

# Public Document Pack



## Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Lesley Little

**Email:** Lesley.Little@northumberland.gov.uk

**Tel direct:** 01670 622614

**Date:** Wednesday, 25 January 2023

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL** on **THURSDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2023** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Rick O'Farrell  
Interim Chief Executive

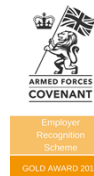
**To Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee members as follows:-**

**C Ball, A Dale, W Daley (Chair), R Dodd (Vice-Chair), C Dunbar, S Fairless-Aitken, M Richardson, M Swinburn, T Thorne and A Watson**

**Co-opted Members: A Hodgson, L Houghton, D Lennox, P Rickeard and J Sanderson**



**Rick O'Farrell, Interim Chief Executive**  
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## AGENDA

### PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(Pages 1  
- 6)

The minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Thursday 5 January 2023, as circulated, to be agreed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

#### 3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must

contact [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

- 4. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS** (Pages 7 - 12)

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions for February to May 2023. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the committee.
- 5. CABINET REPORT - SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR THE 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR** (Pages 13 - 72)

The report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/25 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval from Cabinet (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought. Comments made by this Committee will be reported to Cabinet when they consider the report.
- 6. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022** (Pages 73 - 108)

The report presents to members the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report for 2021-22 regarding the education achievement of Northumberland's looked after children and care leavers.
- 7. CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL** (Pages 109 - 116)

The report provides to members information about the children in Northumberland who are not in school full time, the multi-agency support that is in place for families, and national developments that will affect school attendance, children missing education and children who are electively home educated in the future.
- 8. SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION** (Pages 117 - 124)

The report provides an overview of the challenges of and responses to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

- 9. DOMESTIC ABUSE** (Pages 125 - 130)
- The report provides Scrutiny with an update on the current domestic abuse multi-agency partnership arrangements and domestic abuse service provision to ensure Northumberland County Council meets the requirements of the statutory duties within section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 10. FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23** (Pages 131 - 142)
- To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman, should, Members are asked to review and note the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report.
- 11. URGENT BUSINESS**

**IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:**

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date of meeting:</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>			
<b>Item to which your interest relates:</b>			
<b>Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):</b>			
<b>Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?</b>		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

## Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

## Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and Property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licenses</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body



	<p>where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</li> <li>ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</li> </ul>
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\* ‘director’ includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* ‘securities’ means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
  - i. exercising functions of a public nature
  - ii. any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

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## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at Council Chamber - County Hall on Thursday, 5 January 2023 at 10.00 am.

#### PRESENT

W Daley (Chair) (in the Chair)

#### COUNCILLORS

C Ball  
R Dodd  
M Swinburn  
A Watson

A Dale  
S Fairless-Aitken  
T Thorne

#### CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

A Hodgson

#### OFFICERS

C Angus  
S Aviston  
L Little  
G Reiter  
D Street

Scrutiny Officer  
Head of School Organisation and Resources  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Joint Interim Director of Children's Services  
Deputy Director of Education

#### ALSO PRESENT

P Mead

NCASP Independent Safeguarding Scrutiny  
and Assurance Chair

There was 1 member of the press and public present.

#### 55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors C Dunbar, M Richardson and G Renner-Thompson, L Houghton, D Lennox and P Rickeard.

#### 56 MINUTES

(a) 10 November 2022

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Thursday 10 November 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

**(b) 1 December 2022**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Thursday 1 December 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and be signed by the Chair.

57 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

58 **CABINET REPORT - NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA & SCHOOL FUNDING 2023/24**

S Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources, provided a comprehensive introduction to the Cabinet report which gave an update regarding the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the implications for 2023/24 School Funding in Northumberland. Members were reminded that the figures in the report were indicative and Cabinet were asked to approve the delegation of the approval of the final formula values to the Joint Interim Director of Children's Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Children's Services and Deputy Leader once the final budget allocations had been released. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) figures were released on 16 December 2022 and with £9m additional grant funding awarded to this authority, Northumberland would receive just over £298m which was £17.4m more for 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 which would assist schools to meet their inflationary needs.

In response to concerns regarding the movement of funding to the High Needs Block (HNB) and membership of the Schools' Forum, it was clarified that this transfer of funds had been done for the previous 4 years due to the increasing demand for special school places as a result of schools not being as inclusive, along with the increasing number of pupils with EHCPs. The movement of funding could not be undertaken without consultation and the percentage to be transferred had reduced from 1% in 2018/19 to this proposal for 0.25% for 2023/24. A lot of work was undertaken in the background to ensure that the Schools Forum understood the reason for the transfer and it was also highlighted that previously paid for Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for SEND services had been removed and these services were now given free of charge in order to allow more strategic support for all schools to be provided. Financial impacts on schools were often related to pupil numbers and information on individual financial settlements for schools could be provided to Members. It was confirmed that the HNB funding was still being spent on Northumberland children with a large proportion of it being spent within mainstream schools for SEND pupils, and whilst it would always be good to get more Government Funding, there had been an increase of £17.4m this year. The provision of additional SEND places within County would ensure that more money remained within Northumberland rather than paying for expensive out of County placements. Assurance was provided

that the membership of the Schools' Forum reflected the make-up of the County's maintained schools, academies, early years and alternative provisions and as a group were very vociferous and diligent in their decision making. It was noted that whilst Schools Forum was the consultation body for school funding, it was Cabinet who made the final decision.

There were limitations on what the Council could do in relation to the funding of smaller rural schools with surplus places when funding was based on pupil numbers, however the Council did pay the maximum sparsity funding and once the budgets had been set Members could be given the figures for their local schools in order for them to have more detailed discussions if they so wished.

Members were advised that in terms of funding for education, whilst significant progress had been made from Northumberland's previous position of third worst funded authority to where they were now in the middle of the table, additional funding would always be needed. The Council was still part of the F40 Group which campaigned for fairer education funding to allow equal opportunities for children no matter where they lived. Information on the F40 Group and Northumberland's funding position and comparator could also be included in the report on final funding figures for the schools.

The Chair highlighted that whilst the lack of equitable funding for education within the County was still an issue, that Children's Services was not a failing service nor did Northumberland have failing schools. All staff involved either in schools, academies or the whole education team within the Council were doing an excellent job and would be able to do even better with additional funding.

**RESOLVED** that

1. Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report; and
2. A report be provided to this Committee giving details of the Council's education funding position and comparator information in relation to other Local Authorities and members of the F40 Group.

## 59 **UPDATE OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2021-24**

Cabinet had approved the publication of the second iteration of the School Organisation Plan for 2021-24 in September 2021. It had been agreed at that time that the plan be updated on an annual basis with the latest relevant school information and data and this Committee be authorised to recommend its publication. S Aviston provided an introduction to the report and plan advising that whilst it was not a statutory requirement for a local authority to publish a school organisation plan the Council chose to do so in order to assist schools, academies, parents the DfE and other partners to understand the complicated factors that impact school place planning within the County.

Members asked that this document be shared with all Councillors and highlighted that whilst the Council had no control over the expansion or reduction of pupil numbers within free schools or academies, that 97% of pupils were given their

first choice of schools. Officers were asked to look at the recent Government announcement in respect changes to housing developers being required to provide funding for school places.

Concern was expressed regarding the high number of surplus places within the County especially within the Haydon Bridge and Berwick Partnerships and the inability to allow new housing in rural villages due to Green Belt policy. It was felt this was a blunt instrument in preventing development which would help to sustain rural schools by attracting a younger demographic into villages. The large number of properties being used as second homes was also a cause for concern in some villages. In relation to difficulties encountered by asylum seekers in the Ashington area, it was clarified that whilst academies were their own admission authorities, that as these were vulnerable young people, decisions on their placement were made at the Pupil Placement Panel in order to determine the most suitable school for each individual child and that decision was binding on all schools and academies. The concerns of the Ward Member would be looked at outside of this meeting.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The updating of School Organisation Plan 2021-24 to reflect changes to data and circumstances since July 2021 be noted; and
2. The updated School Organisation Plan 2021-24 be circulated to all schools, academies, Ward Councillors and would be published on the Council's website.

60 **NORTHUMBERLAND CHILDREN AND ADULTS SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP (NCASP) ANNUAL REPORT SEPTEMBER 2021 - AUGUST 2022**

The annual report set out Northumberland's multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASA) for children and young people. The safeguarding partners were required to publish a yearly report setting out what they and relevant agencies had done as a result of the MASA. The purpose of the report was to ensure transparency for children, families and practitioners about the activity agencies had undertaken and how effective the arrangements had been in practice.

A comprehensive introduction to the report was provided by P Mead, NCASP Independent Safeguarding Scrutiny and Assurance Chair. Members were advised that this was a transition year following a decision to join up the Children's and Adult Services Partnerships which would provide a better use of resources and align priorities and that the next report would be a joint report. Assurance was provided that this was being done in order to be able to work more effectively and was not about budget savings. In response to a question, she advised that her biggest concern was how children could be protected throughout the pandemic when there were no "eyes on them", stating that there was a need to ensure that processes and systems were in place to support parents and prevent the tragedies that had happened elsewhere in the Country.

Members were advised that a report at the next meeting would provide details of

school attendance and the work being undertaken to get children and young people back into school following the pandemic and provide assurance of the good systems and oversight provided by the Virtual School Headteacher.

There were challenges nationally regarding mental health provision as there had been an increased demand for services due to the effects of isolation and social media use within a reducing workforce capacity to ensure that the most vulnerable were prioritised. Following partnership challenge, data from the Mental Health Trust provided some assurance that this was being done and that there was very good early help provision for both children, young people and parents within Northumberland.

Clarification would be sought from the ICB on whether GPs were providing face to face appointments for children following concerns that some were only being offered telephone appointments. There was a lot of training and systems in place to ensure the safeguarding of children in Northumberland with the work undertaken by the Midwifery Service highlighted.

Members questioned the HR implications section of the report and whether additional resources needed to be identified by the Council to pick up work currently being done by other organisations or the voluntary sector if these were to cease for any reason, to ensure early identification of safeguarding issues usually made by them continued. It was stated that this was a partnership report and there were limitations on what could be included in this report about arrangements for individual partners. However what this Partnership would do if a service was reduced or withdrawn was provide challenge to whoever was responsible, on what the impact would be and how this would be mitigated. Any staffing implications for the Council would be part of any future report should additional services be required to be provided.

Members thanked P Mead and the Partnership for their work and comprehensive report.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report and responses to comments from the Committee be noted.

## 61 **REVIEW OF SEND PROVISION IN NORTHUMBERLAND: SCOPING REPORT**

In November 2022, this Committee recommended creating a task and finish group to examine the continued increase of children and young people requiring an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP). The scoping report requested this Committee to agree the terms of reference/scope of review along with the membership and timeline for the task and finish group.

It was clarified that this report provided an outline of the way in which the task and finish group would work however members would be able to request the attendance/input from other officers and organisations as thought relevant to the review.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The terms of reference and scope of the review be agreed;
2. The membership be agreed as:

Councillor R Dodd (Chair)  
 Councillor C Ball  
 Councillor A Dale  
 Councillor M Swinbank  
 Mr J Sanderson (Co-opted Member)

3. The timetable for the review to be completed be agreed by the members; and
4. The findings of the review be reported to Family and Children’s Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**62 FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23**

The work programme had been circulated for information and any issues which Members wished to bring to the Committee should be raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny Officer in the first instance.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that it was hoped that the School Transport report would be brought to the Committee in March.

Members requested that the 12 month update report in respect of Atkinson House which Cabinet had requested be brought to this Committee prior to Cabinet and that an information report also be provided on the progress of the movement of the Riding for the Disabled from the Pegasus Centre to Kirkley Hall College.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**63 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair and Members of the Committee offered their congratulations to Susan Ghulam, Home Manager at Barndale House short break unit for receiving a well-deserved MBE in the King’s New Year’s Honours List and thanked her for her excellent work and commitment to Barndale.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....



## Forward Plan

### FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS FEBRUARY TO MAY 2023

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p><b>30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account</b>                      The report presents to Cabinet the 30 year Business plan for the Housing Revenue Account.                      (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon – 01670 622168)</p>	<p>CSEG OSC                      13 February 2023</p>	<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p><b>Alternative Provision to Support Children Permanently Excluded from School</b>                      The report seeks permission from Cabinet to undertake a tender process to support the provision of Alternative Education for children of statutory school age. This is a statutory service which is demand led meaning that the Council must provide full time schooling for permanently excluded pupils from the 6th school day. The request is necessary due to the approaching expiry of an existing tender and a likely change in emphasis by the Department for Education in respect of regulation which may have an impact upon levels of expenditure.                      (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - (01670) 622281)</p>		<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p><b>Berwick Theatre Revised Outline Business Case</b>                      The report is to provides an update about some important changes to the Business Case for the Berwick Theatre (New Maltings) project, including changes to the project costs, funding requirement, and value for money assessment.</p>		<p>14 February 2023</p>

<p>It subsequently seeks approval to request a further investment of £5m from the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to cover rising capital costs. (G. Sanderson/ J. Rose 07500 097568)</p>		
<p><b>Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27</b> The report presents the updated Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 to Cabinet following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced during December 2022. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings. (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon 01670 622168)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 February 2022</p>	<p>14 February 2022 <b>Council 22 February 2022</b></p>
<p><b>Council Response to the Independent Review of its Cultural Investment Portfolio</b> The report summarises the findings of the independent report and seeks approval to the Council's immediate response to those findings, including the proposed budget approach to revising the Investment Portfolio. (J. Watson/J. Rose 07500 097568)</p>		<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p><b>Council Response to the Report of the Independent Future of Farming in Northumberland Inquiry</b> The report summarises the findings of the independent Inquiry and seeks approval to the Council's immediate response to those findings. (G. Sanderson/ J. Rose 07500 097568)</p>		<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p><b>Council Tax Discretionary Discount and Council Tax Hardship Schemes 2023-24</b> The report proposes a Council Tax Discretionary Discount</p>	<p>CSEG OSC 13 February 2023</p>	<p>14 February 2023 <b>Council 22 February 2023</b></p>

<p>Scheme and Council Tax Hardship Schemes for financial year 2023-24. (R. Wearmouth/Alison Elsdon 07796 652072)</p>		
<p><b>Energising Blyth: Energy Central Campus Governance Arrangements Update</b> This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval for amendments to the officers nominated as Directors of the Energy Central Campus Company Ltd. (W. Ploszaj/R. Strettle – 07770642773)</p>	N/A	14 February 2023
<p><b>Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Programme</b> The report summarises the Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Programme the initial tranche of funding secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Rural Economic Prosperity Fund, and North of Tyne Investment Programme. It subsequently seeks approval to the proposed first phase of implementation. (G. Sanderson/ J. Rose 07500 097568)</p>		14 February 2023
<p><b>Revenues and Benefits Policies for 2023/24</b> The report sets out the policies that the Revenues and Benefits services operate for the administration of council tax, business rates, housing benefit and council tax support. The report is for information and approval of any updates or legislation changes that need to be made. The policies need County Council approval on 22 February 2023. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 01670 624351)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 February 2022</p>	<p>14 February 2022 <b>Council 22 February 2022</b></p>
<p><b>Director of Education Final Report</b></p>	FACS OSC	14 March 2023

<p>The Director of Education Annual Report presents a self-evaluation of where NCC Education are as a result of work delivered during 2021-22 and also seeks to demonstrate aspirations for the future across all areas of education and related supporting functions. (G. Renner Thompson/A. Kingham - 01670 622742)</p>	<p>2 March 2023</p>	
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022</b> The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 December 2022. (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p><b>Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022</b> The report provides Members with the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2026 for review and agreement (C. Horncastle/J. Stewart - 07771 974 112)</p>	<p>Communities and Place OSC 5 April 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p><b>School Transport Review Outcome Options</b> At SLT on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 the full range of recommendations resulting from the system wide review of home to school transport were shared. In response to this, SLT requested a further paper to provide a summary with greater detail on the range of options considered during the review on where the transport service best sits within Northumberland County Council. This report provides the options as requested for evaluation and alongside this request's approval for the specific initiative to establish NCC delivered Independent Travel Training provision using start-</p>	<p>FACS OSC 6 April 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>

up funding from the Council Transformation Fund (G. Renner Thompson/N. Dorward – 07811 020 806)		
<b>Service Charges in Sheltered Accommodation</b> The report will request permission to introduce Service Charges to all tenants in 8 Sheltered Housing Schemes in line with those currently charged at Arnison Close in Allendale. The HRA is currently subsidising these tenants at a cost of approx. £200k per year. (C. Horncastle/S. Ogle – 07976851270)	Communities and Place OSC 5 April 2023	14 March 2023
<b>The Link (Bridge Street Improvements)</b> This report updates Cabinet and seeks approval of the Outline Business Case and other key decisions regarding the development and delivery of The Link project. The Link will improve the highway and public realm along Bridge Street which is one of the main vehicle and pedestrian routes into the town centre. It will improve connectivity and provide a greatly improved walking and cycling link between the town centre and the quayside. The project will support Blyth's vision to be a Connected, Vibrant and Clean Growth Town (W. Ploszaj/Lara Baker - 07919 217457 )		14 March 2023
<b>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022</b> The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2022-23 (R. Wearmouth/ M. Calvert - 01670 620197) Confidential report	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 March 2022	14 March 2023
<b>Leisure Programme Update</b>	OSC TBC	11 April 2023

To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)		
<b>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of March 2023 (Provisional Outturn)</b> The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 March 2023 (provisional outturn) (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)	N/A	9 May 2023
<b>Outcomes of Phase 2 Consultation about Education in Berwick Partnership</b> This report sets out the feedback received from stakeholders arising from Phase 2 of informal consultation with stakeholders in the Berwick Partnership area and other relevant parties on the possible models of school organisation within both the current 3-tier system and within a 2-tier (primary/secondary) system. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston - (01670) 622281)	TBC	9 May 2023
<b>Leisure Programme Update</b> To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)	TBC	12 December 2023
<b>Leisure Programme Update</b> To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)	TBC	9 April 2024



## Northumberland County Council

### CABINET

**14<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

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#### **School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/2025 Academic Year**

Report of: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, Children's Services

Joint Interim Executive Director Children's Services Audrey Kingham

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#### **Purpose of report**

This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/25 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2021. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **Cabinet are recommended to:**

1. Note the outcomes of the six week consultation undertaken in relation to the Council's proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2024/25 that took place between 11th November 2022 and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022;
2. Approve the proposed co-ordinated admission scheme for all maintained schools and academies, as provided in Appendix 1 of this report;
3. Approve (determine) the proposed admission arrangements, including proposed oversubscription criteria and proposed admission numbers for First and Primary community and voluntary and controlled schools, as provided in Appendix 2 of this report;
4. Approve (determine) the proposed admission arrangements, including proposed over subscription criteria and proposed admission numbers, for Middle, High and Secondary community and voluntary controlled schools, including sixth forms, as provided in Appendix 3 of this report.
5. Approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at Northburn Primary School from 45 to 30, in view of current and future pupil numbers.
6. Approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at Hipsburn Primary School from 21 to 15, in view of current and future pupil numbers.

7. Approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at Shilbottle Primary School from 30 to 15, in view of current and future pupil numbers.
8. Approve a reduction of the Published Admission Number at The Duchess High School from 250 to 240, in view of current and future pupil numbers.
9. Approve the amendments to the catchment areas of Broomhill First School, Felton CofE Primary School, James Calvert Spence College and Duchess's High School as set out on pages 24 & 25 of this report.

## **Key issues**

1. On an annual basis the local authority needs to determine its school admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. As the Council's decision making body Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the arrangements for the academic year 2024/25.
2. There have been some minor amendments to the current admission policies, following a review of our arrangements by the Office of the School Adjudicator, there are however no amendments to the oversubscription criteria, for first, primary, middle, high and secondary schools for 2024/25. Full copies of these are contained in the appendices to this report.
3. Cabinet is asked to approve (determine) all the admission arrangements for 2024/25 in accordance with the Admissions Code 2021. Determination of the arrangements must be made by 28 February 2023 prior to publication on the Council's website and to allow for the submission of any objections regarding the arrangements to the School's Adjudicator by 15 May 2023.

## **Admissions Arrangements Consultation Process and Outcomes**

4. A six week consultation on the Council's proposed admissions arrangements for 2024/25 took place between 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2022.
5. As required by the School Admissions Code, the full proposed admission arrangements were published on the Council's website for the whole of the consultation period, together with details of the person to whom comments could be sent. There were no areas specified on which comments could not be made.
6. Groups and persons consulted with as part of the consultation process were as follows:
  - Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18, via website and communication from schools and nurseries;
  - All Governing Bodies of voluntary controlled and community schools;
  - All Governing Bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies, who are their own admissions authority;
  - Neighbouring Local Authorities (Newcastle City Council; Cumbria County Council; Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council; North Tyneside Council; Durham County Council) and
  - The CE Diocese of Newcastle and Durham; the RC Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle



7. All 4 schools affected by the PAN reduction proposals appreciate the rationale behind the proposals and they are aware that the pupil population in their catchment is decreasing over time. Of the concerns raised, the main theme related to parental choice and the impact reducing the PAN would have on choices available to families. There were also some concerns about siblings and the potential for families to withdraw older siblings if they can't access a place for younger children. There was some dissatisfaction with the consultation process which has been acknowledged by officers and consideration will be given to suggestions when carrying out the process in subsequent years. Detailed responses can be found in Appendix 4.

## BACKGROUND

1. The School Admissions Code 2021 applies to all maintained mainstream schools, which includes voluntary controlled and community schools and schools that are their own admission authority. Academies are required to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions as part of their funding agreements, although the Secretary of State may vary this requirement if there is a demonstrable need. The Local Authority does not have any decision making powers when it comes to the admission criteria to academies.
2. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. In order to promote fair access to educational opportunities, admission arrangements are subject to scrutiny by the Schools Adjudicator who has the power to impose arrangements on those authorities that do not meet the requirements of the Code.

NB: NCC Officers were contacted by the Schools Adjudicator in May 2022 following an enquiry by a member of the public. There was a full review of the Council's Admission Arrangements during the Summer Term resulting in some small administrative changes which are now included in the policies below (Appendix 2 and 3).

3. When changes are proposed, admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following year. Where no changes to admission arrangements are proposed, admission authorities need only consult once every 7 years. The admission arrangements must be formally approved each year.

## IMPLICATIONS ARISING OUT OF THE REPORT

<b>Policy</b>	The Admissions Policy enables all applications for school places to be prioritised in an open and fair way, ensuring that all schools and academies adopt lawful admission arrangements.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There are no direct financial implications as a result of these arrangements.
<b>Legal</b>	The admission arrangements comply with legislation. The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications
<b>Human Resources</b>	No implications
<b>Property</b>	No implications
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	EIA attached at Appendix 5
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	The level of risk involved in the proposed amendment to the admissions numbers is perceived to be minimal.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
<b>Customer Considerations</b>	Parents can express a preference for schools and give their reasons in the light of the criteria within the admissions policies. As far as possible under the policies, parents will be allocated a place for their child at the school for which they have expressed a preference. Where this is not possible, and where parents live in the Northumberland County Council area, a place will be offered at an alternative school.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	It is not envisaged that this proposal would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	No implications
<b>Consultation</b>	A six week consultation on the Council's proposed admissions arrangements for 2024/25 took place between 11 <sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2022.
<b>Wards</b>	All Northumberland Wards

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

### Report Sign Off

Finance Officer	Alison Elsdon obo Jan Willis
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Children's Services	Audrey Kingham
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

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Report Author: Sue Avis ton, Head of School Organisation and Resources  
Sue.Aviston@northumberland.gov.uk

### Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Proposed coordinated admission scheme for all maintained schools and academies 2024/25
- Appendix 2 - Proposed admission arrangements, including proposed over subscription criteria and proposed admission numbers, for First and Primary Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools – 2024/25
- Appendix 3 - Proposed admission arrangements, including proposed over subscription criteria and proposed admission numbers, for Middle, High and Secondary Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools – 2024/25, including sixth forms
- Appendix 4- Consultation responses
- Appendix 5 - Equalities Impact Assessment

## Coordinated admission scheme for maintained schools, including academies 2024/25

**Note: The status of some schools listed in this document may be subject to change as a consequence of academy conversion or school organisational changes.**

### Introduction

All Local authorities are required by the School Admissions (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 to have a scheme in place each year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools and academies (except special schools and nursery schools) within their area. The scheme has to comply with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Coordination schemes are intended to simplify the admissions process whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Coordination establishes a mechanism that ensures as far as is reasonably practicable that every parent of a child living in a local authority (LA) who has applied to a maintained school is sent a single offer of a school place by their LA.

Coordination schemes do not affect the rights and duties of the governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools to set and apply their own admissions arrangements and oversubscription criteria, nor for academies to agree their own arrangements with the Secretary of State. Admission authorities do not need to determine the same or similar oversubscription criteria, but must ensure that their own admission arrangements are compatible with and do not undermine the coordination scheme for their area.

The following coordinated admission scheme for Northumberland County Council will apply to the admission arrangements for the school year beginning September 2024.

### Interpretation and glossary

In this Scheme –

"The LA" is Northumberland County Council acting in its capacity as a local (education) authority.

"The LA area" means Northumberland.

"School" means a community, voluntary controlled, foundation or voluntary aided school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA.

"Academy" means a state funded non fee paying independent school set up under a Funding Agreement between the Secretary of State and the proprietor of an Academy (most commonly and hereafter referred to as an Academy Trust). Academy Funding Agreements require Academies to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions, though the Secretary of State has the power to vary this requirement where there is a demonstrable need. Academies include free schools and studio schools.

"Admission authority" in relation to a community or voluntary controlled school means the LA and, in relation to a foundation or voluntary aided school or an academy, means the governing body of that school.

"The specified year" is the school year beginning in September 2024.

"Admission arrangements" are the determined arrangements which govern the procedures and decision making for the purpose of admitting pupils to a particular school or academy.

"Late application" means any application for a place in the first year of entry to the school that is received after the closing date for applications.

"Parent or carer" means any person who (as defined in the 1989 Children Act) holds parental responsibility for a child and with whom the child normally lives.

"Home authority" is the LA that a parent resides in.

## **The scheme**

The scheme will apply to all first, primary, middle, secondary and high schools and academies in the LA area (except special schools and nursery schools) and shall take effect from 28 February 2023.

Under the coordinated scheme, Northumberland County Council will set and apply the oversubscription criteria for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the area. The governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools and academies will set and apply their own oversubscription criteria.

The LA will work with all other admission authorities within Northumberland and with other relevant local authorities to ensure that a fair and transparent system for the allocation of places is achieved.

## **The normal admissions round**

The scheme will apply to all children whose parents are seeking a school place for the school's initial year of entry for the start of Autumn term 2024 (whether or not it is their age cohort). The initial years of entry are:

### **School type or name Initial year of entry**

<i>First and primary schools</i>	<i>Reception</i>
<i>Middle schools</i>	<i>Year 5</i>
<i>Secondary schools</i>	<i>Year 7</i>
<i>High schools</i>	<i>Year 9</i>

There will be a common application form available for all applicants, which will be available online and as a paper version. Online applications are encouraged as parents receive an immediate response to their application and they can accept their offer online.

The common application form must be used by parents who live in Northumberland as a means of expressing preferences for a school place for their child. All preferences expressed on the form are valid applications and they should be ranked in order of preference. Reasons to support each preference can be included on the form.

The form will specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned to. Completed forms must be returned to the LA before the closing date. The form will be accompanied by an explanation of the coordinated admissions scheme. This will explain that:

- the parent/carer will receive one single offer of a school place

- all preferences will be treated equally
- a place will be offered at the highest ranked school for which the child is eligible for a place under the admission criteria
- if more than one school could offer a place, the parent/carer will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the preference order appearing on the form
- if a place is unable to be offered at a preferred school, a place will be offered at the nearest school with available places based on the straight line distance from home to school.

The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that every parent resident in their area who has a child due to start primary education or is in their last year of first, primary or middle school is made aware of the procedures for applying for a school place and has access to a copy of the form and supporting guidance.

### **Verification of data**

Parents may be asked to provide proof of address by the LA or by other admission authorities.

In some cases, for example where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a child's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances the address used for child benefit purposes will normally be used, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the benefit. If that is not available, then the address on the NHS medical card can be used.

### **Supplementary information**

Admission authorities can require parents to provide additional information where it is required for the governing body to apply its oversubscription criteria. Any requested information should be returned by the dates stated in order to be considered as part of the application.

### **Submission dates**

The application period for middle, secondary or high school places will open from **12 September 2023**.

**31 October 2023, midnight**, is the deadline for parents to apply to the LA for a place in a middle, secondary or high school or academy.

The application period for reception school places will open from **1<sup>st</sup> November 2023**.

**15 January 2024, midnight**, is the deadline for parents to apply to the LA for a place in a reception class.

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure that applications are returned directly to the home LA by the closing date.

### **Late applications**

Any application for the normal admissions round received after the deadline will be deemed "late".

Late applications will be dealt with after all on-time applications have been processed and places allocated. Late applicants will not be made an offer on National Offer Day. They will be offered as part of the second waiting list process once offers have been accepted.

Only in exceptional limited circumstances will late applications be considered at the same time as applications submitted on time. These include:

- The illness/death of a close relative such that making an application during the application period was not possible.
- A move into Northumberland from outside the area after the deadline date. Confirmation of the new address must be provided (in the form of an exchange of contracts or a tenancy agreement).
- Where there has been a delay in the LA receiving the application due to an administrative error.
- Other circumstances to be considered and each case decided on its own merits.

Documentary evidence should be provided with the application to verify the circumstances which caused the application to be late. If evidence cannot be provided, the application will not be considered as an exception.

The LA will determine whether the late application is considered as an exception.

**22 November 2023** is the deadline for asking for a late application for a place in a middle, secondary or high school or academy to be considered as an on time exception.

**14 February 2024** is the deadline for asking for a late application for a reception place to be considered as an on time exception.

## Changing preferences

No changes will be accepted to applications after the deadline date has passed, unless there is a genuine reason for the change, such as a change of address or siblings have changed schools. **The deadlines and evidence requirements are the same as for exceptional late applications, see above.** If these are not met, the request will not be considered as an exception.

Any request to change preferences will cancel out and replace the previous application. If submitted after the deadline date, and not agreed by the LA as an exception, this means the original application will be withdrawn by the LA, processed as late, and no offer will be made on National Offer Day. Places will be offered as part of the second waiting list process.

## No form received

Where no form is submitted for a child known to the LA, a place will be offered at the nearest Northumberland school to the home address with a vacancy, measured in a straight line using an electronic (GIS) map measurement system. This may be a community, voluntary controlled, foundation or voluntary aided school or academy, if the admission authority agrees. However, places will not be offered on National Offer Day: they will be offered as part of the second waiting list process.

## Processing applications

After the closing date the LA will forward details of relevant applications received on time to

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School Admissions Arrangements 2024/25, -



other admission authorities in its area and to other LAs if a preference is made for a school in another area. Late applications will be shared with other admission authorities after offer day.

Parental preferences will be ranked by every admission authority strictly according to the oversubscription criteria for the relevant school. The ranked lists will be returned to Northumberland LA by the specified date detailing how the oversubscription criteria have been applied to the list.

The order of school preference listed on the application form will not affect these rankings.

## **Determining offers**

The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities. The LA will only make a decision on the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the form where:

- it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or on behalf of another admission authority that has delegated its role to the LA, or
- an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
- an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA, using preference data and oversubscription criteria rankings (including those from own admission authority schools and academies), will allocate places according to each parent's preference ranking as follows:

- Where a parent's first preference can be met, a place will be allocated at that school. The LA will not consider any lower ranked preferences.
- Where a parent's first preference cannot be met, but a lower preference can, a place will be allocated at the lower preference school. Any higher preference applications will be placed on the waiting list for that school(s) and ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. Any preferences ranked lower than the preference offered will not be considered.
- Where none of the parent's preferences can be met, a place will be allocated at the nearest school with available places based on the straight line distance from home to school. The applications for preferred schools will be placed on the waiting lists for those schools and ranked according to their oversubscription criteria.

## **Distance measurements**

Distances are measured using the Council's electronic (GIS) map measuring system in a straight line distance from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

## **Offers**

Parents will receive one offer of a school place. Parents who applied online can log in on National Offer Day to find out their allocated school.

Parents who submitted a paper application will be posted a letter to arrive on National Offer Day. Information will not be given out over the telephone.

If a parent was refused a place at a preferred school, the letter or email (depending on how

parent applied for their place) will explain why the place was refused and that the parent has the right of appeal.

## **Responding to offers**

Parents are required to respond to the LA regarding the offer of a school place to either accept or refuse it within two weeks of National Offer Day. If the parent does not confirm to the LA that they accept the place, the LA may remove the place and reallocate it to another child.

Parents should not refuse a place unless they are certain of a place at an alternative school. This does not remove the parent's right of appeal.

If a parent wishes their child to be considered for an alternative school(s) after offer day, a new application must be completed listing the new order of preferences. This will cancel out and replace the previous application.

## **Waiting Lists**

Children will be kept on a waiting list for any school ranked higher on their form than the school at which they were offered a place, for example, where a parent has been allocated a place at their second preference school, they may be placed on the waiting list of their first preference school but not their third.

Where a parent has been offered a place at a school they did not nominate on their form, they will be placed on the waiting list of all the schools they did nominate, and considered for places at those schools if any become available.

Waiting lists will be kept by all admission authorities until at least **31 December 2024**. The waiting list will be maintained strictly in accordance with the oversubscription criteria and if a place becomes available this will be offered to the child ranked highest on the list. Places on waiting lists will change over time as new applications are received. When any place in a school is refused, the LA will reallocate that place to the child at the top of the waiting list for that school.

## **Appeals**

All parents have the right of appeal if refused a place at a school. Appeals are coordinated by the relevant admission authority. Appeals will be heard by an independent appeals panel and if the panel uphold the appeal, the decision is legally binding on the admission authority and they must admit the child.

## **Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry**

Children are entitled to start school full time the September following their fourth birthday. This is when most children start school. However a parent does not have to send their child to school until they reach compulsory school age. A child will reach compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. Children must receive full time education from this point. For children under compulsory school age, once a school place has been offered and accepted, parents may, if they wish, request that their child attends school part-time until later in the school year, or starts full time, later in the school year, but not later than the start of the summer term. If you would like your child to attend school part time or start school later in the school year, you must contact the local authority and school following receipt of your offer letter.

## **Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be discussed with the head teacher of the school and made in writing to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

## **Summer Born Children**

The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August can also choose to defer entry as above but they can also request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.

Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request. The local authority will liaise with the school and the relevant admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the relevant admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.

If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools. If a child who has not reached compulsory school age has been allocated a Reception place and their parent or carer wishes to delay their child's entry to school, the place will be held open. The place must be taken up in the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

## **Shared responsibility**

The management of school applications may be severely delayed during the main admissions round where separated parents of the child each submit an application for different schools or one parent does not agree with the application made by the other parent. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer of a school place per child can be made by the Local Authority. In this situation the Local Authority asks that parents and/or carers resolve matters between themselves before informing the Local Authority in writing of which application should be processed/their agreement to an application. In case of dispute between parents, where more

than one parent has parental responsibility and they do not agree to an application being made to a particular school, a temporary school place will be offered until any dispute is resolved by both parents as a personal matter and this will be based on the address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term-time only.

In some cases, for example where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a child's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances the address used for child benefit purposes will normally be used, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the benefit. If that is not available, then the address on the NHS medical card can be used.

## **Children from overseas**

Children who hold a full British Citizen passport or children whose passport has been endorsed to show they have the right of abode in the UK are entitled to apply for a place at a maintained school. The passport or visa may be requested for inspection before an offer of a place can be made. The LA will allocate a place in advance for families of UK service personnel and Crown Servants with a confirmed posting to the area, where they are moving to the area outside of the normal admission round.

## **Applying for places in-year (outside of the normal admissions round)**

Parents with children of school age who move into Northumberland and require a school place in-year (outside of the normal admissions round) should contact the Admissions Team if they require advice on schools with places.

Parents who want a place in a Northumberland school will need to complete the LA's in-year school application form and return it to the LA Admissions Team. Parents are allowed to name their preferred schools on the form.

Places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless house moves have been confirmed, for example through the exchange of contracts or the signing of a formal lease agreement. Documentary evidence to support the new address will be required.

In Northumberland, the local authority manage the in-year admissions for the majority of schools, however some academies allocate their own in-year admissions directly. Where this is the case, the LA will forward the application to the school and the school will inform the parent if they are able to offer a place. If no place is available at a preferred school, the LA will make Northumberland residents an offer of an alternative school.

## **Attendance at school following the offer of a school place**

For admission to a school's normal point of entry, the child is expected to attend the allocated school within 10 school days of the start of the term (except where deferred entry to Reception has been agreed, in which case the child is expected to attend from the start of the term).

For in-year admissions, the child is expected to take up the offer and attend the allocated school within 10 school days of being made an offer, or the offer will be withdrawn.

## Coordination timetable for admission to Reception in September 2024

DATE	EVENT
1 November 2023	Application process opens online for 2024/25
Midnight 15 January 2024	Closing date for all application forms to be received by the LA
14 February 2024	Last date for any late applications to be submitted and considered as Exceptions
5 February 2024	Applications for own admission authority schools and academies in Northumberland will be forwarded to those admission authorities and applications stating preferences for schools in other LAs will be forwarded to those LAs
2 March 2024	Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools to provide the LA with their ranked lists of applicants, including details of how the oversubscription criteria were applied
8 March 2024	The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of Northumberland schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas
22 March 2024	The LA will inform Northumberland schools of children to be offered places at their schools
16 April 2024	National offer day for places.
1 May 2024	Date for parents to refuse the offer
8 May 2024	Reallocate spaces that have become available since offer day (on-time applicants only - waiting list process) in criteria order.
29 May 2024 onwards	Places are allocated as and when they become available in priority order.
June/July	Appeals are heard

## Coordination timetable for admission to middle, secondary and high schools in September 2024

DATE	EVENT
12 September 2023	Application process opens online for 2024/25
Midnight 31 October 2023	Closing date for all applications to be received by the LA
22 November 2023	Last date for any late applications to be submitted and be considered as exceptions
23 November 2023	Applications for own admission authority schools and academies in Northumberland will be forwarded to those admission authorities and applications stating preferences for schools in other LAs will be forwarded to those LAs
11 January 2024	Academies, foundation and voluntary aided schools to provide the LA with their ranked lists of applicants, including details of how the oversubscription criteria were applied
25 January 2024	The LA will inform other LAs of any offers of Northumberland schools to be made to applicants resident in their areas.
28 February 2024	The LA will inform Northumberland schools of children to be offered places at their schools
1 March 2024	National Offers Day
16 March 2024	Date for parents to refuse offers of a place
20 March 2024	Reallocate spaces that have become available since offer day (on-time applicants only – first waiting list process).
18 April 2024 onwards	Places are allocated as and when they become available in priority order
May – July	Appeals are heard

**All schools and academies to which this scheme applies:**

**1. All Northumberland County Council community and voluntary controlled schools**

**2. VA Middle Schools**

N/A

**3. Trusts**

**Ashington Learning Partnership Trust**

Bothal Primary School

Central Primary School

**4. Academies and Free Schools (first/primary)**

Abbeyfields First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Bede Academy (South site), Emmanuel Schools Foundation

Belsay Primary School, Pele Trust

Bishop's Primary School (NCEA)

Blyth Malvins Close Academy, Wise Academies

Blyth Morpeth Road Academy, Wise Academies

Blyth Croftway Academy, Wise Academies

Broomley First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Cramlington Village Primary School

Darras Hall Primary School, Pele Trust

Haltwhistle Primary Academy, Wise Academies

Harbottle Church of England First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Heddon on the Wall St Andrew's C of E Primary School, Pele Trust

Meadowdale Academy (primary from September 2020)

Mickley First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Morpeth Stobhillgate First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

Ovingham CE First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Pax Christi Catholic Partnership, Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Academy (Cramlington)

Ponteland Primary School, Pele Trust

Ponteland Community Primary School (previously Ponteland Middle), associate of Tyne Coast Academy Trust

Prudhoe Adderlane Academy, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Prudhoe Castle First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Prudhoe West Academy, Wise Academies

Richard Coates C of E Primary School, Pele Trust

Shaftoe Trust Primary School, Wise Academies

St Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Roman Catholic First School

St Matthew's Roman Catholic Primary Academy, St Thomas More Partnership of Schools

St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Primary School

Thropton Village First School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust,

Warkworth Church of England Primary School

Whitfield Church of England Primary School, The Good Shepherd Multi-Academy Trust

Whittonstall First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

Wylam First School, Tyne Community Learning Trust

### **Academies (Middle)**

Dr Thomlinson Church of England Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust  
Morpeth Chantry Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust  
Morpeth Newminster Middle School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust  
Hexham Middle School, Hadrian Learning Trust  
Highfield Middle School, Tyne Community Learning Trust  
Ovingham Middle School, Tyne Community Learning Trust  
St Joseph's Roman Catholic Middle School

### **Academies (secondary/high)**

Ashington Academy, The North East Learning Trust  
Bede Academy (North Site), Emmanuel Schools Foundation  
Bedlington Academy, The North East Learning Trust  
Berwick Academy  
Cramlington Learning Village  
NCEA Duke's Secondary School  
Ponteland High School, Pele Trust  
Prudhoe High School, Tyne Community Learning Trust  
Queen Elizabeth High School, Hadrian Learning Trust  
St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, Pax Christi Catholic Partnership  
The Blyth Academy, Northern Education Trust  
The King Edward VI School, The 3 Rivers Learning Trust

### **5. VA and Foundation Schools**

Bedlington Whitley Memorial Church of England Primary School  
Bellingham Primary School  
Bellingham Middle School and Sports College  
Haydon Bridge High School  
Broomhaugh Church of England First School  
Chollerton Church of England First School  
Corbridge St Helen's Church of England First School  
Holy Island Church of England First School  
Holy Trinity Church of England First School  
Hugh Joicey Church of England First School  
Humshaugh Church of England First School  
Longhorsley Church of England First School  
Morpeth All Saints Church of England First School  
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School (Berwick)  
St Robert's Roman Catholic First School  
Tritlington Church of England First School  
Wark Church of England First School  
Whitley Chapel Church of England First School  
Ellingham Church of England Primary School  
Embleton Vincent Edwards' Church of England Primary School  
Greenhead Church of England Primary School  
Henshaw Church of England Primary School  
Newbrough Church of England Primary School  
Richard Coates Church of England School  
St Aidan's Roman Catholic Primary School  
St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic First School



St Michael's Church of England Primary School  
St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School (Alnwick)  
Whalton Church of England Primary School

## Northumberland County Council Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - 2024/25

### Admission to First and Primary Schools (Reception)

#### Introduction

These are part of the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled first and primary schools.

NB If you are applying for a school that manages their own admissions e.g academies, please review their admissions policy/arrangements via the school website.

#### Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

In line with current legislation, the Local Authority has drawn up a co-ordinated admissions scheme to coordinate admissions to maintained schools and Academies within Northumberland and neighbouring authorities for the main admissions round.

#### Published Admission Numbers

The admission number the Local Authority will publish for each community and voluntary controlled school is shown below.

#### Please note proposed changes re: Shilbottle Primary, Hipsburn Primary and Northburn Primary

- Reduction of the Published Admission Number at Shilbottle Primary School from 30 to 15, in view of current and future pupil numbers.
- Reduction of the Published Admission Number at Hipsburn Primary School from 21 to 15 in view of current and future pupil numbers.
- Reduction of the Published Admission Number at Northburn Primary School from 45 to 30 in view of current and future pupil numbers.

School Name	Published Admission Number (PAN )
Acomb First School	15
Allendale Primary School	24
Amble First School	30
Amble Links First	30
Beaconhill Community Primary School	30
Beaufront First School	15
Bedlington Station Primary School	30
Bedlington Stead Lane Primary School	30
Bedlington West End First School	30
Belford Primary School	30
Berwick St. Mary's C.E. First School	30
Branton Community Primary School	6

Broomhill First School	15
Burnside Primary School	60
Cambo First School	8
Cambois Primary School	15
Choppington Primary School	15
Craggside C of E Primary School	60
Cramlington Eastlea Primary School	30
Ellington Primary School	30
Felton C of E Primary School	15
Grange View CE First School	30
Greenhaugh County Primary School (as will be)	8
Guidepost Ringway Primary School	30
Hareside Primary School	60
Hexham First School	30
<b>Hipsburn Primary School</b>	<b>15 (previously 21)</b>
Holywell First School	30
Horton Grange Primary School	90
Kielder Community Primary School (as will be)	8
Linton Primary School	8
Longhoughton C of E Primary School	30
Lowick C of E VC First School	10
Morpeth First School	60
Mowbray Primary School	30
New Delaval County Primary School	45
New Hartley First School	30
Newsham Primary School	60
Norham St Ceolwulf's C of E First School	10
<b>Northburn Primary School</b>	<b>30 (previously 45)</b>
Otterburn Primary School	10
Pegswood County Primary School	30
Red Row Community First School	29
Rothbury First School	20
Scremerston First School	18
Seahouses Primary School	21
Seaton Delaval First School	30
Seaton Sluice First School	30
Seghill First School	30
Shanklea Primary School	45
<b>Shilbottle Primary School</b>	<b>15 (previously 30)</b>
Slaley First School	10
Spittal Community First School	40
Stakeford Primary School	30
Stamfordham Primary School	15
Stannington First School	20
Swansfield Park Primary School	45
Swarland Primary School	17

The Sele First School, Hexham	84
Tweedmouth Prior Park First School	30
Tweedmouth West First School	30
Whittingham Primary School	15
Wooler First School	27

## The Local Authority Admissions Policy for 2024-2025

This admissions policy will be used to allocate places at those schools which are oversubscribed. It is attached below for entry to a Reception class.

### **Admission Policy – first and primary schools**

This policy applies only to Local Authority maintained schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

The County Council is obliged to admit all applicants to a particular school provided these do not exceed the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan where the school is named in the statement will be admitted.

### **Oversubscription Criteria**

Where there are more applications than places available the following oversubscription criteria will be applied, strictly in order of priority:

1. Children in Public Care (and as deemed under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) including a child who was previously "looked after" but immediately after being "looked after" became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Note: A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

2. Children living within the catchment area of the school and those on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

The following link provides information re: catchments relevant to the 2024/25 academic year:  
[Digital catchment maps](#)

3. Children with an exceptional social or medical reason that means that they can only attend that specific school (for example, where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only go to one school).

Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body involved with the family or the child. The professional must be independent of both the family and the school. The

evidence must relate specifically to the school for which the application is being made and must demonstrate clearly why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs. No assumptions should be made that the submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself be sufficient to allocate a place.

NOTE: You will not be allocated a place under this criterion if you omit to send to School Admissions Team a written statement from a professional third party by 16 January 2024.

4. Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership who have a sibling\* already in the school who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.
5. Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

NOTE: The greater catchment area for a school is the catchment area of the high or secondary school i.e all school in a partnership that feed into a particular high or secondary school. The Local Authority cannot determine catchment areas for Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools or Academies, however for the purpose of this criteria, the Council has determined a greater catchment for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. Parents can find details of this using the digital catchment maps link above.

6. Children who have a sibling\* who already attends the school and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

\* For the purpose of admissions siblings are deemed to be brothers and sisters, stepsiblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children who reside permanently in the household and are treated as siblings.

7. Other children

## **Tie Breaker**

Should it prove necessary, because places are limited, to distinguish between children in any given category priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school, measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies') using the LA's computerised measuring system (GIS). Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

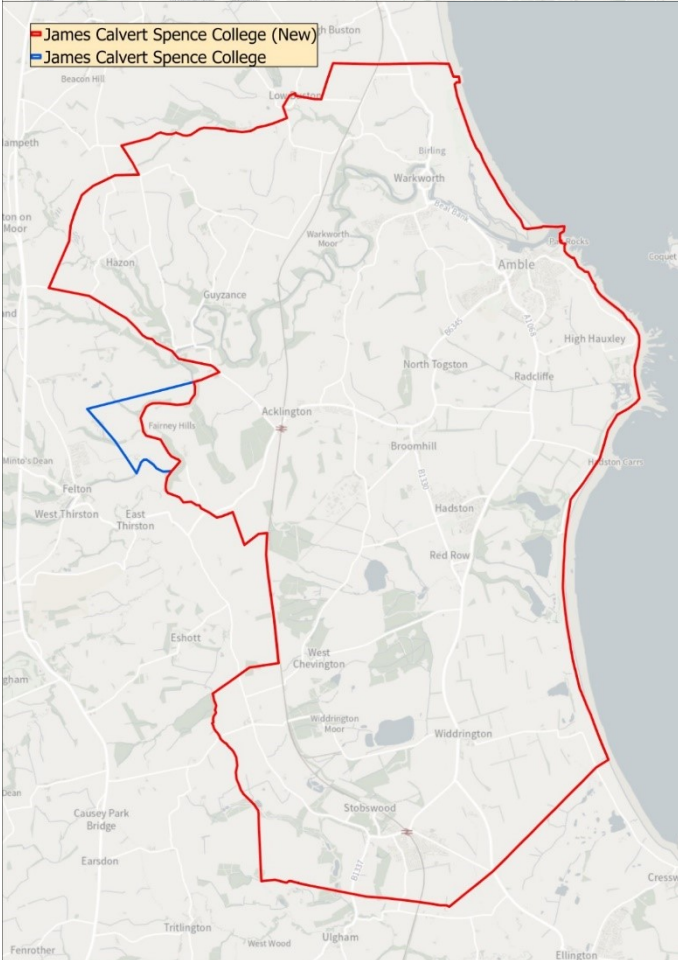
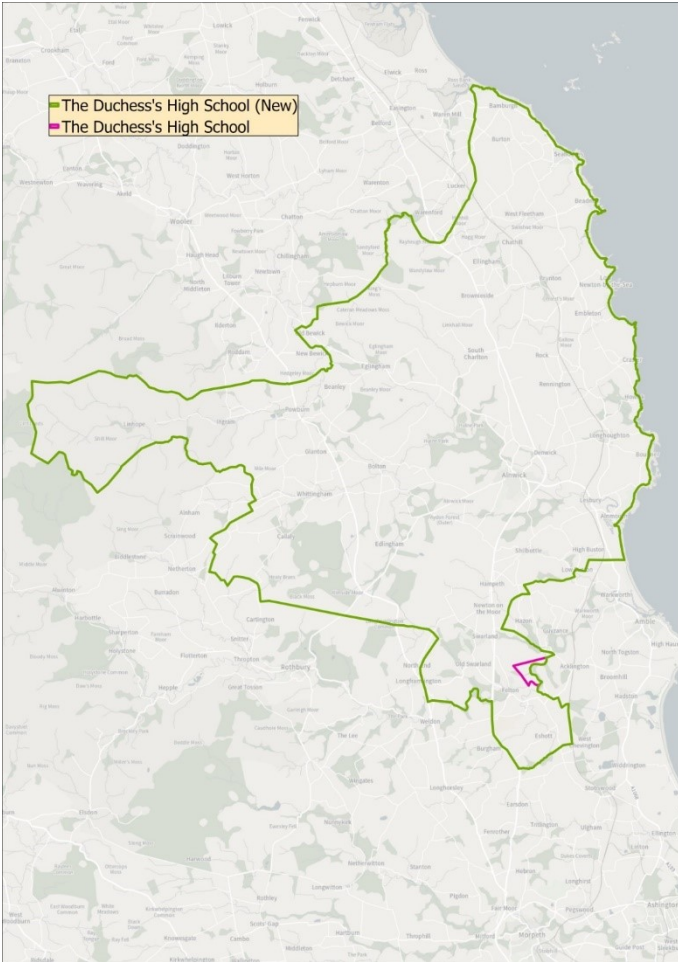
Applicants refused admission are entitled to an appeal which is determined by an independent panel.

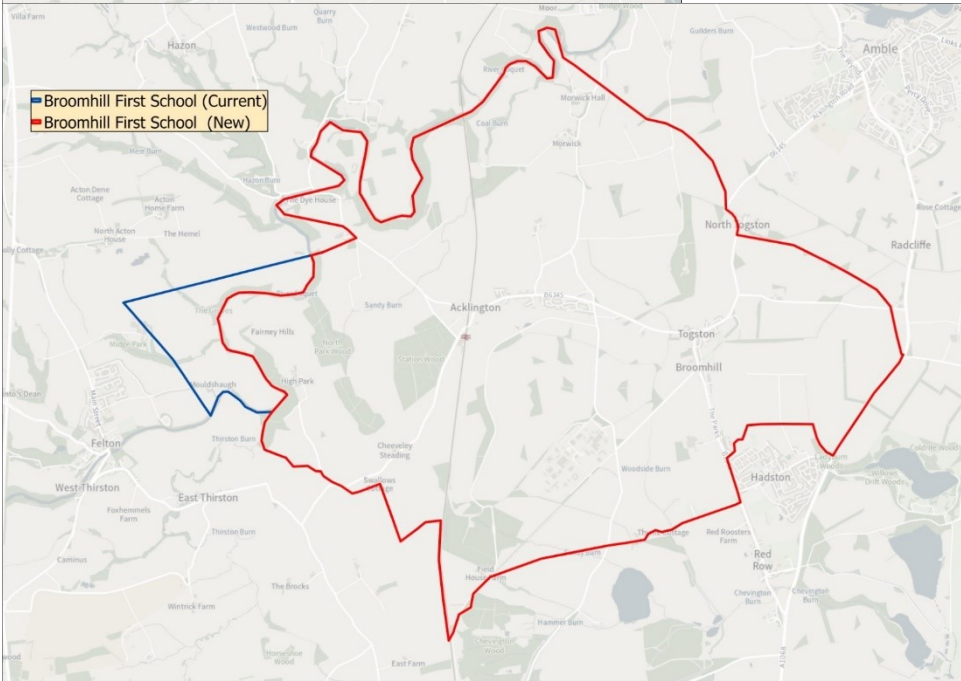
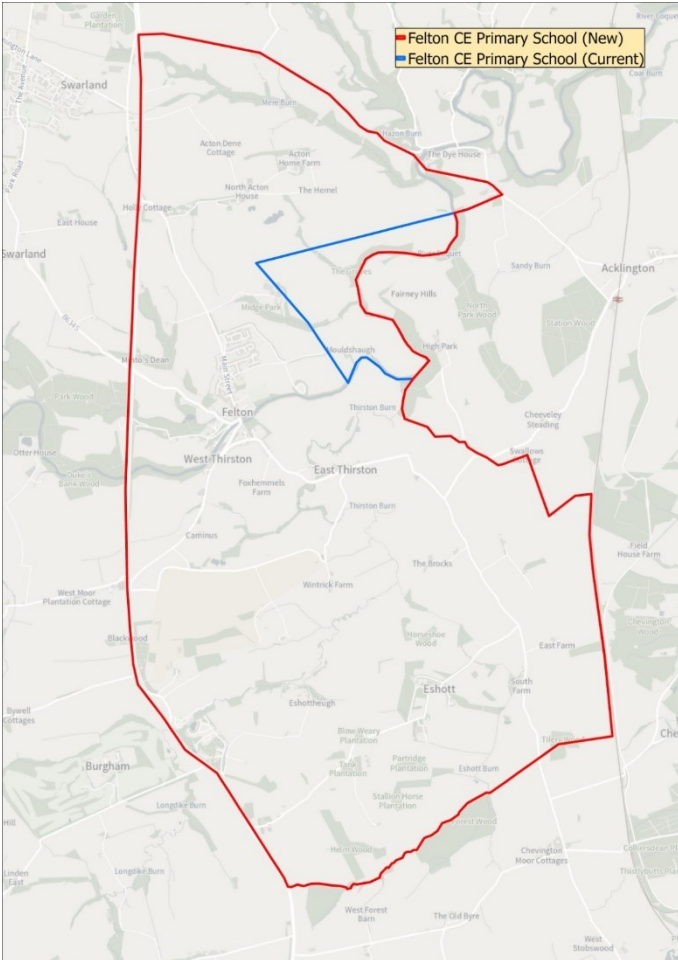
## **Catchment proposal**

### **Broomhill, Felton, James Calvert Spence and The Duchess High**

Having reviewed the catchment areas for Broomhill First School and Felton Primary School, it appears that the inclusion of the houses at the end of Mouldshaugh Lane in the Broomhill catchment could have been as a result of an anomaly or historical error. Therefore, this consultation presents an opportunity to review the Broomhill First and Felton Primary catchment areas, and we will consult on moving the western boundary of the Felton Primary and The Duchess's High Schools catchment areas to the natural border formed by the River Coquet. This consultation will ensure that all stakeholders that might be impacted by any change to the catchments, including Broomhill First and James Calvert Spence College, will have the opportunity

to submit their views for consideration. A copy of the previous maps and the new proposed maps can be found below:





**GENERAL**



**Parents may be asked to provide evidence of residency if the requested school is oversubscribed.**

Applications on behalf of children who are resident in other Local Authority areas will be considered in the same way as applications from Northumberland residents.

Children with disabilities will be treated no less favourably than other applicants for admission. Schools are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, and no child will be refused a place on the grounds of disability. A pupil has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Those parents whose application to a school has been unsuccessful will be notified of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, gives this right to all parents whose application for a school has been unsuccessful. The decision of an Appeal Panel is binding on both the Admission Authority and the school. The School Admission Appeals Code can be found on the DfE website at: [www.gov.uk/dfes](http://www.gov.uk/dfes).

**Definitions used under the policy**

**'Parents'** include all those people who have a parental responsibility\* for a child as set out in the Children's Act 1989. Where responsibility for a child is 'shared', the person deemed to be the person responsible for completing the application is the person receiving Child Benefit and whose address will be used for admission purposes.

\*Parental Responsibility, unless otherwise determined by a court order:

- Mothers automatically have parental responsibility.
- Fathers also have parental responsibility if the father is married to the mother at the time of the child's birth. This continues after any divorce/separation/remarriage even if the child lives apart from them.
- An unmarried father can obtain Parental Responsibility by:
  - marrying the mother
  - having his name registered or re-registered on the birth certificate if his name is not already registered\*\*
  - entering into a Parental Responsibility Agreement with the mother
  - obtaining a Parental Responsibility Order from the court
  - having obtained a Residence Order prior to 22.4.2014
  - by being named as the resident parent under a Child Arrangements Order
  - becoming the child's guardian on the mother's death

\*\*The law has changed so that unmarried fathers who registered or re-registered their name on their child's birth certificate *after* 1st December 2003 will have Parental Responsibility for their child.

Therefore:

- If an unmarried father has a child after 1st December 2003 and he is registered on the birth certificate he WILL have Parental Responsibility.
- If a child's birth was registered before 1st December 2003 and the father was not named on the birth certificate, the birth can be re-registered to include the father's name. Once this has been done, the father WILL have Parental Responsibility.\*

- If an unmarried father's name is already on the birth certificate and the child was registered before 1st December 2003, the law has not changed this situation so the father WILL NOT have Parental Responsibility. (Unless obtained by other means).

## Same-sex parents

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### Civil partners

Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

### Non-civil partners

For same-sex partners who are not civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- [applying for parental responsibility](#) if a parental agreement was made
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth

## Address to be Used in Determining Priority for Admission

The address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term time only, will be used in the allocation process.

In some cases, for example where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a child's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances the address used for child benefit purposes will normally be used, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the benefit. If that is not available, then the address on the NHS medical card can be used.

## Fraudulent Applications and Withdrawal of a School Place

The Local Authority will not withdraw the offer of a place unless it has been established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, the application will be considered on the basis of correct information, and parents or carers will have the right of appeal where no place can be offered.

**The local authority may seek to withdraw the offer of a school places if it is established that a fraudulent application was submitted.**

Where parents or carers are found to have made a fraudulent application for a school place and the admission authority decides not to withdraw that place in the best interests of the child, should a school place be sought for any other sibling, or siblings, the sibling criterion will not be considered.

If a place is withdrawn it will be offered to those with a greater right to the place as of National Offers Day, ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria.

## Parental disagreement

The management of school applications may be severely delayed during the main admissions round where separated parents\* of the child each submit an application for different schools or one parent does not agree with the application made by the other parent. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer of a school place per child can be made by the Local

Authority. In this situation the Local Authority asks that parents and/or carers resolve matters between themselves before informing the Local Authority in writing of which application should be processed/their agreement to an application. In case of dispute between parents, where more than one parent has parental responsibility and they do not agree to an application being made to a particular school, a temporary school place will be offered until any dispute is resolved by both parents as a personal matter and this will be based on the address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term-time only.

## **Late Applications**

Normally applications submitted after the relevant published date will not be considered until after allocations for those parents who applied on time have been made unless in exceptional circumstances. If the LA considers your reasons are exceptional your application will be considered along with those received on time. Examples of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances are a family who have just moved into the area (proof of ownership or tenancy agreement will be required). Any evidence submitted after the relevant date to support a late application or change of preference will not be considered. Affected applicants will not receive an offer with other parents on National Offers Day, instead receiving one on 're-allocation day'.

## **Waiting Lists**

Once places have been allocated, children refused a place will continue to be considered for any vacancies which become available. Vacancies will always be allocated by applying the admissions policy and oversubscription criteria of the school; length of time on the waiting list will not be considered. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. The LA will hold all waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and where requested for VA, Trust and Academies. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be kept open until 31 December 2024.

## **Twins and Siblings of Multiple Births**

Where places are available for some but not all children from multiple births (including twins) the Local Authority will exercise discretion offered by the School Admissions Code to offer all the children a place, even if this breaches the published admission number for the year group.

## **Catchment Areas**

Catchment areas are a tool used to apply the over subscription criteria when a school has more applications than places. Catchment areas have no separate legal identity outside of the application of the admissions policy. Details of catchment areas are available on request or by following the links on the County Council's webpage to the interactive mapping system (see above)

## **Distance Measures**

Distance measures will be undertaken using the Local Authority's computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This measures a straight-line measure from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement. Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

## **Admission of Children below Compulsory School Age and Deferred Entry**

Children are entitled to start school full time the September following their fourth birthday. This is when most children start school. However a parent does not have to send their to school until they reach compulsory school age. A child will reach compulsory school age on the prescribed

CABINET 14 February 2023

School Admissions Arrangements 2024/25, -

day following their fifth birthday (or on their fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day). The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. Children must receive full time education from this point. For children under compulsory school age, once a school place has been offered and accepted, parents may, if they wish, request that their child attends school part-time until later in the school year, or starts full time, later in the school year, but not later than the start of the summer term. If you would like your child to attend school part time or start school later in the school year, you must contact the local authority and school following receipt of your offer letter.

## **Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be discussed with the head teacher of the school and made in writing to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

## **Summer Born Children**

The parents of a summer born child, i.e. a child born between 1 April and 31 August can also choose to defer entry as above but they can also request that the child be admitted out of their normal age group, to the reception class in the September following their fifth birthday and that the child will remain in this cohort as they progress through school.

Parents who want to make this request should make an application for their child's normal age group at the usual time. The application to the local authority should include this request. The local authority will liaise with the school and the relevant admission authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the head teacher, who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the relevant admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Parents will be informed of the outcome of the request before primary national offer day.

If the request is agreed, the application for the normal age group may be withdrawn before a place is offered. If the request is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

Where a parent's request is agreed, they must make a new application as part of the main admissions round the following year.

One admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another admission authority on admission out of the normal age group. Parents, therefore, should consider whether to request admission out of the normal year group at all their preference schools, rather than just their first preference schools. If a child who has not reached compulsory school age has been allocated a Reception place and their parent or carer wishes to delay their child's entry to school, the place will be held open. The place must be taken up in the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age.

## **Admission to Nursery Schools and Infant/Primary Schools Offering Nursery Education**

These arrangements do not apply to the admission of nursery children. Nursery admission arrangements are determined separately. **Attendance at a school's nursery does not guarantee admission to the school's Reception group nor is it a factor in allocating places in most cases.**

**All parents must apply for a place in a Reception class.**

## The Admissions Timetable

The timetable for the September 2024 application and allocation processes will be in line with the co-ordinated admissions schemes in accordance with the timetable detailed below.

### Admissions timetable

<b>1 November 2023:</b>	E-admissions portal opens.
<b>1 November 2023:</b>	Common application forms together with admissions information and school prospectuses are made available for parents.
<b>15 January 2024:</b>	Closing date for applications: E-admission portal closes.
<b>16 April 2024:</b>	Parents notified of the outcome of their applications for school places
<b>2 May 2024:</b>	Last date for refusals by parents

### Publication of the Local Authority's Information for Parents (2024/25) Handbook

The Information for Parents publication for September 2024 entry will be available from the beginning of September 2023.

## APPENDIX 3

### Northumberland County Council Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools - 2024/25

#### Admission to Middle, High, Secondary schools (years 5, 7 and 9) and sixth forms (year 12 entry)

##### Introduction

These are part of the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled middle, high, secondary schools and sixth forms.

##### Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements

In line with current legislation, the Local Authority has drawn up a separate co-ordinated admissions scheme to coordinate admissions to maintained schools and Academies within Northumberland and neighbouring authorities for the main admissions round.

## Published Admission Numbers

The admission number the Local Authority will publish for each community and voluntary controlled school is shown below

### Please note proposed changes re: The Duchess's Community High School

- Reduction of the Published Admission Number at The Duchess's Community High School from 250 to 240 in view of current and future pupil numbers.

School Name	Published Admission Number (PAN) (main school)	Published Admission Number (admission to sixth form – external (new) students only)
Astley Community High School	150	10
Berwick Middle School	114	N/A
Corbridge Middle School	90	N/A
Glendale Middle School	42	N/A
James Calvert Spence College	120	10
Seaton Sluice Middle School	85	N/A
<b>The Duchess's Community High School</b>	<b>240 (previously 250)</b>	<b>10</b>
Tweedmouth Community Middle School	93	N/A
Whytrig Middle School	90	N/A

## The Local Authority Admissions Policy for 2024-2025

This admissions policy will be used to allocate places at those Local Authority schools which are oversubscribed. It is attached below for entry to Year 5, Year 7, Year 9 and Year 12.

### Admission Policy for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools – middle, high, secondary schools and sixth forms

This policy applies only to Local Authority maintained schools and voluntary controlled schools.

NB If you are applying for a school that manages their own admissions e.g academies, please review their admissions policy/arrangements via the school website.

The County Council is obliged to admit all applicants to a particular school provided these do not exceed the school's Published Admission Number (PAN).

Children with Education Health and Care Plans where the school is named in the statement will be admitted.

## Oversubscription Criteria

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Where there are more applications than places available the following oversubscription criteria will be applied, strictly in order of priority:

**NB Criteria 4 and 5 are only relevant to Middle Schools.**

- 1 Children in Public Care (and as deemed under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) including a child who was previously “looked after” but immediately after being “looked after” became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

Note: A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see section 46 adoption orders). Child arrangements orders are defined in s.8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by s.12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order. See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- 2 Children living within the catchment area of the school and those on whose behalf firm evidence is presented that they will be living in the catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

The following link provides information re: catchments relevant to the 2024/25 academic year:  
[Digital catchment maps](#)

- 3 Children with an exceptional social or medical reason that means that they can only attend that specific school (for example, where the child or one or both parents has a disability that means that the child can only go to one school).

Strong supporting evidence must be provided from a professional body involved with the family or the child. The professional must be independent of both the family and the school.

The evidence must relate specifically to the school for which the application is being made and must demonstrate clearly why it is the only school that can meet the child's needs. No assumptions should be made that the submission of the relevant evidence will, in itself be sufficient to allocate a place.

Note: You will not be allocated a place under this criterion if you omit to send to the School Admissions Team a written statement from a professional third party by 31 October 2023.

- 4 Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership who have a sibling\* already in the school who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.
- 5 Children resident in the greater catchment area of the school partnership. Evidence must be presented to confirm that the child will be living in the greater catchment area by the appropriate admission date.

NOTE: The greater catchment area for a school is the catchment area of the high or secondary school i.e all school in a partnership that feed into a particular high or secondary school. The

Local Authority cannot determine catchment areas for Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools or Academies, however for the purpose of this criteria, the Council has determined a greater catchment for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools. Parents can find details of this using the digital catchment maps link above.

- 6 Children who have a sibling\* who already attends the school, including sixth form, and who is expected to be on roll at the school at the time of admission.

\*For the purpose of admissions siblings are deemed to be brothers and sisters, stepsiblings, foster siblings, adopted siblings and other children who reside permanently in the household and are treated as siblings.

- 7 Requests on behalf of children which are based on the need to maintain continuity of educational provision within the feeder pattern of Northumberland's schools.

NOTE: Please see feeder schools below.

	Feeder Schools
Astley Community High School	New Hartley, Seaton Sluice, Seghill, Holywell Village, Seaton Delaval First Schools  Seaton Sluice, Whytrig Community Middle Schools
Berwick Middle School	Holy Trinity CE, St Cuthbert's RC VA (part), Berwick St Mary's, Hugh Joicey CE. Holy Island CE, Lowick, Norham St Ceolwulfs CE, Scremerston First Schools
Corbridge Middle School	Broomhaugh CE, Corbridge CE, Slaley, Whittonstall First Schools
Glendale Middle School	Wooler First School
James Calvert Spence College	Amble, Amble Links, Broomhill, Red Row, Grange View First Schools NCEA Warkworth CE Primary
Seaton Sluice Middle School	New Hartley, Seaton Sluice, Seghill First Schools
The Duchess's Community High School	Swansfield Park, Ellingham CE, Shilbottle, Swarland, Branton, Embleton Vincent Edward's CE, Seahouses, Felton CE, Hipsburn, Longhoughton CE, St Paul's RC VA, St Michael's CE, Whittingham CE Primary Schools
Tweedmouth Community Middle School	Spittal, Tweedmouth Prior Park, Tweedmouth West, St Cuthbert's First Schools
Whytrig Middle School	Holywell Village, Seaton Delaval First Schools

Important: This criterion does not apply to those children who have entered a school in the final year before transfer.

- 8 Other children

### Tie Breaker

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Should it prove necessary, because places are limited, to distinguish between children in any given category priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school, measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies') using the LA's computerised measuring system (GIS). Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

Applicants refused admission are entitled to an appeal which is determined by an independent panel.

## **Applications for Year 12**

All Northumberland schools offer sixth form of study for students. The majority of the sixth form students transfer from Year 11, but places are available for external students. The entry requirements for sixth forms are largely dependent on the course of study that a student wishes to access. They are the same for internal and external students. Details of specific entry requirements and courses available may be obtained from the school. The availability of courses is dependent upon the number of applicants and the financial sustainability of the course and the Governing Body of the school determines this.

## **Entry requirements and oversubscription criteria – Year 12**

Students who have attended the school in the previous academic year (during Year 11) and who satisfy the school's entry requirements\* will be automatically allocated.

All other students will be allocated in accordance to the oversubscription below:

a) Children in Public Care (and as deemed under Section 22 of the Children Act 1989) including a child who was previously "looked after" but immediately after being "looked after" became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. Children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

b) All other students.

## **Tie Breaker**

Should it prove necessary, because places are limited, to distinguish between children in any given category priority will be given to those who live nearest to the school, measured in a direct line ('as the crow flies') using the LA's computerised measuring system (GIS). Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

Applicants refused admission to a sixth form are entitled to an appeal which is determined by an independent panel.

\*Details of the entry requirements are available from the individual Sixth Forms.

## **Catchment proposal**

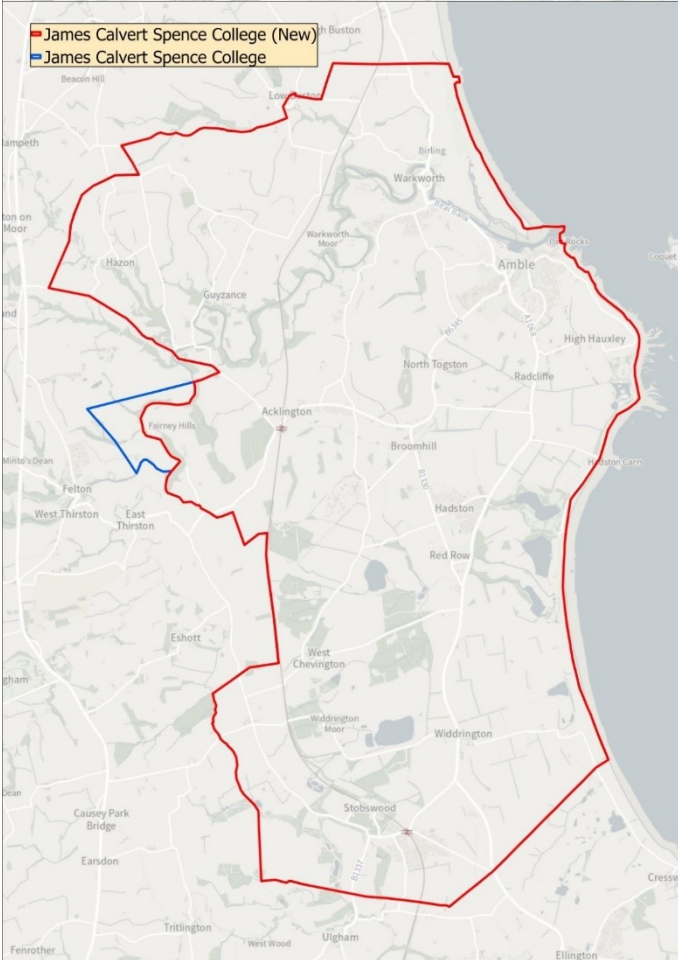
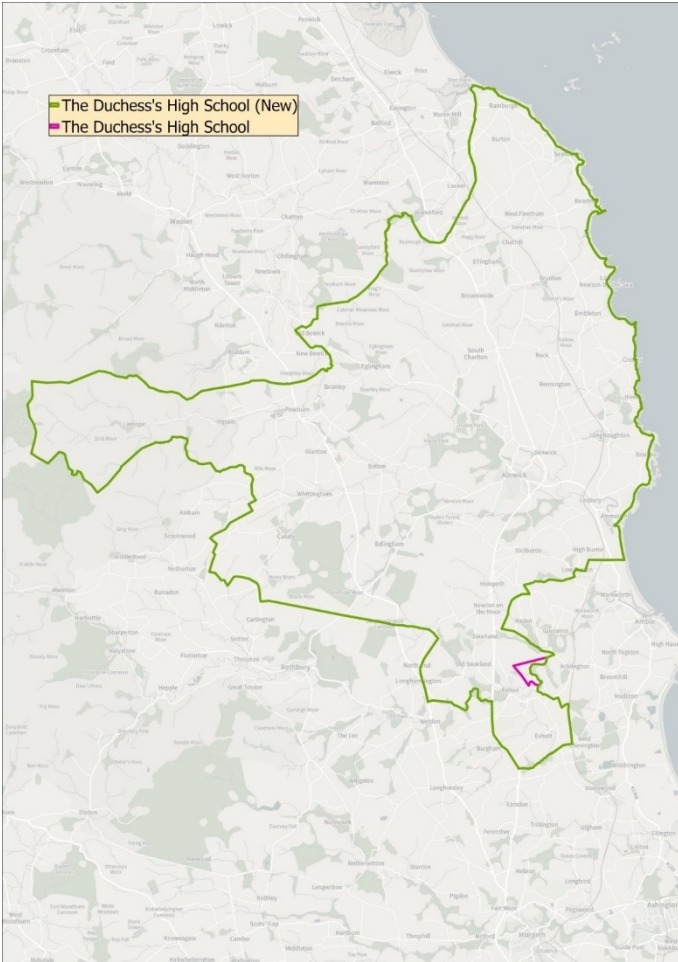
### **Broomhill, Felton, James Calvert Spence and The Duchess' High**

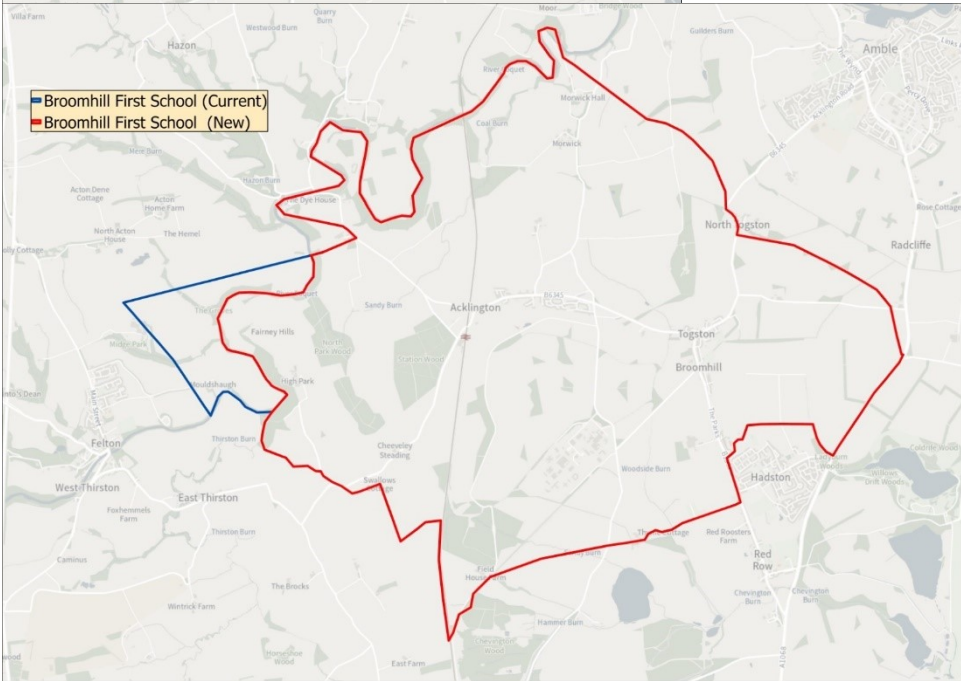
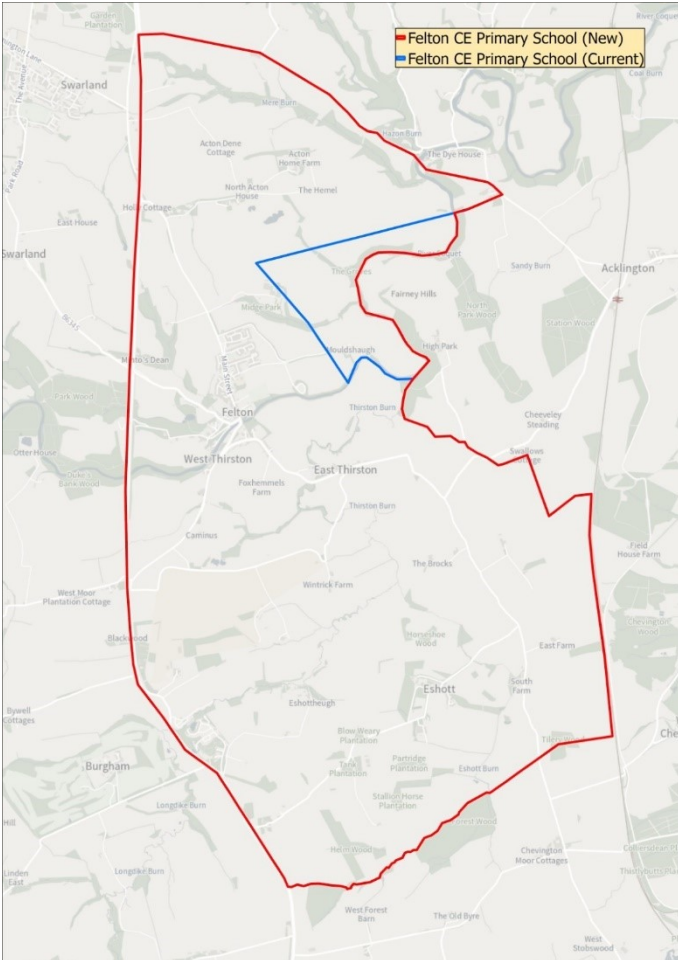
Having reviewed the catchment areas for Broomhill First School and Felton Primary School, it appears that the inclusion of the houses at the end of Mouldshaugh Lane in the Broomhill

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catchment could have been as a result of an anomaly or historical error. Therefore, this consultation presents an opportunity to review the Broomhill First and Felton Primary catchment areas, and we will consult on moving the western boundary of the Felton Primary and The Duchess's High Schools catchment areas to the natural border formed by the River Coquet. This consultation will ensure that all stakeholders that might be impacted by any change to the catchments, including Broomhill First and James Calvert Spence College, will have the opportunity to submit their views for consideration. A copy of the previous maps and the new proposed maps can be found below:





**GENERAL**

## **Parents may be asked to provide evidence of residency if the requested school is oversubscribed.**

Applications on behalf of children who are resident in other Local Authority areas will be considered in the same way as applications from Northumberland residents.

Children with disabilities will be treated no less favourably than other applicants for admission. Schools are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that children with disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage, and no child will be refused a place on the grounds of disability. A pupil has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Those parents whose application to a school has been unsuccessful will be notified of their right of appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, gives this right to all parents whose application for a school has been unsuccessful. The decision of an Appeal Panel is binding on both the Admission Authority and the school. The School Admission Appeals Code can be found on the DfE website at: [www.gov.uk/dfes](http://www.gov.uk/dfes).

### **Definitions used under the policy**

**'Parents'** include all those people who have a parental responsibility\* for a child as set out in the Children's Act 1989. Where responsibility for a child is 'shared', the person deemed to be the person responsible for completing the application is the person receiving Child Benefit and whose address will be used for admission purposes.

\*Parental Responsibility, unless otherwise determined by a court order:

- Mothers automatically have parental responsibility.
- Fathers also have parental responsibility if the father is married to the mother at the time of the child's birth. This continues after any divorce/separation/remarriage even if the child lives apart from them.
- An unmarried father can obtain Parental Responsibility by:
  - marrying the mother
  - having his name registered or re-registered on the birth certificate if his name is not already registered\*\*
  - entering into a Parental Responsibility Agreement with the mother
  - obtaining a Parental Responsibility Order from the court
  - having obtained a Residence Order prior to 22.4.2014
  - by being named as the resident parent under a Child Arrangements Order
  - becoming the child's guardian on the mother's death

\*\*The law has changed so that unmarried fathers who registered or re-registered their name on their child's birth certificate *after* 1st December 2003 will have Parental Responsibility for their child.

Therefore:

- If an unmarried father has a child after 1st December 2003 and he is registered on the birth certificate he WILL have Parental Responsibility.
- If a child's birth was registered before 1st December 2003 and the father was not named on the birth certificate, the birth can be re-registered to include the father's name. Once this has been done, the father WILL have Parental Responsibility.\*
- If an unmarried father's name is already on the birth certificate and the child was registered before 1st December 2003, the law has not changed this situation so the father WILL NOT have Parental Responsibility. (Unless obtained by other means).

## Same-sex parents

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### Civil partners

Same-sex partners will both have parental responsibility if they were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg donor insemination or fertility treatment.

### Non-civil partners

For same-sex partners who are not civil partners, the 2nd parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- [applying for parental responsibility](#) if a parental agreement was made
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth

**Details of catchment areas are available on request or by following the links on the County Council's webpage to the interactive mapping system**

### Address to be Used in Determining Priority for Admission

The address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term time only, will be used in the allocation process.

In some cases, for example where shared parental living arrangements are in place, a child's address may be difficult to determine. In these circumstances the address used for child benefit purposes will normally be used, i.e. the address of the parent claiming the benefit. If that is not available, then the address on the NHS medical card can be used.

### Fraudulent Applications and Withdrawal of a School Place

The local authority will not withdraw the offer of a place unless it has been established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent, or intentionally misleading application. Where an offer is withdrawn on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, the application will be considered on the basis of correct information, and parents or carers will have the right of appeal where no place can be offered.

**The local authority may seek to withdraw the offer of a school places if it is established that a fraudulent application was submitted.**

Where parents or carers are found to have made a fraudulent application for a school place and the admission authority decides not to withdraw that place in the best interests of the child, should a school place be sought for any other sibling, or siblings, the sibling criterion will not be considered.

If a place is withdrawn it will be offered to those with a greater right to the place as of National Offers Day, ranked according to the school's oversubscription criteria.

### Parental disagreement

The management of school applications may be severely delayed during the main admissions round where separated parents\* of the child each submit a separate application for different schools or one parent does not agree with the application made by the other parent. The School Admissions Code states that only one offer of a school place per child is made by the Local Authority. In this situation the Local Authority asks that parents and/or carers resolve matters between themselves before informing the Local Authority in writing of which application should be processed/their agreement to an application. In case of dispute between parents, where more than one parent has parental responsibility and they do not

agree to an application being made to a particular school, a temporary school place will be offered until any dispute is resolved by both parents as a personal matter and this will be based on the address of the parent or carer with whom the child is normally resident, Mondays to Fridays term time only.

## **Late Applications**

Normally applications submitted after the relevant published date will not be considered until after allocations for those parents who applied on time have been made unless in exceptional circumstances. If the LA considers your reasons are exceptional your application will be considered along with those received on time. Examples of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances are a family who have just moved into the area (proof of ownership or tenancy agreement will be required). Any evidence submitted after the relevant date to support a late application or change of preference will not be considered. Affected applicants will not receive an offer with other parents on National Offers Day, instead receiving one on 're-allocation day'.

## **Waiting Lists**

Once places have been allocated, children refused a place will continue to be considered for any vacancies which become available. Vacancies will always be allocated by applying the admissions policy and oversubscription criteria of the school; length of time on the waiting list will not be considered. Each added child will require the list to be ranked again in line with the published oversubscription criteria. The LA will hold all waiting lists for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and where requested for VA, Trust and Academies. Waiting lists for the normal year of entry will be kept open until 31 December 2024.

## **Twins and Siblings of Multiple Births**

Where places are available for some but not all children from multiple births (including twins) the Local Authority will exercise discretion offered by the School Admissions Code to offer all the children a place, even if this breaches the published admission number for the year group.

## **Catchment Areas**

Catchment areas are a tool used to apply the over subscription criteria when a school has more applications than places. Catchment areas have no separate legal identity outside of the application of the admissions policy. Details of catchment areas are available on request or by following the links on the County Council's webpage to the interactive mapping system (see above)

## **Distance Measures**

Distance measures will be undertaken using the Local Authority's computerised Geographical Information System (GIS). This measures a straight-line measure from the front door of the home to the main gate of the school. Distance checking is an integral function within the school admissions software ensuring consistency in measurement. Where two or more distances are found to be equal a system of random allocation will apply, independently administered.

## **Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group**

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be made in writing to the head teacher of the school and to the local authority. The local authority will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into

account the views of the head teacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the local authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

### **The Admissions Timetable**

The timetable for the September 2024 application and allocation processes will be in line with the co-ordinated admissions schemes in accordance with the timetable detailed below

#### **Admissions timetable (not sixth forms)**

<b>12 September 2023:</b>	E-admissions portal opens.
<b>12 September 2023:</b>	Common application forms together with admissions information and school prospectuses are made available for parents.
<b>31 October 2023:</b>	Closing Date for Applications: E-admission portal closes.
<b>1 March 2024:</b>	Parents notified of the outcome of their applications for school places
<b>15 March 2024:</b>	Last date for refusals by parents.

### **Publication of the Local Authorities Information for Parents (2024/25) Handbook**

The Information for Parents publication for September 2024 entry will be available from the beginning of September 2023.



## APPENDIX 4

### The Duchess High School

We support the decision by Northumberland County Council to limit our PAN to 240 as this will help us to plan for future staffing and resource needs with greater pupil number accuracy. The birth rate in the catchment is falling and currently the PAN of 250 means that we have 'space' in each year group that means that our numbers can fluctuate year on year. With the current financial pressures all establishments are facing this will allow us to plan with greater accuracy for the future.

### Northburn Primary School

The Local Authority has suggested numbers will continue to fall in the catchment area of Northburn.

The headteacher was informed at a briefing meeting, she was directed to attend, to address surplus places in Cramlington, and in particular the Northburn catchment, and to safeguard other schools in the partnership, it was recommended the Northburn PAN be reduced to 30 from September 2024.

Whilst we are in broad agreement that reducing the PAN at Northburn would offer part of a solution, we have some concerns and further question. It is difficult for governors to form a fully informed response as the LA is unable to share partnership data.

Concerns raised for consideration:

- the proposal will reduce parental choice
- should catchment areas be rethought in light of new builds in Cramlington?
- risk that a number of children who attend Northburn out of catchment with Special Education Needs and, or Disabilities will struggle to find a suitable placement,
- Northburn will not be in a position to take children with complex needs from other catchments so not fully utilising expertise in the partnership. Ofsted recognised that Northburn is an inclusive school and that some children choose to come here because we are able to meet their needs
- that families with siblings already in the school would not have a place for younger siblings, therefore remove their children to another school which will have a negative effect on the school budget and standards. Children removed from Northburn are in a detrimental position as they will require additional transition to another school. This could result in a risk of negative experience and outcomes for children as the curriculum they receive will be disjointed and have long-term effects on their learning and mental health and wellbeing
- risk to community view of the quality of education provided by Northburn,
- insecure financial forecasting and potential redundancy situations that the school could not afford,
- quality of education due to impact of staff turbulence; high quality staff may look for alternative, secure positions,
- the consultation is being communicated through Northumberland County Council website and the Northburn community is unaware of the process and parents are unaware of the consultation,
- if families move into the area there will be insufficient capacity at Northburn to meet catchment requests with a PAN of 30.

We would appreciate the opportunity to expand upon these concerns with relevant decision-makers. We also ask for clarity with regards to when and how the community will be effectively informed of plans, the reasons for them and in particular the reasons not related to the quality of education at Northburn.

### Shilbottle Primary School

Thank you for our meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December at Shilbottle Primary with myself and Emma Bryceland, our Chair of Governors, to clarify some of the issues highlighted in our previous correspondence.

Following consideration of the points raised at the meeting whilst we now have a greater understanding of the process and the need to reduce the school PAN, which we are in agreement with, we also feel that some considerable thought should be given to the following points raised at the meeting with regard to 'the process'. Whilst we can appreciate there is a process and protocol which your departments must adhere to these do not always align with the needs of the schools affected.

Items for consideration by the panel:

1. The intention of the initial meeting should be made clear in the first instance and not via a third party. Where possible, the meeting should be held in person.
2. To ensure absolute transparency the data on which the decision has been made should be readily available to all affected schools. This is a point which we will be considering further at the full governing body meeting in the new term as we may still lodge a Freedom of Information request to access this information.
3. If schools are meant to carry out the consultation process with both families and staff they should have sufficient notice and guidance on this process and consideration should be given to the school's own workload to manage this process. We should not receive the documentation two days into the consultation period starting.
4. The 'Consultation Document' should meet the needs of its intended audience in a user friendly format (schools, parents and staff) and not just the required documentation requested by the DfE. This should have a clear rationale, impact on what it means to each individual school and family, the consultation method and the timescales. Ideally the process will include standardised consultation documents written specifically for families and staff by a central team. The fact that each school is meant to manage this process in their own way can only lead to ambiguity and more issues for central teams at a later date.
5. Data given in response to questions raised should be up to date and accurate. In order to ensure the affected schools are made to feel a valued part of the process current data should be used as opposed to 'estimated' figures as this leads to schools feeling as if central teams do not have an accurate overview on which to base their decisions.

I am aware the consultation period ends on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December and would appreciate a written response to the above parts following the panel meeting.

#### Hipsburn Primary School

Thank you for responding to our earlier queries. We would now like you to accept this email as a formal response to your request.

Firstly, the Head, Chair and Vice Chair of Governors at Hipsburn would like to note that the information we have received does not appear to be consultative; that would mean we felt we felt able to influence or change the suggested way forward. The way in which the document is presented means we feel that the decision had been made before seeking our thoughts.

We feel that the timing of the consultation was poor, coming as it did in the very busy Winter 2 half term, with a closing date of two days before Christmas. We do not think that NCC will be considering or acting upon responses over the festive period and think more time into January should have been allowed, given that the changes will not take effect until September 2024.

We are still not clear why the decision to reduce our PAN from 21 to 15 is being taken now, to be implemented in September 2024.

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We have asked for clarity on whether the overall school PAN would, once fully implemented, be seen as 105 (7 year groups at 15 per year) and if that gives us flexibility to have e.g. a cohort of 12 in Reception but 18 in Year 1 as overall that gives 30 across 2 year groups - and likely 1 class. We have not yet had a response on this.

We have spoken with the staff team about this process. However, with the full change (starting with Reception in Sept 2024 until all year groups have a 15 PAN) not being implemented until the early 2030s they felt it was too far away, with lots of other things that could happen in the meantime, to give any formal response.

We have not spoken with parents on this. We feel that we do not fully understand the rationale and therefore are not placed to answer their questions. We felt that this process has come at a bad time of year. There are many parents, whose youngest children are already well through their time at our school, for whom this will never be an issue. We do however think that NCC should engage with parents, especially of children we know are coming in to the school from September 2024, as there will be less places available than we previously expected (depending on if there are spaces further up the school, if you confirm we can have an 'overall' PAN.)

We still have concerns over parental choice - we have attracted a number of families from outside of catchment due to personal recommendation, our reputation and location e.g. near Alnmouth station. And we also note our concern that if parents cannot secure a place for a younger child as the reduced PAN is being phased in, that they may also choose to remove a child from higher up the school for practical reasons.

We are rated as Ofsted Outstanding but the last full inspection was in 2009, and via our independent SIP we are being assessed as Good, however we are concerned that word of reducing the PAN may lead some parents to think that there are underlying issues which could cause concern.

We think that NCC should prepare a 'parent friendly' document explaining to them why this decision has been taken and what impact this could have on their child's schooling in the coming years.

When we moved from a First school to a Primary in 2016 our PAN became 147 (21 x 7 year groups) and since then we - as a staff and governing team - have continued to ensure a good budget position, even when numbers are lower than the maximum. The Head and his staff team works hard every year to look at the number of children in each year group and changes the 'blend' each year as needed to obtain maximum efficiency, so for example one year we may have a joint Reception and Year 1 class, the next a standalone Reception class with a joint Year 1 and 2 class.

When we are working on the budget we are often asked for 'predicted' numbers, especially for Preschool and Reception in a year or two's time. Because, like all schools, we have families leaving the area or moving to it we cannot always give an accurate figure on this. Could you explain how you have determined that the PAN for our school (and the two others) can be reduced in the coming years but why there is no need in any other schools across the county and what data you have to support this? You previously advised that "the PAN is now appropriate to serve your catchment but will still allow for some parental choice. Too many surplus places increases parental choice but can impact on the viability of other local schools." Being blunt, we have to consider our own school first and turning children away because e.g. one cannot start in Reception in September 2024 and so their siblings in Years 2 and 4 are withdrawn, benefits another local school but takes, as it stands, more than £13K from our budget.

We were also advised that "the purpose of reviewing and reducing the PAN is to ensure that it is more aligned to the community your school serves" Whilst community can be seen as the

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immediate geographic location of the school it is also the group of children in the school, regardless of where they live, who have formed friendships and the staff who teach them. We have children in Preschool from age 2, who usually transition through the school leaving in Year. If there are fewer places available, the school community that they have known may not be able to accommodate them and they will have to move and adapt to a new community.



# APPENDIX 5



Northumberland County Council

## Equality Impact Assessment Template

**To be completed for all key changes, decisions and proposals. Cite specific data and consultation evidence wherever possible. Further guidance is available at:**

**<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Equality.aspx?nccredirect=1>**

### **Duties which need to be considered:**

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

### **PART 1 – Overview of the change, decision or proposal**

1. Title of the change, decision or proposal:

The Council has consulted on proposals for Admission Arrangements for 2024/25

2. Date of equality impact assessment:

January 2023

3. Brief description of the change, decision or proposal:

- 1) The majority of the arrangements remain unchanged from the 2023/24 arrangements.
- 2) In addition, admission arrangements for sixth forms, including the criteria for entry, the admission number (relating to external students to Year 12 only) and the over subscription criteria (that will be applied if there are more applicants than places available) for 2024/25 are proposed. This is so that the Council is compliant with the School Admissions Code, which states that admission arrangements should include those for sixth forms

4. Name(s) and role(s) of officer(s) completing the assessment:

Jill Atkinson, School Admissions and Inclusion Manager  
Audrey Kingham, Interim Director of Education and Skills

5. Overall, what are the outcomes of the change, decision or proposal expected to be? (E.g. will it reduce/terminate a low-priority service, maintain service outcomes at reduced cost, or change the balance of funding responsibility for a service which will remain the same?)

Annual determination of the admission arrangements by Cabinet is in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.

6. If you judge that this proposal is **not** relevant to some protected characteristics, tick these below (and explain underneath how you have reached this judgement).

Disability  Sex  Age  Race  Religion  Sexual orientation

People who have changed gender  Women who are pregnant or have babies

Employees who are married/in civil partnerships

**After considering employees and service users, the characteristics checked above are not relevant because:**

There is no evidence or reason to believe that the proposals would affect more positively or negatively people with the above protected characteristics than those without the above protected characteristics.

## **PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics**

*Answer these questions both in relation to people who use services and employees*

### **Disability**

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**Note:** “disabled people” includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems. You should consider potential impacts on all of these groups.

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

7. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by disabled people, about disabled people’s experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for disabled people.

8. Could disabled people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

9. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of disabled people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

10. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

11. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that disabled people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on disabled people.

12. If there are risks that disabled people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on disabled people.

13. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for disabled people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 7, above.

## **Sex**

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### **Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

14. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by males and females, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for males or females.

15. Could males or females be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No



16. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of males or females to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

17. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards males or females? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

18. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that males or females will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on males or females.

19. If there are risks that males or females could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on males or females.

20. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for males or females linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 14, above

## **Age**

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**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

21. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different age groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for people of different age groups.

22. Could people of different age groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

23. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different age groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

24. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different age groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

25. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different age groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on different age groups

26. If there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on different age groups

27. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different age groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 21, above

## **Race**

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**Note:** For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

28. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different racial groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for people of different racial groups.

29. Could people of different racial groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

30. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different racial groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

31. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different racial groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

32. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different racial groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on different racial groups

33. If there are risks that people of different racial groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on different racial groups

34. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different racial groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 28, above

### **Religion or belief**

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**Note:** *In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief.*

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

35. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different religions or beliefs, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for people with different religions or beliefs.

36. Could people with different religions or beliefs be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

37. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different religions or beliefs to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

38. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different religions or beliefs? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

39. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different religions or beliefs will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on people with different religions or beliefs

40. If there are risks that people with different religions or beliefs could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on people with different religions or beliefs

41. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different religions or beliefs linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 35, above

## **Sexual Orientation**

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*Note: The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.*

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

42. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different sexual orientations, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for people with different sexual orientations.

43. Could people with different sexual orientations be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

44. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

45. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different sexual orientations? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

46. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different sexual orientations will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on people with different sexual orientations

47. If there are risks that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on people with different sexual orientations

48. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different sexual orientations linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 42, above

## **Gender Reassignment**

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*Note: The Act provides protection for transgender people. A transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender.*

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

49. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by transgender people, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on any current arrangements for transgender people

50. Could transgender people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

51. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of transgender people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

52. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards transgender people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

53. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that transgender people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on transgender people

54. If there are risks that transgender people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on transgender people

55. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for transgender people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 49, above

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

*Note: the law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.*

**Please answer these questions with reference to our employees and people who use our services**

56. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks

57. Could pregnant women and those with children under 26 weeks be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

58. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No

59. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No

60. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that pregnancy women or those with children under 26 weeks will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks

61. If there are risks that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks

62. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks linked to this change, decision or proposal?

See 56, above

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

*Note: This applies to changes, decisions or proposals impacting on **employees only**. The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership.*

63. What do you know about the Marriage and Civil Partnership profile of staff employed in the services affected by this change, decision or proposal, and about their experiences of working within it?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on employees who are married or in a civil partnership

64. Could employees who are married or in a civil partnership be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No

65. If there are risks that employees who are married or in a civil partnership could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The introduction of the proposals would have no impact on employees who are married or in a civil partnership

### **Human Rights**

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66. Could the change, decision or proposal impact on human rights? (e.g. the right to respect for private and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right to education)

The proposals support the right to education



### **PART 3 - Course of Action**

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67. Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, tick one of the following as an overall summary of the outcome of this assessment:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal will be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination, or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.

68. Explain how you have reached the judgement ticked above, and summarise any steps which will be taken to reduce negative or enhance positive impacts on equality.

There is no evidence to suggest that any person with any of the protected characteristics would be disproportionately disadvantaged or advantaged by the proposals. Should a decision be made by the Council's Cabinet to implement the proposals, any evidence arising from the implementation that suggests that there could be possible negative impacts, those risks would be analysed to establish whether or not there were certain risks to any or all of those with a protected characteristic. Steps to reduce negative impacts or enhance positive impacts would then be defined.

### **PART 4 - Ongoing Monitoring**

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69. What are your plans to monitor the actual impact of the implementation of the change, decision or proposal on equality of opportunity? (include action points and timescales)

This EIA has been drafted in the light of the consultation carried out on the proposed Admission Arrangements for 2024/25. Should the proposals be approved and implemented, the EIA would be monitored during that period. If adverse implications were identified in the light of the implementation, ameliorating actions would be identified.

### **PART 5 - Authorisation**

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70. Name of Head of Service: Sue Aviston and Date Approved: 9<sup>th</sup> Jan

Once completed, please send to: [Keith.Thompson@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:Keith.Thompson@northumbria.nhs.uk)

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## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

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#### **Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2022**

Report of Councillor Guy Renner Thompson

Interim Joint Directors of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Andrey Kingham

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#### **Purpose of report**

This report is to publish to members the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report for 2021-22 regarding the education achievement of Northumberland's looked after children and care leavers.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Members note the education achievements of our looked after children and care leavers and ongoing challenges caused by the disruption to education during the pandemic.
2. Members to provide scrutiny and challenge to the service responses and developments detailed in the report as appropriate.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the corporate objectives, and specifically the "Living, Learning" and "Thriving" priorities of the Corporate Plan 2021-24.

#### **Key issues**

1. The Virtual School's priority from September 2021 was to get pupils safely back to school and back on track with their learning. School attendance improved during the year and this contributed to improved education outcomes since the last national tests and exams were taken in 2019, notably at Key Stage 1 in the combined reading/writing/maths measure, and at GCSE.
2. The Virtual School made good progress with plans for improvement, despite higher than anticipated levels of staff absence and vacant posts:
  - there is better stability in school placements
  - more pupils are back on track and working within their age-related curriculum
  - more care leavers are staying in further and higher education
  - there is momentum behind our aspiration for all Northumberland schools to be attachment aware and trauma informed

3. Grant funding received to raise achievement was used creatively and had a positive impact overall. The Virtual School received funding to provide additional tuition, to provide support to the adopted parents and carers of previously looked after children, and to promote the education of children with a social worker. These workstreams will continue into 2023.
4. Relationships with schools, both in and out of county, remain strong. Designated Teachers engaged with training in high numbers, including our termly virtual conferences that met a range of training needs. Schools engaged well with the Personal Education Plan process to support children to do the best they can at school.
5. Our response to the new extended duty of Virtual School Headteachers to promote the education of children with a social worker was very positive. Our innovative Virtual School model gave us a strong starting point to share what we know works well and engage professionals with this crucial agenda. Northumberland's model achieved national recognition when we were invited by the DfE to deliver a webinar on the attendance of children with a social worker.
6. We know that pupils are able to achieve their best when they are in stable school placements. For the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year there has been no permanent exclusion of a looked after child from school. However, school stability is a concern. The number of children experiencing suspensions (previously fixed term exclusions) was very high, due to a combination of increasingly complex needs, challenges with self-regulation, and the pressures faced by schools including staffing and attendance. The impact is that we need to work with schools to improve achievement in most key measures so that they are in line with national averages for looked after children.

## **Background**

1. Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2022.

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	The Virtual School fulfils the council's statutory duties in relation to the education of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looked after children</li> <li>• previously looked after children and care leavers</li> <li>• and children who have or have had a social worker</li> </ul>
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The current proposals seek to be delivered within existing service budgets and additional DfE grant funding to support Covid recovery and raise academic achievement.  Grant funding is allocated on a year by year basis and is intended to cover the academic year. Delays in the recruitment process have had a negative impact on achieving the best value for money from this funding.
<b>Legal</b>	Discharge of statutory duties regarding the education of looked after children, the Children Act 2004.
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	The wellbeing of all staff is a priority as they cope with the additional pressures of staff absence and vacant posts, and high demand for support from schools.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Personal risk assessments are in place for all staff; all education providers have risk assessments in place which are monitored by NCC
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	The emotional and mental health and wellbeing of looked after children is a priority. Improved use of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is starting to have a positive impact

<b>Wards</b>	No implications have been identified at this stage
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**Background papers:**

- Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children, DfE statutory guidance February 2018
- Promoting the education of children with a social worker, DfE guidance June 2022

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Lynsey Denyer obo Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Guy Renner-Thompson

**Author and Contact Details**

Report Author: Jane Walker, Virtual School Headteacher

Phone: (01670) 622734

Email: jane.walker@northumberland.gov.uk

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# Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2021-22



“ We want the very best for our care-experienced children and young people. We want our children to tell us we are doing a good job and that they are doing their very best at school.

We want them all to have clear academic or vocational pathways when they leave school so that their lives continue to improve and they feel a sense of belonging in their communities.

We want schools and support services to see themselves as corporate parents and do a good job for their children in care. ”

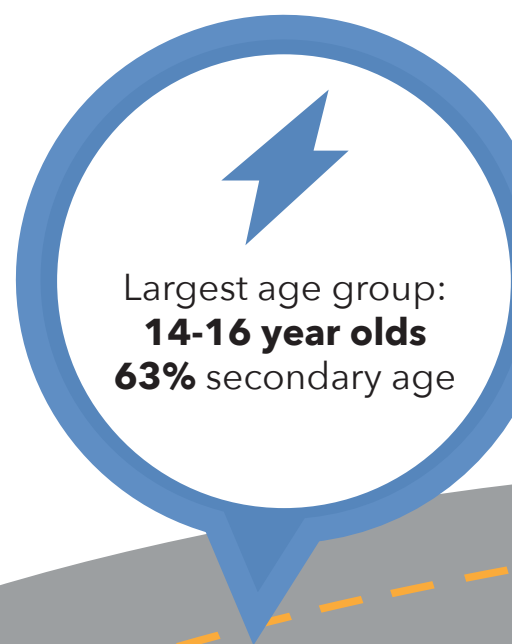
**Jane Walker, Virtual School Headteacher.**

“ Education can have a transformative effect on the life chances of young people, enabling them to fulfil their potential, have successful careers, and grasp opportunities. As well as having a positive impact on the individual, good quality education and child wellbeing also promotes economic productivity and a cohesive society. ”

**Understanding progress in the 2020-21 academic year, DfE.**

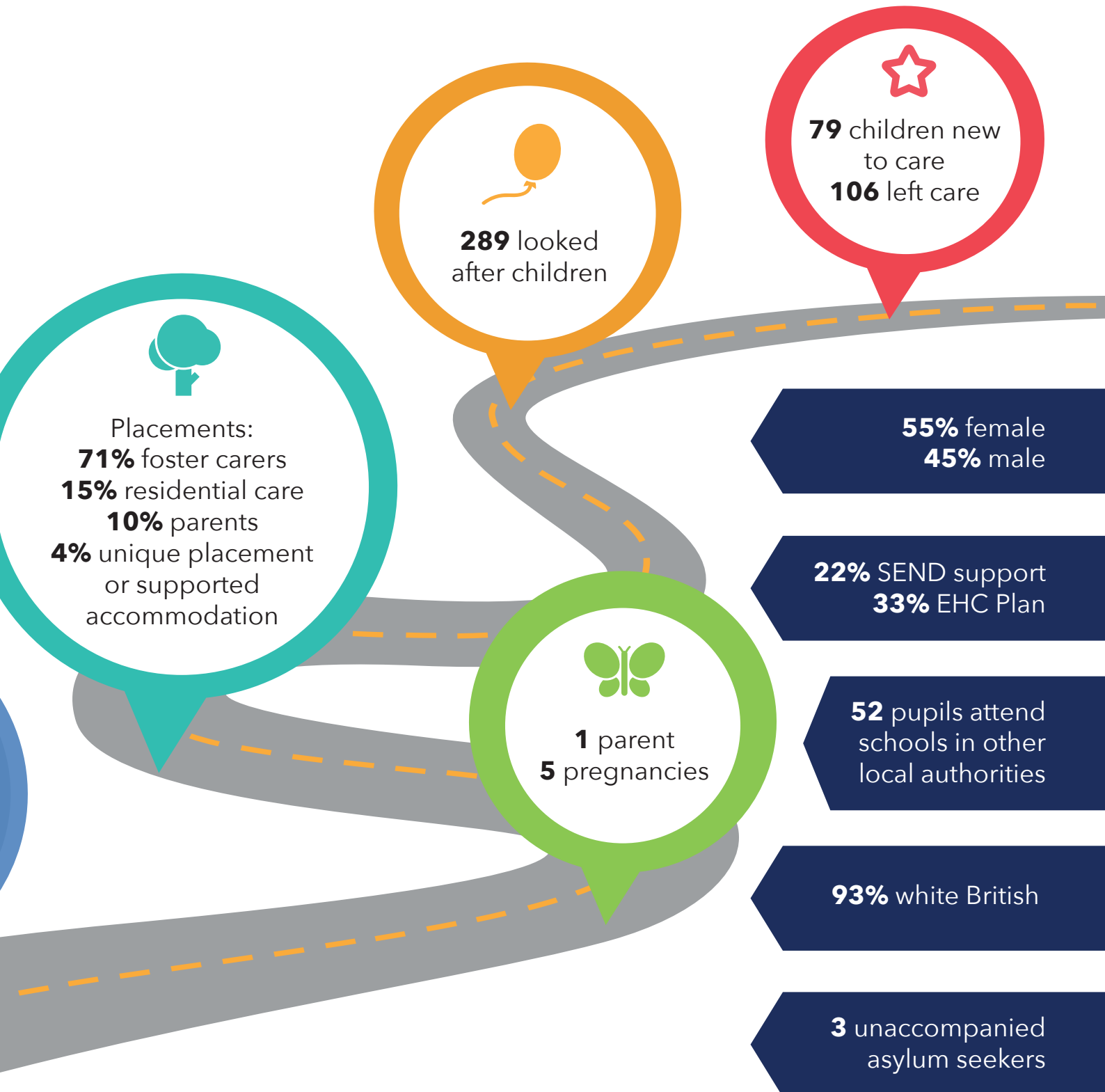


**Department  
for Education**



# Welcome to the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report for 2021-22

Here's a profile of pupils, aged 5-16 years,  
in Northumberland's Virtual School (at 31.08.22)





## Good practice example: Good corporate parenting

Working with a private sector employer, the council's Northumberland Line project will re-instate an operational railway line, with infrastructure, between Ashington and Newcastle. When the contract for the project went out to tender, the council's social values in procurement policy was applied and it was specified that the successful bidder should offer employability opportunities for looked after children and care leavers.

Morgan Sindall won the contract and has been working with the Virtual School to pilot how a large private sector employer can support our young people. A lot has been learned and there have been a number of positive outcomes already, including some young people engaging with an employer for the first time, learning to use Teams to engage with an employer, and experiencing an interview for the first time. Several of our care leavers are reporting feeling empowered and more confident following the interviews.

A Morgan Sindall team member has visited one of our children's residential homes to learn more about the needs of, and challenges facing, our young people. We are moving towards the second phase of the work now and hope this will involve employer visits, work experience and apprenticeships for some of our learners. We are also beginning to work with a large local employer, Tharsus, and will use the learning from Morgan Sindall to inform the development of this relationship.

## 2021-22 at a glance

GOOD	IMPROVING	NOT YET GOOD ENOUGH
<p>No permanent exclusions, <b>14th consecutive year</b></p> <p>PEP completion, <b>97%</b></p> <p>Looked after children progressing into further education at 16, <b>77%</b></p> <p>Children missing education, <b>0</b></p> <p>Destinations at 16 - in education, training and employment <b>87%</b></p> <p>Level 3 achievement, <b>4 young people, 100%</b></p> <p>Level 6 achievement <b>honours degrees, 3 young people, 100%</b></p>	<p>Achievement at Key Stage 4 <b>the Basics 35.1%</b></p> <p>Progress 8 is <b>-1.27</b> and Attainment 8 is <b>24.5</b> (at Key Stage 4)</p> <p>KS1 age related expectations in reading, writing &amp; maths, <b>20%</b></p> <p>Pupils attending good and outstanding schools, <b>76%</b></p> <p>Looked After reviews aligned with EHCP reviews, <b>57%</b></p> <p>Mid-year school moves. <b>34 moves for 34 pupils</b></p> <p>Multiplication tables check, <b>19.2</b> (average score)</p>	<p>Total absence, <b>9.6%</b></p> <p>Persistent absence, <b>23.2%</b></p> <p>PEPs quality assured as green or amber, <b>76%</b></p> <p>Year 11 progressing to level 3 qualifications, <b>17%</b></p> <p><b>95 suspensions for 38 pupils in 31 different schools</b></p> <p>Early Years good level of development, <b>20%</b></p> <p>KS2 age related expectations in reading, writing and maths, <b>18.2%</b></p> <p>Phonics test, meeting threshold, <b>50%</b></p>

# A note from the Virtual School Headteacher

The start of the new academic year was characterised by hope for a return to routine and the joy of learning, continued determination to act swiftly to provide support when needed, and unswerving belief in our looked after children and their capacity to succeed despite the challenges that circumstances might put in their way.

Schools were free of Covid restrictions from September 2021 so getting children safely back into school was our priority. Two years of disruption and the wider impact of the pandemic on staffing and resources meant that we had to do some things differently, many things more intensively, and be very flexible to meet the diverse and changing needs of children and schools.

As one of a few teams that continued to work face to face over the last 2 years, ESLAC (education support for looked after children) staff have overcome many challenges, both professionally and personally, to be exemplary corporate parents and make sure that our looked after children are at the centre of their work.

Often against the odds, we made good progress in achieving what we said we would in our Virtual School Improvement Plan for 2021-22:

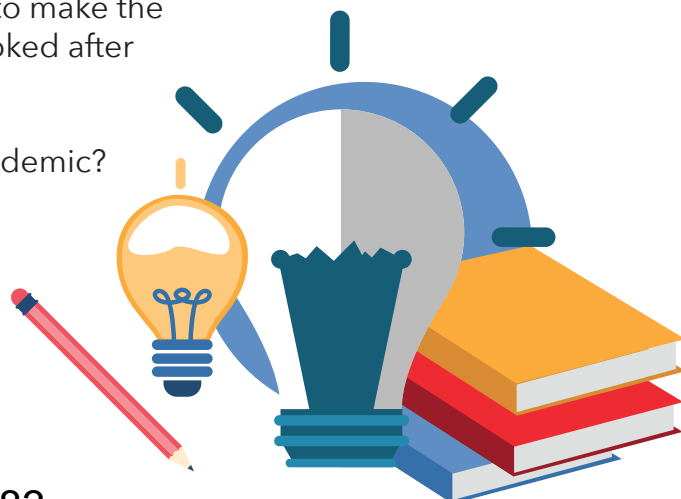
- there is better stability in school placements
- more pupils are back on track and working within their age-related curriculum
- more care leavers are staying in further and higher education
- there is momentum behind our aspiration for all Northumberland schools to be attachment aware and trauma informed
- progress is being made with the whole council approach to corporate parenting

It is still the case that the longer children are in care in Northumberland, the better they do at school.

The highly anticipated new duty for Virtual School Headteachers to promote the education of children who have, or have previously had, a social worker was introduced from September 2021. Using our experience of knowing what works in education for looked after children, and our existing strong relationships with children's social care and schools, we have provided leadership to drive this cultural change that in time will have a positive impact on education outcomes for this very disadvantaged group of learners.

Reviewed DfE guidance relating to school attendance, behaviour in school, and suspensions and exclusions was published during the year, and helpfully raises the profile of the need for Virtual Schools to have a strong strategic influence to make the needs of children with a social worker, including looked after children, everyone's priority.

Are we back on track after the disruption of the pandemic? We're getting there, as this report will demonstrate. But the impact of lost learning, virtual relationships and stretched resources is very real and will take some time for children, education providers and services to fully overcome.



*Jane Walker*

# What we did well this year:

## Supporting teaching and learning

We are very proud corporate parents and recognise the incredible achievement of our looked after children who, despite the nationally recognised challenge of recovering lost learning from the pandemic, have made progress in all phases with some impressive individual success stories.

There has been an improvement in the number of pupils following their age-related curriculum in every year group, attributed to the intensive focus on getting pupils back on track and by using additional grant funding effectively. The Virtual School was able to use a new one-off Recovery Premium and a School Led Tutoring Grant (SLTG) to make sure that pupils who needed it received extra tuition and support in the classroom. The SLTG meant that we could host an innovative summer school that benefited pupils of all ages.

Next year we have planned expenditure of the grant differently to overcome some of the challenges in maximising its impact this year, mainly the shortage of tutors available to work with us. We have spent the funding in line with the conditions of the grant and can demonstrate this upon request.

Our strategies to raise aspirations are working. We were pleased to welcome the return of the Choices Together programme from the North East Raising Aspirations Partnership (NERAP) that had been suspended during the pandemic.

Northumberland has a track record over many years of engaging the highest number of looked after children in the programme, which has a direct impact on those then choosing pathways into Higher Education when they leave school.

The new Choices Together programme provides a set of interventions supporting aspiration, attainment, and study skills for young people from Years 7 to 13. The programme is a blended model of face-to-face sessions, online sessions and campus-based events and care experienced young people are targeted for engagement.




The destinations of our school leavers into further education and the continued success of those engaged in higher education demonstrates that we are providing good support to develop meaningful pathways for school leavers into education, employment and training (EET). We delivered on our improvement plan priority by allocating named careers advisers to work with colleges and training providers to monitor attendance and progress, worked preventatively with further education (FE) partners to improve transition into colleges to prevent early drop out, and funded college places on the Adolescent Thrive course.

A review of the Terms of Reference re-energised the rapid response model of our monthly EET clinics that continued to have a positive impact. Facilitated by the Virtual School, multi-agency partners were able to respond with good quality planning and support when young people were at risk of leaving EET and to then offer alternative EET opportunities when appropriate.

The ePEP mechanism has evolved and improved after undergoing several system enhancements. Specific areas are now mandatory for Designated Teachers to complete with individual children, including pupil views and the pupil strength sections.

The experience of looked after children with SEND continued to improve as the role of the Virtual School funded EHCP Lead Officer for looked after children and care leavers was embedded. Based in the SEND assessment and monitoring team, the lead officer is able to ensure swift action and support for individual pupils when needed. Consequently better quality EHCPs are now in place. More Looked After Reviews were aligned with EHCP reviews, confirmed by a quality assurance audit led by children's social care and involving the SEND team and Independent Reviewing Officers. The outcome of the audit shows that 62% of workers felt that the school had a better understanding of the child's holistic needs by the meeting being aligned and others highlighted that the school's relationship with SEND and ESLAC improved their knowledge of the child. Significantly, every child entering care who already has an EHCP now has an emergency review with the first 3 month Looked After Review. A review of the Belonging Regulations, a policy now being enforced, is having a particular impact for our SEND learners in Scottish placements as it supports and promotes co-ordinated working.



Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) was successfully used to support schools and the ESLAC team to deliver interventions that worked to get pupils back on track with their learning.

Collaborative working with the Early Years team improved and 54 pre-school looked after children (ages 3 and 4) received pupil premium funding (at a rate of £300 per eligible child), to accelerate their development in preparation for school.

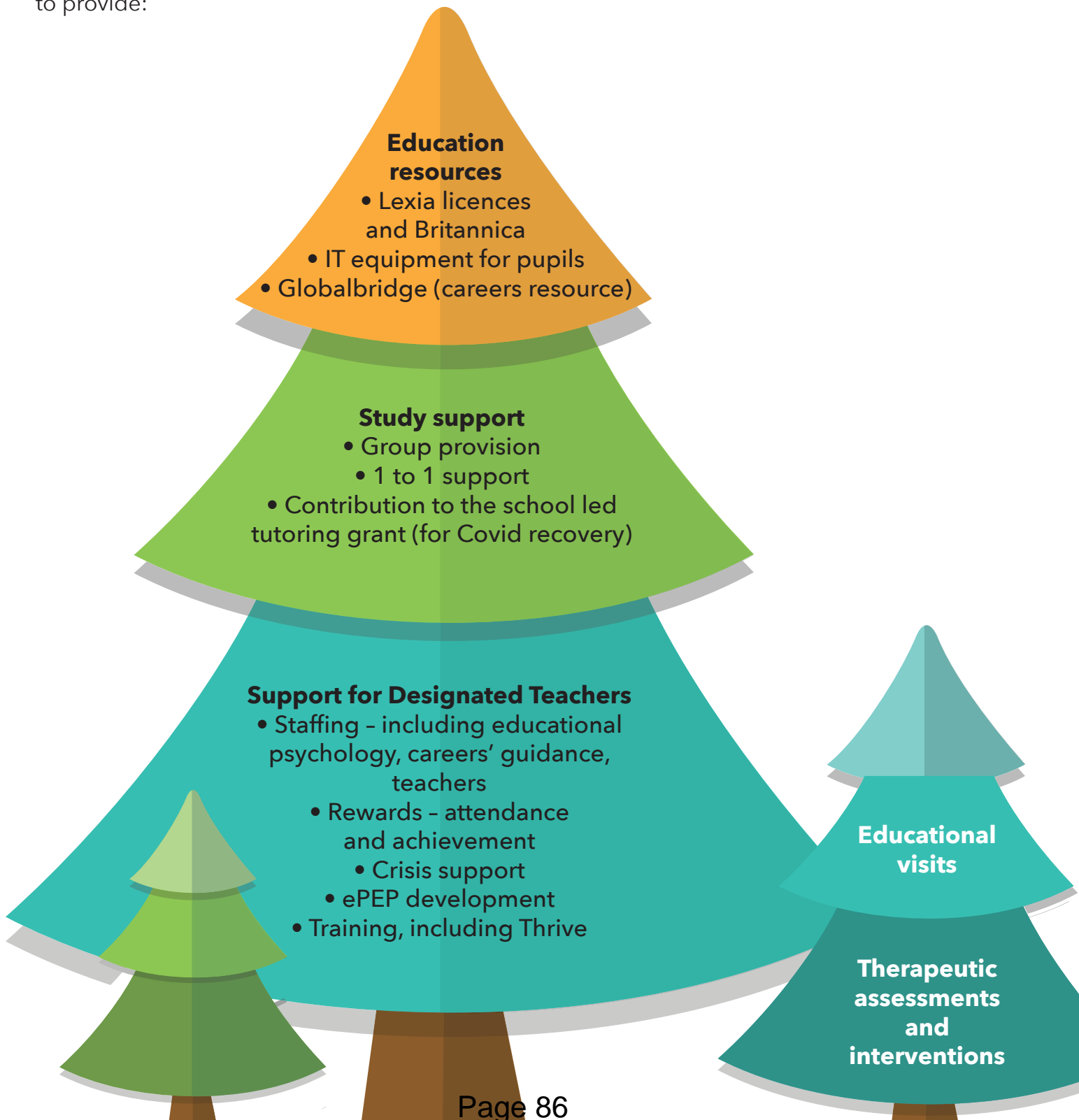


# What we did well this year:

## Pupil Premium Plus Strategy Statement 2022

A PP+ grant of £2410 was allocated for every eligible school age looked after and previously looked after child. The VSH receives the funding for looked after children only and manages the grant allocation to be used for the benefit of the looked after child's educational needs as described in their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

For the academic year 2021-22 our total PP+ budget was £865 190. In line with our PP+ policy we top-sliced £915 from each grant of £2410 and used that centrally held funding of £328 485 to provide:





Schools were allocated a maximum of £1495 of the DfE allocation of £2410 for each eligible pupil which was a total of £536 705. The funding allocated was dependent on providing effective support for each pupil to achieve their individual outcomes and the quality of their Personal Education Plan (PEP).

The Virtual School is also responsible for managing the early years pupil premium (EYPP) which in Northumberland is distributed through the Early Years team to providers that educate looked after children who are taking up the free early education entitlement for 3 or 4 year olds. The local authority received £342 EYPP funding per eligible child taking up 15 hours of early years provision. This was topped up by £444.60 from the Early Years deprivation supplement from the 3 and 4 year olds' budget.

## **Good practice example:** Developing meaningful post-16 pathways

Lily is a Year 12 student who was attending the specialist SEN provision at Kirkley Hall. Due to some behavioural issues Lily was considered to be a safeguarding risk to others and was asked to leave the course. As Lily has an EHCP, a Virtual School careers adviser worked closely with the SEND Lead Officer for looked after children to ensure that she wasn't being excluded completely from education until an alternative option was found. They worked with the college to enable Lily to access education on a 1 to 1 basis. Lily was quite happy with this arrangement as she much prefers classroom work rather than the practical work she would usually do as part of the larger group.

We sent out Lily's EHCP to multiple providers to find an alternative option for her. From those who said they would be able to meet her needs, the careers' adviser put together a presentation for Lily and her mother which was delivered during a joint visit with Lily's social worker. They were able to discuss the 4 to 5 options and whittle it down to 2 options, after which visits were set up for Lily and her mother.

After the visits, Lily decided to sign up for Northumbria Youth Action. She could have started early August but agreed with her mother that she would wait a few weeks and get in a good routine with her ADHD medication again before returning to education – a very sensible plan which was agreed with Northumbria Youth Action. Lily has now started the course and is enjoying it.



# What we did well this year:

## Stability

It is the Virtual School's job to create the right conditions for learning by improving stability in school placements. Looked after children often present with extreme behaviours due to their previous experiences, rejection and inability to self-regulate. When school placements are unstable - due to suspensions, school moves, poor attendance, missed sessions - the trauma is intensified and can deny children a sense of belonging that heightens further feelings of rejection. Looked after children may then have a perception that they are 'not good enough'.

### Contribution to permanence

Involving the Virtual School in strategic arrangements to promote stability have had a positive impact on permanence planning. There is representation from the Virtual School at various meetings with children's social care Heads of Services and senior managers to monitor stability and plan appropriately to ensure education placements are a priority factor in achieving positive long-term outcomes for children in care. The Virtual School is represented at:

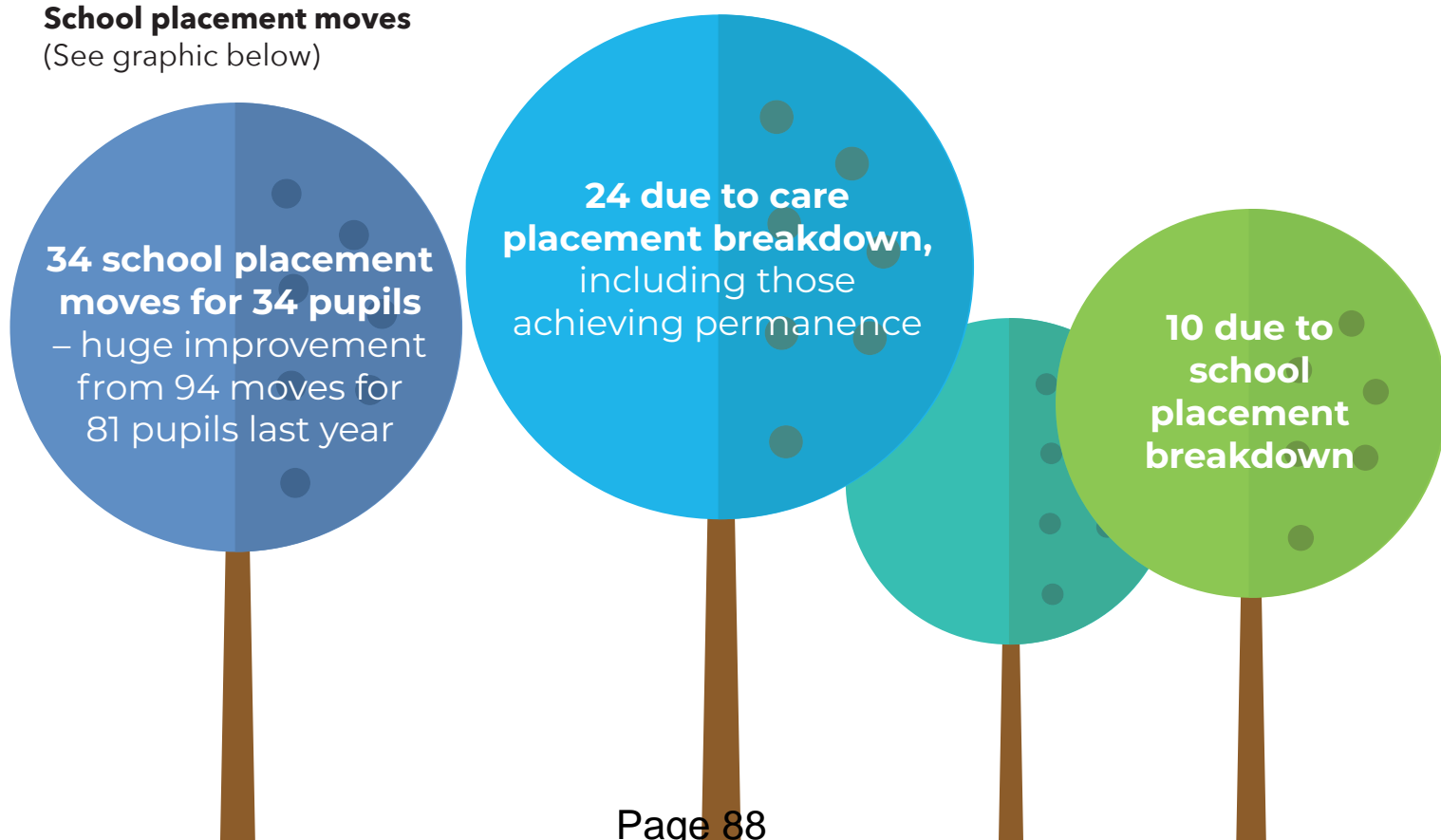
- Legal Gateway Planning
- High Level Resource Panel
- Placement Overview Panel
- Permanence Performance meetings
- Foster Panel
- Adoption Panel

### Mid-year school moves

Partnership working works! Mid-year school moves have dropped as an impact of effective integrated working between the Virtual School, children's social care and the Family Placement Service. We achieved good quality planning for pupils moving schools through involvement in the early placement planning stages and provided regular training and updates for foster carers.

### School placement moves

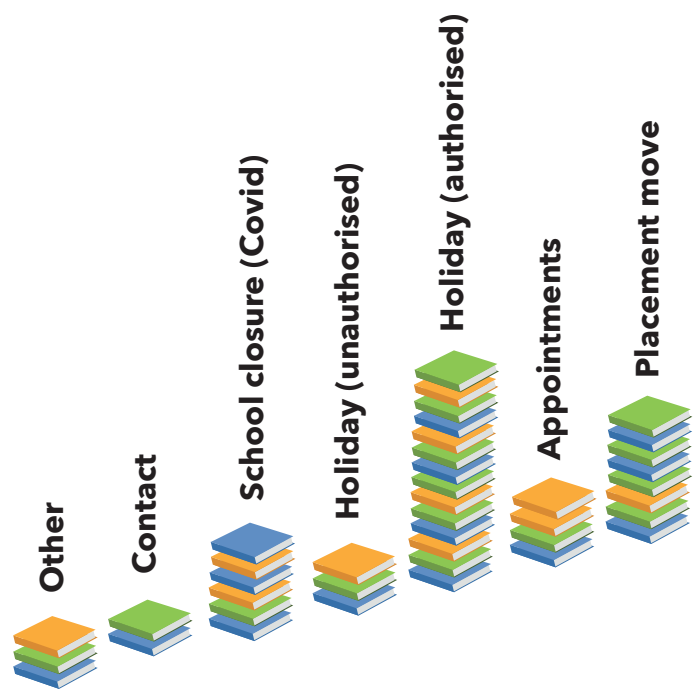
(See graphic below)



### Missed sessions

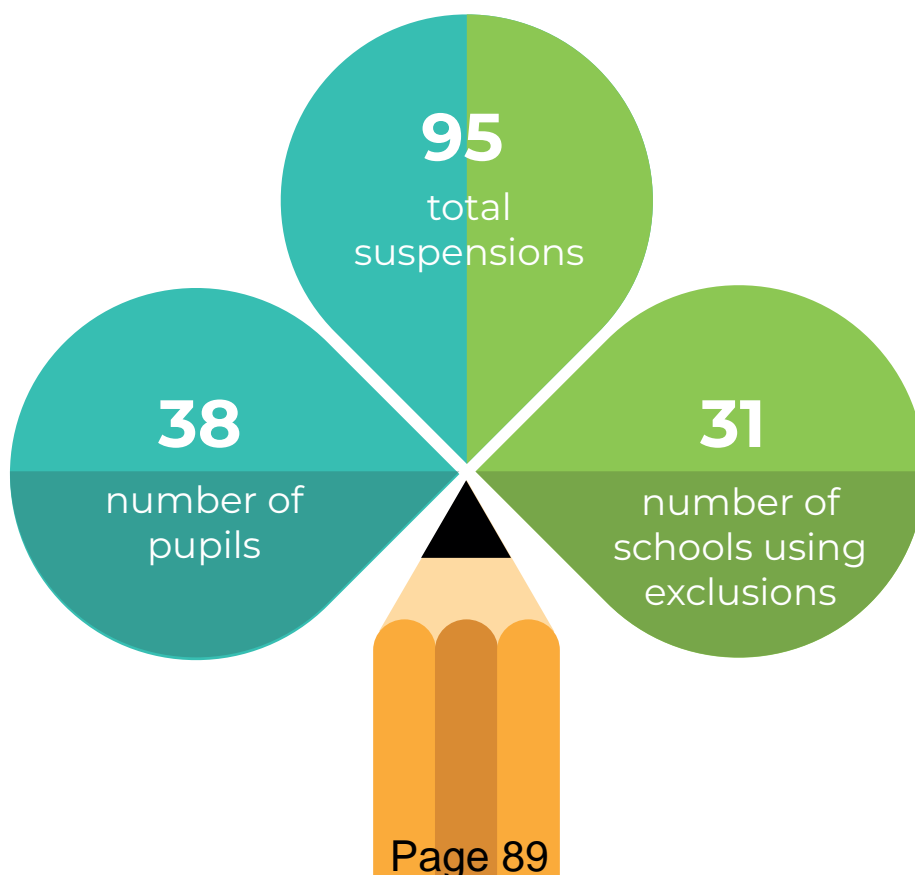
We have a good understanding of the factors that affect learning. Missed learning sessions have a detrimental impact on academic outcomes and increase anxiety, putting looked after children at a further disadvantage. We collaborated with schools and care teams to reduce the number of missed sessions of education that our looked after children experience.

In total 357 sessions were missed by 51 pupils. Most of the absences could have been avoided if better forward planning was in place so we ensured that everyone understood that school sessions should only be missed if there are expectational circumstances. Looked after children are unable to take term-time holidays, and where possible medical appointments and family contact are not made during school hours.



### Suspensions

Some children have found the return to school more difficult than others, and this is showing in the number of suspensions (previously called fixed term exclusions). Suspensions have increased significantly since last year, which interrupt learning and put pressure on foster placements that then threaten home placement stability.



# What we did well this year: Stability (continued)

## Attendance

Swifter action was taken when problems started to emerge with attendance by monitoring live attendance data using a new form in the ePEP. A successful Attendance Initiative improved overall school attendance and reduced the number of persistent absentees (attendance of 90% and below). All school age Northumberland looked after children were eligible to receive a reward for 100% attendance in each half of the Spring Term.

When the Attendance Initiative started overall absence was 10.2%. Over half of our looked after children met the target for a reward voucher in both the Spring and Summer terms and overall absence improved to 8.9%.

## Permanent exclusion

There has been no permanent exclusion of a Northumberland looked after child since 2008.

## Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The achievement of Northumberland's children in 2022 demonstrates that the lower a pupil's SDQ score, the better their education achievement is. Emotional health has an impact on achievement, so the SDQ score helps us to target the right support at the right time for individual pupils.

The new model for using the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), a mandatory behavioural screening tool, has ensured that for the first time there is consistent and regular multi-agency consideration of the emotional health of individual pupils at all of their PEP reviews.




## Good practice example: Improving school placement stability

Virtual School Education Psychologists, teachers, and Intervention Workers have regular consultation meetings with schools to discuss how best to support challenging behaviours and reduce exclusions.

They explore alternative strategies and deliver training to minimise further missed learning for the looked after child.

This supports their sense of belonging and feeling safe.



All Designated Teachers were asked to complete an SDQ at least annually for all Northumberland looked after children on their school roll.

When an SDQ score is high and giving cause for concern, an outcome relating to improving emotional and mental health and wellbeing is included in the PEP and pupils are referred to monthly CYPS liaison meetings.

For looked after children there was an increase in emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) as during lockdown they coped well in smaller class sizes but found it difficult to readjust to the return of full classes. The SDQ and network of Virtual School-trained Thrive practitioners meant that we could identify and address issues swiftly, although very high demand for support did put pressure on the ESLAC team and other services.

### **School readiness**

We got to know our pre-school children better using the Early Years school readiness passports with looked after children. We are aware from an earlier age if additional support is needed when children transition to Year 1.

### **Designated Teacher training**

We delivered 3 conferences for Designated Teachers with content suggested by the volunteer Designated Teacher Working Group. Themes covered included school transitions (including progression to college), the SWAN (safety, welcoming, all together, nurturing) model for returning safely to school, the graduated approach, good practice on entering care, summer school provision, and Mind of My Own (pupil voice). We continued to fund Thrive attachment training and introduced a new programme for Designated Teachers new to role.

## **Good practice example: Supporting school transitions**

To improve school placement stability, the Virtual School was a lead partner of a multi-agency group of schools and other professionals to implement a new framework called STAN - supporting transitions across Northumberland. The work was developed with partners from education, children's social care and mental health and was influenced by the voices of children, young people and their families.

The framework was applied to 90 looked after children starting new schools from September this year, supported by Designated Teachers trained by the Virtual School at a transitions themed Spring Conference. Trainers included representatives from Northumberland Inclusive Education Service, Educational Psychology, the Virtual School Headteacher and Newcastle College.



# What we did well this year:

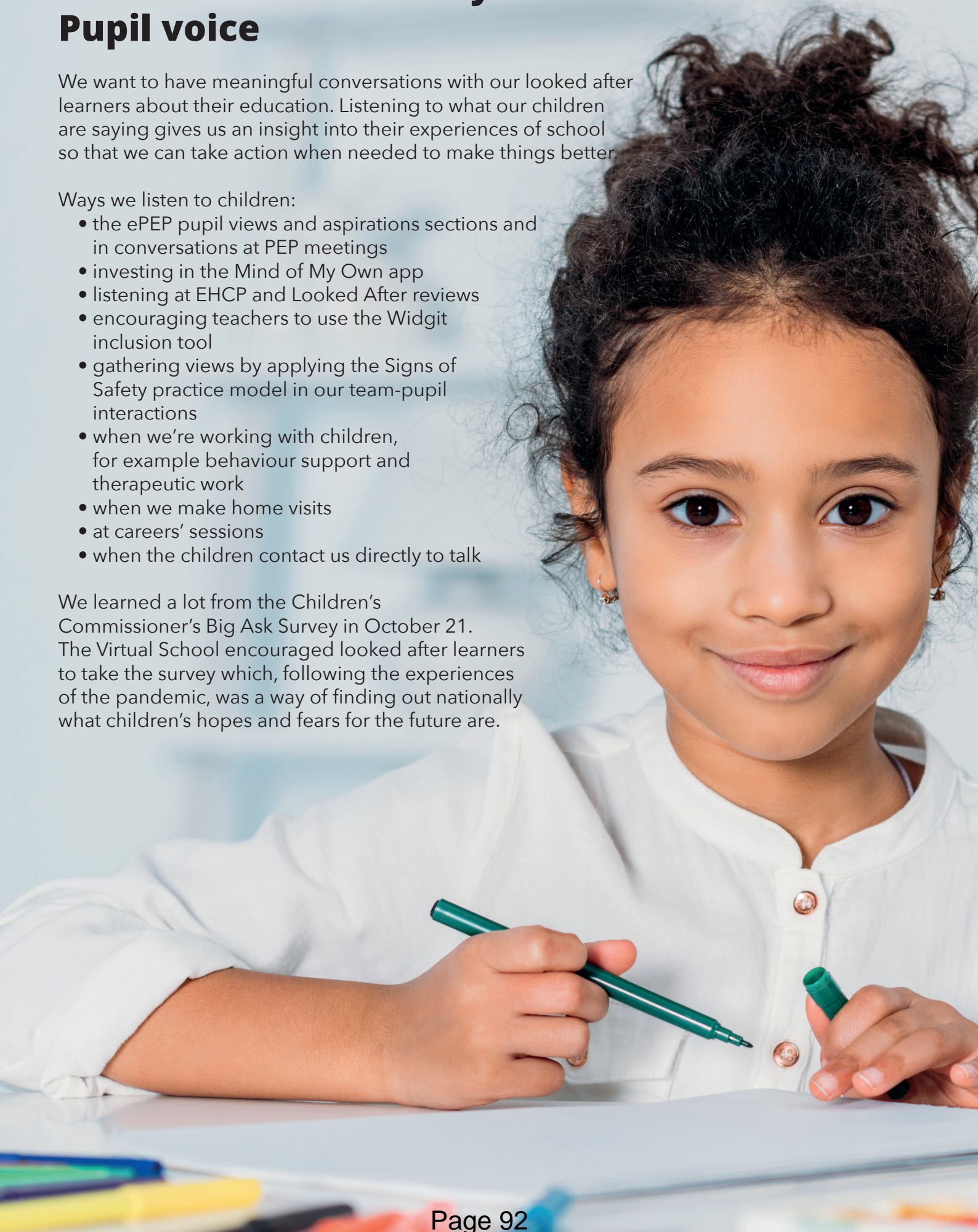
## Pupil voice

We want to have meaningful conversations with our looked after learners about their education. Listening to what our children are saying gives us an insight into their experiences of school so that we can take action when needed to make things better.

Ways we listen to children:

- the ePEP pupil views and aspirations sections and in conversations at PEP meetings
- investing in the Mind of My Own app
- listening at EHCP and Looked After reviews
- encouraging teachers to use the Widgit inclusion tool
- gathering views by applying the Signs of Safety practice model in our team-pupil interactions
- when we're working with children, for example behaviour support and therapeutic work
- when we make home visits
- at careers' sessions
- when the children contact us directly to talk

We learned a lot from the Children's Commissioner's Big Ask Survey in October 21. The Virtual School encouraged looked after learners to take the survey which, following the experiences of the pandemic, was a way of finding out nationally what children's hopes and fears for the future are.



There was an unprecedented response from looked after children and care leavers across England that gave us helpful feedback to plan meaningful support for our children in Northumberland. Children told us that:

- they share the same aspirations as their peers, for example to get a good job and receive a good education
- having a good education and career is a top priority
- they want the security and stability in every day life that other children take for granted
- they don't want to be marked out as different
- they want to be confident about continued support if they need it when they are 18

### Good practice example:

Pupil said, we did ...

**Pupil said:** Michael said he didn't want to attend an alternative provision because there were other pupils there who caused him difficulties in the community.

**We did:** We liaised with his care team and changed the alternative provision for him and he is now engaging and attending well.

**Pupil said:** Kyle said he didn't want to move to a new school even though he had moved to a new placement outside of Northumberland. He was in Year 11 and wanted to do as well as he could in his exams. He said he wouldn't mind travelling.

**We did:** We arranged transport for him and kept in close touch to ensure he was coping. He did well in his exams and is now in further education.

**Pupil said:** Stephen said he wanted extra tuition.

**We did:** We arranged a tutor for him quickly. His confidence has grown and he made the move to his new secondary school smoothly.

**Pupil said:** Chloe said she was concerned about how the staff at school were treating her.

**We did:** We raised her concerns with the Designated Teacher, and a plan that included additional support by a member of staff she trusted was put into place on the same day.

**Pupil said:** Sarah said that she wanted to go to university in the future.

The deadline for the Choices Together programme had already passed.

**We did:** We made enquires and were able to get her application agreed.

She is now able to join in with this year's activities.



# What we did well this year:

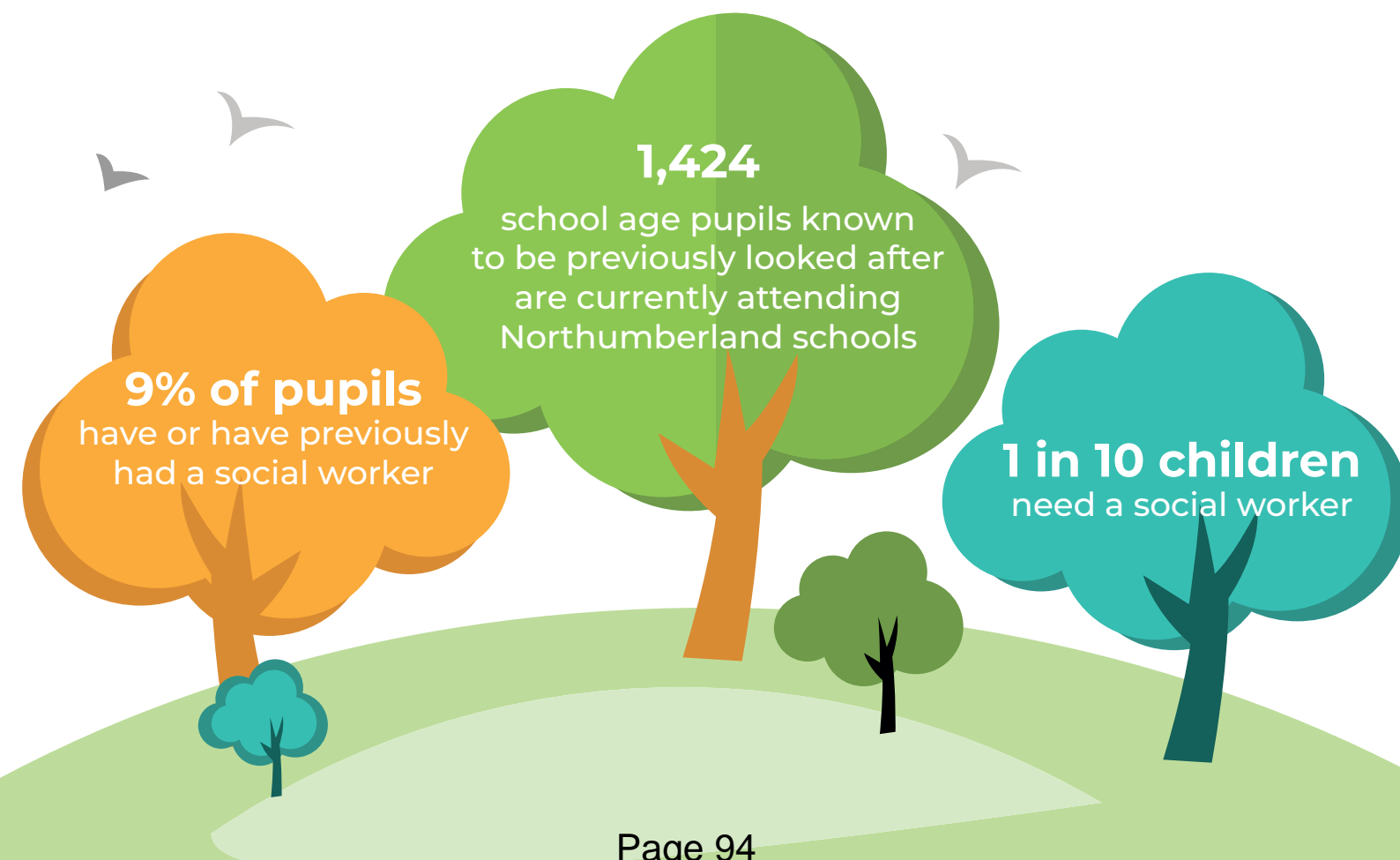
## Previously looked after children

1,424 school age pupils known to be previously looked after are currently attending Northumberland schools. Children and young people who have experienced early life trauma can continue to experience a range of challenges in school. We understand the long term impact of trauma and loss and this informs the support and guidance we give to parents, carers and professionals who live and work with previously looked after children.

The Virtual School's relationship with Adopt North East (ANE) is strong and collaborative working is good. We have participated in half termly sessions convened by ANE, with other regional VSHs, to upskill staff and share good practice resources.

The quality of ESLAC resources has been recognised and distributed throughout the region. Improved knowledge and communication has led to an increase in adoptive parents contacting the Virtual School for a range of advice to reduce difficulties for their children at school, or to recommend school placements that might match their needs.

Northumberland's Deputy VSH has delivered four training sessions for those parents who have already adopted, those in the process of being assessed or at the matching stage. Sessions have been well attended. Content includes the role of the VSH, potential difficulties previously looked after children can experience at key points such as school transition, why additional support is needed and how to access this, and how children can mask behaviors or act out at home while 'keeping it together' at school. Our contribution to the effectiveness of the ANE is enhanced by the Deputy VSH being a member of the adoption panel.





# What we did well this year:

## Children with a social worker

We know that children who have, or who have had a social worker, are some of the most disadvantaged children in England and that they under achieve at school in comparison to their peers who have not been known to social care. Approximately 1 in 10 children need a social worker, they do significantly worse than others at all stages of their education and poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.

In 2021 the government acted on the findings of the Children in Need review (2019) and has asked Virtual School Headteachers to be the strategic leaders who will make a difference to education outcomes for this group of children. At the moment in Northumberland there are 4,494 school age children who have or have previously had a social worker which is about 9% of the pupil population (1,056 with a social worker, 3,951 previously had a social worker).

Good progress has been made to fulfil the VSH's extended duty to promote the education of children with a social worker. We have taken a project approach in Northumberland, with priorities clearly defined through 4 workstreams - Attendance, Behaviour, Wellbeing and Learning. The workstreams are working with Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and children's social workers to strengthen professional relationships to improve safeguarding, planning and partnership working. There is representation from different sectors in the Project Strategic Group and benchmark data has been agreed so that impact can be monitored and measured in the next 12 months using an outcomes framework.

Workstream lead officers have:

- mapped their work to other strategic priorities
- identified services that are already working effectively in their themed area
- mapped training needs for social workers and DSLs
- started to develop guidance for social workers and DSLs to be accessible through a project Sharepoint webpage
- agreed how to promote the education of children with a social worker through their respective networks eg Senior Mental Health Leads, Attendance leads, locality team managers, Independent Reviewing Officers
- drafted case studies of good practice
- identified relevant school policies for development
- published a newsletter for professionals relating to the theme of each workstream

In response to feedback in an online survey, a task and finish group has been convened of volunteer DSLs and children's social workers to generate solutions to overcome operational barriers to strong relationships and good communication.

Recognising the innovative Virtual School model that Northumberland has in place, with a VSH that has oversight of attendance and safeguarding in schools, we delivered a national webinar at the invitation of the DfE on the attendance of children with a social worker. The attendance of children with a social worker is recognised as a major barrier to achievement and is being prioritised nationally through revised statutory guidance that has given the project considerable momentum. Schools are now required to involve the VSH and social workers in matters relating to behaviour, suspensions and exclusions, also captured in revised statutory guidance that will take effect from September 2022.





### **Good practice example:**

Understanding the impact of trauma to overcome barriers to education for children with a social worker

Extra grant funding was used to launch the extended duty of the Virtual School Headteacher to promote the education of children with a social worker at a conference for Designated Teachers and professionals in the Autumn term.

Lisa Cherry was the keynote speaker, an author, researcher and leading international trainer and consultant specialising in assisting schools and local authorities to create change that supports working with the legacy of trauma.

The focus of the conference was School Belonging and this has informed our aspiration with schools to develop positive relational policies to manage and improve behaviour in schools that affects educational achievement.



# Impact evaluation

The education achievement of Northumberland's looked after children improves when they become looked after, despite more pupils entering care during Year 11 and an increase in the number of school age children moving in and out of care.

Consequently, since the last national tests and exams were taken in 2019, education outcomes for our pupils are much improved in several measures, notably at Key Stage 1 in the combined reading/writing/maths measure, and at GCSE.

## Early Years

The low number of children reaching a good level of development in early years is a concern and is a clear indication of the impact of disruption during the previous two years, and the impact that has had on child development and school readiness.

We need more feedback from schools about the impact the PP+ has had on progress and achievement for every year group. From the PP+ allocated to schools through the ePEP we know that 42% of pupils made progress in at least one subject and 28% of pupils made progress in at least four subjects. More information and improved impact will be a priority for next year.

## Key Stages 1 and 2

The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt and gives us a focus for future priorities. In particular we need to target the progress of pupils in Years 2 to 5 so that a much higher proportion are working in their age-related curriculum.

We are also concerned about achievement at Key Stage 2, with poor progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 impacting on the number of pupils achieving age related expectations in Year 6. There is a noticeable weakness in maths which meant the combined measure of reading/writing/maths dipped significantly. This is the first year since 2019 that children in Year 6 have taken the SATs and this year's lower achievement is a direct impact of lost learning for these children during the two years of the pandemic.

## Key Stage 4

**87%**

of Year 11 leavers into FE, full-time training or apprenticeships (for Sep 22)

## Key Stage 4

**38**

KS4 learners in total

**36%**

with EHCPs

## Early Years

**42%**

of pupils made progress in at least one subject

## Early Years

**28%**

of pupils made progress in at least four subjects

## Key Stage 4

The improvement in GCSE achievement has created further opportunity for our Year 11 leavers whose high aspirations have led 87% into further education, full-time training or apprenticeships for September 2022.

Context makes this improvement in performance even more impressive, with a number of factors potentially having a negative impact on learning and therefore GCSE performance. This was a large official cohort of 38 pupils, and over half have SEND (36% with EHCPs). The SDQ scores of the higher achievers were high, which is unusual, and indicates strong personal resilience as well as effective support from care teams and schools.

Stability was not as good as we would have liked it to be, with 10 pupils entering care at the beginning of their GCSE courses, 25 pupils experiencing a placement move during their GCSE courses, 12 pupils having suspensions from school and overall attendance of only 79%. Achievement in the key measures needs to be better aligned with national averages for looked after children.

## Pathways at 16

It is pleasing that 87% of our Year 11 school leavers have a destination in education, employment or training for September 2022, and despite the disruption to some pathways caused by the pandemic the retention rate of Year 12 and 13 learners in Further Education has improved to 70%.

There has been a dip in the number starting Level 3 courses at 16, but this is in part due to the uncharacteristically high number of pregnancies in the Post 16 cohorts and an over representation of learners with SEND (36% have an EHCP). Professionals are in contact to ensure that guidance is available and pathways are ready to be developed when the time is right.

## Higher Education

100% of our learners completing Level 3 courses have achieved well and are now progressing into Higher Education and employment. 100% of our care leavers in Higher Education completed their university degrees and are progressing into employment and postgraduate courses.

### Pathways at 16

**87%**

of Year 11 leavers into education, employment or training (for Sep 22)

### Pathways at 16

**70%**

retention rate of Year 12 and 13 learners in FE

### Higher Education

**100%**

of care leavers completed university degrees and are progressing into employment and post-graduate courses

### Higher Education

**100%**

of Level 3 learners progressing into HE and employment

# Impact evaluation (continued)

## SEND

As expected, outcomes for children with SEND were poorer than that of children with no SEND. Over half of our children need SEND support or have EHCPs, so it is pleasing that at least one met their age-related expectations in Phonics and at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, and 2 pupils achieved the Basics at GCSE.

From Early Years upwards however, progress and achievement need to improve. Overall, there are some encouraging signs here but there is still a lot of work to do.

We need to make sure that the recovery funding is being used for maximum impact and that the social, emotional and mental health needs of our children are being met so that they can make much faster progress.

## Children with a social worker

Understanding who this cohort of children are evolved with the project during the year. Next year we will be able to benchmark and evaluate their education achievement in comparison to the national cohort and gather evidence about the impact of the project outputs.

Clear long term performance indicators will be established and where appropriate integrated with existing children's social care and education data sets.

Our aspiration is to make this cohort of children visible, and for a culture of 'business as usual' to underpin integrated working with professionals. Education should be part of every pupil's plan.



## Good practice example: Maximising the impact of grant funding to get pupils back on track

The drive to get pupils 'back on track' was non-stop and additional grant funding from the DfE (the school led tutoring grant, part of the Covid recovery programme) was used to collaborate with Maximize Tuition in Morpeth to host a 3 week summer school. Working with a team of highly skilled teachers in a safe environment, pupils had the opportunity to work in small groups to continue their learning, develop social skills and prepare for new schools in September. Over the 3 week period 180 tutorials were delivered either at the Maximize centre or online. Tutorials were 1-to-1 or in small groups, depending on what suited individual pupils best.

Pupils were invited to attend the summer school based on their individual needs and circumstances, including those who have missed learning, those in transition, GCSE focus groups, and sessions for our residential homes.

Pupils getting ready for Year 6 and Year 11 in September were also invited, as were pupils with SEND and those leaving Year 11 to prepare for sixth form. All sessions had an academic focus while encouraging friendships and confidence-building, sprinkled with a huge element of creativity and fun!

## Covid


Better stability was gained and maintained this year, as the impact of Covid was relentlessly challenged by the ESLAC team and Designated Teachers.

This was achieved by working with schools to improve their understanding of adverse childhood experiences and promoting good practise for school transitions. However, the main threats to stability remain and will be a priority for improvement next year.

We know that:

- there was fluid movement in the cohort, new to care and leaving care
- looked after children's behaviour has been more challenging due to instability, circumstances and typically the children not managing change well.  
This led to an increase in emotionally based school avoidance
- looked after children already have gaps in their learning due to experiences prior to entering care, further missed sessions increase the gap between them and their peers
- due to staff self-isolating, there has been an increase in supply staff or Teaching Assistants being used who did not know the needs of looked after children well, or had the necessary skills or training to manage their behaviour
- school staff members' resilience may have been lower than normal when dealing with challenging behaviour
- it continued to be difficult for the ESLAC team to facilitate and support the building of relationships between looked after children, key adults and peers due to social distancing and restrictions





## **Good practice example:** Decision making and pathway planning Post-16 – getting the timing right

Charlie completed A-levels after doing well in his GCSEs but due to working from home during lockdowns and school closures, combined with his diagnosis of ASD and mental health issues exacerbated by the pandemic, he struggled with Post-16 education. He didn't achieve the grades he was initially predicted, and decided that Higher Education, which was his original plan, was not right for him at this time.

Charlie wanted to do an apprenticeship but he and his care team felt that he wouldn't cope with the social demands of this at that time and would need to build up to a full-time job.

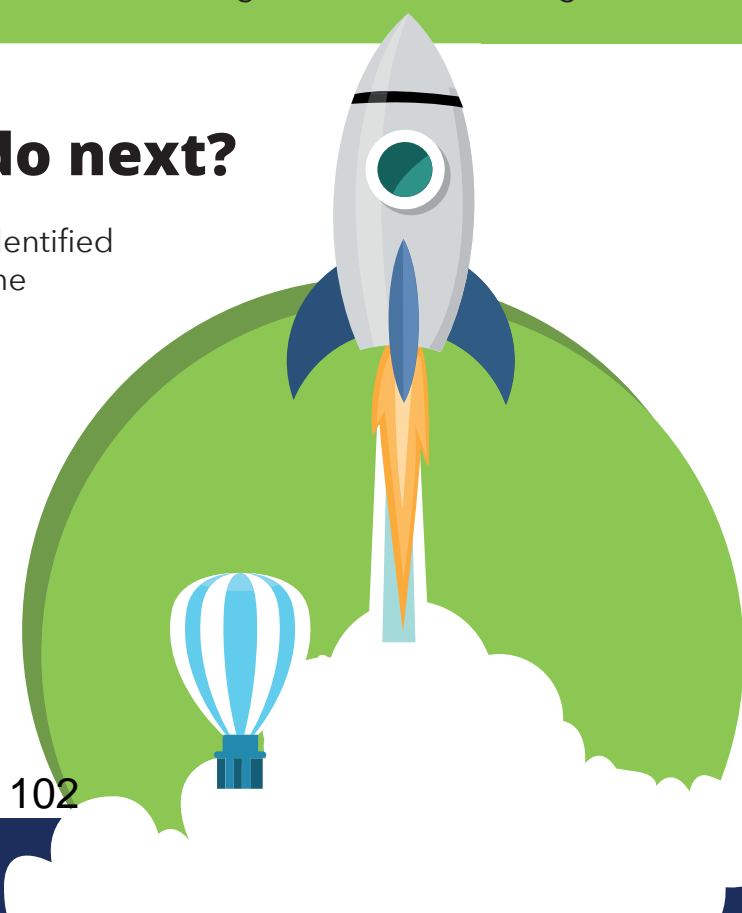
The Virtual School careers' adviser suggested the NHS Project Choice programme, liaised with the Post-16 SEND team regarding funding, and Charlie and his parents attended an information session. Charlie decided this was the best option for him as it would give him the support he needed to get into the workplace. Unfortunately, due to Covid, the work placements Charlie had hoped for weren't available so he spent the first two terms in a charity shop and while this wasn't what he would have chosen, he did gain a lot of experience, including of customer service which he had thought he wouldn't be able to do.

Charlie is now in the 3rd term of the programme and is on placement within the NHS; he has had training on the patient record system which increases his chances of gaining employment within the NHS after his course. However, the year has made him reflect on what he wants and he has decided that he does want to return to education, so Project Choice staff, with support from his 18+ worker and Virtual School careers adviser, have supported him to apply and arrange student finance. He has a place on a Foundation Degree and is excited to get started.

## **What are we going to do next?**

Actions that underpin the following priorities identified in this Virtual School evaluation are set out in the Virtual School Improvement Plan for 2022-23.

(See improvement priorities and areas to cover in the table overleaf.)



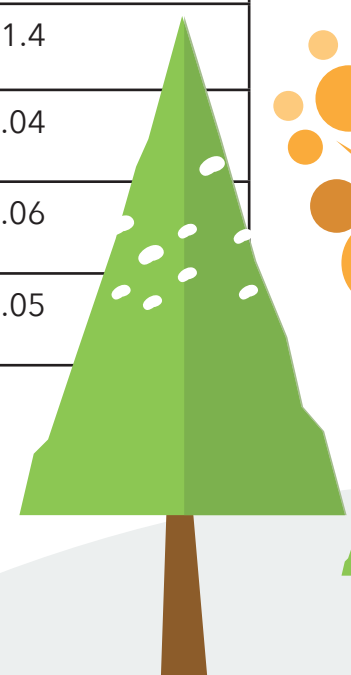


# Virtual School Improvement Plan for 2022-23

Improvement priority	Areas to cover
1. Improve attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce persistent absence</li> <li>• Integrated working with the Education Welfare Service</li> <li>• Training for Designated Teachers, social workers and foster carers</li> <li>• Promote and comply with new attendance guidance</li> </ul>
2. Get progress back on track so that more pupils are following their age-related curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assurance of PEPs with a focus on SMART academic outcomes</li> <li>• Quality audit of EHCPs</li> <li>• Impact of recovery funding</li> <li>• Reduce the use of suspensions and number of missed sessions</li> <li>• Strategies to accelerate progress</li> </ul>
3. Provide leadership for promoting the education of children with a social worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VSH as strategic project lead</li> <li>• Develop and recognise attachment aware and trauma informed schools</li> <li>• Accessible guidance and resources for Designated Safeguarding Leads and children's social workers</li> <li>• Utilise the expertise and experience of Designated Teachers in schools</li> </ul>
4. Participate in the Pupil Premium Plus Post 16 Pilot (national)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of care leavers into further education</li> <li>• Improve retention in EET</li> <li>• Build capacity in colleges to meet the needs of care leavers</li> <li>• Introduce a Post 16 ePEP</li> <li>• Convene a Post 16 working group</li> <li>• Collaboration with regional Virtual Schools</li> </ul>
5. Deliver the Virtual School's contribution to the corporate parenting strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop service Promises as part of whole council approach</li> <li>• Engage private sector employers</li> <li>• Develop training</li> <li>• Create EET opportunities</li> </ul>

# Education outcomes for looked after children in all key measures, 2022

2022	Northumberland CLA* (all) %	Northumberland OC2** %	National CLA %	National All %
Early Years GLD	46.7 (15)	20 (5)	41	65.3
Phonics Year 1	58.8 (17)	50 (8)	59	75.5
KS1 R/W/M	23.5 (17)	20 (5)	28	53.4
KS1 Reading	41.2 (17)	20 (5)	43	66.9
KS1 Writing	29.4 (17)	20 (5)	33	57.6
KS1 Maths	35.3 (17)	40 (5)	42	67.7
MTC average score	19.2	18.9	Data not yet available	
KS2 R/W/M	27.8 (18)	18.2 (11)	32	58.7
KS2 Reading	61.1 (18)	54.5 (11)	52	74.5
KS2 Writing	50 (18)	45.5 (11)	42	69.5
KS2 GPS	55.6 (18)	45.5 (11)	47	72.4
KS2 Maths	33.3 (18)	18.2 (11)	44	71.4
KS2 Progress Reading	-3.04	-3.79	-0.53	0.04
KS2 Progress Writing	-3.52	-2.71	-0.92	0.06
KS2 Progress Maths	-4.75	-5.34	-1.19	0.05

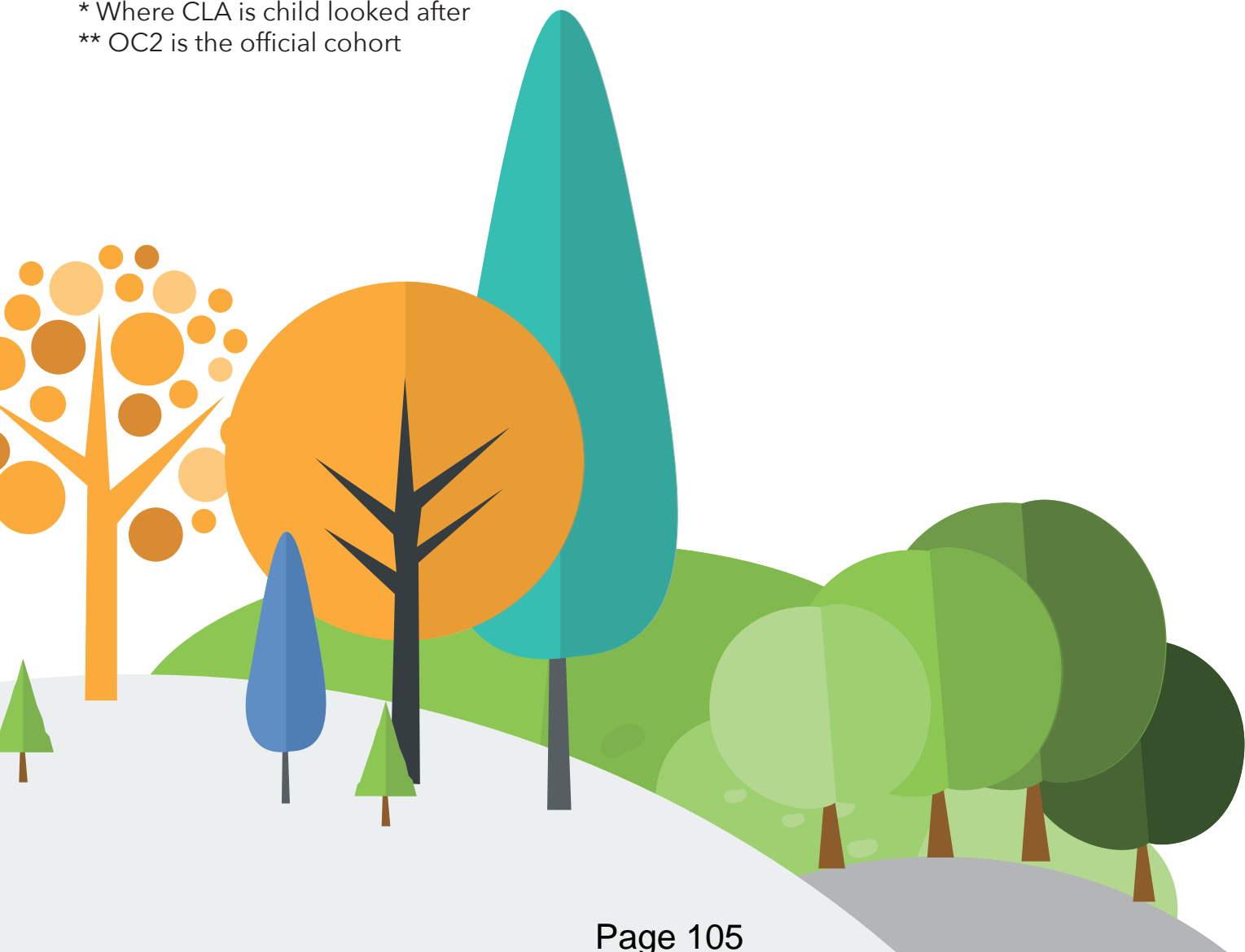


2022	Northumberland CLA* (all) %	Northumberland OC2** %	National CLA %	National All %
KS4 Basics 4+	31.4 (51)	35.1 (37)	27	64
KS4 Basics 5+	13.7 (51)	18.9 (37)	12	49
KS4 English 4+	37.3 (51)	40.5 (37)	34	77
KS4 Maths 4+	35.3 (51)	37.8 (37)	33	68
KS4 Progress 8	-1.42	-1.27	-1.19	-0.03
KS4 Attainment 8	24	24.5	24.8	48.9

Number of pupils in each cohort shown in brackets

\* Where CLA is child looked after

\*\* OC2 is the official cohort



# Northumberland's Virtual School

Northumberland's Virtual School Headteacher is managed through children's social care and has senior management oversight of the work of 5 teams that fulfil statutory duties for the local authority to ensure that children are safer in education. Those services are:

- Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children
- Promoting the education of children who have and have had a social worker
- School attendance
- Children missing and at risk of missing education
- Elective home education
- Licensing for children in entertainment and employment
- Safeguarding standards in schools, including the training of Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Providing education for children with health and medical needs

The Virtual School Headteacher chairs the Schools' Engagement sub-group of the Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership.

The ESLAC - education support for looked after children - team is the operational arm of the Virtual School that is dedicated to looked after and previously looked after children. It is a multi-disciplinary team with 13 members of staff (10.63 fte), providing a range of expertise in teaching, educational psychology, education welfare, careers' guidance and therapeutic interventions. The team provides training and support for Designated Teachers for looked after and previously looked after children in all education settings.

The MALAP - multi agency looked after partnership - has terms of reference as the governing body of the Virtual School. ESLAC is funded by NCC and Pupil Premium Plus grant from the DfE.

Northumberland's Virtual School is a member of the National Association of Virtual School Heads.





### **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this publication is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate at the time of production. Data sources are available upon request.

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## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

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#### **Children Not in School**

Report of Councillor Guy Renner Thompson

Interim Joint Directors of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Andrey Kingham

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#### **Purpose of report**

To provide information about the children in Northumberland who are not in school full time, the multi-agency support that is in place for families, and national developments that will affect school attendance, children missing education and children who are electively home educated in the future.

#### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended:

1. to note this update on safeguarding arrangements for children who are not in school;
2. to note the continued impact of Covid 19 on the number of children not in school and the potential implications of this on education outcomes;
3. to consider the implications of changes to legislation relating to children not in school.
4. To provide scrutiny and challenge as appropriate to ensure the plans detailed can meet the identified needs arising from the areas above.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the corporate objectives, and specifically the "Living, Learning" and "Thriving" priorities of the Corporate Plan 2021-24. This work will sit under and contribute to addressing the overarching inequalities priority.

#### **Key Issues**

1. School attendance In Northumberland is improving gradually but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. The national position in England is similar.
2. Economic deprivation is currently one of the main barriers to education in Northumberland. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive a

suitable education. However, more parents are telling us that the cost of living crisis is making it difficult to send their children to school.

3. Safeguarding arrangements for children who are at risk of missing out on full time education are having improved impact now that health partners participate in the monthly Children Missing Education (CME) tracking panel.
4. The DfE has introduced a requirement for local authorities to submit a termly statutory Children Not in School (CNiS) return with information about children who are not in school for 25 hours per week ie on part time timetables, flexi-schooled, attending alternative provision, permanently excluded and electively home educated.
5. The number of children leaving school rolls to be electively home educated has stabilised. The government's plans to introduce more support for parents who electively home educate their children, set out in the Schools' Bill 2022, are being reviewed. Therefore plans to introduce a local authority register of home educated children are now on hold.



## **Background**

*Timeframe for the data used is September to December 2022.*

1.0 Statistics show that persistent absentees (those with school attendance of 90% or below) are less likely to achieve their full academic potential, therefore affecting GCSE grades and their future prospects in education, training and employment. Children who are not in school during the hours of a normal school day are potentially at risk of exploitation, radicalisation, and being victims of harm. As professionals we need to act on our curiosity and routinely ask ourselves *if children are not in school then where are they and are they safe?*

1.1 In Northumberland our performance for overall absence and persistent absence has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Although in 2021-22 there was no further disruption caused by school closures or forced virtual learning, the challenge of returning children safely to school continues. The latest DfE statistical release for the Autumn and Spring terms of the last academic year confirms that this was a challenging year for school attendance throughout England. In comparison to our regional neighbours, Northumberland 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> out of 12 local authorities for overall absence and persistent absence and this indicates the level work there is still to do.

1.2 An improvement plan is in place and the Education Welfare team has maintained strong integrated working with partners, specifically Early Help, to improve this picture. Strategies are gradually having a positive impact, helped by the introduction of new DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (May 2022) which is a multi-agency document that promotes attendance as everyone's business. As part of this new central government approach, we have been allocated a DfE Attendance Adviser who will support us with the development of a new attendance strategy for Northumberland.

1.3 The implementation of new requirements will have a positive impact on attendance improvement. Significantly, from September 2023 all schools, including academies, will have to complete electronic registers which will give us access to live attendance information at pupil and school level. Identifying issues and intervening early will then be possible, and we can target help and support to the families and schools that need it the most. Schools are encouraged to take a 'support first' approach before considering legal action against parents, and we will be re-introducing parent contracts to positively influence parental behaviour regarding school attendance.

1.4 School attendance for children with a social worker has a high profile and is recognised as a main barrier to their education. This supports our commitment to promote the education of children with a social worker, which is a local authority duty introduced in 2021 and fulfilled by Virtual School Headteachers. As part of this work a particular success story is the impact of Education Welfare Support Officers (EWSO), new roles created during the pandemic. The three EWSOs are working intensively with 18 children and their families to support them back into school, including 4 on child protection plans, 3 Children in Need and 2 returning from elective home education. We have transferred the education welfare officer for looked after children into the Education Welfare team to further build capacity and ensure that our looked after children benefit as much as possible from the protection of school.

2.0 Multi-agency arrangements are in place in Northumberland to safeguard children who are not in school during the hours of a normal school day. We regard these children as at risk of missing out on full time education, and potentially at risk from a safeguarding perspective. The Schools' Safeguarding team co-ordinates a safeguarding standards audit that schools are required to complete so that we know that when children attend school they are in environments where they are safe to learn. We regularly provide this re-assurance to Northumberland's safeguarding partnership (NCASP) to contribute to their current priority to monitor the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the safeguarding of children in Northumberland.

2.1 The number of children being tracked through our children at risk of missing education (CME) process increased sharply in September and we are currently tracking 478 children. Alternative Provision, and non-attendance, and part time timetables are the most common reasons for children not being in school full time at the moment. Themed monthly tracking panel meetings have been introduced to target children with particular issues, for example, children with a social worker and children on part time timetables. The objective is to ensure that planning for children being tracked is robust and that children are returned to full time education at school. Since September 64 pupils have been discussed at the monthly multi-agency tracking panel and 30 are no longer CME. The effectiveness of the panel has improved as Primary Mental Health and CYPS (Children and Young People's Service) professionals now participate in the meetings.

3.0 According to the Children's Commissioner, compared with our European neighbours, England has the highest proportion of pupils in home education and the lowest amount of regulation. Before the pandemic there was a noticeable rise nationally in the number of children being electively home educated (EHE). Since the start of the pandemic there has been a 34% increase, with parents citing a variety of reasons for choosing to take their children out of school. Northumberland has followed a similar trend, although the number of children known to be electively home educated is high but relatively stable. This has generated interest, debate and on occasion concern, and is a priority for the Children's Commissioner ([Out of Sight and Out of Mind: shining a spotlight on home education in England](#), November 2022).

3.1 There is no evidence to suggest that safeguarding concerns are higher in the home education community than for children who attend school. However, within the current legal framework for EHE, children who are home educated can have little or no contact with professionals and therefore for a small number we can lack re-assurance that they are receiving a suitable education in a safe environment. Concerns have grown about a growing population of parents opting for home education because they feel that they have no other option or are being coerced into taking their child off the school roll.

3.2 The number of children being electively home educated in Northumberland has reduced to 381 compared to 423 this time last year. Compared to our regional neighbours Northumberland's rate per 10 000 pupils is the 5<sup>th</sup> highest out of 12 (according to data gathered by the Association of Directors of Children's Services). Since September, 49 children have already returned to school places. We are monitoring closely 21 pupils that have had 1 or more episode of EHE in the last 3 years.

3.3 In December it was announced that the Schools' Bill would not pass through parliament in the next 12 months, so the plan to introduce new duties for local authorities and parents with regard to EHE will not go ahead. The introduction of a Children Not in School register is on hold. However the DfE has already implemented a statutory termly return to monitor children that are at risk of missing education and EHE. Northumberland submitted the first return as requested in October. This added layer of monitoring will contribute to the safeguarding of children not in school.

3.4 We identify and challenge schools where EHE seems to be popular with parents to monitor the reasons why and to ensure that the school is working hard to meet needs. We also take action with EHE families who do not provide the required annual evidence that suitable education is being provided. 5 School Attendance Orders are in progress that will return children to school places unless evidence is received. We are therefore using the full capacity of current legislation to safeguard children who are EHE.

3.5 In September 2022 one of our Education Welfare Officers received an award for excellence when working with and supporting families who have elected to home educate. It was awarded by a national EHE charity as a quality mark to reflect the collective experiences of home educating families with respect to the quality of the support they have experienced. The same officer has now been invited to participate in a short piece of research which examines positive relationships between home educating families and local authority staff dealing with families. The report will be provided to Baroness Barran (the minister responsible for home education) and senior DfE staff. The purpose of the report is to highlight the positive working relationships that exist between EHE families and local authority staff, to provide the DfE with high quality, collaborative feedback on good practice and how that translates into good relationships and improved engagement. Hopefully we can influence future developments to support children who are EHE.

## Implications

<p><b>Policy</b></p>	<p>New DfE attendance guidance will mean implementing new requirements and developing resources. Intervening earlier will significantly increase already high caseloads for Education Welfare Officers.</p> <p>The Schools' Bill, if passed, will introduce duties for parents and local authorities, including the maintenance of a Children Not In School register.</p>
<p><b>Finance and value for money</b></p>	<p>Current arrangements are delivered within existing budgets. However the requirements of the new attendance guidance, the significant increase in children who EHE and the introduction of a register will have resource implications for the Education Welfare service. A request for budget growth was submitted July 2022.</p>
<p><b>Legal</b></p>	<p>Ensuring that the local authority fulfils the requirements of new attendance guidance, including a review of the Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Ensuring that parents and the local authority fulfil their new duties under the Schools' Bill 2022.</p> <p>There is great confusion around what constitutes a 'suitable' education. There is no legal definition for this term. The Department for Education's guidance for parents on home education refers to Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act which says:</p> <p><i>The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable – (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.</i><sup>70</sup></p> <p>In other words, the education should be age appropriate and reflect the child's ability and aptitudes.</p>
<p><b>Procurement</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p>	<p>Potential growth for the Education Welfare service. Pressure is considerable, for example 645 referrals into Education Welfare have been received since September compared to 142 this time last year.</p>
<p><b>Property</b></p>	<p>None</p>

<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Parents are telling us that the cost of living crisis is preventing them from sending their children to school.  There is a personal cost to parents that EHE in providing a suitable and good quality education to their children eg they have to pay GCSE exam fees and buy teaching resources.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Risk assessment of arrangements and for individual children is endemic in the multi-agency EHE strategy  EHE is included in the corporate risk register
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	None
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Regular feedback is requested from families working with the Education Welfare Service  Measures are in place to capture the views of EHE children and parents are all allocated a named Education Welfare Officer
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Very high caseloads for Education Welfare Officers and the emotionally charged nature of the work are impacting on staff health and wellbeing.
<b>Wards</b>	None

### **Background Papers**

Elective Home Education guidance for local authorities, DfE April 2019

Children not in school, Schools' Bill Factsheet, DfE May 2022

Promoting the education of children with a social worker, DfE June 2021

Out of Sight and Out of Mind: shining a spotlight on home education in England, Children's Commissioner November 2022

### **Report Sign Off**

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter

Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

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## Northumberland County Council

### FAMILY AND CHILDREN OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023

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#### **Social Worker Recruitment and Retention**

Report of Councillor Guy Renner Thompson

Interim Joint Directors of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Audrey Kingham

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide an overview of the challenges of and responses to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

#### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To identify any issues for further scrutiny.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the 'living and learning' priority within the Corporate Plan 21-24.

#### **Key Issues**

1. Social work recruitment and retention presents a perennial challenge nationally, regionally and in Northumberland. It is one of the key areas of focus in the national independent review of children's social care which was published earlier in the year.
2. Locally, the issue continues to be recruiting sufficient numbers of experienced social workers and ensuring retention of those that we develop in the academy, once they move into frontline social work teams.
3. The academy continues to be a supportive model attracting newly qualified workers and the team management group is stable and recruited from within existing staff.

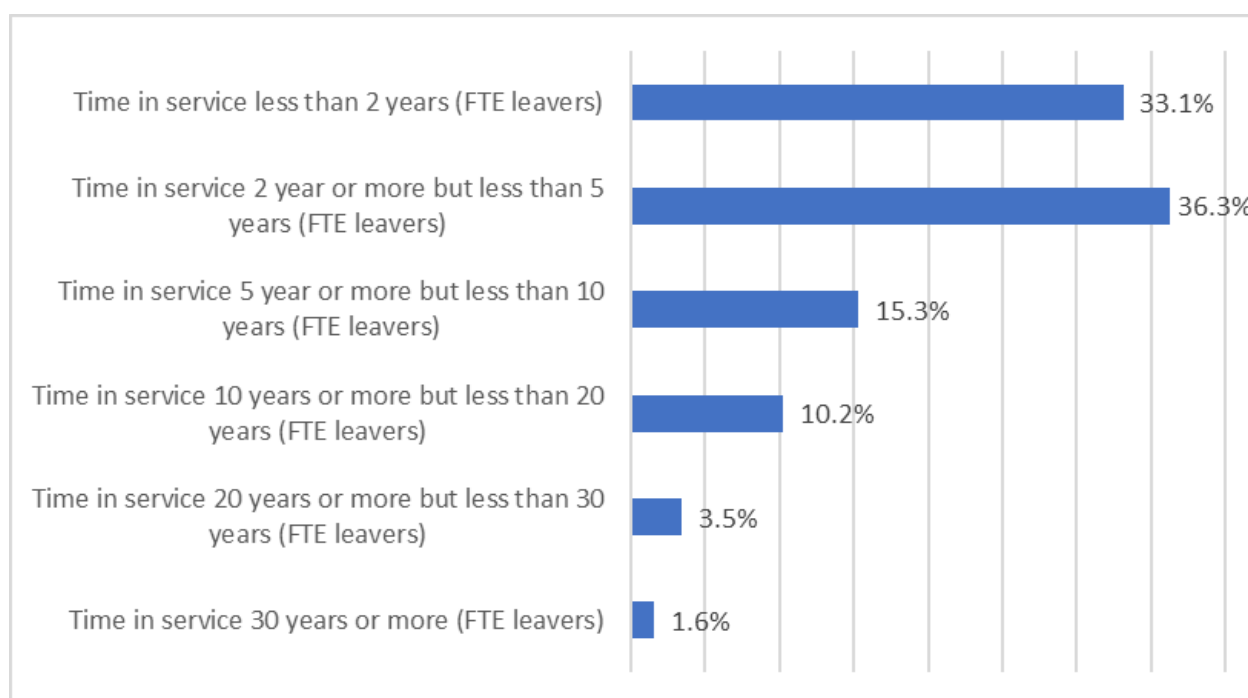
4. Gaps in particular teams increase pressure on existing staff, impacting staff wellbeing and sickness absence. The importance of support from team colleagues and managers cannot be underestimated in supporting this.
5. Work is ongoing with HR to look at creative and innovative ways to support recruitment and retention.



## **Background**

Recruitment of qualified children's social workers into Local Authority safeguarding teams is a challenge across the country. The Department of Education 2022 children's social work force return informs us that in 2022, 32,502 FTE children and family social workers were employed by Local Authorities. In the same year, 4,995 left the profession resulting in a turnover rate of 15.3%. Of those staff who left the profession nearly 69% had been in the role for less than 5 years. As indicated above, the national review of children's social care has workforce as one of its priority areas.

### **Percentage of FTE leavers in the year by time in service, England 2022**



A healthy and stable workforce underpins effective support for children and their families. Good social work is relationship based and therefore minimising the number and changes of social workers that children and families work with is important in achieving this.

The Independent Review of Children's Social care written by Josh McAllister published in May 22 has a section which has a particular focus on workforce:

<https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Realising-the-potential-of-the-workforce.pdf>

Within that the report identifies five key areas to develop the potential of the workforce:

- Reducing bureaucracy
- Developing expertise through an early career framework
- Tackling social work agencies
- Developing the wider children's social care workforce

- Supporting Leadership

We are awaiting a response from central government to the publication of the review which was due before the end of the calendar year but is now expected by end of January 2023. The response from the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) both nationally and regionally has been broadly supportive of many aspects of the review but require the detailed government response to understand more fully how this may translate into any changes in policy or legislation. This includes in relation to the recommendations around the workforce.

Regional work in response to the workforce challenges has continued. The Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the employment of and pay rates for agency staff is currently being reviewed, this work is being led by the Northumberland Service Director for CSC. However, as the challenges of recruiting experienced social workers continue this has become increasingly more difficult for all authorities to adhere to and there is a particular challenge with the increasing use of project teams regionally and nationally. The regional proposals are to be considered further once there is a national response from DfE about the agency workforce which is expected in early January.

### **The Northumberland Position**

Over the last 12 months in Northumberland, the turnover rate for social work qualified staff in front line roles has been 15.9% with 28.8 social workers leaving the Authority. This compares to 15.8% in the previous 12 months. Analysis of the reasons for leaving indicates that there continues to be a mixture of staff leaving to go to other authorities or organisations, staff moving to agency roles, staff moving out of area, retiring or choosing different career paths. We have had a small number of staff who left Northumberland previously return for different roles or a promotion.

At the end of September 2022, we had 12 agency workers, which is a rate of 6.2%, compared to 10.0% in September 2021.

The sickness rate amongst this group (1302 days lost to sickness in the last 12 months) is 1.9%, compared to a rate of 3.6% last year and an NCC target of 3.5%. The rate of 1.9% is the lowest seen by Northumberland in a 12m period (for this cohort).

We have continued to develop our workforce strategy led by a workforce steering group comprising of representatives from children's social care and HR.

The ASYE academy continues to attract a high calibre of applicants and we have recruited a further cohort of 15 in recognition of the strength this approach has with a further small cohort due to start in March 2023. From the staff cohorts recruited in 2021 16 passed their ASYE year and all remain working in Northumberland.

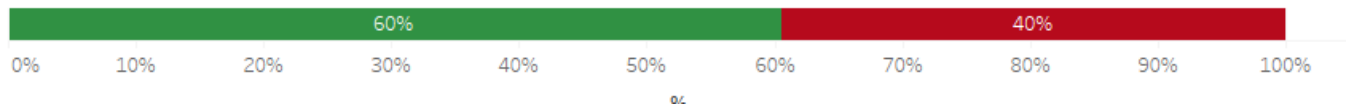
During our most recent focused visit in July 2022 Ofsted reported:  
'All of the social workers spoken to by inspectors during the visit were positive about working for Northumberland. They describe managers as supportive and available to them. The social workers enjoy the range of work allocated to them.'

However, the challenge continues to remain amongst the social work workforce that

it is incredibly difficult to recruit experienced social workers from outside of the authority. This has been exacerbated by the number of staff leaving the authority as detailed above creating real challenges in some of our front line social work teams. In previous years this has focussed on particular teams but it is now impacting on most teams at various times across the year. This is demonstrated by the number of staff working at above workload capacity:

### **Workload Weighting: % of social workers working within the desired level**

Includes social workers, agency social workers, advanced pracs and ASYE academy social workers



We continue to have a generally stable team manager and senior management team although there has been some small movement this year linked mainly to career progression including for one of the Heads of Service. Our team and senior managers continue to work incredibly hard to ensure that the challenges with workforce do not impact on our service to children and families.

### **What are we doing next?**

There are a number of actions which have been and are being progressed across the service to retain the social work staff we have and attract new staff. This is based on analysis of a survey with staff completed over the summer:

1. Maximise flexible working arrangements for staff working across the county and in large rural areas to support best use of work bases and home working.
2. Working with the HR recruitment consultant to develop new platforms and ways of targeting and identifying staff who may want to work with us. This includes developing a specific children's social care recruitment landing page.
3. Looking at career progression routes within the social work role working with HR and adult social care.
4. Supported frontline staff and operational managers by funding the Social Work England registration costs for 22/23.
5. Ensuring that social work staff have regular opportunities to meet face to face with their team colleagues for support.
6. Exploring ways to provide frontline social work staff with regular support to reflect the traumatic experiences they are supporting families and children with.
7. Continuing to make opportunities for senior managers to have regular contact with frontline staff through different mechanisms and encourage our culture of openness and honesty as a learning organisation.
8. Piloting a specialist prebirth team to add to the PAMS team.
9. Ensuring that the allocation of posts from the ASYE academy is aligned to the needs across the service.

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Supports the children's social care work force strategy.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Improved recruitment and retention of social workers reduces agency staff costs.
<b>Legal</b>	Related to statutory responsibilities undertaken by social workers.
<b>Procurement</b>	Would reduce the number of social work agencies needing to be used if the work force were more stable.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Supports the workforce strategy.
<b>Property</b>	Were all social workers to return to working in offices this may cause some challenges because of changes made to workspaces during the pandemic.
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Reputational risk associated with Ofsted judgement which considers work force capacity and planning.
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	Ensuring children are safe and supported includes reducing and removing their involvement with any criminal or anti-social behaviour.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Recruitment and retention critical for delivering best service to children and families.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Providing flexibility around work bases supports unnecessary use of cars for workers reducing pollution.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Sufficient recruitment and retention has an impact on workloads health and wellbeing of the employed staff group.
<b>Wards</b>	All

## **Report Sign Off**

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Lynsey Denyer obo Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Guy Renner-Thompson

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## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

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#### **Domestic Abuse**

Report of Councillor Guy Renner Thompson, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and Councillor Wendy Pattison, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Wellbeing

Interim Joint Directors of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Andrey Kingham

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#### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose this is to provide Scrutiny with an update on the current domestic abuse multi-agency partnership arrangements and domestic abuse service provision to ensure Northumberland County Council meets the requirements of the statutory duties within section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

#### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended:

1. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

A coordinated response to domestic abuse contributes to most of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities but particularly to "living" and ensuring that residents feel safe in our community.

#### **Key Issues**

1. New statutory duties for Tier 1 Local Authorities introduced in section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
2. Services to support victims, survivors, children, young people and those causing risk and harm.

#### **Background**

The new Domestic Abuse Act was passed into law in April 2021. With this new Act a range of new duties were placed on Local Authorities, including the need to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation services in their areas, this covers:

- Refuge accommodation
- Specialist safe accommodation
- Dispersed accommodation
- Sanctuary schemes
- Move on or second stage accommodation

Each Tier 1 Local Authority is also required to establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board that meets quarterly to support them in performing certain specified functions. To:

- Assess the need and demand for accommodation-based support for all victims and their children, including those who require cross-border support.
- Prepare and publish strategies for the provision of support to cover the locality and diverse groups of victims.
- Give effect to strategies by making commissioning / de-commissioning decisions
- Meet the support needs of victims and their children
- Monitor and evaluate local delivery
- Report back to central Government

### **Progress to date in Northumberland**

The domestic abuse multi-agency partnership arrangements were reviewed, and a new strategic Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board established. The Northumberland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board had its first meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021, chaired by Graham Reiter, Service Director Children's Services and the Domestic Abuse Strategy was published on the Northumberland County Council website by 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as required.

In line with the County Council's commitment to ending violence against women and girls, and recognising its White Ribbon Accreditation, the Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out its vision:

*Northumberland is a county committed to having a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and sexual violence. Everyone matters and for that reason our vision is to make it everyone's business to help prevent and put a stop to domestic abuse and sexual violence in the county. We will listen and learn from victims, survivors and their children. We will be proactive, provide support and raise awareness in our communities. We will seek to change culture. Our vision is a vision for all and by working together we can make a difference.*



Domestic Abuse services were recommissioned from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, moving to a new model of an Integrated Domestic Abuse Service with five contracts. The Integrated Domestic Abuse Service for Northumberland provides:

- services to address all levels of risk, and severity of domestic abuse and be accessible for all survivors of domestic abuse regardless of age.
- support for children and young people.
- fulfil the requirements of the new domestic abuse duties and meets the needs of victims, survivors and their families.
- targeted provision for the rural North and West of Northumberland
- and support for those causing harm who acknowledge the need to change their behaviour.
- Development of clear partnership communication strategies to ensure there is no 'wrong door' for service users

Northumberland Integrated Domestic Abuse Service:

1. Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland (DASSN) - provides an assessment hub, a refuge, dispersed properties, Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, a sanctuary scheme, outreach support, assertive outreach support groupwork and a service user forum. The service accepts agency and self-referrals for both male and female victims of domestic abuse over the age of 16.
2. Children's Counselling and Therapeutic and Outreach Support – provides outreach support to children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse, with an initial response, play therapy, counselling, outreach support and a children and young people's service user forum.
3. Changing Behaviour Service – works with both male and female (aged 18 and over) residents who agree to engage and take responsibility and wish to change their abusive behaviour. The service focuses on increasing the safety of partners, ex-partners, children and family members to reduce the incidents of domestic abuse within these relationships.
4. Adult Counselling Service – provides counselling for both male and female victim/survivors (aged 18 and over) to support them to cope and recover from their experiences.
5. Domestic Abuse in Rural Northumberland - provides support for males and females who reside in the North and West of the county to offer both face to face and virtual one to one sessions and support groups. Additionally, to work with other agencies to raise awareness in the communities of domestic abuse and sign-post service users to where additional support is available.

In addition to the commissioned services funding allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to Tier 1 Local Authorities to deliver Part 4 Duties has been allocated internally to support the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to implement the DA Strategy.

- A Domestic Abuse Analyst was appointed in March 2022 to support with the development of a multi-agency domestic abuse dashboard that will support the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to identify themes and trends and monitor the effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- A Domestic Abuse Trainer was appointed in December 2021 to support with the development and implementation of the domestic abuse training strategy to ensure multi agency staff have the skills and knowledge to identify and respond to domestic abuse.
- A Housing Safeguarding Officer was appointed in April 2022 to support the housing teams with their response to safeguarding including domestic abuse.
- A Child to Parent Violence & Abuse Officer appointed April 2022, as part of the Northumberland Adolescent Service, to increase capacity to offer support for parents, carers where child to parent violence and abuse has been identified as a concern.

### **Northumberland Domestic Abuse Summit**

The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board facilitated a multi-agency domestic abuse summit on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 to review the progress of the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Strategy and consult on priorities for next year.

The summit was well attended by internal departments and partners agencies, who gave positive feedback on the multi-agency partnership arrangements, the domestic abuse training strategy and new service model. Challenges in ensuring the availability of resources, staffing levels, and managing waiting lists were identified for the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to monitor.

Priorities for 2022- 2023 were discussed, with the support of national and local guest speakers, for consideration by the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board when it next meets in February 2023:

- A clear communication and awareness raising strategy, both staff and community focused.
- To continue to develop the multi-agency and single agency domestic abuse training offer, with a commitment across all agencies to prioritise staff accessing the training.
- To further develop and review the service offer and engagement in the rural areas.
- To provide evidence-based resources for schools and youth groups.
- To continue to strengthen the service user voice

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Ensure that NCC meets its new statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The recommissioning of the domestic abuse services was developed to reflect both the statutory requirements and local needs analysis.  Value for money was achieved via an open market procurement exercise 2021/22
<b>Legal</b>	The Local Authority has a legal duty to provide domestic abuse services pursuant to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
<b>Procurement</b>	The Integrated Domestic Abuse Support Service was recommissioned 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022
<b>Human Resources</b>	The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Lead was appointed November 2017.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment considered the equality agenda and ensured that minority groups are catered for within the service specification.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	None
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	The Integrated Domestic Abuse Support Service includes support for perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The service providers are expected to hold regular service user forums to gain feedback from service users. This feedback is shared quarterly with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board members to inform the monitoring and evaluation of the DA strategy and action plan.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Health and wellbeing are at the centre of service delivery. The aim of the domestic abuse services is to ensure victims and their children can find safe accommodation, access service provision to support with accessing additional services where appropriate.
<b>Wards</b>	All

## **Background Papers**

Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance July 2022:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance>.

## **Report Sign Off**

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Lynsey Denyer obo Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllrs Guy Renner-Thompson & Wendy Pattison

## **Author and Contact Details**

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# **Northumberland County Council**

## **Family and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2022 - 2023**

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Chris Angus, Scrutiny Officer  
01670 622604 - [Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk)

23 January 2023 - CA

Agenda Item 10

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:

- Early Years
- Education and Schools
- Special education needs and disability
- Adult and Community Education
- Training and Vocational Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Youth Offending
- Social Services for Children and Young People
- Children's Health
- Teenage Sexual Health
- Looked After Children
- Safeguarding – Children
- Youth Services
- Family Services
- Children's Centres

(b) To oversee and monitor school improvement, as follows:

- (i) To receive feedback on the Ofsted inspection of schools.
- (ii) To support the work of the County Council and the progress of schools on the School Intervention and Support Programme in specified categories.
- (iii) To receive an annual report about the number of schools that have been on the School Intervention and Support Programme, the reason(s) for their inclusion, the support given by the Council and the success of this support.
- (iv) To receive an annual report on the performance of schools.

## ISSUES TO BE SCHEDULED/CONSIDERED

### **Regular updates:**

Safeguarding Activity Trends Report  
Finance and Performance Six Monthly Report  
Children Permanently Excluded from School/Elective Home Education  
Schools performance  
Joint Targeted Area Inspection

### **Issues to be raised:**

### **Themed Scrutiny:**

### **Issues to be scheduled:**

School Capital Investment  
Education (Guidance about the cost of School Uniforms) Act 2021

**Northumberland County Council  
Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme 2022 - 2023**

2 February 2023

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**Pre-Scrutiny:- School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2024/2025 Academic Year**

Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021-2022

Children who are Electively Home Educated (Summary and Guidance)

Social Work Workforce and Recruitment and Retention

Domestic Abuse

**This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/25 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2014. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.**

To present the education outcomes of Northumberland's looked after children for the academic year 2021 – 2022.

The report provides information about the increase in the number of children who are electively home educated, and the multi-agency support that is in place for families.

The purpose this is to provide Scrutiny with an update on the current domestic abuse multi-agency partnership arrangements and domestic abuse service.



2 March 2023		
	<p>Director of Education Annual Report: Key Educational Outcomes (2021-2022 Academic Year)</p> <p>Finance &amp; Performance</p> <p>Safeguarding Activity Trend</p>	<p>Annual report on the key educational outcomes of the previous academic year. The Committee will be asked to identify any further areas for scrutiny.</p> <p>To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference</p> <p>To provide analysis of social work activity trends and case allocation as well as highlighting national developments regarding the Department for Education safeguarding indicators.</p>
6 April 2023		
Page 135	<p>Annual Report of Principle Social Worker</p> <p>School Transport Review Outcome Options</p>	<p>To advise and update the Scrutiny Committee about the input and work of the Principal Social Worker in 2021/22 and an overview of the quality of practice and development needs of frontline social workers.</p> <p>To understand how the recommendations of the review will be implemented and to agree a timeframe for receiving further updates</p>

**Northumberland County Council**  
**Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2022-2023**

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1 Page 136	5 May 2022	<b>Informal Consultation on School Organisation for The Coquet Partnership</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 10 May, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
2	5 May 2022	<b>Update On Future Arrangements for The Delivery of Early Help Locality Services in Northumberland</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed changes to the current commissioning arrangements be agreed; and</li> <li>2. The temporary increase in expenditure during 2022/23, 2223/24 and 2024/25, which would be covered by the additional grant funding to be received over the same period from the Supporting Families programme and the Family Hub and Start for life Programmes be noted.</li> </ol>	No further action

3	26 May 2022	<b>Education Strategy Board Annual Update</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that it be noted that the Committee had reviewed the performance of the Board in its first year and its ability to review, develop and drive the Education and Skills key priorities	To continue to receive annual updates
4	26 May 2022	<b>The Impact of the School Improvement Team</b>	It was unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The performance of the team and their ability to develop the quality of education in Northumberland be noted;</li> <li>2. The changes to funding imposed by the DfE and the possible impact of service be noted;</li> <li>3. A further report be received once it was known how the reduced funding would be accounted for; and</li> <li>4. A recommendation be made to Cabinet for funding of the School Improvement Team to continue until the end of this Administration so that the team could continue to develop and offer support to schools both inside and outside of Northumberland</li> </ol>	A further report to be received at a later date
5	7 July 2022	<b>Send Strategy Progress Report</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted and the Committee supported the next steps to be taken.	To receive future updates
6	7 July 2022	<b>The Annual Report of Northumberland County Council</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted and the performance information for the	No further action

		<b>Fostering Service 2021/22</b>	period April 2021 – March 2022 be acknowledged.	
7	7 July 2022	<b>Briefing Note - Potential Multi Academy Trust Opportunity</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the briefing note be noted	No further action
8	8 September 2022	<b>Finance and Performance</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the current performance and how it compared to benchmarks was noted.	No further action
9	8 September 2022	<b>Outcomes of Consultation on Proposals for the Coquet Partnership</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 21 September, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
10	8 September 2022	<b>Children's Services Annual Representations 2021- 2022</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted.	No further action
11	8 September 2022	<b>Children's Social Care – Annual Self Assessment</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted	No further action
12	8 September 2022	<b>OFSTED Focused Visit to Northumberland Children's Services</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted	No further action
13	8 September 2022	<b>Proposal In Relation to Future Arrangements For The Youth Service</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that :-  1. The activity undertaken during the review be noted; and	No further action at this time

			2. Option 1, as outlined in the report, be agreed as the way forward.	
14	8 September 2022	<b>Family Hub Development</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee:-  1. Agree to proceed with the funding for the Family Hub offer; and  2. Support the development of the governance and wider processes to underpin this as outlined in the report.	No further action at this time
15	8 September 2022	<b>Support for Children and Young people with mental health needs in Northumberland</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report and the future plans be noted and the support now on offer for children and young people in Northumberland be recognised.	No further action
16	6 October 2022	<b>Regional Schools Director's Overview</b>		No further action
17	6 October 2022	<b>Outcomes of Consultation on Berwick Consultation</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 11 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
18	6 October 2022	<b>Supported Accommodation Tender</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report and asked that a report be brought back to the Committee at a future date	At its meeting on 11 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.

			outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers.	A report outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers to be brought back in 2023
29	6 October 2022	<b>The Northumberland Inclusion Strategy</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee welcomed the report and noted the content and detailed strategy along with the impact that the work undertaken within Children's Services and Schools has had on the lives of Northumberland children	More detail of figures in appendix 2 to be provided
20	6 October 2022	<b>Pegasus Centre Update</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information in the report be noted.	No further action
21 Page 140	3 November 2022	<b>Proposals for Coquet Partnership: Outcomes of statutory consultation and final decision</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 17 November, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
22	3 November 2022	<b>SEND Place Planning and Capacity Strategy</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cabinet be advised that this Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as outlined in the report; and</li> <li>2. A Task and Finish Working Group be established as outlined above.</li> </ul>	At its meeting on 17 November, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.

23	1 December 2022	<b>Care proceedings and Public Law Outline: Annual Report on progress</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted.	Report to return in 12 months
24	5 January 2023	<b>National Funding Formula and School Funding 2023/24</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that:  1. Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report; and 2. A report be provided to this Committee giving details of the Council's education funding position and comparator information in relation to other Local Authorities and members of the F40 Group.	At its meeting on 17 January, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.  A report on Council's education funding position and comparator information to be provided in the new municipal year.
Page 141	5 January 2023	<b>Update of School Organisation Plan 2021-24</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that:  1. The updating of School Organisation Plan 2021-24 to reflect changes to data and circumstances since July 2021 be noted; and 2. The updated School Organisation Plan 2021-24 be circulated to all schools, academies, Ward Councillors and would be published on the Council's website.	At its meeting on 17 January, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
26	5 January 2023	<b>Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report and responses to comments from the Committee be noted.	No further action

27	5 January 2023	<b>Review of Send Provision in Northumberland: Scoping Report</b>	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The terms of reference and scope of the review be agreed;</li> <li>2. The membership be agreed as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councillor R Dodd (Chair)</li> <li>Councillor C Ball</li> <li>Councillor A Dale</li> <li>Councillor M Swinbank</li> <li>Mr J Sanderson (Co-opted Member)</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The timetable for the review to be completed be agreed by the members; and</li> <li>4. The findings of the review be reported to Family and Children's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ol>	Task and Finish Group meeting dates to be confirmed
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