



# **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

Date: Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Level 2, Town Hall Extension

Everyone is welcome to attend this committee meeting.

There will be a private meeting for Committee Members only at 9.30 am in the Council Antechamber.

## **Access to the Public Gallery**

Access to the Public Gallery is on Level 3 of the Town Hall Extension, using the lift or stairs in the lobby of the Mount Street entrance to the Extension. There is no public access from any other entrance.

## **Filming and broadcast of the meeting**

Meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee are 'webcast'. These meetings are filmed and broadcast live on the Internet. If you attend this meeting you should be aware that you might be filmed and included in that transmission.

## **Membership of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

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### **Councillors –**

Reid (Chair), N Ali, Alijah, Amin, Bano, Bell, Fletcher, Gartside, Hewitson, Judge, Lovecy, Ludford, Marsh, McHale, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

### **Co-opted Members -**

Mr G Cleworth, Canon S Mapledoram, Mrs J Miles, Ms L Smith and Mr Y Yonis

## Agenda

**1. Urgent Business**

To consider any items which the Chair has agreed to have submitted as urgent.

**2. Appeals**

To consider any appeals from the public against refusal to allow inspection of background documents and/or the inclusion of items in the confidential part of the agenda.

**3. Interests**

To allow Members an opportunity to [a] declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in any items which appear on this agenda; and [b] record any items from which they are precluded from voting as a result of Council Tax/Council rent arrears; [c] the existence and nature of party whipping arrangements in respect of any item to be considered at this meeting. Members with a personal interest should declare that at the start of the item under consideration. If Members also have a prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

**4. Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024.

Pages

7 - 14

**5. Revenue Budget Update 2024/25**

To follow

**5a. Children and Education Services Budget 2024/25**

To follow

**5b. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

To follow

**6. Update on progress of the Leaving Care Service**

Report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

Pages

15 - 34

The report and presentation provide an update on Manchester's approach to supporting its Care Leavers.

**7. Update on the Government's Strategy to Reform Children's Services (Stable Homes, Built on Love)**

Report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

Pages

35 - 68

This report and presentation provide an overview of the Government's strategy for the reform of children's services and the implications for Manchester.

<b>8. Overview Report</b>	Pages
Report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit	69 - 78

The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee’s work programme and any items for information

## Information about the Committee

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Scrutiny Committees represent the interests of local people about important issues that affect them. They look at how the decisions, policies and services of the Council and other key public agencies impact on the city and its residents. Scrutiny Committees do not take decisions but can make recommendations to decision-makers about how they are delivering the Our Manchester Strategy, an agreed vision for a better Manchester that is shared by public agencies across the city.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee reviews the services provided by the Council and its partners for young people across the city including education, early years, school standards and valuing young people.

In addition to the elected members the Committee has seven co-opted member positions. These are:

- Representative of the Diocese of Manchester – Canon Susie Mapledoram
- Representative of the Diocese of Salford – Mrs Julie Miles
- Parent governor representative – Mr Yacob Yonis
- Parent governor representative – Vacant
- Parent governor representative – Mr Gary Cleworth
- Secondary sector teacher representative – Vacant
- Primary sector teacher representative – Ms Laura Smith

The co-opted members representing faith schools and parent governors are able to vote when the Committee deals with matters relating to education functions.

The Council wants to consult people as fully as possible before making decisions that affect them. Members of the public do not have a right to speak at meetings but may do so if invited by the Chair. To help facilitate this, the Council encourages anyone who wishes to speak at the meeting to contact the Committee Officer in advance of the meeting by telephone or email, who will then pass on your request to the Chair for consideration. Groups of people will usually be asked to nominate a spokesperson. The Council wants its meetings to be as open as possible but occasionally there will be some confidential business. Brief reasons for confidentiality will be shown on the agenda sheet.

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Agenda, reports and minutes of all Council Committees can be found on the Council's website [www.manchester.gov.uk](http://www.manchester.gov.uk)

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings.

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## Further Information

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This agenda was issued on **Tuesday, 30 January 2024** by the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit, Manchester City Council, Level 2, Town Hall Extension (Library Walk Elevation), Manchester M60 2LA

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## **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2024**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Reid – in the Chair  
Councillors N Ali, Amin, Fletcher, Gartside, Hewitson, Judge, Lovecy, Ludford, McHale, Marsh, Muse, Nunney, Sadler and Sharif Mahamed

#### **Co-opted Voting Members:**

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative  
Mr Y Yonis, Parent Governor Representative

#### **Also present:**

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People  
Alice Taylor, Adoption Counts

#### **Apologies:**

Councillor Bell  
Canon S Mapledoram, Representative of the Diocese of Manchester  
Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

#### **CYP/24/01 Minute's Silence - Wiktor Daron**

A Member paid tribute to Wiktor Daron, the former Head Teacher of St Paul's Catholic High School in Wythenshawe who had passed away. He highlighted some of Mr Daron's many achievements, including improving the school's Ofsted judgement from inadequate to good with outstanding features, securing new sports facilities for the school, improved academic results and becoming one of the best schools in the country for pupil progress, as well as being awarded the Papal Medal for Services to Catholic Education.

The Committee held a minute's silence in his memory.

#### **CYP/24/02 Urgent Business - Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Serious Youth Violence**

The Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) informed Members that this had been considered at the meeting of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee the previous day and would also be considered by the Executive on 17 January 2024. He reported that, while the action plan was awaiting feedback from Ofsted and would also be adapted in light of Members' comments, the work stemming from this was already being progressed and he suggested that the Committee might want to scrutinise some elements of this work in future.

The Chair reported that she had submitted her comments to the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee, focusing on the need for child-centred, trauma-informed policing and for closer multi-agency working, and that this was likely to be something that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee would consider at a future meeting.

## Decision

To note the verbal update.

### **CYP/24/03 Minutes**

#### **Decisions**

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 22 November 2023.

### **CYP/24/04 Fostering Service Annual Report 2022-2023**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which set out what the Fostering Service had achieved over the past year and what its priorities were for the coming year.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Background information;
- Successes for 2022-2023;
- Main issues; and
- Priority actions for 2023-24.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that there was an improving picture in relation to fostering and he highlighted the role of Councillors in promoting fostering.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Whether there were any particular communities where there was a shortage of foster carers;
- That some people were wary about the process to become a foster carer and how long it took;
- The management of allegations against foster carers, including allegations which were found to be unsubstantiated;
- Trauma-informed training;
- Roll-out of the Mockingbird Model;
- Placement stability; and
- Sharing experiences of being a foster carer.

The Service Lead (Fostering) informed Members that at present 18% of children in care were Black (including Black African, Black Caribbean and Black British) and 10% of foster carers (excluding kinship carers) were Black so this was the main group from which more foster carers needed to be recruited. In response to a further question, she reported that housing was a significant barrier, particularly for kinship



carers and people in central Manchester, including many black families, and that her service was looking at ways to address this. She acknowledged that trust of government institutions was also an issue in some communities and reported that her service was working to build relationships with those communities and help them to understand the process. She reported that her service took a trauma-informed approach across its work but also offered specific trauma-informed training. She informed Members that the first Mockingbird Constellation had been launched in south Manchester and that work was taking place to develop the next one in north Manchester, after which one would be developed in central Manchester. In response to a Member's question she reported that a lot of preparatory work had taken place to prepare for the refugees from Ukraine but that, as yet, no children from Ukraine had required fostering services. She informed Members that the process to become a foster carer took on average 12 weeks, stating that the service carried out regular information evenings for people interested in fostering and would be happy to come and speak to any groups that Members suggested. A Member stated that he would speak to officers outside of the meeting to arrange this.

The Assistant Director (Provider Services) advised Members that the process for recruiting foster carers needed to be rigorous to ensure that the people coming forward had the right motivation for fostering.

A Member shared her personal experiences of being in foster care and the impact of this. She emphasised the importance of having a rigorous process to recruit the right people and thanked officers for the work they did to improve the experience of children in foster care. She expressed concern that some of the recruitment advertisements for foster carers could give a false impression of fostering, glossing over the challenges involved.

The Assistant Director (Provider Services) acknowledged the Member's point about advertisements. She drew Members' attention to the Fostering Unfiltered campaign across Greater Manchester which depicted the reality of fostering, although she stated that this had not produced the response that had been wanted and that the Greater Manchester local authorities would be working together further on this campaign. She stated that her service had worked hard on ensuring that foster carers understood how children with significant trauma communicated. She reported that only 8% of the children were in residential care, rather than living in families, which compared favourably to other local authorities.

The Assistant Director (Provider Services) explained the process for managing allegations against foster carers, differentiating between allegations of abuse and practice concerns. She stated that allegations of abuse were referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and that a Strategy Meeting would take place, attended by Greater Manchester Police (GMP). She reported that allegations were investigated to establish whether they were substantiated, that foster carers were provided with independent support during the process and that the safety of the child was central to decision-making, including whether it was safe for them to remain with the foster carer. She acknowledged the impact on foster carers who were subject to unsubstantiated allegations but stated that not many foster care arrangements broke down because of this, as foster carers received training to understand the impact of trauma on the child they were caring for, and that most foster carers who

experienced this felt supported. She reported that a small number of foster carers had been deregistered. She advised that it was important to take seriously anything that a child reported or that another professional raised as a concern and that, from the training they received, foster carers understood that this was a necessary process.

The Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) reported that his service had increased its family group conferencing approach, supporting children in their families and suggested that the Committee might want to consider a report on this at a future meeting. He recognised the importance of placement stability for the well-being of children in foster care and stated that the Mockingbird Model was a key part of this, enabling foster carers to support one another. He also highlighted the importance of family-based care, which provided a better environment for children than the large children's homes which used to be commonplace.

The Assistant Director (Provider Services) reported that the number of children who had had three or more moves was monitored and reported to the Department for Education (DfE) and that this year that figure had decreased from 10.4% to 9.6%.

The Chair informed Members about the improvement journey that Children's Services had been on since 2014, when it had been judged to be inadequate by Ofsted, and she welcomed that the service had significantly improved and was now judged to be good, while advising that there was always more that could be done. She reported that housing was a challenging issue which prevented people from becoming foster carers and advised that, where this was the case, it should be addressed at a ward level so that Ward Councillors could assist with resolving issues and she suggested that this could include moving them into Band 1 for housing priority. She highlighted that MP Andrew Gwynne had been raising issues relating to kinship carers in Parliament. She recognised the work of Alonzi House to keep children out of care. She also commented on the age profile of foster carers and the future implications of this.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that Children's Services now worked closely with Housing in a way which it had not done previously, and which did not happen in a lot of other local authorities. He reported that all Looked After Children were classed as Band 1, as were foster carers, and that discussions were taking place about how some housing could be made available in cases where housing was a barrier to people becoming foster carers. He informed Members that the Council was using guidance from a national lobby group on kinship carers to assess how it was doing and ways it could improve in relation to this group.

## Decisions

1. To note the progress and impact being achieved by the Fostering Service in Manchester and the goals set out for 2023-24 with regard to:
  - Recruiting more foster carers, and carers who meet our children's cultural needs.
  - Retaining the right foster carers and supporting them to 'stick with' our children and provide them with stable and loving homes.

- Developing our kinship offer to ensure our families and communities are offered the right support to care for the children in their networks and to provide them with a permanent home.
2. To additionally recognise the importance of ensuring sufficient provision of housing to enable families to care for these children.

### **CYP/24/05 Annual Adoption Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which outlined the progress in planning and placements for children, assessment, and approval of prospective adoptive parents, and in offering adoption support.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Performance (children);
- Quality of children's reports;
- Marketing recruitment and assessment of adopters;
- Practice developments;
- Adoption Panel; and
- Adoption support.

Alice Taylor from Adoption Counts delivered a presentation which outlined the highlights for Manchester from the Adoption Counts Annual Report. This included children's data, timescales, early permanence, report quality, adopter data, adoption support and achievements in 2023 beyond the service's core work.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The quality of Child Permanence Reports (CPRs);
- Reasons for delays in adoption and what was being done to expedite the adoption process; and
- Staff retention and supervision.

The Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services informed Members that the CPR was the profile and story of the child which could assist with the matching of a child for adoption and, although the quality of some CPRs presented at the first stage (Should Be Placed For Adoption – or SHOBA - meeting) needed to improve, this did not indicate that poor decisions were being made in relation to the placement of a child for adoption as there was a lengthy, robust process in place. He reported that there had been delays in the adoption process in 2022 – 2023, partly as a legacy of the pandemic. He outlined some of the other issues which could cause delays, including relatives coming forward late in the process for alternative care arrangements which then had to be explored, lengthy care proceedings and the complexities of individual children and planning for them. He reported that the service was involved in the oversight and governance of the family court to influence improvements which could be made and in family group conferencing to identify family members at an earlier point in the process.

Alice Taylor reported that the Council and Adoption Counts held regular tracking meetings so Adoption Counts was made aware of any unexpected delays, for example if a family member had put themselves forward to be assessed, but that a lot of the background work would still be taking place so the agency was in a position to progress to matching with a family if it was then decided that adoption was the right path for that child. She outlined work that would be taking place over the next year to streamline the adoption process within the agency to minimise delays, while ensuring the process was robust.

The Chair expressed concern about the delays in the process, including court backlogs. She requested that the next time items on adoption and fostering were considered that adoptive parents and foster carers be invited to the meeting to speak about their experiences. The Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) requested that consideration be given to this outside of the meeting to ensure that the families and children involved were not compromised.

In response to a question from the Chair about Greater Manchester local authorities which were not part of Adoption Counts, the Deputy Strategic Director of Children's Services reported that all local authorities were linked with a regional adoption agency but some Greater Manchester authorities were aligned with a different agency. He highlighted the role of the Workforce Development Strategy and assured Members that the appropriate supervision of and support for staff at the Council and Adoption Counts was of the highest priority. In response to Members' comments about retaining links with birth families after adoption, he highlighted the importance of lifelong letterbox contact and reported that work was taking place to improve the quality and meaningfulness of this contact.

A Member asked if Committee Members could visit the Council's social work frontline service and this was supported by the Chair.

### **Decision**

To arrange a visit to the Council's social work frontline services.

### **CYP/24/06 Annual Virtual School Head's Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Education which provided an overview of the work that had been undertaken during 2022-23 to promote the education, employment and training of the Children and Young People overseen by the Manchester Virtual School. The report stated that this included Children and Young People in the care of Manchester, Manchester Care Leavers, Previously Looked After Children who attended education settings within Manchester, Children and Young People with a Manchester Social Worker and Young People supported by the Youth Justice Service.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- 2022-23 success headlines;
- Virtual School structure, duties, offer and summary of 2022-23;

- Overview of Children and Young People;
- Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion;
- Ofsted judgements of the schools attended by Our Children and Young People;
- The views, wishes and feelings of Our Children and Young People;
- The outcomes achieved by Our Children and Young People;
- The Virtual School work to promote the Education, Employment and Training of the children and young people it oversaw;
- The Virtual School work to promote inclusion;
- School attendance;
- Exclusions and suspensions;
- Workforce development overview; and
- Virtual school priorities for 2023-24.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted the achievements outlined in the report, including significant improvements in examination results and post-16 participation, and he recognised the positive work of the Virtual School team. He encouraged Members to attend the next Corporate Parenting Panel meeting to consider the new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the overall positive picture, in particular the improvement in GCSE results;
- What was being put in place to support younger children, who were not achieving as well; and
- Variations in PEP forms and processes between different local authorities, noting that schools and colleges often had children from different local authority areas attending their setting and were having to work with different PEPs.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People reported that a number of discussions had already taken place at previous Committee meetings about the impact of the pandemic on young children more broadly and that for children with any additional challenges the outcomes diverged further, both from where they had been previously and from the rest of the cohort. He reported that he had written to Government Ministers about this and that the Council was working hard to address this, including setting up a Kickstarter scheme to provide targeted support.

The Chair expressed concern at the impact that the pandemic had had on all babies and young children. She also highlighted the impact of the forthcoming expansion of the free childcare entitlement.

The Virtual School Deputy Head outlined some of the work taking place to support the progress of their younger children who had been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, working with Early Years and Key Stage 1 providers, closely monitoring progress through the termly PEP process, offering access to Educational

Psychologists, ensuring that children were accessing the Kickstarter programme, working with the Speech and Language Team and using Pupil Premium funding for literacy activities. In response to a Member's question on pre-pandemic data on Early Years development, reading, writing and mathematics, she advised that this was available in previous reports but that there was no national data on Good Level of Development (GLD) in Early Years prior to the pandemic.

The second Virtual School Deputy Head recognised the Member's comments about variations in the PEP across different local authorities and reported that this had been raised at a regional level; however, she advised that there were benefits to the secure electronic PEP system used by Manchester and that, while Manchester would be willing to engage in discussions with other Virtual Schools on standardisation of the PEP form, she believed that Manchester's version provided the level of detail that was needed.

The Chair advised that the Committee should consider an item on Early Years development and the progress of the cohort of young children affected by the pandemic, in relation to all children, as part of a future item. She shared her experiences as a Regulation 44 visitor, expressing concern about the young people who were not in education. She highlighted the work that Morgan Sindall had been doing with Care Leavers and advised that other employers could do similar education, employment and training work as part of the Social Value element of Council contracts. She also reported that Manchester Adult Education Services (MAES) could do more work with this group.

### **Decision**

To consider an item on Early Years development and the progress of the cohort of young children affected by the pandemic as part of a future item.

### **CYP/24/07                      Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The Chair reported that she was discussing with the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee an item on children's dental health.

### **Decision**

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above comment.

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 7 February 2024

**Subject:** Update on progress of the Leaving Care Service

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

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### Summary

Manchester Leaving Care Service is the second largest Leaving Care Service in the country within Birmingham being slightly larger supporting 10 additional young people. The Service has over time grown to where it is today currently supporting 29.4% of the GM regions care leavers.

The Leaving Care Service supports a diverse group of young people. Over the last year we have supported and welcomed our former UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) into the service, now making up a third of our care leaving population.

In March 2022, Leaving Care was graded 'good' by Ofsted. *'Care Leavers in Manchester receive a consistently good service. This is underpinned by a strong child-focused strategy and a clear promise to young people to make sure they are 'happy, healthy, safe and successful' as they move into adulthood'.*

The slide set attached to this report highlights Childrens Services and partners update over the last year and review plans and prioritises for the coming year.

### Recommendations

Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

1. Discuss the presentation and comment on Manchester's approach to the support given to our Care Leavers.
  2. Recognise the services response to challenges and discuss planning priorities for 2024.
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**Wards Affected:** All

<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>The organisation is committed to reducing the carbon footprint associated with the provision of Leaving Care and participation services to our young people.</p>
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>Manchester Leaving Care service continues to deliver culturally attuned services to all our young people. This includes developing trauma informed practice approach as well as providing service that assist our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and former UASC to thrive in the city.</p> <p>Priority is given to linking in our young people into bespoke community activities within Manchester as per an individual's needs. The services are responsive to ensuring individual needs are being met for example communication aids, use of interpreters, space to be able to express individuality and bespoke support, for example LGBTQ+ friendly spaces.</p> <p>Consideration is given to how young people where possible are culturally matched to supported accommodation provision, for example we have bespoke contracts for out UASC and former UASC.</p>



<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective support for young people is critical so they can connect, support, contribute and access a thriving and sustainable City.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Ensuring our young people are given the opportunity to access immediate support enables a timely assessment of need to ensure the right support at the right time is provided.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Building a trusted relationship with young people helps builds their resilience, recover from trauma which is needed to enable their potential to be achieved.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for young people dispersed across the city helps build and develop communities.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Children's Services and partners have responded to ensuring our young people have a high-quality opportunity to live in supported accommodation and forever homes that will help them manage the transition out of care and into the adult world, where they will achieve and be an active member and contributor to Manchester City and local communities.

Full details are in the slide set, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences**

There are no financial consequences outside of wider considerations for Children Services associated with this report.

### **Contact Officers:**

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):** None

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Leaving Care Act 2000 identifies Local Authorities duties and responsibilities to its young people leaving care. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extended the duties placed on Local Authorities with each Local Authority having to (but not limited to) an obligation to publish a Local Offer for care leavers, extended duties to young people up to 25, recognising young people as an integrated and integral part of the corporate parenting role. In the revision of Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services (ILACS) Ofsted included a separate judgement for Care Leavers.
- 1.2 Following the Southwark Ruling, the Leaving Care Service support all Homeless Children In Need and those post 18 that have been placed in care as a result of homelessness.
- 1.3 We have seen an increase in young people who are assessed as ‘qualifying’ leaving care service who have accessed the service following being subject of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and those who have been subject of Private Fostering arrangements.
- 1.4 This year Manchester has seen a growth in its UASC population. Local Authorities have a legislative responsibility to protect and support unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and as such are ascribed a ‘looked after’ status and are particularly vulnerable. An unaccompanied child is entitled to the same local authority provision as any other looked after child, additionally will require help and support to lodge an asylum claim and access specialist legal advice in relation to their asylum claim.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Manchester has 1490 Care Leavers age 16+.Manchester is responsible for 29.4% of all Care Levers across the region.
- 2.2 There are 976 YP allocated to a Personal Advisor aged between 16-25 years old. We co-work 129 young people under the age of 18 with their statutory social worker.
- 2.3 In addition, there are 514 YP open to the service who receive support via our Virtual Personal Advisor & or drop-in services.
- 2.4 There are 478 YP within the service with an immigration status making up 32% of the service, this is projected to be 37% within the year. There are 2 specialist PAs within the New Arrivals Team to support UASC at the point of transition to post 18 permanence.
- 2.5 There are 314 YP aged 23 and above who will exit the service within 24 months.
- 2.6 There are 6 teams in the Leaving Care Service. 5 PA teams, totally 46 FTE PAs and the Positive Housing pathway team consisting of 3 Social Workers

and 4 PAs. The Positive Housing Pathway team offers specialist housing advice to all YP age 16+ to prevent youth homelessness and is a specialist service for all care leavers age 18 – 25 years. Additionally, we have 1 participation apprentice and 1 FTE (2 PA's) as EET engagement leads.

- 2.7 Over the last 2 years the numbers of young people the service are actively supporting has grown by 309 young people, 21%. Of this cohort 63% of young people have immigration status.

### **3.0 Service Offer**

- 3.1 The slide set attached to this report highlights the Leaving Care Services' current performance data, developments, proud moments in 2023, challenges and plans for 2024.
- 3.2 The report sets out the continued positive performance of the service to its young people. Manchester continues to perform well and is above national average for young people engaged in EET, those living in suitable accommodation and those remaining in touch with their PA. The number of young people qualifying for support has increased which has resulted in higher but manageable caseloads for Personal Assistants.
- 3.3 Our older care leavers are more engaged and accessing our participation offer and our social events than their younger counterparts. These young people have shared that they see the Leaving Care service as a 'lifeline' where other adults services pathways/ eligibility criteria may not always promote ease of access. In response to this, Leaving Care has developed a more robust and regular face to face drop-in service as well as daily duty response that is promoted to all care leavers aged 16+ however is primarily for our older cohort of young people (21+). This drop in is attended by a range of partners and offers a warm and welcoming social space to young people who may not require an allocated PA for day-to-day support but use the service as a path finder to specialist advice and guidance. This service is also used by young people who have an allocated PA to promote confidence in the 'open door' approach to these group sessions / drop in.
- 3.4 The service has reviewed the relationships with the transitions team within Adults Social Care and there is a renewed commitment to supporting and assisting care experienced young people in a preventative way, in acknowledgement of their increased vulnerability. In terms of future development, consideration of a PA from Leaving Care working across the Childrens/Adults services in order to develop and upskill services to respond to the needs is currently being pursued. We are collaborating with partners to look at a transitional safeguarding model for young people where there are vulnerabilities that do not necessary fit the Care Act defined criteria.
- 3.5 Young people in Manchester live in suitable accommodation and there is a strong framework of supported accommodation available to young people to assist in developing their skills and independence, in October last year our internal provision was formally registered with Ofsted as per Supported

Accommodation regulations. Manchester has good relationships with preferred providers, that continue to be committed to the Care Leaver Housing pledge and recognises the need for continued support post 18 years to thrive in their first tenancy.

- 3.6 For those young people in custody, we are working with Youth Justice following the start of the SHIFT programme to improve opportunities for those young people resettling back into the community after custody. There are currently 13 young people in custody under 21 all young people in custody are supported by their PA.
- 3.7 Leaving Care is involved in the development of an accredited independence programme that will offer all young people the same opportunity to develop skills as part of pathway planning towards independent living. Whilst there are elements of practical and social skills, the focus of the programme is emotional maturity and resilience to live independently. This programme has been written by young people.
- 3.8 The development of the Staying Close team has been integral to providing additional support to our young people who 'need a little bit extra' to help them transition into independence confidently. The team are in the process of recruiting to 2 additional posts which will mean support being offered to 50 young people.
- 3.9 Young people in Manchester are accessing and engaging with education, employment and training opportunities and the service has a reputation for taking the lead in innovative ways to support and guide young people into developing skills, be creative and reach their potential. The EET figures has remained largely stable for the past 2 years for both 18 – 21year olds (63.7%) and our older care leavers (56%) which considering the increase in young people in the service reflects an increase in engagement.
- 3.10 There is a renewed focus on older care leavers and understanding the barriers to them accessing EET opportunities that appear to be prevalent as they grow older. This is being supported by the Multiply programme that is focussed on older care leavers obtaining improved literacy and numeracy skills and boosting confidence to re-enter work or an education environment. There will be two dedicated PAs working part time to implement this programme with a focus on promoting wellbeing, using music, arts, cooking and sports to engage and inspire young people to carry on with meaningful activities.
- 3.11 The health and wellbeing of our care leavers is the leading priority for the service in 2024. The need for bespoke health services for our care leavers is crucial to improving emotional wellbeing across our young people. Without question young people across all ages are presenting with emotional and mental health issues both acute and enduring. It is widely acknowledged that the wellbeing of our care leavers is central to them accessing EET opportunities and improving their self-esteem and economic prospects now and later in life.

- 3.12 There is currently no dedicated offer for care leavers in Manchester as the responsibilities of the named nurse and the Cared for Children CAMHS services ceases at age 18 years. This is a limitation when raising the profile of care leavers in a bid to address the inherent health inequalities that exist in this cohort of young people. This is on the agenda for the Corporate Family forum and a Care Leavers Health and Wellbeing strategy is in draft format at present.
- 3.13 The 2024 calendar of participation events includes a weekly physical activity such as a walking group or 5 a side football training and tournaments that are well attended. There are strengthening links with community health services and they are routinely invited to Leaving Care service briefings to promote their use with PAs.
- 3.14 In addition, the Leaving Care service is developing a trauma training module for use across partners such as police, health and housing to promote the need for a considered and trauma informed engagement and support pathways for care leavers. There is ongoing work with our young people, police and housing colleagues to develop the content that both PAs and young people can co-facilitate to ensure co-production remains central to this.
- 3.15 There are challenges with mental health services, particularly where young people had additional social, and communication needs as to whether adults or mental health to meet the primary need. The renewed relationships between Leaving Care and the Transitions team have improved over the past 6 months and have had an immediate and positive impact; ongoing development work has been identified earlier within this report and is a real strength.
- 3.16 The service has responded to this by ensuring all PA's have undertaken 'Beyond Psychology' trauma informed practice. This has been well received within the service and has built up resilience and confidence within the service to be able to support our young people. The training has also been rolled out to Cared for Children's service, which is already providing a 'common' language for children and young people and a common methodology across social workers and PA's when supporting children and young people.
- 3.17 There is now a well-established Care Consultation group that are employed by the council to meet, devise and develop the corporate strategy and lead on improvements on behalf of all care experienced young people in the city. The Corporate Family forum has replaced the previous board meetings and these are entirely led by young people under the four work streams of young people being 'happy', 'health', 'safe' and 'successful'.
- 3.18 These young people are consulted on all areas of policy and procedure that links to the improvement work under these guiding principles and conditions for young people who continue to grow, thrive and develop.
- 3.19 Over the past 12 months, the care consultants have led on projects to improve knowledge and skills of professionals to ensure they recognise care

experience as a key consideration of a young person's identity. This was achieved by delivering talks and training to a range of council departments and this now is being developed to upskill police, housing and health colleagues. In addition, they have campaigned for an increase in the First Home Grant of £1,000 and all care leavers now receive additional funding when they secure their first tenancy as a result. In addition, Manchester has provided additional funding to offset the impact of rising inflation and cost of living for care leavers and this was achieved via their representations at the Corporate Family forum. This group of young people is well established however needs to diversify and grow in 2024; to include younger children and those from different cultural backgrounds. As these care consultants reach 25 years, we are considering developing a mentoring role to support continued engagement to represent older cohort as well as younger people that are involved in the service.

- 3.20 The services plan for the coming year are centred around 4 themes, permanence, equality and diversity, education training and employment and wellbeing. These themes are underpinned by the Manchester Childrens plan guiding principal of *'We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us'*.

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

- Endorse Manchester's approach to the supported given to our Care Leavers.
- Recognise the services response, to challenges and planning for 2024.

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# Manchester Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

## 7th February 2024

### Manchester's Leaving Care Service

#### Capacity and responding to needs of care leavers.



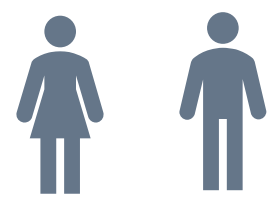
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12th May 2023

Appendix 1, Item 6

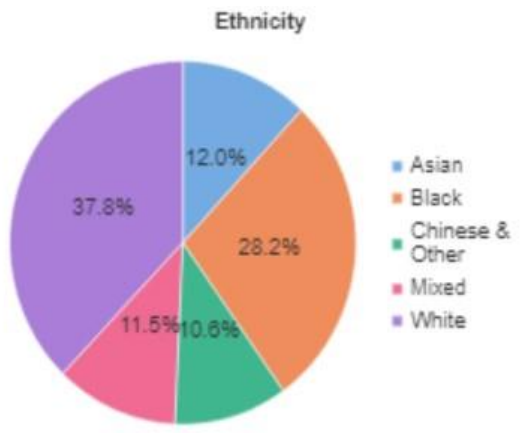
# Demographic

## Gender



33 % 67%

- Manchester Care Leaver population is 1490 aged 16 +. Manchester has one of the largest cohort in the country.
- There are 976 young people allocated to a Personal Advisor aged between 16-25 years old. 158 are aged 21+.
- Currently we have 765 young people aged 21 to 25. 607 have a Virtual Personal Advisor Service & receive support via our drop-in services; approx. 40 young people per month use this service.
- There are 478 young people within the service with an immigration status making up 32% of the service, this is projected to be 37% within the year.
- There are 2 specialist Personal Advisors within the New Arrivals Team to support UASC at the point of transition to post 18 permanence.
- There are 5 teams in the Leaving Care service each with 8 FTE Personal Advisors and the Positive Housing Pathway team consisting of 3 CSW and 4 Personal Advisors.
- The Positive Housing Pathway team offers specialist housing advice to all young people age 16+ to prevent youth homelessness and is a specialist service for all care leavers age 18 – 25 years.



# Performance

- In Touch with 94.4% of Care Leavers in Manchester.
- Manchester has experienced an increase of 16.7% of young people open to the Leaving Care service (128 young people) there has been a sharp rise in over 21's and former UASC young people.
- 86% of our young people have a health profile in place.
- Overall, 97.7% of all Care Leavers are in 'Suitable Accommodation'. Young People not in living in suitable accommodation are those currently in custody (13 young people)
- Overall, 64.7% of all Care Leavers in Manchester are engaged in Education, Employment or Training.
- Young People are considered for a Leaving Care service at the age of 16 in accordance with Manchester's Local Offer and Practice Standards.
- Young People from age 17 years are allocated a Personal Advisor in the Leaving Care service. Joint working takes place between the Personal Advisor and partners in order to complete the Pathway plan.

# Accommodation

- Manchester Personal Advisors are fully committed to all Care Leavers residing in appropriately supported and suitable accommodation in line with Manchester's joint Housing Protocol and Housing Pledge.
- There is a strong accommodation framework that sits around young people to support a young person's transition to independence.
- Leaving Care work with the "Staying Close" programme to assist young people to develop strong community links and are supported to access adult based services.
- All care leavers have access to priority housing via the 'Band One' priority need process, this is the gateway to quality affordable 'forever' homes.
- The service is developing with young people an accredited Independence Programme that all care leavers will complete alongside their pathway planning from age 16 years.
- The Positive Housing Pathway Team supports all young people who are homeless Children In Need and have specialist accommodation Personal Advisor's based within the team who support young people up to 25 to access housing and maintain their tenancy.

# Education, Training and Employment

- In Manchester 64.7% of all Care Leavers are engaged in Education, Employment or Training (EET); 8.8% are in Higher Education.
- We have strong partnerships with private and public providers to access work experience and apprenticeships.
- The Careers Connect service is co-located and are an integral partner in assessing and supporting young people.
- VEETO meetings take place whereby key Personal Advisors meet with the VST and Leaving Care to match and prioritise young people to opportunities.
- Manchester Leaving Care service is the host authority for the three year Catch 22 GM EET programme, 'Career Hive.'
- Manchester is host to 'Multiply'; with a focus on young people aged 21 - 30 years who are not in formal EET to develop their functional skills in English and Numeracy.
- Care experience is recognised as a protective characteristic on all Manchester application forms and if a young person meets the essential criteria they are offered automatic interview.

# Emotional, Mental, Physical and Sexual Health

- All Personal Advisor's have completed a trauma informed approach to practice; Level 1 & 2, Adolescent development. PACE training due to completed by March 2024.
- The Leaving Care service has established relationships with counselling and support services such as 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and MIND. Both feed into the 21+ drop in and Staying Close offer.
- Development of the multi- agency 21+ 'drop in' services to be a 'befriending' service for our older young people.
- There are monthly wellbeing activities facilitated by the Leaving Care Service such as organised walks, football tournaments, socials such as clothing events, food stalls and craft afternoons to improve mental and physical wellbeing and reduce social isolation for our care leavers.
- The Northern Care Alliance provide community & clinic-based specialist sexual health services including contraception to Manchester's Care Leavers including home visits and healthy relationship supports. Wit fast access to GP's
- The service is co-producing an online training module on the impact of being care experienced to assist Partner agencies in the issues and barriers some young people.
- This training will assist in the further implementation of care experience being a 'protected' characteristic in Manchester to safeguard and level up against the disadvantage identified.

# Strengths and Developments

- The Leaving Care Service is a strong service, our young people have relationships with their Personal Advisor's, there are supportive plans that are reviewed regularly; these plans are most effective where partner agency involvement is clear. There is a strong relational approach with the young people needs & identity being a central feature to decisions made and planning.
- We have an established Care Consultants network who regularly represent the voice of Care Leavers at corporate events and lead the Corporate Family agenda.
- The service is developing into having a consistent Trauma Informed approach to practice. This includes offering young people the opportunity to access this learning and support in order to understand their own difficulties and empower them to communicate their own needs.
- We are working alongside Transitions to develop a 'transitional safeguarding' model and there are agreed plans to embed a 'link' Personal Advisor between Leaving Care and the Adults Transitions.
- Additional Personal Advisor capacity has been provided for the service in response to increasing numbers of UASC eligible for a Leaving Care service.
- We have re-modelled our offer for young people over 21 in response to the increase in young people 21+ eligible for a service.
- The Service events have an increasing number of older young people attending. Young people tell us they are staying connected to the service and feel the service is a 'life line'.
- EET figures for Care Leavers in Manchester have remained largely consistent for the Personal Advisors 2 years; The service is having a targeted approach to strengthening the offer to older Care Leavers.

# Next Steps

Permanence	Equality and Diversity	Education employment and training	Wellbeing
<p>Recruit additional staying close workers to strengthen the offer to young people to support the transition to adulthood and happy lives</p> <p>Ensuring UASC form is completed for each child to enable us to track them to legal permanence and identify issues earlier</p> <p>Young People have the skills and time to transition to independence confidently</p> <p>Further PA CE training and embedding trauma informed approach in practice for Personal Advisors to increase stability in relationships and increase resilience for young people.</p> <p>Development of PA pathway planning to increase connection between need, planning, action and outcomes evidence for YP/on case file.</p> <p>Continued promotion of Bee Connected APP and social media platforms to ensure our care experienced young people are familiar with their entitlements, and ensuring all young people are connected within their homes to wifi and data.</p>	<p>All staff across the service are champions of equality and diversity we respect and value our colleges, PA, partners and children and young people.</p> <p>Continued PA partnership work with GMIAU to address the consequences of the illegal immigration act and achieve continued legal permanence for our UASC</p> <p>UASC and Former UASC network meeting to strengthen PA partnership working and links in the community</p> <p>Recruit more supported lodgings providers to reflect the heritage and meet the identity needs of our care experienced young people.</p> <p>All our Looked After Children have an All about me – especially those in transracial placements</p> <p>Further development and launch of the protected characteristics pledge in MCC to ensure this is meaningful and impactful for YP</p> <p>Improve diversity in age range and ethnicity for care consultation forum to ensure representation across the city and service.</p>	<p>Develop voluntary work experiences for UASC to support enhancement of CV's</p> <p>Recruit Care Consultants especially targeting our UASC and Former UASC young people.</p> <p>Accredited independence programme</p> <p>Launch and embedding of Multiply project to improve numeracy for NEET and track impact &amp; access to EET opportunities.</p> <p>Working for the family business, developing programme and Pathway for work experience for all young people.</p>	<p>Staff teams to continue to be encouraged to develop resilience as a team and as individual workers, supported by the GM resilience hub. Staff encouraged to have socials together, walking meetings, sport and attend wellbeing workshops.</p> <p>Develop a Partnership meeting to wrap around the NAT and work together to improve the life chances of our UASC</p> <p>Recruit to and develop the role of MHP to offer services that get alongside young people offer the support they want an need</p> <p>Look at how to weave the theme of wellbeing through the Independence programme during the stakeholder sessions re: Pre tenancy work</p> <p>Work with health &amp; adults colleagues to develop an early intervention Pathway for Emerging Mental Health needs of care experienced YP</p> <p>Embedding and implementation of health and wellbeing strategy re Eating, Sleeping, Moving and Connecting with others as a basis for being well.</p> <p>Ensure all care experienced children have a health passport, access to and understand their health needs and support.</p>

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Believe I am too well  
to tell the story  
of my life  
In any other way,  
I cannot tell it at all."  
-Reina Parks

**✊**

"If you can  
make it  
through the  
night there's  
a brighter day."  
-2Pac



**“We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things that we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us”.**

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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 7 February 2024

**Subject:** Update on Government’s strategy to reform children’s services  
Stable Homes, Built on Love

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Children and Education Services)

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### **Summary**

In response to the Independent Review of Children Social Care, during February 2023 the government published its response and strategy for reform; Stable Homes Built on Love.

Stable Homes, Built on Love, has 6 ambitions of reform.

1. Family Help
2. Keeping children safe
3. Supporting families to help children.
4. Make better care for children in care and care leavers,
5. Children to have great social workers.
6. Improving the whole system for children and families.

As part of its reform programme, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 the government issued the following key strategies and statutory guidance.

1. Championing Kinship Care
2. Children Social Care National Framework
3. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
4. Digital and Data Strategy

The attached presentation includes links to the above publications, a short summary of the key elements and critique of local implications.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the presented information and planned local response.
  2. Seek further updates on progress for each specific area of reform and include in the committee’s work programme for 2024/25.
-

**Wards Affected:** All

<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	None
<p><b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	

<p><b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy</b></p>
<p>A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities</p>	<p>Effective support for young people is critical so they can connect, support, contribute and access a thriving and sustainable City.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p>	<p>Ensuring our young people are given the opportunity to access immediate support enables a timely assessment of need to ensure the right support at the right time is provided.</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>Building a trusted relationship with young people helps builds their resilience, recover from trauma which is needed to enable their potential to be achieved.</p>
<p>A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work</p>	<p>Improving outcomes for young people dispersed across the city helps build and develop communities.</p>
<p>A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth</p>	<p>Children's Services and partners have responded to ensuring our young people have a high-quality opportunity to live in supported accommodation and forever homes that will help them manage the transition out of care and into the adult world, where they will achieve and be an active member and contributor to Manchester City and local communities.</p>

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Legal Considerations

**Financial Consequences – Revenue**

To be determined.

**Financial Consequences – Capital**

None

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

Update on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care  
<https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s35812/Care%20Review%20Presentation.pdf>

Childrens Workforce Presentation

<https://democracy.manchester.gov.uk/documents/s39074/Childrens%20Workforce%20presentation.pdf>

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 As part of the government's plans to reform children social care and wider system, on 15th December 2023, 3 key strategies and the revised statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 were published. These documents.

- *Propose practical and financial support to promote and support kinship care.*
- *Outline the purpose, principles, enablers, and outcomes for children's social care to achieve so that children and their families can thrive.*
- *to promote the 'system' to embed new standards, strengthened governance and clarity as to partnership working to provide help, support and protection to children.*
- *Outline how the government will support information sharing and improve data services, produce a national dashboard of key data and promoting innovation in this area.*

## 2.0 Background

2.1 The background document is the information presented to Scrutiny Committee members on 12th October 2022. This presentation outlined the key recommendations and an analysis of the government's strategy Stable Homes, Build on Love and Manchester Children's Services readiness, which is positive.

## 3.0 Main issues

3.1 The attached presentation outlines the key issues from the aforementioned strategies, statutory guidance and local implications for children social care, the data/reporting systems and wider partnership.

3.2 The Championing Kinship Care Strategy outlines the governments ambition to promote and support kinship carers with practical and financial support. Manchester City Council actively promotes kinship care, having increased Family Group Conferencing capacity, supporting over 600 carers, and providing specific support from the Virtual School and a specialist fostering team. However, presently beyond indicating there will be 8 national pilots there has been no announcement of any additional funding to support the successful implementation. This is a significant challenge.

3.3 In respect of the Children Social Care National Framework whilst it is yet to be published there is a proposed dataset that will be published and available nationally. This will bring transparency to the progress and impact of children's social care, although it will be important to understand the 'narrative' that surrounds the respective local authority and respective indicators.

- 3.4 In addition, the National Framework outlines the roles of key contributions to delivering a safe and effective children social care service, this has been welcomed. As a result of this guidance, a review of key practice guidance and policies will need to be undertaken to ensure they are contemporaneous and support local deliver and reform of children’s social care. This will be progressed by the Deputy Director, Children Social Care.
- 3.5 In respect of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, there is clarity provided in respect of a local authority’s duty under s17 Children Act 1989 and the ‘lead professional’. This provides an opportunity to reimagine how services for some children such as those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be delivered. Subsequently work will be undertaken to explore and develop these opportunities and the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership will develop an action plan to deliver changes. This will be reflected and reported in the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report 2023/24.
- 3.6 Finally, the governments Digital and Data Strategy presents an ambitious set of proposals to improve the way information is shared and promote innovation with regards to supporting practitioners in the daily activities. However, this is dependent upon providers being able to adapt and modify their systems and therefore presents some significant challenges. In addition, no funding allocation has been announced which without will be significant barrier to success in the current climate of austerity. Notwithstanding this, Manchester City Council’s children services is working with our digital suppliers to develop several initiatives to capture the ‘voice/contribution’ of children to their records and use of AI (artificial intelligence).

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to:
1. Consider and comment on the presented information and planned local response.
  2. Seek further updates on progress for each specific area of reform and include in the committee’s work programme for 2024/25.

#### **5.0 Appendices**

Presentation



# Stable Homes build on love, reform of Children Social Care

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**Paul Marshall, Strategic Director  
Children and Education Services.  
February 2024**



# Stable Homes, Built on Love - one vision, six strategic pillars

We published our strategy for Children's Social Care reform on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023, for consultation closing 11<sup>th</sup> May.

## OUR VISION:

For children to grow up in **loving, safe and stable families** and, where that is not possible, **care provides the same foundations**, so that **all children can achieve their potential**.

### Pillar 1

**Provide the right support at the right time** so that children thrive within their families and that families stay together.

### Pillar 2

**A decisive multi-agency child protection system** with agencies working together in a fully integrated way, led by social workers with specialist expertise and knowledge.

### Pillar 3

**Unlock the potential of kinship care**, so wherever possible, children who can't stay with their parents are cared for by people who know and love them already.

### Pillar 4

**Reform the care system**, to make sure we have the right homes for children in the right places. Be ambitious for children in care and care leavers – providing the right support to help them thrive and achieve their potential into adulthood.

### Pillar 5

**Provide a valued, supported and highly-skilled social worker** for every child who needs one.

### Pillar 6

Make sure the **whole system continuously learns and improves** and **makes better use of evidence and data**.

# Phased Approach to Reform

We set out our long-term plan for reform, with phase one taking place over the Spending Review period (~ March 2025).

## Phase One from spring 2023

Over the **next two years**, we will **address the most urgent issues** facing children and families, **setting national direction** and **laying the groundwork** for future reforms.

We will use a “Pathfinder” approach for the most complex reforms in local areas, before we plan to roll-out out nationally at scale. A Pathfinder does not test the policy interventions themselves, rather the feasibility of reforms and specific models.

## Subsequent Phases from March 2025

We will consider **plans for wider roll out** in the **next Spending Review Period** subject to Phase one outcomes.

This will be about **embedding reform everywhere**.

This will include consideration of legislative changes (subject to parliamentary time) and a wider programme of support.

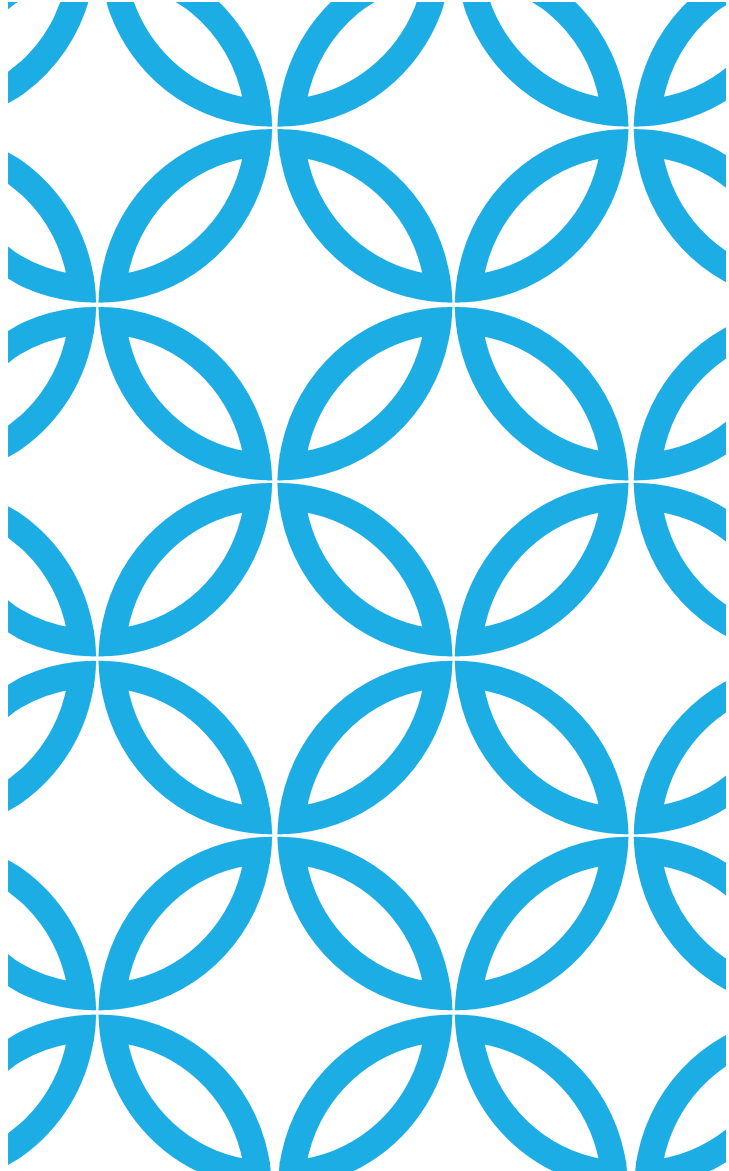
We will prepare for this in the first phase through consultation and reviewing existing legislation.

Across the strategy we are promoting take up of well evidenced models – for example expanding the Mockingbird model in fostering, or using learning from the Strengthening Families Protecting Children programme in our Family Help and Child Protection reforms.

# 4 Key National Policies to Support the DfE Reform of Children's Social Care

On 15th December 2023, the DfE published The following interrelated strategies and statutory guidance.

1. A kinship strategy, 'Championing Kinship Care' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/championing-kinship-care-national-kinship-care-strategy>
2. A Children's Social Care National Framework <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-national-framework>
3. Multi-agency statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
4. A digital and data strategy and which includes a proposed National Children's Social Care Dashboard. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-data-and-digital-strategy>



# CHAMPIONING KINSHIP CARE THE NATIONAL KINSHIP CARE STRATEGY DECEMBER 2023

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# KEY MESSAGES

The strategy aims to provide more financial and employment support for kinship carers, improve training for kinship carers, and improve education support for children in kinship care

The strategy also aims to advocate for kinship families, amplify the voices of kinship families in national government, and empower family networks throughout the children's social care system

The plan for implementation of the reforms to kinship care will begin over the next 2 years and the DfE has committed £20m of funding in 2024/25 to.

- Trial financial allowances in 8 Local Authority Areas
- Expand the role of the Virtual School from September 2024 with a focus on advocacy, attendance and attainment.

# KEY MESSAGES CONTINUED



New Government guidance has been published which sets out best practice for supporting kinship carers at work, including how to adapt internal HR policies to better support their kinship carer employees



The existing Adoption Support Fund will be rebranded from January 2024 as the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. No changes to eligibility or scope of the Fund have been made.



Commitment to establishing a new national offer of training and support for kinship carers. Kinship has been awarded a £3 million contract to deliver a bespoke package for all kinship carers in England, including informal carers, launching in Spring 2024.

# KEY MESSAGES NATIONAL ACTIVITY

Page 48

A new National Kinship Care Ambassador will be appointed in Spring 2024 to advocate for kinship carers and work with local authorities.

A National Kinship Care Advisory Board of sector experts will be established to advise the Minister for Children.

Updated local authority guidance to implement family group conferences, enabling every family being offered access to an FGC at pre-proceedings stage. The Government will explore using legislation to mandate this in the future.

New statutory guidance on kinship care will be published in Spring 2024, titled 'Kinship Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'. Every local authority will publish a policy setting out its approach to supporting all kinship families.

New definition of kinship care has been published to include all arrangements where children live with family or friends.

The Strategy also requires a new data set and building on existing research work to build a better picture of kinship care, including a review of what works to improve outcomes for children in kinship care, to be published in Spring 2024.

Appendix 2  
Item 7



## LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

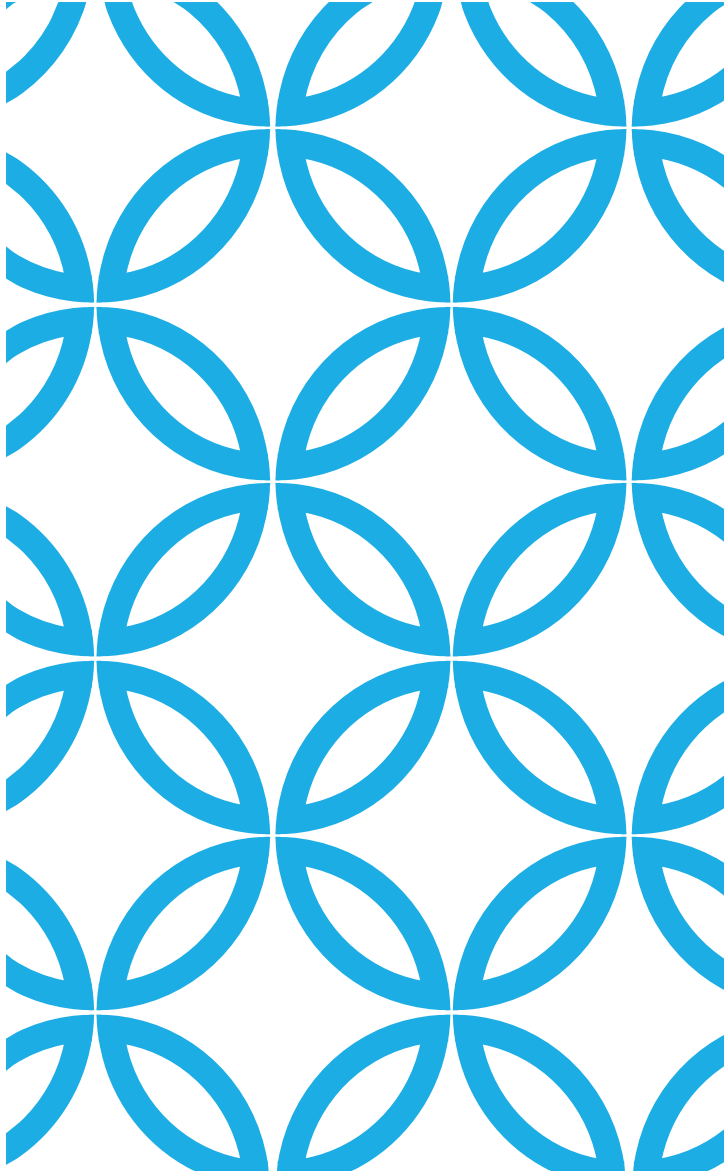
Manchester City Council is a Fostering Friendly employer has invested in promoting and enabling 'kinship care'; supporting 850 carers.

A Kinship Care policy and offer is currently in development.

Virtual School resources and capacity is currently being evaluated and reviewed to respond to the pending new duties.

There will be financial implications associated with this strategy and associated duties and responsibilities.

To date the DfE has only confirmed additional funding for the Virtual School.



# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

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Statutory guidance on the purpose, principles for practice and expected outcomes of children's social care

# THE FRAMEWORK

The National Framework become operational with effect from 15th December 2023 with 24 months to pilot and 'embed'.

The Framework aligns the **purpose** of local authority children's social care with the **principles** by which children, young people and families should be supported, the **enablers** that should be in place so the system is effective, and the **outcomes** that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive.

It provides useful and detailed expectations in the form of statements how leaders, practice supervisors and practitioners deliver the framework.

The National Framework is to be read alongside Working Together 2023 and SEND Code of Practice.

# ENABLERS AND OUTCOMES

## **There are 3 enablers:**

Multi-agency working is prioritised and effective

Leaders drive conditions for effective practice

The workforce is equipped and effective

## **There are 4 outcomes:**

Children, young people and families stay together and get the help they need

Children and young people are supported by their family network

Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes

Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes

# PURPOSE

Articulation of senior leaders, practice supervisors and practitioners Roles to **understand what is expected of their work with children, young people and families.**

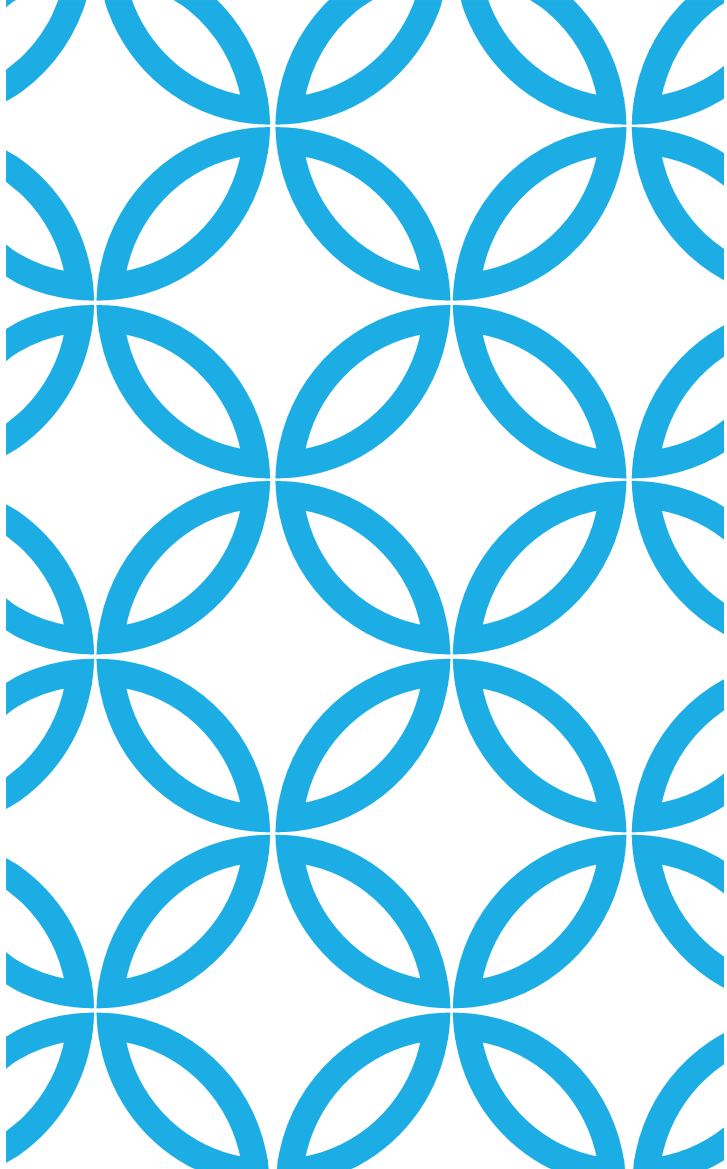
It should be used in the design and delivery of services, and should underpin the interactions between practitioners and children, young people, and families.

It is intended the guidance is used to increase accountability, reflect, learn, and improve practice to achieve good outcomes.

# THE DASHBOARD

The National Framework will be supported by the **Children's Social Care Dashboard** (the Dashboard), which will bring children's social care data together in one place to understand progress towards the outcomes of the National Framework.

The Dashboard will serve as a **learning tool**, which should enable local authorities to reflect on their own practice over time, as well as to learn best practice from others.



# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE NATIONAL DATA FRAMEWORK

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# KEY MESSAGES/ CHANGES AND TIMESCALES



DfE have proposed an initial set of indicators which will be published in a public dashboard in early 2024 based on data they believe is currently available.



There are also plans this year to develop a 'private' dashboard which will incorporate more timely data. Early adopter LA's will be enrolled to help develop this



A 2nd set of indicators are being developed by DfE for potential inclusion in the future based on data not yet collected by the sector.



In terms of mechanisms for dataflow, DfE envisage a pipeline direct from LA case management systems to DfE to populate both the public and private dashboards in the future, no timescale set for this as yet



# LOCAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Ofsted will be 'rebalancing' their inspection framework to consider the government's plans around social care reform.

The initial set of indicators have been RAG rated by PRI. Those indicators rated orange and red will require potentially significant development work to allow reporting.

It is anticipated at least 5 current indicators will need to be reconfigured and 9 will require significant developments to meet reporting requirements.

The additional 35 data measures will take the number of indicators currently reported on for children social care to 381.

The existing Performance Management Framework/Scorecards used within children and education services will need to be remodeled.

Some indicators require partner data specifically from GMP and NHS. To be determined.

To date there has been no additional funding identified to support the proposed changes.

Green	Existing indicator already reported on	21
Orange	Additions/amendments required to existing report	5
Red	Significant work required to build new report	9

# WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN 2023: KEY CHANGES

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January 2024



# KEY MESSAGES



**Key updates introduced in Working together to safeguard children 2023: a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children relate to:**

- Multi-agency expectations for all practitioners.
- Working with parents and families.
- The roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners.
- The role of education and childcare providers,
- Multi-agency practice standards.
- Support for disabled children.
- Tackling harm outside the home.

To be implemented by December 2024.

# SUMMARY OF CHANGES



- Reinforces that successful outcomes for children depends on strong multi-agency partnerships.
- Reinforces the importance of building positive, trusting and cooperative relationships with children and partners.
- Strengthens multi-agency safeguarding arrangements including clarifying the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding partners including the roles of senior leaders, chairing arrangements, scrutiny etc.
- Emphasises the role of education and the importance of voluntary, charity and social enterprise organisations in safeguarding.
- Highlights the importance of information sharing including changes to probation and prison sections.
- Introduces reporting of care leavers deaths up to the **age of 25**

# SUMMARY OF CHANGES CONTINUED



- Outlines the role of education and childcare settings in supporting children and keeping them safe is strengthened especially in relation to early help.
- The approach to working with families has been strengthened including outlining the role of **family networks**, including use of family group conferences in decision making and supporting children.
- Clarifies that a **broader range of practitioners** can be the lead practitioner for children and families receiving support and services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Clarifies the children's social care and multi-agency responses in respect of extra-familial harm
- Clarifies the role of children's social care in respect of disabled children and families, children in mother and baby units (in prisons) and children at risk from people in prison and people supervised by the probation service.
- Linking to the National Framework WT 2023 introduces multi-agency child protection standards.

# A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A new chapter highlighting the importance of strong multi-agency working and the expectations of practitioners, managers and leaders.

- Share the same goals
- Learn from each other
- Have what they need to help families
- Acknowledge and appreciate difference
- Challenge each other.

**Informed by four principles when working with parents and carers:**

- Building effective partnerships including the importance of building strong, positive, trusting and co-operative relationships
- Being respectful, non-blaming, clear and having inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication that is adapted to the needs of parents and carers
- Empowering parents and carers to participate in decision making by equipping them with information, keeping them updated and directing them to further resources. This includes emphasising the role of family networks including undertaking family group conferences.
- Involving parents and carers in the design of processes and services that affect them.



# MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Outlines new roles and responsibilities relating to the three safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, the Police and the Health Service – ICB). – 2 Key Roles

## Lead safeguarding partner (LSP)

- The LSP is the head of each statutory safeguarding partner agency e.g. for a LA – the Chief Executive, police – Chief Constable
- The LSP is responsible for holding their own organisation or agency to account, speaking and making decisions on behalf of their agency, and meeting the statutory and legislative duties of their agency.
- LSPs from different agencies are jointly responsible for the proper involvement of all relevant agencies, and should work as a team, as opposed to as a voice for their own organisation.
- Local Authorities should implement a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) role to improve links between SEND and Children Social Care systems.



# LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

Strength in the partnership which reviewed its Safeguarding arrangements in and embedded a 'scrutineer' role. This positions the partnership positively to respond to the revised statutory guidance.

An opportunity to strengthen how services across the partnership are working with families and embracing the standards.

The inclusion of Care leavers within the sphere of Serious Child Practice Reviews is welcomed.

An opportunity to further strengthen the profile, contribution and inclusion of VCSC and School Leaders within the Safeguarding Partnership.

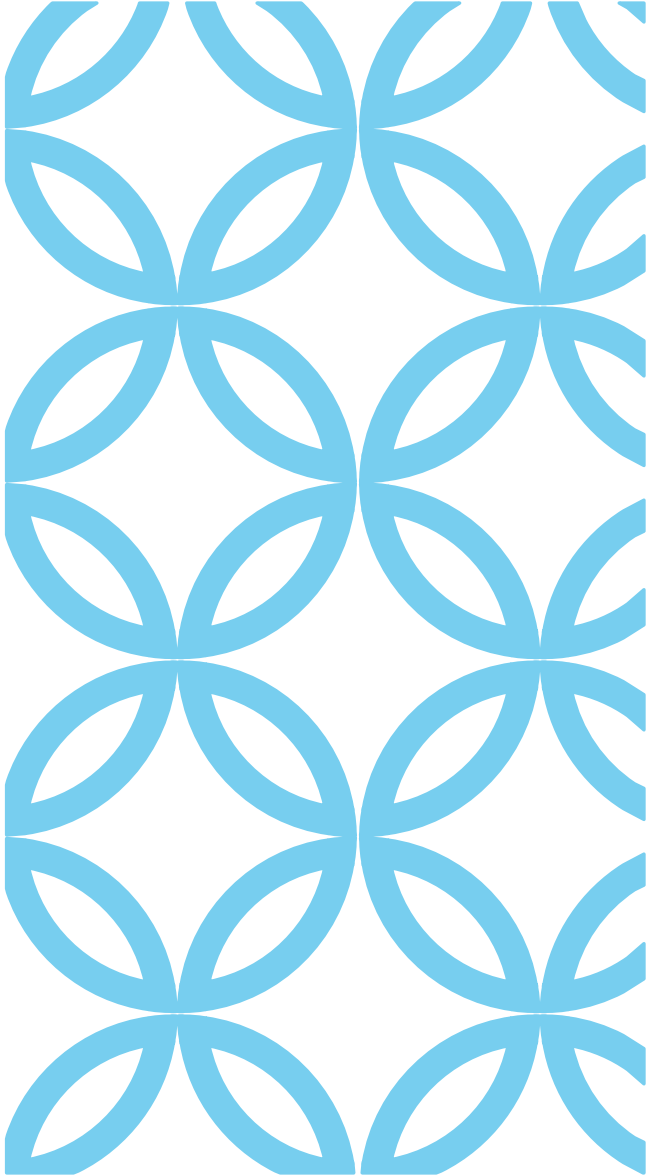
An action plan is currently being developed to coordinate the changes and implementation.

It is anticipated there are potential additional financial implications with the addition of care leavers inclusion in Serious Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

There is work for the MSP Leadership and Accountability Board which is attended by, or representatives of the 3 Statutory Chief Officers to consider further strengthening the partnership and relationship with the community based voluntary sector.







# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK + SOCIAL CARE DATA & DIGITAL STRATEGY

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# KEY MESSAGES/ CHANGES AND TIMESCALES

- 3 strategic objectives outline the key focus between now and 2025
  - Supporting a strong data culture and leadership
  - Supporting systems and technology to meet sector need
  - Improve the data we collect, share and use
- Raise the capabilities of digital systems used in children's social care to overcome current shortcomings in data sharing
- Make improvements by establishing standards and principles to provide more consistency in case management systems, data and data sharing processes
- The DfE will also evaluate existing resources such as the NHS Spine and the Child Protection Information Sharing service (CP-IS)
- And there will be a focus on developing improved technology which can capture the voice of children, young people and their families, reducing the need to repeatedly tell their story and ease transitions
- DfE will work with Social Work England alongside ICO advice to develop its ability to share information. Also aim to help local safeguarding partnerships to use data sharing agreement templates and governance arrangements
- There will be a pilot to link DfE and family courts data to better understand national picture of permanent kinship care arrangements

# LOCAL IMPLICATIONS



The Strategy could be a significant opportunity to help develop data in children's social care if it involves practical support around data improvement, ICT infrastructure as well as advancing management information system maturity and information sharing.



Welcome the focus on reducing administrative burden and attempts to automate data collections.



There is potentially a significant risk to and reform of Manchester's data infrastructure, system supplier(s) and stability.



The sector is hamstrung by the capabilities and maturity of case management providers, it remains to be seen how much DfE can influence private sector providers of case management systems to advance their technology.



There is the potential to lead to additional burdens on data collection in the short to medium term as digital capabilities and technology catches up with the ambitions of the strategy.



There is no identified funding for this strategy and for which the costs could be significant.

# SUMMARY

1. The nationally published Kinship Carer Strategy and statutory guidance play a critical part to the governments vision to reform children social care and system, together there is a need to review policy, practice guidance and safeguarding practice and governance arrangements.
2. Manchester has invested in key areas of activity ie support for kinship carers, family group conferencing and has a comprehensive performance reporting.
3. Whilst a small amount of funding been available from the government. However, the proposed changes will bring additional burdens and require financial funding.
4. To ensure a coherent response a programme approach will be established to review guidance, develop policy and supporting strategies.
5. The MSP is developing a clear action plan to coordinate and deliver the respective changes.

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 7 February 2024

**Subject:** Overview Report

**Report of:** Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit

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### **Summary**

This report provides the following information:

- Recommendations Monitor
- Key Decisions
- Items for information
- Work Programme

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to discuss the information provided and agree any changes to the work programme that are necessary.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### **Contact Officer:**

Name: Rachel McKeon  
Position: Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer  
Tel: 0161 234 4997  
Email: [rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.mckeon@manchester.gov.uk)

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### **Background Documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## 1. Monitoring Previous Recommendations

This section of the report contains recommendations made by the Committee, responses to them, if they will be implemented, and if it will be, how this will be done.

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
9 October 2019	CYP/19/39 Skills for Life	To request that the Council work to ensure that, as far as possible, all settings are involved in Skills for Life, including independent schools, and that officers look into how Skills for Life could be incorporated into the contracts when Our Children are placed in non-Council-owned residential settings.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
6 November 2019	CYP/19/48 Youth and Play Services - Young Manchester	To request that clear information on the availability of toilet facilities, for example, in park cafes, be included on signage in parks.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Neil Fairlamb, Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)
4 March 2020	CYP/20/16 Improving Children's Outcomes Through Collaboration and Working in Partnership in a Locality	To request further information on how the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust is dealing with smoking around its hospital sites and to note that the Executive Member for Children and Schools will circulate a briefing note on work that is already taking place to address	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Paul Marshall, Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
		smoking in pregnancy.		
22 July 2020	CYP/20/26 Manchester's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	To request that school governors be included in the plans for schools and that CAMHS and the support on offer be included on the agenda of a future Chair of Governors briefing.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Amanda Corcoran, Director of Education
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To ask officers to consider how Councillors could help with this work and to circulate a note to the Committee Members on this.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Julie Heslop, Strategic Head of Early Help
2 December 2020	CYP/20/51 Early Help Evaluation (2015 - 2020)	To request that the Early Help Project Manager provide information on the number of families, in relation to the presentation slides on areas of the city and the sustainability of impacts.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Ed Haygarth, Early Help Project Manager
20 July 2022	CYP/22/36 The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being	To request data on the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, in order to be able to identify any gaps.	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be circulated to Members.	Al Ford, Director of CAMHS/Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer
21 June 2023	CYP/23/25 Update:	To recommend that consideration be given to	A response to this recommendation has been requested and will be reported	Amanda Corcoran, Director of

Date	Item	Recommendation	Action	Contact Officer
	Education Climate Change Action Plan 2022-24	partnering schools with allotments and parks.	back to the Committee via the Overview report.	Education
10 January 2024	CYP/24/05 Annual Adoption Report	To arrange a visit to the Council's social work frontline services.	This is being arranged in conjunction with the Chair and officers.	Rachel McKeon, Governance and Scrutiny Support Officer

## 2. Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish details of key decisions that will be taken at least 28 days before the decision is due to be taken. Details of key decisions that are due to be taken are published on a monthly basis in the Register of Key Decisions.

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution is an executive decision, which is likely:

- To result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
- To be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the city.

The Council Constitution defines 'significant' as being expenditure or savings (including the loss of income or capital receipts) in excess of £500k, providing that is not more than 10% of the gross operating expenditure for any budget heading in the in the Council's Revenue Budget Book, and subject to other defined exceptions.

An extract of the most recent Register of Key Decisions published on **29 January 2024** containing details of the decisions under the Committee's remit is included below. This is to keep members informed of what decisions are being taken and, where appropriate, include in the work programme of the Committee.



## Register of Key Decisions:

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Officer Contact
<p><b>Take a breath - Residential accommodation (2023/07/06A)</b></p> <p>To implement a residential accommodation model to support hospital discharge and prevent hospital admission for children and young people.</p>	Strategic Director - Children and Education Services	Not before 6th Aug 2023		Report and Recommendations	Sarah Austin, Strategic Lead - Commissioning sarah.austin@manchester.gov.uk
<p><b>The provision of a contraception &amp; sexual health service for young people (2023/09/27A)</b></p> <p>To award a contract to a provider to deliver a contraception &amp; sexual health service for young people.</p>	Director of Public Health	Not before 27th Oct 2023		Contract Report	Marie Earle, Strategic Commissioning Manager marie.earle@manchester.gov.uk

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme – February 2024**

**Wednesday 7 February 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Friday 26 January 2024)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Executive Member</b>	<b>Strategic Director/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Revenue Budget Update	To receive a report on the financial challenge facing the Council, the latest forecast position, and the next steps.	Cllr Akbar (Finance and Resources )	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson	
Children and Education Services 2024/25	Consideration of the final 2024/25 budget proposals that will go onto February Budget Executive and Scrutiny and March Council.	Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson Paul Marshall	
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	To receive a report on the DSG.	Councillor Bridges	Carol Culley Tom Wilkinson Paul Marshall	
Leaving Care Provision	To receive a report focusing on capacity and responding to the needs of care leavers.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Independent Review of Children's Social Care	To receive a presentation on the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and	-	Rachel McKeon	

	any items for information.			
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**Wednesday 6 March 2024, 10 am (Report deadline Friday 23 February 2024)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Executive Member</b>	<b>Strategic Director/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Manchester Sensory Support Service	To receive an update report.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See March 2022 minutes.
SEND Annual Report	To receive the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Annual Report.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Education Strategy	To receive a report on the Education Strategy.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Overview Report	The monthly report includes the recommendations monitor, relevant key decisions, the Committee's work programme and any items for information.	-	Rachel McKeon	

**Items To Be Scheduled**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Executive Member</b>	<b>Strategic Director/ Lead Officer</b>	<b>Comments</b>
School Streets	To receive a report on School Streets.	Councillor Bridges Councillor Rawlins	Amanda Corcoran	Invite Chair of the Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee

Domestic Abuse and Children	To receive a report on the impact of domestic abuse on children and the Safe and Together programme.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See March 2023 minutes
Children and Young People's Plan 2020 - 2024	To receive an annual report on the progress of this work.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See November 2020 minutes
Elective Home Education (EHE)	To receive a report on EHE. To include up-to-date figures on children who are not in school, including those whose parents have chosen EHE, with a breakdown by areas of the city.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See January 2022 and October 2022 minutes
School Attendance and Attainment	To receive regular reports regarding attainment and attendance.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) Education	To receive a report on PSHE education in schools.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	
Road Safety Around Schools	To consider a report on road safety around schools.	Councillor Rawlins Councillor Bridges	Kevin Gillham Amanda Corcoran	To be confirmed See January 2023 minutes.
Early Years and Health Visiting Service	To receive a further report at an appropriate time.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	See May 2023 minutes.
Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in	To receive an update at a future meeting.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See September 2023 minutes

Schools				
Youth Justice	To receive a further report on Youth Justice.	Councillor Bridges	Paul Marshall	
Post-16 Education Employment Training Strategic Plan 2022- 25 - Progress Update	To receive a further update and to invite a representative of Career Connect to attend the meeting.	Councillor Hacking	Amanda Corcoran	See December 2023 minutes.
Early Years and the COVID-19 pandemic	To consider a report on Early Years development and the progress of the cohort of young children affected by the pandemic.	Councillor Bridges	Amanda Corcoran	See January 2024 minutes

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