to achieve at least 105% of our claims target annually. This means that Sheffield's expected claims targets for the commissioned years of the programme are as follows:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Successful family outcomes expected</b>	825	1335	1652
<b>105% of successful family outcomes:</b>	866 (achieved)	1402	1734

- 1.8 Historically, the Family Intervention Service (FIS, previously known as the Multi Agency Support Teams - MAST), have provided the majority of Sheffield's successful outcomes (claims) for the programme. However, the significant rise in claims over the recommissioned programme has meant that we have explored how we can evidence significant and sustained success from other sources. These include both internal and external services from across the Early Help System and innovative approaches continue to be explored to ensure we maintain momentum and our claims targets and transformation expectations are met.
- 1.9 Over the past year, we have been working with colleagues to evidence additional successful outcomes from internal services including:
- 1.9.1 **Community Support Workers within Family Hubs**  
Expect 48 – 115 additional claims per year (implemented late spring 2023)
  - 1.9.2 **Pre-Birth Social Care Team**  
(Implemented November 2023)\*
  - 1.9.3 **Attendance and Inclusion Team**  
(Implemented March 2024)\*
- \*Further analysis will need to be undertaken in regard to the successful outcomes achieved by the Pre-Birth Social Care Team and the Attendance and Inclusion Team due to the time period required for regression checks and validity of claims. It is expected that we will be able to provide a verbal update to this during the March committee.
- 1.10 We are also working with our Children's Social Care Senior Leadership Team to explore claims as the national framework allows Local Authorities to submit cases from their Child Protection/Child In Need cases. As a snapshot of what this could look like in regard to evidencing successful outcome, in Sheffield, there are on average 195 families, or 343 children closed to social care each month that could be potential successful families to evidence as part of our totals.
- 1.11 As part of the developments of the BSF and Family Hub Networks, in November 2023 we co-designed a contract specification with colleagues from across the partnership which aims for Voluntary, Community and Faith organisations to deliver formal Early Help to families within Sheffield.
- 1.12 This specification went live on the SCC YORTender portal in January 2024, and successful partners were notified in February 2024. The contract will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and run for two financial years.
- 1.13 Through partners delivering formal Early Help and the principles of BSF, this will ultimately support in:



- increasing the number of partners who work whole family and use the Signs of Safety approach in Sheffield
  - measuring/understanding the impact of whole family working across the wider Early Help system
  - providing financial incentives to support Sheffield's Early Help maturity goals
  - developing data maturity across partners
  - improving the connectivity between voluntary, community and faith sector activity, family networks and formal Early Help activity
- 1.14 DLUHC release an annual Early Help System Guide (EHSG) which outlines a national vision and descriptors for a mature Early Help System that is shared by them and the Department for Education (DfE). The guide aims to provide a framework for local workshops, partnership conversations, strategic planning and to support prioritisation within the Early Help System. It is structured as five sections focusing on family voice and experience, workforce, communities, leaders, and data.
- 1.15 We liaise with colleagues from across the Early Help partnership to provide this joint self-assessment. It supports discussion around the effectiveness of Early Help and focuses on common goals across partners within the city.
- 1.16 Following Sheffield's annual submission of the Early Help System Guide (EHSG) self-assessment in July 2023, we received notification from DLUHC the following month to state that there was "very strong practice" across a number of the descriptors. They also noted that in relation to the workforce sector, "it was great to see the extent of the training available" via the Early Help Partnership Training offer, and also how well the Family Hub and BSF transformation ambitions and activity are integrated. As a result of the success in these areas, we have been asked to support other areas to showcase the good practice which occurs in Sheffield (examples of this can be found within sections 1.24 onwards).
- 1.17 In terms of next steps and future developments, the DLUHC have a strong focus on understanding the formal Early Help activity which is ongoing and further developing with external partners including the voluntary sector.
- 1.18 Formal Early Help activity consists of a family having a recognised lead practitioner who undertakes whole family assessments and supports them in significant and sustained long term success. The national team envisage that to do this successfully, they would like partners to act as lead practitioners, undertaking assessments and leading cases whilst accessing a shared case management system.
- 1.19 DLUHC's vision also recognises that a mature Early Help system within an area harnesses the talent and contribution of work that is already ongoing within communities. It is a large part of the transformation agenda to ensure that we have colleagues across the system who are well connected with, and

understand the local areas they serve, including the differences within communities at a granular neighbourhood or street level.

- 1.20 To support connectivity and awareness around these areas, the Family Hub Network Membership was implemented and continues to grow. It ensures that partners are able to access training around the funded elements of the programme, working to increase awareness of these more specialised areas. This offer has augmented that of the Early Help Partnership Training offer.
- 1.21 We have also co-designed an Early Help Badge with families to improve identification of Early Help provision provided across the city, with branding guidance also created and shared with partners.
- 1.22 The national team have also advised that an ongoing focus on increasing wider family voice and lived experience across the partnership as a whole could support in both service delivery and design.
- 1.23 As part of the contract to deliver formal Early Help by partners external to SCC, we developed a Family Voice and Feedback form that mirrors that of the one utilised by colleagues in the Family Intervention Service. It is envisaged that the greater alignment and cohesion between colleagues delivering formal Early Help and that of the Local Authority, as well as engaging experts by experience and peer support leaders in the Early Help System Guide workshops, will ensure that feedback is used as learning to support changes in how the whole system works together effectively.
- 1.24 The national team had not commented on the priorities we set out in the 2023 EHS self-assessment, however, we are confident that the commission of partners delivering formal Early Help activity aligns with these ambitions and will support in the continued maturity of Sheffield's Early Help and data systems. Our chosen descriptors are:
  - 1.24.1 **Workforce (sub-descriptor 1)**: "The workforce in our area operates effectively to deliver whole family working and is aligned with the workforce table" ([appendix 1](#)).
  - 1.24.2 **Workforce (sub-descriptor 5)** – "We know the quality of Early Help practice across professionals listed in the workforce table. We directly support professionals in our partnership to improve their practice, including around whole family working, through a quality assurance framework, e.g., through audit, supervision and guidance".
  - 1.24.3 **Communities (sub-descriptor 4)** – "We are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal Early Help activity".
- 1.25 We have continued to support the regional and national work of the Supporting Families programme and as a result of this, Sheffield accepted the opportunity to present at a national webinar relating to attendance. The service manager for Attendance and Inclusion presented information on

Sheffield's Inclusion Model which was greatly received by delegates nationally.

- 1.26 Our Early Help Partnership Training (EHPT) offer has also continued to receive interest from across the country, and as such, colleagues have been asked to present at other Local Authority meetings to discuss the offer and how it was established.
- 1.27 The EHPT offer ensures that whole family working is embedded in practice across the partnership. This free offer of training to support and upskill the workforce (including those at universal level) is available, and engagement continues to grow from all partners, including the VCF sector.
- 1.28 In July 2023 – December 2023 a total of 108 Early Help Partnership Training sessions were delivered with a total of 895 attendees. We organise the topics into 4 broad sections:

<b>Sections:</b>	<b>Sessions delivered:</b>	<b>Attendees:</b>
Parenting and Whole Family Working	45	368
Public Health and Early Years	33	271
Inclusion	5	94
Employment, Financial Exclusion and Housing	25	162
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>895</b>

1.28.1 In comparison with the 6 months prior, the EHPT offer saw an increase in the number of sessions delivered but a decrease in the number of overall attendees: Jan – June 2023 = 961 attendees at 89 sessions. This number of expected participants is expected due to partners taking annual leave over the August/December months.

1.28.2 However, if we compare the July – December figures between 2022 and 2023, there has been a significant increase in the number of sessions provided and delegates attending:

<b>July – December</b>			
	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>% increase</b>
<b>Sessions Delivered</b>	51	108	112%
<b>Attendees</b>	443	895	102%

- 1.29 The success of the EHPT offer has evolved to establish other Early Help Partnership offerings. Following the February 2023 Early Help System Guide (EHSG) workshop with colleagues from across the system, we received feedback stating that some of the most common barriers to cross-partnership working include a lack of understanding of what other services are available, where they are based and what the criteria for working with a family can be. Therefore, as of April 2023, we have established further Early Help Partnership activity:

- 1.29.1 Support Mornings; a drop in session for any member of the Early Help workforce, providing advice and guidance from a variety of service providers. Partners from over 20 different services have attended regularly at the monthly sessions.
  - 1.29.2 Newsletter; providing quarterly updates to over 400 members of the EHP distribution list.
  - 1.29.3 Lunch and Learn sessions; 30-60 minutes training sessions which can be facilitated throughout lunch times and has covered topics such as cost of living support, details on the new projects/programmes launching in the city, an introduction to people seeking safety in Sheffield, brief advice from Sheffield Smoke Free Services and infant feeding services.
- 1.30 We have also increased the partnership SEND offer within training and further developed our Information Café's. As an example of this, Family Action Sheffield's ADHD Drop-in Café celebrated its first birthday with a special event on 28th November 2023, to mark its work supporting hundreds of families looking for advice and guidance around their child's behaviour.
- 1.30.1 This work has developed from the BSF Team Manager for Partnerships undertaking face to face conversations with parents and carers from communities across the city, regarding the neurodiversity needs of their children and what would really help them.
  - 1.30.2 Following consultation, the Partnership Manager implemented citywide ADHD Information Cafes for all families to access and connectivity was developed with both Family Action and Ryegate (Sheffield Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust) to start the offer from October 2022.
  - 1.30.3 Continued development has resulted in parents and carers having the opportunity to come together and share their experiences with other families in a warm and welcoming environment. Part of the essential peer support which the café provides is access to an ADHD WhatsApp group, which the families set up, that now has over one hundred members who regularly access this essential lifeline to other families experiencing similar struggles.
- 1.31 Partnership working with South Yorkshire Police (SYP) has also grown in strength over the past 12 months with district wide ambitions to develop data sharing receiving the backing of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Assistant Chief Constables and senior leaders within each Local Authority (LA). In May 2023, SYP hosted an Information Sharing Summit with colleagues attending from across the sub-region to explore the benefits of improved automated information sharing between key partner agencies and identifying the next steps of how we achieve this.
- 1.32 Since this event a core group of colleagues have met monthly to ensure the project retains momentum. The next stages of the project include identifying

the scoping requirements and costs fully and then identifying funding streams which support the development of this work at a city wide level.

- 1.33 We are also working with colleagues from health to develop information sharing agreements that support earliest identification of need.
- 1.34 The activities and opportunities highlighted above evidence the positive work which underpins the success of Sheffield's Early Help partnership/system and has allowed greater opportunities for networking with other Local Authorities and continually developing good practice as well as increasing confidence in Sheffield's practices by the national team.

## 2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The need to continuously develop the maturity of our Early Help system and partnership, alongside the transformation of Family Hubs, support the "Our Sheffield Corporate Delivery Plan", namely;
  - **Fair, inclusive, and empowered communities** – the partnership networks we are expanding as part of the Family Hub Transformation and the governance routes will support in ensuring Sheffielders are able to contribute to and shape the issues that matter to them in their communities.
  - **Strong and connected neighbourhoods** – we are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal Early Help activity through building capacity in communities and harnessing the talent of parents, carers, and young people with lived experience to help one another.
  - **Healthy lives and wellbeing for all** – we strive to ensure that families say they know how to navigate local services and that the help they have received addressed their problems and they are better connected to their own support network and local community.
  - **Happy young people who have the start they need for the future they want** – If we can continue to identify needs at earlier opportunities across the partnership, we will be able to offer preventative support ensuring that families' needs do not escalate requiring statutory intervention and we meet need at the point of presentation.
- 2.2 At the heart of the Supporting Families programme and the transformation of the Family Hubs is the Early Help vision; "Sheffield will be an inclusive city where we work together to ensure that all children receive the right support at the right time so that they live a happy and fulfilled life."

## 3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

### 3.1 Co-production:

- 3.1.1 As Early Help is a system and not a single service, there is continuous co-production ongoing across different organisations in the city. This work is vital in establishing new ways of working and ensuring that children, young people, their families and professionals co-produce services that they are able and willing to engage with.
- 3.1.2 The work in expanding the Family Hub networks to align with formal Early Help being delivered by voluntary, community and faith organisations has been co-produced with services across the system to ensure that there is a contract which is co-designed.
- 3.1.3 Sheffield's 2024 Early Help System Guide Self-Assessment is expected to be submitted back to the national team by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. To support the co-production of this, a workshop took place on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 to review the progress over the last year and develop our future plans with senior leaders from across the system.
- 3.1.3.1 An overview of the organisations who attended that workshop will be provided as an appendix to this document prior to the March 2024 Education, Children and Families committee meeting.

### 3.2 Consultation:

- 3.2.1 Due to the Early Help partnership already having established methods for ways of working, consultations are ongoing across the system to ensure we can maximise efficiencies and provide a service that meets the needs of children, young people, and families. In all Early Help services, we want children and young people with additional needs to be identified and receive appropriate support in a timely manner.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### 4.1 Equality Implications:

- 4.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.1.2 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as having protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Also identified and considered is care experience which is now treated as a protected characteristic in Sheffield.

4.1.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed, it highlighted that the work of the BSF programme has an impact on the following characteristics and therefore a full impact assessment has taken place:

- Health
- Age
- Carers
- Disability
- Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Partners
- Race
- Cohesion
- Religion/Belief
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

4.1.4 It has been agreed that no changes to the ways of working for the programme are required following the EIA.

4.2 Anecdotal discussions with some other Local Authorities have identified difficulties in securing successful outcomes that will be sufficient in meeting the annual totals for this financial year and next. Reasons for lower successful outcomes were cited as increased complexity of issues within a family, ultimately causing slower throughput in services and increased regression checks under the new framework which came into effect on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.

4.2.1 However, within Sheffield we also recognise the risks associated with the increase in claims for the next financial year. As identified in section 1.8 of this document, the solution to this relies heavily on creating systems that allow the automated recognition of social care cases as part of our BSF cohorts. The work which is underway in increasing partnership working and consider where improvements can be made to data or early help system maturity will also compliment this.

4.2.2 The implementation of the new outcomes framework has also made it more difficult for Local Authorities to accurately predict potential quarterly figures given the change to the areas of needs (previously referred to as Headline Problems) and also the time in which a case needs to have been closed for before it can be identified as successful.

4.2.3 To address this, SCC's Performance and Analysis Service are monitoring for unsuccessful outcomes following case closure more accurately and are working to scope this fully and identify areas of concern.

4.3 Financial and Commercial Implications:

4.3.1 Earned Autonomy Status means that the Council is paid upfront for the Successful Families programme funding. In October 2022, the outcomes required from the programme changed, and there is a significant increase in the target number of successful family outcomes for 23/24 and 24/25.

4.3.2 If we do not achieve our targets, there is a risk that DfE could withdraw the Earned Autonomy status, which would mean funding is then received retrospectively on submission of quarterly claims.

4.3.3 This in turn, would have funding/cashflow implications for the programme as it is possible that we will return to Payment by Results (PBR) if we are unable to meet the quota of successful families supported by the programme. Successful Families by design has inherent risks, retaining Earned Autonomy Status is dependent on meeting 105% of the target claims and data and system maturity.

4.3.4 The indicative funding and outcomes expected over the three years of the current programme can be found below:

<b>Indicative funding</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
<b>Successful family outcomes expected</b>	825	1335	1652
<b>Advanced transformation funding</b>	£660,000	£1,068,000	£1,321,600
<b>Annual funding</b>	£2,329,667	£2,737,667	£2,991,266
Total funding available 2022-25: £8,058,560			

4.3.5 As of Q3 in the 2023-2024 financial year, we had achieved and submitted 1184 successful outcomes to the national team. This means of our:

- basic target (1335), we have achieved 89%
- extended 105% target (1402), we achieved 85%

4.3.6 We anticipate achieving at least 105% of our target for this year and potentially up to 115%. Any claims above 100% can be rolled over into the 2024/25 claims windows.

4.3.7 A large proportion of Sheffield's claims this financial year have come from Child in Need Social Care cases under the old Supporting Families



framework (prior to October 2022). These claims were able to be identified by the data team as part of the submission towards this year's targets.

4.3.8 The funding attached to the programme directly relates to the successful outcomes which are achieved as a city and provides direct support to families through funding a proportion of workers within the Family Intervention Service, Attendance and Inclusion, Parenting and Family Hub teams, whilst also providing resources for Adult Mental Health Workers, Citizen Advice Sheffield, and Shelter staff to deliver the wider specialised elements of support. The programme also funds workers within SCC's Performance and Analysis Service to ensure we continue our data maturity, colleagues within our commissioning teams to drive the programme strategically, as well as contributing to a South Yorkshire Police Analyst time as per the requirements of the programme.

4.3.9 An overview of the spending summary for 2024/25 can be found below:

	2024/25	£000
<b>Area of spend</b>	<b>2024/25 funding provided</b>	<b>2991</b>
<b>Direct support to families</b>	FIS (previously MAST)	1401
	Parenting	217
	Attendance & Inclusion	216
	Adult Mental Health	32
	Community Support Workers	164
	Citizens Advice Sheffield	100.4
<b>Resource to support data maturity</b>	SCC Performance and Analysis Service	153
	South Yorkshire Police	20.5
	Information Governance provision	17
<b>Resource to deliver the programme strategically</b>	Partnership Team Manager	52
	Early Help Partnership Officer	43
	Commissioning Officers	124
	Assistant Commissioning Officer	43
	Temporary Additional Responsibility Allowance	7
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Delivering partner workshops	4
	VCF contracts	300
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>2893.9</b>
<b>NET POSITION – BSF</b>		<b>97.1</b>

4.3.10 As identified within section 1.29, it is worth noting that any underspend from the 2024/2025 financial year maybe dedicated towards achieving the data transformation ambitions of the Local Authority with colleagues such as South Yorkshire Police and Health partners e.g., Sheffield Children's Hospital and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals.

4.3.11 Officers will hold delegation of the programme grant funding and make decisions on funding in line with Sheffield City Council processes. This

includes ensuring that we comply with the general principle of open and transparent decision making and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

4.3.12 We expect that due to the national commission of the programme ending in March 2025, we will receive correspondence from the Department for Education within the next 6 months as to the future of the programme.

4.3.13 If the programme is recommissioned, we will follow external grant funding protocol in line with the committee process. This means that as we would expect the programme grant to be in line with current funding arrangements, we would seek approval by the committee for Education, Children and Families.

4.3.14 In the event that the national team do not recommission the programme post March 2025, we have created a risk register that is reviewed monthly by the Integrated Commissioning Senior Leadership Team.

#### 4.4 Legal Implications

4.4.1 Programme development will support the Council to meet its duties under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, which requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority, each of the authority's relevant partners and such other persons or bodies working with children in the local authority's area as the authority considers appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area.

#### 4.5 Climate Implications

4.5.1 There are no significant changes which are arising from the programme, a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) is therefore not required,

4.5.2 Where services will be delivered by external partners and providers, we will aim to work with providers who align with our ambition to be a Net Zero city by 2030, through the procurement process. We will encourage partners to think about the climate impacts of delivering the service, such as use of office space, staff and client travel, energy and resource use, and opportunities to increase awareness of positive climate action, and take appropriate steps to reduce their impacts in the delivery of the service.

### **5. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### 5.1 Equality Implications:

5.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

5.1.2 This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.1.3 The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation. Also identified and considered is care experience which is now treated as a protected characteristic in Sheffield.

5.1.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed, it highlighted that the work of the BSF programme has an impact on the following characteristics and therefore a full impact assessment has taken place:

- Health
- Age
- Carers
- Disability
- Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Partners
- Race
- Cohesion
- Religion/Belief
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

5.1.5 It has been agreed that no changes to the ways of working for the programme are required following the EIA.

## 5.2 Successful outcomes required for the 2024/2025 financial year

5.2.1 Anecdotal discussions with some other Local Authorities have identified difficulties in securing successful outcomes that will be sufficient in meeting the annual totals for this financial year and next. Reasons for lower successful outcomes were cited as increased complexity of issues within a family, ultimately causing slower throughput in services and increased regression checks under the new framework which came into effect on October 3rd, 2022.

5.2.2 However, within Sheffield we also recognise the risks associated with the increase in claims for the next financial year. As identified in section 1.8 of this document, the solution to this relies heavily on creating systems that

allow the automated recognition of social care cases as part of our BSF cohorts. The work which is underway in increasing partnership working and consider where improvements can be made to data or early help system maturity will also compliment this.

5.2.3 The implementation of the new outcomes framework has also made it more difficult for Local Authorities to accurately predict potential quarterly figures given the change to the areas of needs (previously referred to as Headline Problems) and also the time in which a case needs to have been closed for before it can be identified as successful.

5.2.4 To address this, SCC's Performance and Analysis Service are monitoring for unsuccessful outcomes following case closure more accurately and are working to scope this fully and identify areas of concern.

### 5.3 Data Sharing Ambitions

5.3.1 Similar to other large projects, the ambitions which we hold with SYP as a district pose a number of risks associated with the implementation. However, we would work to ensure that these are fully investigated during the scoping exercise to identify the potential resource (financial, human and physical) required, and also the possible mitigations which could be implemented prior to any full commitment taking place.

## 6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Not applicable as this report is an annual report of the development of the Building Successful Families programme.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The Early Help System is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people, and families at the earliest opportunity. If we continue to develop our system, we will see vulnerable families thrive, becoming empowered to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Our local services will also be joined-up, flexible and responsive to new challenges, becoming sustainable for the long-term creating stronger multi-agency partnerships which work together to understand local trends, predict emerging need, and respond to those needing additional help. It is therefore essential that we continue the ambitions in further developing our data and system maturity with the full approval of the committee.

## APPENDIX 1: THE WORKFORCE TABLE

Frequent and Modelling	Regular and Promoting	Sometimes and Active	Occasional and Connected
Children's social workers	Schools and colleges	Housing tenancy/ homelessness advisors	Adult mental health workers
Family Workers	Early years settings	Substance misuse workers	Adult social workers
Early Help Worker	Family Hub workers	Mental health workers	Domestic abuse worker
Targeted Youth Worker		Midwives	VCF sector workers and volunteers (unless commissioned differently)
Specialist Public Health or Community Nurse		Career advisors	GPs and practice nurses
Family nurses		Youth Justice / prevention	Library staff
		PCSOs/neighbourhood policing	Youth Justice Officers
		EWO	Reactive police officers
		SEN support staff	

## APPENDIX 2: EARLY HELP SYSTEM GUIDE WORKSHOP ENGAGEMENT

(to be added as an update following the February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, workshop)

Partners in attendance:			
Best Start, MCDT	Kenwood Academy	SCC - Education & Skills	Sheffield Wednesday Community Programme
Causeway	Malin Bridge Primary School	SCC - Family Hubs & Start for Life	Shelter
City of Sanctuary	Meadows Nursery	SCC - Family Intervention Services	SHU Nurseries
Community Midwifery	Meynell Primary School	SCC - Inclusion and Learning	Smoke free Sheffield
DfE	Outwood City Academy	SCC – Youth Justice	The Family Works
DWP	SCC - Communities	SCC – PAS	Reed in Partnership
EPEC	SCC - Community Youth Services	Sheffield Parent Carer Forum	Zest
Heeley Trust			

Total number of attendees:

99+ (99 partners signed in but we know additional partners attended for the partnership stalls and mini presentations during the morning session)

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## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** 2024 annual update of the Building Successful Families programme to committe

**EIA ID:** 2421

**EIA Author:** Emily Ward

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**Proposal Outline:** This report is to provide an annual update to the Education, Children and Families Committee on the Building Successful Families (BSF) programme, referred to nationally as the Supporting Families programme. In addition, there are a number of key areas where the Committee is asked to endorse the progression of strategic level activity to support the transformation of the Early Help System in its aim to help children, young people, and families at the earliest opportunity.

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 23/24

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Joe Horobin (NCC)

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**Service Area:** Integrated Commissioning

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**EIA Start Date:** 25/10/2023

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**Lead Equality Objective:** Break the cycle and improve life chances

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**Equality Lead Officer:** Bashir Khan

**Committees:**

Policy Committees

- Education, Children & Families

## Portfolio

**Primary Portfolio:**

Integrated Commissioning

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**EIA is cross portfolio:**

Yes

Children and Families

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**EIA is joint with another organisation:**

No

## Overview of Impact

**Overview Summery:**

To be eligible for support in the Supporting Families / BSF programme, families must be identified as having barriers in regard to accessing/achieving 3 or more of these areas (as identified in the national Supporting Families Outcomes Framework):

- Getting a good education
- Good early years development
- Improved mental and physical health
- Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance misuse
- Improve family relationships
- Children safe from abuse and exploitation
- Crime prevention and tackling crime
- Safe from domestic abuse
- Secure housing
- Financial stability

The Early Help System is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity. If we are successful, we will see vulnerable families thrive, becoming empowered to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Our local services will also be joined-up, flexible and responsive to new challenges, becoming sustainable for the long term creating stronger multi-agency partnerships which work together to understand local trends, predict emerging need, and respond to those needing extra help. The benefits of this approach will be felt across the city as pressure on statutory services should reduce as the system begins to rebalance away from intervening at crisis point or before families have multiple areas of need. This will help services to become more sustainable and allow them to intervene



much earlier in the cycle, delivering better outcomes for families. Supporting Families' outcomes align with the Family Hubs transformation which is ongoing, providing a single access point – a 'front door' – to universal and early help services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Family Hubs involve co-location of services and professionals to make it easier for families to access the services they need, including Start for Life services, and this can include both physical locations, outreach support and virtual offers. Many services offered in a Family Hub network will be for families who do not need intensive, whole-family Lead Practitioner support; however, hubs will ensure seamless access to a whole-family Lead Practitioner where needed.

**Impacted characteristics:**

- Age
- Carers
- Cohesion
- Disability
- Health
- Partners
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors

**Impacted local area(s):**

All

**Consultation and other engagement**

**Cumulative Impact**

**Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:**

Yes

**Initial Sign-Off**

Full impact assessment required: Yes

Review Date: 02/12/2024

**PART B - Full Impact Assessment****Health**

Staff Impacted: No

Customers Impacted: Yes

**Description of Impact:** The BSF programme identifies a number of areas of family need, one of which is supporting families to have improved mental and / or physical health. Health colleagues represent parts of the Early Help workforce such as universal, targeted or acute services and are crucial in ensuring that collectively we are working towards greater cohesion and earlier identification of need for families. If we are able to identify needs earlier across the wider Early Help partnership, this may support in reducing more serious health needs at a later point for an individual by accessing support services sooner.

Name of Lead Health Officer:

Comprehensive Assessment Being Completed: No

Public Health Lead signed off health impact(s):

## Age

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** The Early Help System is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and families at the earliest opportunity and eligibility for support includes having barriers in regard to accessing/achieving 3 or more of these areas (as identified in the Supporting Families Outcomes Framework): • Getting a good education • Good early years development • Improved mental and physical health • Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance misuse • Improve family relationships • Children safe from abuse and exploitation • Crime prevention and tackling crime • Safe from domestic abuse • Secure housing • Financial stability If we are successful, we will see vulnerable families thrive, becoming empowered to become resilient over time and build connections to their local community. Supporting Families' outcomes align with the Family Hubs transformation which is ongoing, providing a single access point – a 'front door' – to universal and early help services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There is much overlap between the Supporting Families programme, the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme and the World Health Organisation's framework of becoming an age friendly inclusive city. The eight interconnected domains which include elements such as community and health care, affordable and appropriate housing, social inclusion and employment, all work to embed principles of people being able to participate and engage with activities within their communities.

## Carers

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** Carers, especially young carers are recognised within the Supporting Families Outcomes Framework, and

practitioners utilising this framework specifically considers whether there are any unsupported young carers in the family. We are hoping that through the practice framework, increasing amounts of practitioners will be able to recognise children or young people who may be carers or who may need additional support so that we are able to offer the rights support at the right time to not only the child but the whole family.

## Care Experienced

Staff Impacted:

Customers Impacted:

Description of Impact:

## Cohesion

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: We have developed our workforce practice framework as we recognise that a strong partnership requires cohesion to operate effectively. The development of the practice framework and continual developments relating to developing our workforce in general will continue to support a group of practitioners that better reflect the diversity of the city, allowing services to be more culturally sensitive, diverse and inclusive. By identifying a clearer workforce practice framework, and also clearer outcomes for our practitioners, this will create longer term cohesion for families and wider society.

## Disability

Staff Impacted:

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

The supporting families outcomes framework identifies that there are a number areas of family need that may require support in relation to disability, for example; - a child's Special Educational Needs are not being met, - the child or parent requires support with learning disabilities, neurodiverse conditions and/or physical health needs that affect the family (e.g., long-standing health conditions requiring management, physical disabilities requiring adaptations) If we are able to identify needs earlier across the wider Early Help partnership, this may support in families accessing support services sooner. Supporting Families drives high standards of continual improvements to local partnership working and data use, while funding intensive keywork support for those families facing multiple complex problems. Family Hubs are one way of delivering the Supporting Families vision of an effective early help system. Family Hubs provide a single access point – a 'front door' – to universal and early help services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. Family Hubs involve co-location of services and professionals to make it easier for families to access the services they need, including Start for Life services, and this can include both physical locations, outreach support and virtual offers.

## Partners

**Staff Impacted:**

Yes

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

We have strong partnership arrangements that enable partners to take collective responsibility, share risks and jointly invest in early help. This ensures that our leaders speak with one voice on the importance of early help, whole family and whole system working and ensure this culture is embedded through senior and middle management and the front line and staff at all levels are effectively involved in shaping and developing improvements. Strong partnerships are at the heart of an effective and mature Early Help System, as are developing data maturity to provide a more holistic view of a family for those lead practitioners. Sheffield's Information Sharing and Data Governance

Board is working towards unblocking those barriers to data sharing to allow more effective whole family working. We expect to further strengthen and widen our partnerships across the city through the ambition to commission formal early help activity.

## Poverty & Financial Inclusion

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** Early Help services provide a huge amount of support to families to minimise the impact of poverty on children and young people including support to access good quality housing advice, benefits advice, and support with steps towards employment. The focus on engagement with positive activities and good school attendance increases life chances for children and young people so that they are more likely to be able to be economically active as adults. The challenge of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis which has also emerged makes it even more important to help families early on, identifying support at the earliest opportunity to avoid issues escalating. The programme has an ambition to support recovery of the local economies post pandemic by helping children back to school, helping those who have lost their jobs get back to work, by helping young people avoid crime, protecting mental health and by tackling domestic abuse.

## Pregnancy / Maternity

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** The updated Supporting Families Outcomes Framework which came into effect on October 3rd 2022 identified new criteria which stated that support for families may begin before a child is born and expectant or new parents who require additional support may be eligible for the programme. Providing guidance for parents and developmental support for

babies and young children is essential for delivering strong health and educational outcomes for children, ensuring they have a positive start in their early years. Supporting Families' outcomes align with the Best Start for Life vision of achieving good early years outcomes for babies and young children, and practitioners, services and families all benefit from expanded core services in the Family Hub transformation which ensure that children have the best possible start in life.

## Race

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** It is notable that when considering Sheffield's areas of greatest ethnic diversity, these are also largely populated in the most deprived areas of the city. We are cognisant that many of the Family Hubs are located within some of these of greatest deprivation and therefore we hope that with an increased age range of support being able to be provided in these building (0-19 or 0-25 for those with SEND), and the wider work with partners, we will be able to increase access, connectivity and relationships among stakeholders, ultimately reducing barriers to engagement and providing a "no wrong door" approach for those who wish to engage. In 2023, we have also actively sought out a wider selection of smaller Voluntary and Community sector organisations to engage them in the Early Help System Guide self-assessment in the hope that they are able to enhance the reflection of families in some of our more seldom heard communities when considering the uptake of Early Help services. We hope that the ambitions to commission formal early help activity by the VCF sector will support in working with grass root and community organisations to deliver early help in and alongside communities. Leaders from these organisations will form part of the Early Help Partnership Board which is the senior strategic group accountable for Sheffield's Early Help System and we hope that this may also diversify the membership.

## Religion / Belief

**Staff Impacted:**

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

Sheffield is a religiously diverse city and we need to continually ensure that all services are culturally sensitive. As part of the alignment between the Building Successful Families programme and the Family hub transformation, there is an increased focus on community engagement. We have recruited four new Community Support Workers (CSW) whose role will include building those community engagement partnerships and promoting and delivering socially inclusive services. Anecdotal evidence suggests that families may have previously refused to engage with a different service as they prefer to continue with a trusted person. The CSW's would not only support the most seldom heard communities/families in increased access to support and community engagement but would also support the developments identified from the Early Help System Guide self-assessment in improving our links with communities and the Family Hub transformation. We hope that the ambitions to commission formal early help activity by the VCF sector will support in working with grass root and community organisations to deliver early help in and alongside communities. Leaders from these organisations will form part of the Early Help Partnership Board which is the senior strategic group accountable for Sheffield's Early Help System and we hope that this may also diversify the membership.

## Sexual Orientation

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

Just Like Us, the UK's Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans (LGBT) young people's charity commissioned a study to explore the experiences and wellbeing of young LGBT+ people aged 11-18 across the UK. 2,934 pupils were surveyed and 1,140 of these identified as LGBT+. 68% of LGBT+ young people say their mental health has 'got worse' since the pandemic, compared to 49% of their non-LGBT+ peers. It is hoped that with the alignment between the EH system and the Family Hub transformation, children, young people and their parents will be able to navigate and access services



easier. This can include access to Mental Health services, peer support groups or wider family support.

## Voluntary / Community & Faith Sectors

**Staff Impacted:** Yes

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** The VCF sector form a key part of our early help offer, as evidenced by their contribution to our extensive Early Help Partnership Training offer. However, we are keen to continue to develop and engage a wider variety of the VCF sector into our Early Help partnership and Family Hub networks to ensure that we are improving the connectivity between voluntary and community sector activity, family networks and formal Early Help activity across the city. We will strengthen partnerships with the VCF sector across the city by launching a tiered approach to partnership networks. This will enable the involvement of all organisations across the city and engage them in delivery of the BSF and Family Hub services where possible. Offering VCF partners the opportunity to apply via a commissioning process to deliver through their organisations and settings will ensure the requirements are linked to the programme outcomes (such as providing claims for the BSF programme which increase significantly through to 2025), ultimately: - providing partners with financial incentives to support the city's Supporting Families maturity goals - increasing the number of partners who work whole family and use the Signs of Safety approach - Developing data maturity across the Early Help sector

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

**Outline of action plan:** Feb 2024 – workshops with partners from across the Early Help System to discuss the Early Help System Guide self-assessment, strengths and areas for next steps. March 2024 – EH partners will complete and share their own self-assessment of the Early Help System Guide following workshop. May 2024 – collation of and showcase of the first draft of the EHSG with representation of what areas are working well, and areas for developments. We will also identify three areas of priority to develop over 2024/25. June 2024 –

Share a final draft of the EHSB with senior leaders, partners and committee members for sign off.

**Action plan evidence:**

Sheffield's 2023 Early Help System Guide Self-Assessment Just Like Us - LGBT+ report on bullying, schools and mental health  
<https://www.justlikeus.org/blog/2021/11/25/research-report-growing-up-lgbt-bullying/>

**Changes made as a result of action plan:**

## Mitigation

**Significant risk after mitigation measures:** No

**Outline of impact and risks:**

## Review Date

**Review Date:** 02/12/2024



## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** *(Andrew Jones  
Director of Education)*

**Tel:** *(07990594728)*

**Report of:** *Meredith Dixon-Teasdale Strategic Director of Children’s Services.*

**Report to:** *Education, Children and Families Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *19<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

**Subject:** *Pupil outcomes in Sheffield School settings and the impact of the Learn Sheffield commission*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(2620)</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>“The <b>(report/appendix)</b> is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph <b>(insert relevant paragraph number)</b> of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>				

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide the Committee with an update on Pupil outcomes in Sheffield School settings and the impact of Learn Sheffield.

**Recommendations:**

*That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee note the progress in relation to pupil outcomes and demographics in school settings following national releases of comparative data and demonstrating Learn Sheffield's impact in supporting settings.*

**Background Papers:****Independent Evaluation of Learn Sheffield**

Learn Sheffield has undertaken an evaluation of their work over the eight years since they were incorporated in 2015. The Learn Sheffield Independent Evaluation 2015-2023 was published ahead of their 2024 AGM on 8 February 2024.

The following colleagues contributed to the independent evaluation: Sir David Carter, Dame Christine Gilbert, Fiona Gowers and Helen Lane. They used the supporting documents below (produced by the Learn Sheffield team), the 2018 Peer Review of Learn Sheffield and conducted a range of interviews and other activities as an evidence base for their findings. There are substantial documents for the evaluation and these can be found on the Learn Sheffield Web Site – [www.learnsheffield.co.uk](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk) - including Sheffield Performance Analysis 2023.

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
		Climate: <i>n/a</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	

<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Andrew Jones</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Director of Education and Skills</i>
<b>Date:</b> <i>5<sup>th</sup> March 2024</i>	

## 1. PROPOSAL

The Committee have previously sought a perspective on the effectiveness and impact of Learn Sheffield, who are currently commissioned to deliver a small number of statutory duties on behalf of Sheffield City Council.

This current commission (circa £60k per annum) is in its first of two years to provide primary writing moderation, KS2 SATs monitoring, support school headteacher recruitment in maintained schools and speak to and support Ofsted inspections in maintained schools. This commission is below the threshold for Committee approval.

This update also addresses city performance, as would routinely be the case at this point in the work plan for this Committee.

### 1.1 Evaluation Executive Summary

#### 1.1.1 Independent Evaluation of Learn Sheffield

Learn Sheffield has undertaken an evaluation of their work over the eight years since they were incorporated in 2015. The Learn Sheffield Independent Evaluation 2015-2023 was published ahead of their 2024 AGM on 8 February 2024.

The following colleagues contributed to the independent evaluation: Sir David Carter, Dame Christine Gilbert, Fiona Gowers and Helen Lane. They used the supporting documents below (produced by the Learn Sheffield team), the 2018 Peer Review of Learn Sheffield and conducted a range of interviews and other activities as an evidence base for their findings. There are substantial documents for the evaluation and these can be found on the Learn Sheffield Web Site – [www.learnsheffield.co.uk](http://www.learnsheffield.co.uk) - including Sheffield Performance Analysis 2023. This analysis has been produced in partnership between Learn Sheffield and Sheffield City Council provide an overview of performance in relation to: Ofsted judgements, pupil characteristics and SEND, attendance, exclusions & attainment and progress.

A selection of slides from this analysis have been selected and will be shown in the Committee but the data below provides headlines of performance analysis. The full report includes trails for further investigation in each section and Learn Sheffield have also produced Insight Reports in three areas where further analysis could be helpful.

On the Learn Sheffield web site one can find a more detailed background on the organisation and its history. This includes a description of what Learn Sheffield is and does, as well as reflections on what has changed between 2015 and 2023.

Some of Learn Sheffield's research methods include: sharing questionnaires with school leaders, those involved in governance and wider stakeholders as part of the evaluation process. The responses include overall perspectives on Learn Sheffield as well as feedback on the services offered by Learn Sheffield.

### **1.1.2 Evaluation Executive Summary**

The Committee is encouraged to access the independent evaluation in full, but the excerpt below provides a short independent assessment of Learn Sheffield.

The scale of engagement with Learn Sheffield has remained very high over the past eight years. Leaders and other stakeholders say that Learn Sheffield continues to successfully foster an 'excellent, collaborative culture'.

All of the leaders who responded to a questionnaire agreed that Learn Sheffield acts with integrity and reflects the values education settings promote for their children and young people. Leaders typically described Learn Sheffield as an 'ethical partnership which fosters a real sense of loyalty and fraternity' and as 'something we should be proud of.' Leaders agree that a key strength of Learn Sheffield is that it deeply understands Sheffield. Indeed, 98% of leaders who responded to the questionnaire agree that they would recommend Learn Sheffield to a colleague.

Colleagues working for Learn Sheffield have a wealth of knowledge about the context of the area and about individual schools and trusts. Leaders know that the work of Learn Sheffield is driven by the desire to improve outcomes for children and young people in Sheffield. Leaders have absolute trust in Learn Sheffield and in particular of the integrity shown by the Chief Executive of Learn Sheffield. They are confident that help and support would be found or signposted, adding 'Learn Sheffield are always willing to be involved, even in the most difficult of times. You are never turned away.'

Learn Sheffield oozes collaboration. Leaders consider Learn Sheffield has been instrumental in 'keeping many schools working together' and 'maintaining partnerships and trust.' Leaders particularly valued the work of Learn Sheffield during the Covid pandemic.

Learn Sheffield believes that an infrastructure of partnership meetings is essential. The vast majority of leaders who responded to the questionnaire agree, typically commenting that: 'Learn Sheffield is very proactive in developing a strong infrastructure' and acts as a 'vehicle for partnerships.' Some leaders say partnerships are 'shaped in the right way'. On the other hand, others are of the view that it would be beneficial to reconsider the current structure of groups and

partnerships, as ‘there seems to be some duplication’, particularly regarding the information shared.

Since Learn Sheffield was formed in 2015, the proportion of good or better settings in Sheffield has improved markedly. The vast majority of school leaders spoken to during the evaluation confirmed the view that Learn Sheffield’s support before and during Ofsted inspections is excellent. They talked about the positive impact of Learn Sheffield through providing support and challenge for senior and middle leaders during school reviews, as well as a strong professional development offer for example, in particular subject areas. Leaders were almost unanimous in their view that the work of Learn Sheffield contributes positively to school improvement and therefore to rising inspection outcomes.

Despite the very impressive Ofsted trend, pupils’ outcomes in Sheffield largely remain below the national average. Data continues to be forensically analysed by the Learn Sheffield team with a view to identifying and addressing any underlying trends. Analysis shows that priorities need to focus primarily on supporting leaders of various settings to address common challenges, such as: improving attendance; helping all pupils do as well as they can, particularly disadvantaged children and those with SEND; improving pupils’ outcomes and improving behaviour.

The development and training programme offered by Learn Sheffield has developed significantly over the past eight years. Analysis of the numbers of settings accessing Learn Sheffield training suggests leaders consider that the training offered is helping to improve key aspects of their work. Nevertheless, leaders say that it would be beneficial if Learn Sheffield planned its CPD programme much earlier in the school year. It is suggested that Learn Sheffield routinely canvasses the views of setting leaders, Multi-academy Trust (MAT) leaders and the Learn Sheffield Improvement Partner Team (LSIP) team to ensure the CPD programme aligns with the key MAT, individual school and Sheffield priorities and to avoid replicating training already scheduled.

Learn Sheffield is currently reviewing its subscription model to ensure it is financially viable and to ensure CPD and in-school support provided continues to meet the needs of its subscribing settings. As Learn Sheffield reviews the structure and shape of its work and its financial viability, it is important it maintains and continues to build on its many strengths. Succession plans need to be in place to consider the ‘future proofing’ and leadership of Learn Sheffield. It is vital that the leadership structure of Learn Sheffield going forward has enough capacity to respond to future opportunities and the need for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of the school improvement services (including requests from other local areas) and has more distributed leadership.



It is recommended that Learn Sheffield continues to build both its Improvement Partner team and its team of school-based Support Partners, through rigorous recruitment and induction processes. Learn Sheffield continues to deliver very well on its motto, 'By Sheffield. For Sheffield. In collaboration'.

### **1.1.3 Learn Sheffield Future Shape**

The purpose of the evaluation was to help Learn Sheffield ensure its improvement priorities are the right ones for education settings, children and young people in Sheffield and to help ensure that the structure and shape of its work is relevant for the next stage of its development.

By the time of this Committee meeting, Learn Sheffield expects to have produced a document responding to the evaluation. This will address the recommendations made to Learn Sheffield and sharing what it has learned for the city, the organisation and for place-based education partnerships.

### **1.1.4 Sheffield Performance Analysis Headlines**

As discussed earlier, the Committee may wish to access the full Sheffield Performance Analysis 2023 and the three Insight Reports (SEND / Attendance / Outcomes) which were amongst the supporting documents for the Learn Sheffield evaluation. Accompanying slides will be shared at the Committee Meeting, on the projector, to support any further lines of enquiry by members. The public can access the full report on the Learn Sheffield website.

- **Ofsted Judgements**

Sheffield has the strongest Ofsted outcomes that it has ever had. In 2015 Sheffield was almost 10 percentage points below national for the proportion of its schools that were judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted. In September 2023 Sheffield is national (+0.9% points) for the second consecutive year.

For example, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 Sheffield had 89.8% of its settings judged as good or better by Ofsted. The previous year it was 88.6%. We are 0.2% 'behind other core cities but (as mentioned) 0.9%+ above national average. We have made progress each year and have increased in 4.1% since 2020.

This means that there are twenty-one thousand more Sheffield children and young people attending good or better schools in September 2023 than there were in September 2015. At the start of the current academic year just over ten thousand Sheffield pupils were attending a school not currently judged to be good by Ofsted.

- **Pupil Characteristics and SEND**

There are 76,581 pupils in Sheffield. 14,881 have an identified Special Educational Need. This is 19%. 3,099 have an Educational Health Care Plan. Roughly 4%. Speech and Language; Autism and Social, Emotional and Mental Health are the three main 'primary needs' in SEN. The SEND Insight Report notes that, despite the increase in demand in this area, Sheffield's level of demand is around half of what would be expected according to national data.

27,478 pupils are eligible for Free School Meals. (Though Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils all receive a Free School Meal despite a family's income. This equates to 35%. 18,131 have English as an Additional Language. 58% of Sheffield's school children are classified as White British. 8% are classified as Pakistani; 5% are classified as Black African; 5% as White and Black Caribbean. The remaining 24% is equally shared across 'other Asian;' 'other white European;' 'Roma;' 'Other Eastern European;' 'other Ethnic' or 'other mixed' backgrounds. Arabic; Urdu; Punjabi; Slovak & Somali are the 5 main additional languages spoken in Sheffield Schools.

Since 2016 there has been an increase in 6,000 young people in Sheffield's schools. This will be down to birth rates and moving to Sheffield. Most of the increase is in the Secondary Sector. There are an additional 500 pupils in Special Schools since 2016. There has been an increase in 1,400 of pupils with an EHCP since 2016. Autism has risen from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> most prevalent need in Sheffield's schools.

- **Attendance**

Current attendance data states that in all schools, the National Picture is 93.4%. Persistent absence is still 20%.

In the first term of 2023 (September – December) Sheffield's Primary School attendance was 94.5%.

Sheffield's Secondary School was 91.5%. Sheffield's Special School attendance was 86.7%.

In the Autumn term, 16,600 young people missed at least one day of school every fortnight. 13% of young people in Special Schools are attending less than half the time and 38% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals are missing at least one day a fortnight.

The attendance of around 1,100 young people would need to improve to above 90% to bring persistent absence rates in Sheffield in line with National, but this would still mean that over 1/5 of young people were missing at least one day a fortnight.

Sheffield's attendance figures are below national but in line with Core Cities and levels of deprivation, which has not previously been the case.

The analysis now includes, however, outcomes by attendance band. This demonstrates the extent to which the likelihood of achieving the expected standard at each stage of education declines at each band of attendance.

- **Attendance and Outcomes correlations:**

If a child in Foundation Stage (often called Reception year: circa 5 years old) attends over 95% of the time 78% of these pupils will achieve a Good Level of Development at the end of their first year at school. If they are persistently absent (<90%) then only 48% will achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD).

In Year 1 if a child attends 95%+ 85% will pass their Phonics Screening Test (PST). If they are persistently absent (<90%) then only 61% will pass their PST.

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6 SATS) those pupils who attend 95%+ 64% will pass their SATS whereas if a child is persistently absent only 34% will pass their SATS.

In Secondary Settings, we see a similar pattern. Once attendance drops below 90% the chance of achieving a grade 4+ in English & Maths drops significantly. Nearly 28% of the KS4 cohort (Year 10&11) had an average attendance below 90%.

If a child in KS4 attends 95%+ 77.8% will go on to achieve a grade 4+ in English and Maths. If they are persistently absent, then only 42.8% of the cohort will achieve a grade 4+ in core subjects.

Attendance will be a priority for the city because of the impact that it has on the outcomes of children and young people. Sheffield is the second strongest core city (of eight) in terms of quality of education (Ofsted outcomes) but fifth strongest (on average) for both outcomes and for attendance. If Sheffield was also second for attendance it would be likely to correspond with a similar improvement in pupil outcomes.

- **Exclusions**

Exclusions are included in the performance analysis but routinely discussed by this Committee in a separate part of the work plan. The slide below provides the summary from this section in the performance analysis report.

In the primary phase, Sheffield is above Core Cities and national in relation to suspensions. It is in line with Core Cities but above national in relation to exclusions.

In the secondary phase, Sheffield is in line with Core Cities but above national in relation to suspensions. It is above both Core Cities and national in relation to exclusions.

In 2021/22 3,300 young people in Sheffield were suspended from school. Those pupils eligible for Free School Meals and with SEND were over 3 times more likely to be suspended. 92 young people were permanently excluded from school in 2021/22. This is 27 more young people than the national average.

- **Attainment and Progress.**

- 1.) At each Key Stage, the gap between attainment in Sheffield and the national average is around 2-4% points.
- 2.) Attendance; deprivation and ethnicity impact on outcomes meaning that some pupils are significantly less likely to achieve than others.
- 3.) At each Key Stage, less than ½ of pupils with attendance below 90% achieve the required standard at the end of each Key Stage.

The headlines below provide headline information for city performance at EYFS (Early Years), Key Stage 2 (primary SATs) and Key Stage 4 (secondary GCSE). More detailed information, including the performance of groups, can be found in the full performance analysis on Learn Sheffield's Web Site.

- **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Around 65% of Sheffield's children achieving a good level of development in early years settings. Sheffield continues to be above Core Cities (circa 63%) but below national (circa 67%). Although performance improved in 2023 the gap between Sheffield and national widened slightly.

Sheffield's LA ranking in this headline measure dropped in 2023 (to 117 of 152) but remained in line with deprivation. Sheffield is the third strongest core city (of eight).

- **Key Stage 2 Attainment**

In 2023, the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2 Sheffield was 56.9%. This is in line with Core Cities but below national (59.8%).

Sheffield's LA ranking in this headline measure improved slightly in 2023 (to 115) to be in line with deprivation. Sheffield is the fifth strongest core city.

- **Key Stage 4 (GCSE)**

Around 62% of Sheffield's Secondary pupils achieved a grade 4+ in English and Maths. This is slightly above other core cities but below National (67%)

Sheffield's LA ranking for attainment 8 improved slightly in 2023 (to 114) to continue to be in line with deprivation. Sheffield is the fifth strongest core city for this measure.

The progress of young people in Sheffield (the progress 8 measure) is above Core Cities but below national. Sheffield's LA ranking for progress 8 improved in 2023 (to 86) to out perform deprivation rankings. Sheffield is the fifth strongest core city for this measure.

Sheffield's rank amongst Core Cities has improved slightly since 2022 (average rank now 4.4). In 2019 Sheffield was 3rd Core City for KS4 performance.

Learn Sheffield, in conjunction with Sheffield City Council & our school leaders uses data, such as this, to consider further lines of enquiry and to consider trends and evaluations to support schools. It must be noted that this is last year's data and that cohorts of pupils will vary from year to year which may be a contributory factor in any changes in next years performance data.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 This report shows how Learn Sheffield impacts upon and supports school settings and with thorough self-evaluation and independent evaluation can continue to support children and young people's outcomes.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 We have engaged with Learn Sheffield and this organisation, in turn, engages with external evaluation

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

- 4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 An EIA has been carried out showing pupil outcomes in Education and the educational demographics in school settings will impact upon all characteristics of race, gender and ethnicity. This data is used to inform

setting's strategies to improve pupil outcomes or identifies trends in performance.

#### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Under the Education and Inspection Act 2006, local authorities are required to carry out their duties related to the delivery of education, as far as they are able to, with the aim of: (a) advancing high-quality standards, (b) guaranteeing equitable access to educational opportunities, and (c) encouraging every child and young person involved to reach their full educational potential.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no climate implications to be considered

#### 4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 There are no other implications to be considered

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 There are no alternative options to be considered

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 For members to understand the educational landscape of pupil outcomes in Sheffield.

## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Pupil Outcomes and Impact of Learn Sheffield

**EIA ID:** 2620

**EIA Author:**

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**Proposal Outline:** An updated to pupil outcomes (2023) and demographic data in school settings following national releases of comparative data and demonstrating Learn Sheffield's impact in supporting settings in Sheffield.

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 24/25

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Andrew Jones

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**Service Area:** Education and Skills

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**EIA Start Date:** 26/02/2024

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**Lead Equality Objective:** Break the cycle and improve life chances

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**Equality Lead Officer:** Bashir Khan

### Decision Type

**Committees:** Policy Committees

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio:

Children's Services

EIA is cross portfolio:

No

EIA is joint with another organisation:

Yes

Learn Sheffield

## Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

Showing pupil outcomes in Education and the educational demographics in school settings will impact upon all characteristics of race; gender and ethnicity. This data is used to inform setting's strategies to improve pupil outcomes or identifies trends in performance.

Impacted characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Care Experienced
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sexual Orientation

## Consultation and other engagement

## Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:

Yes



Impact areas:

Year on Year

## Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required:

No

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Review Date:

26/02/2024

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan:

NA

Action plan evidence:

A review of Learn Sheffield  
<https://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/>

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures:

No

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date:

26/02/2024

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## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Andrew Jones,  
Director of Education and Skills and Joe Horobin,  
Director of Commissioning

**Report of:** *Meredith Dixon-Teasdale, Strategic Director of Children's Services*

**Report to:** *Education, Children and Family Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *19<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

**Subject:** *Update on the development of a Children's Services Belonging Framework*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 2479				
Has appropriate consultation taken place? This report outlines the approach that will be taken to coproduce the Belonging Framework.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<p><i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i></p>				

### Purpose of Report:

This paper provides an update about our work to develop a Belonging Framework.

As a reminder, we are developing a Belonging Framework to drive change - so that everything we do is focussed on developing and deepening children and young people's sense of belonging.

Children and young people's views will be central to the development of our Belonging Framework and will be at the heart of all we do.

Belonging links to our strategic priorities in the **Sheffield City Council Plan 2024 – 2028, Together we get things done**. In particular to the first priority outcome:

*A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future.*

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

1. Acknowledges our update and endorses our next steps.
2. Continues to be proactive in the development of the belonging framework, including the proposed engagement plan.
3. Notes that the development of the framework continues to be an iterative process as we gain the views of children and young people in ways that work best for them, and review and refine the framework and next steps based on this.
4. Notes the continued intention for an ongoing conversation with the Committee about belonging, including a further update presented at the Committee meeting in Summer 2024.

**Background Papers:**

*(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)*

1. Draft Belonging Framework

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Kayleigh Inman
		Legal: Nadine Wynter
		Equalities & Consultation: Bashir Khan
		Climate: Kathryn Warrington
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Cllr Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Andrew Jones</i> <i>Joe Horobin</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Director of Education and Skills</i> <i>Director of Integrated Commissioning</i>
	<b>Date:</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 We are currently speaking to stakeholders across the Council to start assimilating thinking about Belonging and how it applies to their services. We continue to liaise with colleagues in Community Youth Services to develop our approach to engagement with children and young people. We shared our initial draft ideas with the Youth Cabinet and their feedback has helped to inform our view and further develop the approach.
- 1.2 We have been reviewing what young residents have said relating to Belonging and a sense of self. From this, we are beginning to draw out possible themes and recurring issues.
- 1.3 We have started and will continue to work with colleagues across Education and Skills, Community Youth Services and Children and Families to hear their views and engage with children and young people about Belonging. We are also engaging with Learn Sheffield and schools as part of a wider engagement about the City Goals and Council's Corporate Strategy.
- 1.4 Our first piece of planned large-scale consultation with young residents will take place in Autumn 2024. We will support Community Youth Services to develop a Young Residents' Survey which will go out to all 11–18-year-olds in school in October 2024. The timing of the survey has been chosen to coincide with annual Democracy Week activities 2024. The survey will have some from a number of council areas including (but not limited to):

- Education
- Climate
- Transport
- Housing
- Access to community
- Being a young person
- Social care
- Infrastructure
- Health
- Access to your council/democracy

We will support Community Youth Services to work with colleagues in each of these areas to identify the questions they would like to ask. Community Youth Services will amend wording and draft the questions as necessary to ensure they are appropriate for engaging children and young people.

- 1.5 The Young Residents' Survey will be delivered in every secondary school in Sheffield. It will mirror the delivery model of the Sheffield Youth Cabinet elections and National Make Your Mark campaign. This saw

over 11,000 young people engage. The consultation period is to be finalised but it is anticipated that it will run for 4 weeks.

Our goal is to reach upwards of 10,000 children and young people with the Young Residents' Survey. The survey will be part of our pre-consultation work. It will be an initial large scale 'temperature check' from which we can then have more nuanced, exploratory discussions with young residents about language, assumptions and key themes.

- 1.6 A key objective of the survey is to provide us with high-level quantitative data from young residents about a range of areas that affect their lives. This methodology offers scoping questions which will then allow Community Youth Services to run in-depth workshops and creative consultation collaboratively with children and young people. It will help us break down the findings into themes, trends and specifics and to help draw out what belonging means.

Our overarching priority is for the voice of Sheffield young residents to be at the core of the development of the Belonging framework. This means committing to deep and meaningful participation – where we can challenge young people and they can challenge us, creating an authentic dialogue.

- 1.7 The timescale of the survey will allow us to engage more thoroughly with providers and others in the coming weeks. This will give us the opportunity to spend more time with a wide range of learning provision and care and support to get our questions right.
- 1.8 In the lead up to the survey, we will continue to work with schools to explore Belonging with them and seek their views. This will include school visits and events. We will also use other opportunities that present themselves to pick up conversations around Belonging. We are exploring whether and how Artificial Intelligence (AI) might help us to pick up the views of children and young people in a more efficient and effective way.
- 1.9 We continue to work with Professor Kathryn Riley, who is a leading international voice in the field of Belonging. She will work with schools and other services to raise further awareness, and generate discussion about, Belonging with them.

1.10 **Questions for Members to consider in approving the proposal:**

- i. Will the proposed approach enable the optimum number of children and young people to engage in the consultations?
- ii. How can Members beyond the Education, Children & Families Committee become aware of this approach and shape the Belonging Framework from within other committees and other activities undertaken by the Council?

- iii. Does the Committee feel that the planned approach of carefully building up consultations is appropriate and what is the Committee's view on engaging with organisations beyond the Council?

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 The Belonging Framework and our approach to its development will feed into to a number of the ambitions within the Council's Corporate Plan. It will contribute to our aim of 'happy young people who have the start they need for the future they want'.

There is also a strong link with our aim of healthy lives and wellbeing for all.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 Ensuring that children and young people's voices drive this approach is absolutely vital. We have set out above how we have sought the views of young people and also our plans for consultation with young residents over the coming months. We will continue to work with schools and other stakeholders to explore Belonging with them and seek their views. We will also use other opportunities that present themselves to create opportunities for conversations around Belonging.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

- 4.1.1 Decisions need to consider the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and highlights with this framework we will be better able to engage with

children and young people, cutting across various characteristics. The engagement with a wide range of children and young people's voices later this year will help inform the strategy for Belonging moving forward.

#### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this update.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 Whilst this strategy won't have significant climate impacts, the Education, Children and Families Committee Climate Statement that was considered by Strategy and Resources Committee in December included the Belonging Strategy as being a key piece of policy on this Committee's work programme that would have a positive impact to the sense of pride in the places children and young people call home and may in time lead to them going to school and socialising in their community, reducing the need for travel.

#### 4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 There are no other implications to consider

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 The alternative options are to consult young residents on a smaller scale but more quickly or to use feedback we have already received and not seek any more.

5.2 We do not recommend either of these approaches given feedback from the Youth Cabinet which has informed our approach and how vital it is to the development of a meaningful Belonging Framework that we carry out authentic consultation that reflects a wide range of children and young people's views. The volume of consultation that we anticipate will be achieved by the Young Residents' Survey, will give us a much wider reach and in doing so provide feedback that reflects the personality and diversity of the city.

5.3 When children and young people feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, their peers, and their communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for their learning and development. Positive messages about their families, backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, and languages help children and young people to develop pride in who they are. These messages also give them



confidence to voice their views and opinions, to make choices, and to help shape their own learning, development and future.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 A Belonging Framework will ensure that everything we do is focussed on developing or deepening children and young people's sense of belonging. It will be designed so that other parts of the Council and other organisations can review and "attach" their contribution to belonging to the framework.
- 6.2 Our approach to engagement and plans for consultation will mean that we can carry out authentic consultation with children and young people. It will also ensure that we can fully explore Belonging with other stakeholders, listening to their views and allowing us to develop other opportunities for engagement as they present themselves.
- 6.3 Outcomes for the Belonging Framework will have a qualitative and quantitative focus. They will be developed iteratively through the process of co-production. These outcomes may relate to individual experience, happiness, fulfilment, purpose, stability and will relate back to our vision, however we will be led by what children and young people tell us.

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## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Belonging Framework

**EIA ID:** 2479

**EIA Author:** Eleanor Pryde (NCC)

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**Proposal Outline:**

Our proposal is to coproduce a Belonging Framework with children and young people to drive change – so that everything we do is focussed on developing or deepening children and young people’s sense and experience of belonging. We want the Belonging Framework to become an overarching guide for all work in Children’s Services and further afield in the future. To this end, we intend to talk, with children and young people, to partners including education settings, community partners and the voluntary sector. Our aspiration is that every child in Sheffield feels they belong and they have a place where they can grow and become who they want to be. The broader aims of the framework are to:

- Enable the voice of children and young people to be heard and to allow this voice to help shape our policies as we develop them.
- Encourage healthy debate and discussion with our colleagues, teams, service and partners around the concept of belonging and how we can successfully implement this, beginning with children and young people.
- Establish connections with other teams / services within the authority to look at whether they are already actively promoting the concept of belonging for children and young people – and if so, how are they doing this?
- Develop a common language between services that allow us to have a child-centred focus in everything that we do.

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**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

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**Year Of Proposal:** 23/24

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**Lead Director for proposal:** Andrew Jones

Service Area:

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EIA Start Date: 04/12/2023

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Lead Equality Objective: Leading the city in celebrating and promoting inclusion

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Equality Lead Officer: Bashir Khan

## Decision Type

Committees: Policy Committees

- Education, Children & Families

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Education and Skills

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EIA is cross portfolio: Yes

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EIA is joint with another organisation: No

## Overview of Impact

Overview Summary: The framework should have a positive impact, helping us to reach more children and young people and cutting across multiple characteristics. We expect to continue redeveloping the framework in order to meet the changing needs of children and young people, in the years to come.

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Impacted characteristics:

Carers  
Cohesion  
Disability  
Gender Reassignment  
Health  
Partners  
Poverty & Financial Inclusion  
Pregnancy/Maternity  
Race  
Religion/Belief  
Sex  
Sexual Orientation  
Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors

## Consultation and other engagement

## Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative impact:

Yes

We are at the early stages of developing the framework. We still need to do much consultation to develop the content and direction, so although many people are aware, there are people and teams that we have not yet engaged with. We recognise that, to get it right, we must be led by children and young people in the development of this framework. Their voice will be central to how we shape and amend the framework in future. We need to hear what children and young people understand by belonging and to identify what helps them to feel like they do or do not belong. This will help identify what is most important to children and young people and how we will all judge and determine our future success. Our engagement with children and young people will include:

- Children who have been excluded from school.
- Children looked after and care leavers.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and/or additional needs.
- Children who are from minority ethnic groups and backgrounds.
- Children who are LGBTQ+

We understand that multiple experiences, identities and inequalities can overlap, interact and compound a person's disadvantage - intersectionality - we will be mindful of this throughout our engagement with children and young people. Our

approaches will be developed working with colleagues including from across Education and Skills, Community Youth Services, and Children and Families. We have begun conversations with various stakeholders across the council to start pulling together ideas about belonging and how it applies to their areas. We have also begun reviewing what children and young people have said previously that relates to belonging and we are working with colleagues in Children's Services to create a consultation plan for children and young people over the next few weeks and months. We know that we cannot do this alone and, as a Council, we have seen the amazing work that schools, communities, voluntary, community and faith groups, and others do to foster a sense of belonging. We would like to connect with those who have been successful and share their good practice. We are also mindful of how we support those who do not feel they belong and what we can do, together, to help those children, young people and families. Update for 04.03.24: We have been reviewing what young residents have said relating to Belonging and a sense of self. From this, we are beginning to draw out possible themes and recurring issues. Our first piece of planned large-scale consultation with young residents will take place in Autumn 2024. We will support Community Youth Services to develop a Young Residents' Survey which will go out to all 11–18-year-olds in school in October 2024. The timing of the survey has been chosen to coincide with annual Democracy Week activities 2024. The survey will have questions from a number of council areas including (but not limited to):

- Education
- Climate
- Transport
- Housing
- Access to community
- Being a young person
- Social care
- Infrastructure
- Health
- Access to your council/democracy

The Young Residents' Survey will be delivered in every secondary school in Sheffield. It will mirror the delivery model of the Sheffield Youth Cabinet elections and National Make Your Mark campaign. This saw over 11,000 young people engage. The consultation period is to be finalised but it is anticipated that it will run for 4 weeks. A key objective of the survey is to provide us with high-level quantitative data from young residents about a range of areas that affect their lives. This methodology offers scoping questions which will then allow Community Youth Services to run in-depth workshops and creative consultation collaboratively with children and young people. It will help us break down the findings into themes, trends and specifics and to help draw out what belonging means. We will also continue to work with schools to explore Belonging with them and seek their views. This will include school visits and events.

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Impact areas:

Year on Year

Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required:

Yes

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Review Date:

21/02/2024

## PART B - Full Impact Assessment

### Health

Staff Impacted:

No

Customers Impacted:

Yes

Description of Impact:

Research (by Professor Kathryn Riley – [www.theartofpossibilities.org.uk](http://www.theartofpossibilities.org.uk)) shows the impact belonging can have on wellbeing. With regards to belonging at school, it has demonstrated:

- Children and young people who have a sense of belonging in school tend to be happier and more confident and perform better academically.
- A student's sense of belonging to school is a rich and substantial protective factor against mental health problems such as stress, depression and anxiety.
- School belonging in adolescence can have a protective effect in adulthood.
- Belonging has been identified as the largest known correlate with depression in adolescence. We expect that the Belonging Framework will help health outcomes, especially because this cohort of children and young people has been through a very challenging time in last three or four years, with the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis and it is well known that there has been a knock on impact on health and wellbeing.

Name of Lead Health Officer:

Comprehensive Assessment  
Being Completed:

No

Public Health Lead signed off health  
impact(s):

## Age

Staff Impacted:

No

Customers Impacted:

Yes

Description of Impact:

The Belonging Framework is aimed at ensuring all children and young people in the city feel a sense of belonging and is about our commitment to them, so it fully affects them. If we get it right and implement a belonging framework that is built around the views of children and young people, then we will be able to fulfil our vision that Sheffield is an inclusive city where we work together to ensure that children and young people can live a happy and fulfilled life. This will have a positive impact on children and young people. Our research and consultation will include work with children and young people to get their views about what is important to them. We will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months. We will also work with children and young people's services and partners both within and outside the council to gather views and shape the framework.

## Armed Forces

Staff Impacted:

No

Customers Impacted:

Yes

Description of Impact:

We will need to put some further thought into how we reach children and young people from the armed forces or armed forces families. Their experience of belonging will potentially be very different and we need to hear it. As already stated, we will engage with



children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them. We will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

## Carers

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** As stated, we will engage with children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them and what shapes their sense of belonging. This will include young carers – currently, the city’s Youth Cabinet has two seats for young carers and we will be exploring with Community Youth Services how we can engage young carers in this work. We will continue to work with the Community Youth Service and others to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

## Care Experienced

**Staff Impacted:**

**Customers Impacted:**

**Description of Impact:**

## Cohesion

**Staff Impacted:** Yes

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** If we do this right, we anticipate improved outcomes for children and young people, which may also benefit

partners and wider within the city. We will link with colleagues in Community Development to ensure our work on Belonging complements ongoing work around strengthening communities, cohesion, and community engagement. We recognise that a sense of belonging within a child or young person's community can impact their wider sense of belonging in Sheffield city as a whole and beyond.

## Disability

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

As of November 2023, Sheffield has 5,343 children and young people with an EHCP. School Census data from January 2023 shows that Sheffield had 3,392 children and young people of compulsory school age in school in Sheffield with EHCPs and 12,491 children and young people of compulsory school age in Sheffield with SEN support. There are also children and young people who identify as having additional needs who are not at SEN Support level and whose needs are supported by their school. Research by Professor Kathryn Riley in 'Place and Belonging in School: Why it Matters Today' suggests that children with special educational needs are more likely to be excluded from school than their peers. In the 22/23 academic year in Sheffield, we know that the rate of fixed term suspensions and exclusions is higher for children and young people with SEND than it is for their peers with no identified SEND. We want all children and young people to feel a sense of belonging. This includes children and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. We are already reviewing what children and young people have told us previously and will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months. We will also work with children and young people's services and partners both within and outside the council to gather views and shape the framework. If we get this right, then the longer-term adverse impact on young people as they move through life should reduce. This could result in longer term benefits for our partners too.

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** More young people are identifying as non-binary and transgender. This is a particularly vulnerable cohort of young people and we need to make sure we hear their voice about belonging. As already stated, we will engage with children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them. We will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

## Partners

**Staff Impacted:** Yes

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** We know that we cannot do this alone and, as a Council, we have seen the amazing work that schools, communities, voluntary, community and faith groups, and others do to foster a sense of belonging. We would like to connect with those who have been successful and share their good practice. We are also mindful of how we support those who do not feel they belong and what we can do, together, to help those children, young people and families.

## Poverty & Financial Inclusion

**Staff Impacted:** No

**Customers Impacted:** Yes

**Description of Impact:** Research by Professor Kathryn Riley in 'Place and Belonging in School: Why it Matters Today' suggests that children from disadvantaged communities are twice as likely as their more advantaged peers to feel they don't belong and four times more likely to be excluded from school. Sheffield City Council's 2021/22 Annual Equality Report states that in the 2019 Indices

of Deprivation Sheffield was ranked as the 57th most deprived local authority in England (out of a total of 317), but the second least deprived of the 8 English core cities. In general, the east of the city tends to be more deprived than the west. It also states that The Cost-of-Living crisis is disproportionately impacting vulnerable groups, such as children and families, older people, disabled people and those with health issues. We want to make sure we engage children from a range of different backgrounds and from all parts of the city.

## Pregnancy / Maternity

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

As already stated, we will engage with children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them in relation to belonging. This will include young people who are parents or expectant parents. We have already begun discussions with Youth Voice and Influence teams to look at work they have recently done with young parents and how we can feed this into our engagement work. We will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

## Race

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

We know we need to vary our approaches to ensure we engage a diverse range of Sheffield communities. We are already working with Youth Voice and Influence teams to ensure we capture a wide range of children and young people's voices. The Sheffield City Council Annual Equality Report 21-22 shows that in 2021 (according to census estimates) 60-70% of children and young people aged 0-24 identified as White British, with the remaining 30-40% from all other ethnic

groups combined. Research by Professor Kathryn Riley in 'Place and Belonging in School: Why it Matters Today' suggests that children and young people from black Caribbean backgrounds are more likely to be excluded than their peers. In Sheffield in 2022-23, the number of fixed term suspensions and permanent exclusions from school was highest for white British children and young people, followed by children and young people from the white Gypsy or Roma ethnic group and from mixed white and black Caribbean backgrounds. As a percentage of ethnic group population in school as a whole, suspensions and exclusions were higher for children and young people from the white Gypsy or Roma ethnic group, Pakistani ethnic group and from mixed white and black Caribbean backgrounds compared to their peers. The Sheffield Race Equality Commission Report states that we will be an anti-racist city within three years and sets out multiple recommendations and actions to achieve this. We will need to carry out ongoing work to make sure we reach all communities and also realise that our communities are in a state of flux and new emerging communities are appearing.

## Religion / Belief

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

As already stated, we will engage with children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them and understand what creates a sense of belonging. This will include children and young people with different religions and beliefs. We will consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

## Sexual Orientation

**Staff Impacted:**

No

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

We will engage with children and young people across the city to get their views about what is important to them and to understand what shapes their sense of belonging. This will include children and young people with different sexual orientations. We will continue to consult children and young people to capture their views and develop the framework in the coming months.

**Voluntary / Community & Faith Sectors**

**Staff Impacted:**

Yes

**Customers Impacted:**

Yes

**Description of Impact:**

We know that we cannot do this alone and, as a Council, we have seen the amazing work that schools, communities, voluntary, community and faith groups, and others do to foster a sense of belonging. We would like to connect with those who have been successful and share their good practice. We are also mindful of how we support those who do not feel they belong and what we can do, together, to help those children, young people and families. If we do this right there will be longer term benefits to partners and more cohesion in the city, possibly less intervention. We anticipate improved outcomes in the longer term.

**Action Plan & Supporting Evidence**

**Outline of action plan:**

Initial draft Belonging Framework to Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2023. • Consultation with children and young people – December 2023 – March 2024 (and ongoing) • Consultation and engagement with schools (ongoing) • Consultation and engagement with partners (ongoing) Update fo 04.03.24: Initial draft Belonging Framework to Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2024. • Consultation with children and young people (ongoing) • Consultation and engagement with schools (ongoing) • Consultation and engagement with partners (ongoing)

**Action plan evidence:**

• Draft Belonging Framework • Belonging research by Kathryn Riley & co.: [www.therartofpossibilities.org.uk](http://www.therartofpossibilities.org.uk) • Sheffield City Council Annual Equalities Report 2021/22 (N.B. The next report is being done for late February

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures:

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date:

21/02/2024

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## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** (*Amanda Boughton-Brown Assistant Director Quality Assurance & Involvement and Bob Cuff School Adviser*)

**Tel:** 07407 683921

**Report of:** *Meredith Dixon-Teasdale Strategic Director of Children's Services.*

**Report to:** *Education, Children and Families Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *19<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

**Subject:** An update on work related to the Race Equality by Children's Services

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (2617)				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

To update the Committee on progress made by Children's Services on actions and steps taken towards implementing our Race Equality Objectives.

**Recommendations:**

That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee note the Children's Services progress in relation to the implementation of the Race Equality initiatives both corporately and with our children and families.

**Background Papers:**

*No background papers*

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
	Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	Climate: <i>n/a</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b> <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b> <i>Cllr Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> Amanda Boughton-Brown Bob Cuff
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Assistant Director Quality Assurance &amp; Involvement</i> <i>School Adviser</i>
<b>Date:</b> <i>19<sup>th</sup> March 2024</i>	

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Committee has sought an update on Children's Services progress in implementing the Council's race Equality Objectives.
- 1.2 Representatives from the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team, Amanda Boughton-Brown and Bob Cuff attended the new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Delivery Group on 2nd February 2024. This group has been established to help co-design the Corporate Strategy's goals as articulated in the extraordinary Strategy & Resources Committee in December 2023.

This group has brought together representatives from across the Council to examine some of the Council's Strategic Goals:

1. Leadership & Communities
2. Workforce
3. Reduce Inequalities through commissioning.

- 1.3 Moving forward, Children's Services has a firm focus on our city's children and young people, ensuring that our workforce reflects the community it serves. We will be at the heart of this co-designed EDI strategy group and will involve key members of our service teams in these discussions moving forward.
- 1.4 A particular focus will be on including children and young people's voices in this Corporate Strategy. This will not only add a sense of belonging for our children and young people but also provide a connection with the Council.
- 1.5 Children's Services also participated in Race Equality Week's 5-day challenge. As a service, we encouraged participation to drive change and deliver a clear message to teams within the directorate, demonstrating our commitment on our journey to become an anti-racist organisation. Each service area took part in the 5-day challenge and signed up to a promise that will be part of the anti-racist action plan in Children's Service. The senior leadership team made the following promise and shared it with the workforce:

- Develop reciprocal mentoring (e.g., encourage my senior managers to mentor and be reverse, reciprocal, or co-mentored).
- Develop/engage in mechanisms to identify, develop, and promote ethnically diverse people within my division to ensure there is a pipeline of senior and management level capable candidates that reflect the importance of race diversity to my organisation.
- Set targets and have an action plan for ethnically diverse recruitment, retention, and promotion, and report on them.

- 1.6 By taking part in this challenge, we made a commitment to offer safe spaces to hear the lived experiences of some of our black and minority ethnic children and young people and wanted to promote a better

understanding across our service of the impact of the beliefs and actions we take in our day-to-day lives.

1.7 Children's Services will encourage belonging through our culture and actions within the workplace and with our partners. For example, to promote this sense of belonging through race equality, Meredith Teasdale (DCS) and Bob Cuff (School Adviser) facilitated a meeting with Black and Minority Ethnic School Leaders. This was to establish a Race Equality Working Group with a focus on galvanizing support, listening to shared experiences, appointing a chair and vice-chair, and agreeing on some next steps and direction. In collaboration, Linda Joseph (Head Teacher Springfield Primary School) was acknowledged as a chair, and at the next meeting (1st March 2024), there will be an open election for a vice-chair and an invitation for Jonathan Lear (St Catherine's Primary) to share his experiences of an inclusive curriculum. Jonathan is often sought as a consultant by schools to talk about the inclusive curriculum and if/how it can be cascaded across settings.

1.8 Children & Families and Education & Skills also hosted Whole Service Events updating our teams on the Corporate response to the Race Equality Commission (Strategy & Resources Committee December 2023), and we were central players in galvanizing our schools and youth music community groups in supporting the MOBO Awards (Music of Black Origin).

1.9 Education & Skills personnel were also invited to a few Educational Settings to conduct a 'vox-pop' with children whose age range was around 13-17. One of the questions posed was: "What could Sheffield do to become an anti-racist city? What would it look like / is there anything in place already...?" In summary, their responses included: More central events that unite everyone and bring them from their community to mix and learn from other communities. Examples they gave:

- Tramlines – positive impact. Can we have more? Music unifies.
- Can we have cultural markets like we had Christmas Markets?
- More art / music / cultural events as this helps cut through identity, where people can leave their prejudices behind and come together to be educated in one another's cultures and see the positives in everyone.
- How do we convert the Sheffield Village 'feel' into a united cultural city?
- Why did 'we' paint over Black Lives Matter murals if we're an anti-racist city?
- Educate 'civically' from a much younger age? For example, Windrush and English Slave trade not taught - much more of a focus on the American Slave Trade – so can we teach a more balanced history. We're excited to continue to talk to our children and young people to elicit their opinions and views as the months progress.

1.10 Children's Services acknowledges its important reach across the city from all teams to tackling race inequalities. We are collating our varied service action plans and initiatives to identify best practice and any learning we need to do. These will be fed into the EDI Delivery Group through Amanda and Bob. For example, an anti-racist subgroup is in place to look at staffing within Children Services and how this reflects the community that it serves. Children's service within social care has developed an antiracist action plan which includes:

- Identified an area where Black staff are underrepresented to pilot in an area work towards actively recruiting BAME staff.
- Experiential days for BAME staff are set up for the beginning of March.
- Met with development in house to look at coaching for BAME staff.
- Exit questionnaires have changed, and race and diversity questions have now been added so we can learn from staff feedback.
- Children's social work matters are looking at doing a feature on social work staff, a day in the life of this will be used going forward in recruitment. Staff chosen from areas are all BAME background.
- There will be videos that are from black managers talking about their journey to give other black staff aspiration to progress within the organization. Dates booked in for video recording is 16th May.
- FIS has a day set up in March to look at diversity and race within the service.
- Fostering service is setting up a similar event over the next few months.
- Scoping exercise within the local authority to look at what training is available for mentoring, what training on coaching is this appropriate moving forward. This work is ongoing with the training and development service.
- The voice and influence workers over the next few months will be working with BAME care experienced young people around their experience of services they have received and how these could improve moving forward. One final example, in lifelong learning and skills one employee (Jacqueline Williams) is currently working on a creative action plan for recruitment and other recruitment initiatives. This will positively impact on our current workforce and any future employees of Sheffield City Council. Children's Services will be inviting employees, such as Jacqueline Williams, to attend the EDI Delivery Group to feed her creative initiatives into this newly established group. Children's Services will continue to approach race equality (and our learning in this agenda) from a position of both learning and seeking advice from its black and minority ethnic employees - and most importantly - our cities' children and young people.

## 2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 This is an ongoing iterative process ensuring the recommendations for Race Equality are progressive and ongoing.

### **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 Children's social care have a working group that meets monthly. This includes staff and managers.

Consultation with children and young people are taking place and will continue.

### **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

#### **4.1 Equality Implications**

- 4.1.1 An EIA has been conducted. Ongoing work should improve equality by ensuring that staff are supported. We will ensure BAME employees and children are involved in helping to improve services. We will update on Children's Services movement to implementing Race Equality and we will update the EIA as plans develop moving forward which will be in line with the corporate strategy and with a view on our young people.

#### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

- 4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. However, there may be a financial implication of ensuring the appropriate training is available within the city to offer mentoring and reciprocal mentoring to all

#### **4.3 Legal Implications**

- 4.3.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

#### **4.4 Climate Implications**

- 4.4.1 There are no climate implications to be considered.

#### **4.5 Other Implications**

- 4.5.1 There are no other implications to be considered

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 There are no other options to be considered

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 This report provides an update of Children's Services in implementing Race Equality



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## PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

**Proposal Name:** Race Equality Update Education, Children and Families Committee

**EIA ID:** 2617

**EIA Author:** Bob Cuff

**Proposal Outline:** An update of Children's Services in implementing Race Equality proposals. For example, Children's Services involvement with the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Delivery Group. Education & Skills establishing a School Leaders Race Network and an initial vox-pop with some children and young people.

**Proposal Type:** Non-Budget

**Year Of Proposal:** 24/25

**Lead Director for proposal:** Meredith Dixon-teasdale

**Service Area:** Children's Services

**EIA Start Date:** 22/02/2024

**Lead Equality Objective:** Leading the city in celebrating and promoting inclusion

**Equality Lead Officer:** Bashir Khan

### Decision Type

**Committees:**

## Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Children's Services

EIA is cross portfolio: No

EIA is joint with another organisation: No

## Overview of Impact

### Overview Summary:

Update on Children's Services movement to implementing Race Equality Objectives with schools and settings. Update on some pupil vox-pop ideas on becoming an anti-racist city Update on Children's Services involvement in the co-design of the Corporate Race Equality Strategy. We will update the EIA as plans develop moving forward. This will be in line with the corporate strategy and with a view on our young people.

### Impacted characteristics:

- Race
- Age
- Care Experienced

### Impacted local area(s):

All

## Consultation and other engagement

## Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative

impact:

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Impact areas:

Year on Year, Geographical Area, Across a Community of Identity/Interest

## Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required:

No

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Review Date:

22/02/2024

## Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan:

Action plan evidence:

Changes made as a result of action plan:

## Mitigation

Significant risk after mitigation measures:

Outline of impact and risks:

## Review Date

Review Date:

22/02/2024

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## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Meredith Dixon-Teasdale

**Report of:** Meredith Teasdale-Dixon

**Report to:** Education, Children and Families Committee

**Date of Decision:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Subject:** The creation of a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop practice and policy in relation to Home to School Transport

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? <i>(Insert reference number)</i>				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

This report seeks approval to appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop practice and policy in relation to Home to School Transport. Membership will be drawn from the Education Children and Families Committee. The Terms of Reference of the Group is appended to this report.

**Recommendations:**

That the Education Children and Families Policy Committee appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work to develop practice and policy in relation to Home to School Transport.

**Background Papers:**

*(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)*

- a) Terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>Kayleigh Inman</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i>
		Climate: <i>N/A</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Meredith Teasdale, Strategic Director, Children's Services</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Councillor Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Meredith Teasdale</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Strategic Director, Children's Services</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>6<sup>th</sup> March 2024</i>	

## **1. PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval and appoint a Task and Finish Group to oversee work and review the Home to School Transport Policy.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group will examine in detail the Home to School Transport Policy and consider the following:
- To review Looked After Children in receipt of a bursary or scholarship to receive a bus pass if attending a private school within the City boundary.
  - Review of the Home to School Transport Policy, with particular regard to how other local authorities process applications for Zero Fare Bus Passes for travel to faith schools.
  - Review of the information provided to parents on Home to School Transport applications when applying for secondary schools for their children.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

- 2.1 To provide appropriate home to school travel support for our Children and Young People, whilst promoting the use of 'sustainable travel and transport'.

Travelling independently develops key life-skills and leads to increased educational, social and employment opportunities in adulthood, as well as improving health outcomes and contributing to sustainable travel in the city.

The policy supports the Council's priorities for improving health and wellbeing; more children ready for learning and life; improving support to children with special educational needs or disabilities; and supporting children and young people to be safe, independent, and well.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 No prior consultation is required for this proposal.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

- 4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 The Task and Finish Group will have Member representation from the 3 largest political parties, ensuring that advice is reflective of the political makeup of the Council.

Members will have the opportunity to discuss equality and inclusivity relevant to each of the session topics.

#### 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no direct financial and commercial implications because of creating a Task and Finish Group. However, the group will consider the financial implications of policy advice provided.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 There are no direct legal implications. Policy committees may form Task Groups to assist in the completion of their duties. The membership of Task and Finish Groups is not limited to members of the appointing Policy Committee and may include in an advisory capacity people who are not elected members, as well as members of the wider Council. Policy committees may have no more than one appointed Task and Finish Group at any time.

#### 4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no direct climate implications as a result of creating a Task and Finish Group. However, climate implications and the links between the two will be one of the areas the Group will consider. CIAs will be completed as required throughout the process and for any resulting actions

#### 4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee can establish limited Task and Finish Groups each year. Setting up a Task and Finish Group for the Home to School Transport Policy will leave lower opportunity for the Committee's remaining annual work plan.

### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 An alternative would be to deliver a series of Knowledge Briefings for the Policy Committee. This was rejected as it would not enable constructive debate and advice to be provided to officers.

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Task and Finish Group will bring together a small, focused group of members to review the home to school transport policy and provide clear advice to officers developing the policy. Cross party



representation will mean that political agreement is reached at an early stage of the process allowing the Policy to progress. The Group will feedback advice given, and progress on the work programme to the Education, Children and Families committee so the Committee can make informed decisions on the Home to School Transport Policy.

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# Policy Committee Task and Finish Groups

## Terms of Reference

### Home to School Transport Policy Education Children and Families Policy Committee

#### 1 Purpose

- 1.2 The Council's Constitution outlines that Task and Finish Groups may be appointed by Policy Committees as appropriate to assist in the completion of their duties, save that each Policy Committee may have no more than one appointed Task and Finish Group at any time.

The purpose of such Task and Finish Groups is to examine in detail specific issues or aspects of policy, procedure or service, according to their remit. These groups do not take any decisions but inform the deliberations of the Policy Committee. They should provide regular progress updates to meetings of the Policy Committee

Details of the scope of this Task and Finish Group are set out in Section 4.

#### 2 Membership and attendance

- 2.1 Member of the group will consist of

Membership is drawn initially from the Education, Children and Families Policy committee. This may be the whole Committee or some of the Committee. When not the whole committee, membership of the Group will be proportionate to the political representation on the committee.

The Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group will consist of:

- 5 Elected Members and include 2 from the Labour Party, 2 from the Liberal Democrats party and 1 from the Green Party
- The Group will include at least one of the following members of the Education Children and Families Policy Committee:
  - Chair
  - Deputy Chair
  - Group Spokesperson
- Councillors from each party will be appointed based on the topic for review. Members of the group may have a special knowledge or interest in the subject being considered.
- The Group may co-opt non-voting members who are not elected Members of the Council to assist in its consideration of an issue. This could include other council officers and representatives of other agencies for specific items.

- 2.2 Members of the Group will:

- Be polite and respectful and encourage constructive debate across the range of issue.

- Prepare for each meeting by reading briefings and fact sheets relevant to the task and finish group purpose.
- Request further information to help shape thinking where it is practicable to provide this within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Will request that certain issues are considered by the Group where this is practicable within the constraints of the timetable set out for the group
- Will liaise with their relevant political parties in advance of the meetings and be empowered to provide advice within the remit of the task and finish group

### 2.3 Chair :

Task and Finish Groups will require a Chair to lead the review, chair meetings and report on progress. The Chair should be appointed based on the topic for review and can either be appointed by the parent committee or at the first meeting of the Task and finish group

2.4 The Task and Finish Group will be supported by officers from the relevant directorate. Officers will provide relevant material and take action notes for the Group

2.5 Task and Finish groups do not meet in public session and are not subject to the Access to Information Requirements.

2.6 The Group will be accountable to the Education, Children and Families Committee and report on progress made against the review of the home to school transport policy and any policy development in this area

## 3 Meeting Frequency

3.1 4/5 meetings will be held. Meetings will take place fortnightly and last for 1.5 hours. Meetings will be in person where practicably possible or online. Additional meetings can be requested by Group Members by exception and will be facilitated where practicable with the time constraints of the Group

3.2 The Task and Finish Group will seek to bring its work to a conclusion and submit a report to the Policy Committee by September 2024

## 4 Scope of the Task and Finish Group

4.1 The Group has been established to consider

- An amendment to the Home to school Transport policy to the effect that look after children in receipt of a bursary or scholarship be allowed to receive a bus pass if attending private school within the City Boundary
- A review of the Home to School Transport Policy, with particular regard to how other local authorities process applications for Zero Fare Bus Passes for travel to faith schools

- A review of the information given to parents on Home to School Transport applications when applying for secondary schools for their children; to look at incorporating the following
  - to review the current information pack for parents with particular reference to travel;
  - admissions information written in plain language;
  - a summary of important points to take into account when choosing a school, including the potential financial consequences of their choice;
  - support for parents who have English as a second or third language;
  - support for feeder schools in offering accurate advice to parents when applying for school places; and
  - engagement with parents in order to test the new information pack to make sure that it is user friendly.

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## Report to Policy Committee

### Author/Lead Officer of Report:

Meredith Dixon-Teasdale, Strategic Director of Children's Services

**Report of:** Meredith Dixon-Teasdale, Strategic Director of Children's Services

**Report to:** Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

**Date of Decision:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Subject:** Update report from the Strategic Director of Children's Services

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? ( <i>Insert reference number</i> )				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
<i>"The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i>				

### Purpose of Report:

The paper provides a Strategic Director's update on the performance and governance of Children's services, including progress in meeting DCS (Director of Children's Services) accountabilities and delivering on our statutory requirements. It also provides an update regarding progress in relation to the Council's Delivery Plan, key strategic events and issues on the horizon.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that Education Children and Families Policy Committee:

1. Notes the Strategic Director of Children's Services report and agrees key activity for the coming months.

**Background Papers:**

Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children’s Services and the Lead Member for Children’s Services

<b>Lead Officer to complete:-</b>	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Kayleigh Inman
	Legal: Nadine Wynter
	Equalities & Consultation: Climate:
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b> <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b> <i>Councillor Dawn Dale</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Meredith Dixon-Teasdale</i>
	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Strategic Director, Children’s Services</i>
<b>Date:</b> 05/03/24	



## 1. PROPOSAL

1.1 This report starts with recognition and gratitude for all those working in children's and education system, who continue to work together to ensure our children and young people are safe, healthy, attaining and moving towards an independent adulthood.

### 1.2 Leadership and Partnership

I have continued to establish good working relationships with Leaders across the system who work for or with children, young people and their families. I continue to lead on a number of Partnership Boards and also to attend others to ensure advocacy for children and young people.

I have attended both the Primary and Secondary Partnership Meetings run by Learn Sheffield. It was a very helpful meeting to hear schools view about how we are supporting our children and young people to stay in school, what more we can do and how we improve our governance and decision-making processes. This conversation was supplemented by Learn Sheffield very helpful insight reports that give a clear picture of where we are as a city and draws out where we could concentrate our efforts to potentially effect transformational change for our children and young people by focusing on speech, language and communications skills. Here is the link to the Learn Sheffield reports [Learn Sheffield | By Sheffield. For Sheffield. In Collaboration.](#)

I continue to work with health colleagues through the Children's Delivery Group and Health Care Partnership to both look at joint commissioning services and also raising the profile of children and young people's needs in the health system. Our priorities for the coming few years are: Best Start in Life; Neurodiversity, SEMH and Speech Language and Communication; and how we share risk and resource to ensure our children with most complex needs are placed in a local home in Sheffield. This also is supplemented by conversations with CEX across the Health system about a focus on children and young people including ensuring clear oversight of the emotional health and well being pathway within Children's Governance.

Work on Race Equality is ongoing. A well attended meeting took place with Education system leaders - Linda Joseph and Linda Goodall are leading this work. A letter is to be sent out on behalf of the group to all schools to gain a baseline of staff in schools from the global majority. This will then inform work around mentoring, training and recruitment.

We have had a good focus on Early Years and reprioritising this area across the Council this was also supported by a very good Early Help Workshop which brought organisations and staff from across Sheffield to look at how they can prioritise prevention across the age ranges but also within early years.

I have made a commitment to attend all Special Schools in Sheffield before Easter. My visits to date have been illuminating and helpful and will support with the transformation work we are undertaking to improve outcomes for our children and young people in the City.

As chair of the Youth Justice Board we had a very helpful development session. A key activity is improving attendance at the Board particularly from Senior Leaders and also improving the profile of the work of our very good team. I have committed to speaking to all

statutory partners to ensure the right level of leadership. It would also be helpful to bring regular updates to this Committee on the work in this area.

I have again visited a number of our children's homes. I have again seen great work taking place with our children. The OFSTED inspections of our homes sees continued progress at improving outcomes and also building on robust strong leadership and management.

Finally, I attended the Cynefin workshop hosted by Learn Sheffield. This highlighted a new and very innovative way to listen to our people and to provide feedback in a timely way. This is an area I and the team are continuing to explore but has a real possibility to shift how we engage and listen.

### **Over the coming months**

I will continue to develop relationships and work to ensure that we have a common vision and plan for the children and young people in our city linked to the Our City Goals work. I will also continue to be a key advocate for all our children and young people. I am striving to be a clear visible leader where my mantra is that children and young people should belong in a loving family and stable home, they should belong in their local school, be a valued part of their local community where they are listened to and are key to decision making and are celebrated for the dynamism and innovation as key residents in the City of Sheffield.

My focus over the coming months is on key transformation themes which look to improve outcomes, improve independence and also provide cost-efficiency. The key areas are:  
Address our high- cost placement issues in collaboration across Education, Health and Social care

Graduated approach ensures our children with SEND are in their local school, with their needs met which is shown by improved attendance at school and higher attainment  
Address the increase demand and cost of transporting our children to school particularly focusing on how we promote independent travel for our young people with SEND

## **1.3 Safeguarding**

### **1.3.1 Residential Service**

Over the last month, the residential service and project team have been developing a 10 year residential strategy which sets out the ongoing transformation programme. Over the coming years there is a plan to have smaller children's homes, that represent more of a family home. There is a lot of activity taking place across various workstreams with support from colleagues in Finance, HR and the project team and over the last month we have been looking at developing practice guidance on expenditure within the homes and exploring different establishments that would fit to smaller homes.

There is also a strong focus on practice to ensure there is more consistency across the service. This involves work with the Voice and Influence team who are supporting the service on developing our own Sheffield City Council Children's Residential Logo, and using key messages from previously cared for young people to develop our vision and ethos which will be used in all of the homes Statement of Purpose.

### **1.3.2 Short Breaks**

We have had sessions with the parent carer forum, fostering, commissioning from adults and children, as well as SNIPS, so that we could really understand the needs of families

and children. As part of this there will be a steering group to further develop the offer. We want to start with getting wider feedback from families. We are considering using Disability Sheffield to establish if they will do some scoping work to see what families and children need by offering them sessions.

### **1.3.3 Fostering and Family Based Care**

A new recruitment campaign has been launched on social media for Fostering and Supported Lodgings. This generated over 50 enquiries in January.

An afternoon Tea Party was held to celebrate our Fostering community and thank them for their commitment over the years.

Alongside mainstream Fostering recruitment there has been significant raise in the assessment of Kinship care placements in Sheffield, This allows children who are unable to live at home to live with family members or friends. Between 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 we have had 203 referrals into the team for viability assessments. Many of these are sibling groups but a sibling group is counted in these figures as one referral.

During the same period, we have had 165 children referred into our team for a Reg 24 fostering assessment or kinship assessment. At the current time 75 of these have closed (because, for example, an alternative order has been made or the child has moved placements).

We currently have 90 children in Reg 24 placements, this is the highest number ever – this equates to 67 households currently being assessed. There are also 8 assessments awaiting allocation.

## **1.4 Race Equality**

Children's Services have completed the 5-day challenge across social care and pledges have been made on how to become an anti-racist service.

Children's Social Work Matters are writing a piece on a day in the life of social workers in areas where BAME social workers are underrepresented. The areas they will cover is fostering, independent reviewing service, child protection service. This will be used as part of ongoing recruitment.

The experiential days for BAME staff in areas where they are underrepresented start at the beginning of March in the child protection service. Workers have been identified staff will have the opportunity to shadow a Child protection Co-ordinator which will hopefully encourage those communities under presented to apply.

In May Children's Social Work Matters will be doing a video for the service which will be an aspirational video it will be a group of BAME managers talking about their journey into management this will be shared at a whole workforce event.

Over the past 2 years we have had a rolling recruitment of international social workers and we currently have 24 international social workers mainly of African descent. A few more workers are joining us over the next few weeks.

#### **Other upcoming actions:**

- Further work needs to be completed on reciprocal mentoring programme. This not quite what Nottingham were offering. This will require financial commitment and will

need to be commissioned. There are currently a group of BAME managers and Ally's who want to be part of this mentoring programme

## **1.5 Educational excellence**

Pat Butterell, Assistant Director of School Effectiveness at Sheffield Council, and Bob Cuff, School Advisor have been actively engaging with schools on a regular basis, fostering positive relationships both directly within schools and through the Learn Sheffield initiative. Meanwhile, Bob has been dedicated to advancing the cause of the Race Equality Commission (REC) and is actively involved in a project aimed at supporting BAME school leaders. Additionally, Bob has been collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce and the Sheffield universities to enhance representation at the school governance level.

Addressing attendance challenges remains a top priority, and collaborative efforts with Learn Sheffield have led to the development of city-wide strategies. We are pleased to note that the Department for Education (DFE) has expressed a keen interest in joining our efforts to tackle attendance issues.

### **Learn Sheffield have now completed their self-evaluation.**

The evaluation spanning from 2015 to 2023 provides a comprehensive overview of its achievements, challenges, and areas of focus.

Positive feedback highlighted the organisation's strengths, including high engagement, a collaborative culture, and a commitment to integrity. An impressive 98% of leaders recommended Learn Sheffield to their colleagues. While there was notable improvement in Ofsted outcomes, pupil outcomes remained below the national average. Challenges identified included attendance issues, support for disadvantaged children, and addressing the needs of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Training Program and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) were acknowledged for their positive impact on leaders. However, there were suggestions for improvement in early planning and alignment with organizational priorities. Learn Sheffield is actively reviewing its subscription model to ensure financial viability, with a strong emphasis on succession planning and leadership continuity.

The Sheffield Performance Analysis highlighted the organisation's success in improving Ofsted outcomes over the years. Despite this progress, pupil outcomes, particularly in attendance, remained a priority. Exclusion rates were in line with Core Cities but below the national average. However, pupil attainment lagged behind the national average.

The future direction of Learn Sheffield is outlined with the evaluation aiming to guide improvement priorities and maintain relevance. Continuous development of the Improvement Partner team and Support Partners is recommended.

The Performance Statistics presented various metrics, including Ofsted judgments indicating that 89.8% of settings were judged as good or better. Pupil characteristics revealed that 19% had identified SEND, and 35% were eligible for Free School Meals. While attendance rates were relatively high at 94.5% in primary and 91.5% in secondary, persistent absence stood at 20%. Exclusion rates were above the national average, with 92 permanent exclusions in the 2021/22 academic year. Attainment and progress were reported below the national average, with notable gaps observed in attendance, deprivation, and ethnicity.

Learn Sheffield's proactive use of data, in collaboration with Sheffield City Council and school leaders, was emphasised for trend analysis and to provide support to schools. The evaluation underscored the importance of considering variations in cohorts when interpreting performance data.

## **1.6 Lifelong Learning and Skills – post-16 and adult education.**

The Lifelong Learning and Skills Service presented our 2022/23 Self-Assessment Report and our performance report for term 1 of 2023/24 to our Advisory Board on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. Our self-assessment is that the Lifelong Learning and Skills Service continues to provide education that is good with some outstanding areas of delivery, which remains in line with the inspection report produced by [Ofsted in](#) May 2023.

The term 1 performance report was shared with the Economic Skills Development Committee on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 as an information update about activity against our AEB grant funding from SYMCA (receipt of which had previously been approved by this committee). The committee were also informed about delivery against our Study Programme grant funding and Apprenticeship funding through the ESFA. The performance report was well received.

In summary, performance against targets for retention of learners, attendance of learners and predicted achievement of learners across the service is on track and is expected to exceed national averages across all three areas of our delivery (adult learning, high needs study programme learning and apprenticeships).

Delivery of the DfE “Multiply” (adult numeracy) programme in Sheffield, (again grant funded through SYMCA) is about to enter its final year (year 3) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and continues to be a success in Sheffield based on performance against targets. SYMCA have worked with adult learning (FACES) within Lifelong Learning and Skills to consider how our contracted providers can support the region to address underperformance elsewhere by extending their offer in year.

Finally, students at Sheaf have been successful for the third year running in winning the Better Learners Better Workers NHS Promotional Campaign. Students created a rap [video](#) to promote awareness about responding to a stroke victim which the campaign organisers felt was worthy of the top prize, on the back of two previous years where Sheaf was also successful.

## **1.7 Early Years Overview**

We continue to maintain an overview of the quality of provision both for the Early Years and Schools sectors. Clearly, funding to the sector is a key factor which underpins quality of provision and sustainability of the workforce.

### **1.7.1 Overview of PVI (Private, Voluntary and Independent) settings and Ofsted grades (as of /26/2/2024)**

Current Group Care settings = 123 (including 2 maintained Schools)  
Childminders = 192

Ofsted Grade	Outstanding	Good	Require improvement	Inadequate	Newley registered	Met	Not met	Agency childminders
Group care Providers	23	90	2	0	8			
Child-minders	12	142	1	1	15	21	0	10- @ home childcare 7- Tiney Community

Group care providers – The 8 newly registered settings are made up of 5 new registrations and 3 re-registrations.

Childminders – Included in the figures above are 21 childminders who are on the early years register but are either not minding early years children at the moment or have no early year’s children on their register at the moment. 4 childminders are not receiving support or engaging with Local Authority – they are not FEL (Funded Early Learning)

The Quality Improvement Team monitor this by contact calls as well as working with Ofsted and Childcare Planning, sharing updates of resignations or information shared by the provider. There are 5 childminders who have informed us they may retire or de-register with Ofsted this year.

We have established links with the childminders who are registered with agencies, the two main ones being used in Sheffield being @Home Childcare and Tiney Community Childminding. The childminders will be included in our weekly correspondence and invited to access the Sheffield Safeguarding training and briefings for Early Years Providers. Childminders will also be invited to access the training we deliver for a cost.

Recruitment and retention within the Early Years sector continues to be a concern. The Early Years team are working with Sheffield City College to promote going into the workforce, Sheffield City Council Sector Routeways delivering a ‘taster’ week of training on Early Years Childcare and Education, supporting apprenticeship events and attending them to promotes working in Early Years as well as working closely with DWP to form a working party with providers to support appropriate candidates being employed within the sector.

### 1.7.2 Overview of school early years settings and Ofsted grades (as of /26/2/24)

The two schools with EYFS requiring improvement who were not engaging with us were inspected by Ofsted November / December 2023. The reports have now been published, both schools being graded Good for EYFS - though one school is still requires Improvement as an overall grading.

One school is continuing to receive bespoke support since receiving their requires improvement grading. The school have accessed whole staff training, support, and action planning for their EYFS lead and have regular contact calls and visits from their allocated Quality and Access Officer. The school are accessing training for their team to access through our traded service subscription.

All schools have an allocated Quality and Access Officer who contacts them termly to check in and offer support if needed outside of the traded subscription offer, We have recruited to the full-time post and the successful candidate with be in post by mid-April.

Current workload being carried out by EY Quality, Access and Moderation Manager and 1 EY Quality and Access Officer.

## **1.8 Inclusion**

The new exclusion prevention service will commence delivery from the 1<sup>st</sup> April with Brigantia Academy Trust. This follows a re-tendering process undertaken in autumn of 2023 (see committee report in September 2023 for context). This service is a key strand in our work to support belonging and prevent school exclusions. We are looking forward to working with Brigantia on this new service and thank Sheffield Inclusion Centre for their delivery of this service over a number of years.

## **2 HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?**

**2.1** This gives line of sight to Committee Members about activity being undertaken in Children Services, specifically the work being undertaken by the DCS and priorities for the next period between committees.

## **3 HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

**3.1** The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to Children Services.

**3.2** Consultation is undertaken during the development of proposals for the budget and implementation of proposals for the budget as appropriate.

**3.3** An overall approach to coproduction and involvement is also a key element of the delivery plan, ensuring that the voice of our children and Young People is heard and young people are happy who have the start they need for the future they want.

## **4 RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

**4.1.1** Reducing risk of Committee Members not being aware of the activity undertaken in children Services. Providing clarity and purpose and ensuring assurance whilst highlighting any risks

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

**4.2.1** No financial and Commercial implications

### **4.3 Legal Implications**

**4.3.1** No legal implications as no formal policy and proposals

### **4.4 Climate Implications**

**4.4.1** No Climate implications

### **4.5 Other Implications**

**4.5.1** There are no other specific implications for this report

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**5.1** Not applicable – no decision or change is being proposed

## **6 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1** This report provides an update regards Children's Services activities for Members.