

Public Document Pack



Northumberland County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Lesley Little

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Tel direct: 01670 622614

Date: Wednesday, 22 February 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 MARCH 2023** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr Helen Paterson
Chief Executive

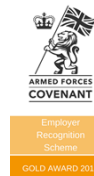
To Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee members as follows:-

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



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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

(Pages 1
- 6)

The minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Thursday 2 February 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. 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 - 16)

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 - ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT 2021/22** (Pages 17 - 42)

The annual report details the Education and Skills performance for Northumberland in the 2021/22 academic year and informs Members of the detailed work supporting schools undertaken by the Education and Skills team along with wider services. Comments made by this Committee will be reported to Cabinet when they consider the report on Tuesday 14 March 2023.
- 6. PERFORMANCE & FINANCE REPORT (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)** (Pages 43 - 56)

The report requests Members to consider current performance and the budgetary position as at December 2022 for services within the Committee's terms of reference.
- 7. SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY TRENDS AND BENCHMARKING REPORT** (Pages 57 - 70)

The report provides an analysis of trends within social work activity in responding to safeguarding concerns regarding Northumberland's children and young people; highlighting key indicators of performance, with comparisons to national and regional variations.
- 8. FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23** (Pages 71 - 82)

Members are asked to review and note the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report.
- 9. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency

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.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
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):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		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
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	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.
Contracts	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.
Land and Property	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.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	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.
Securities	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"> i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or 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.
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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)

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, 2 February 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

R Dodd (Vice-Chair) (in the Chair)

MEMBERS

C Ball
S Fairless-Aitken
M Swinburn

A Dale
M Richardson
A Watson

OTHER COUNCILLORS

G Renner-Thompson

OFFICERS

C Angus
S Aviston
M Connor
A Kingham
L Little
L Pyle

Scrutiny Officer
Head of School Organisation and Resources
Head of Service, Children's Social Care
Joint Interim Director of Children's Services
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Co-ordinator
Joint Interim Director of Children's Services
Deputy Director of Education
Head of Virtual School
Principal Education Welfare Officer

There was 1 member of the press and public present.

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors W Daley, C Dunbar and Mr A Hodgson.

65 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair commenced the meeting by reflecting on the tragic events that took place in Hexham on Friday 27 January when Holly Newton suffered fatal injuries following an incident in the town centre and a teenage boy also suffered serious

injuries. The incident had come as a complete shock to our community and thoughts were with the families and friends of all those touched by this. An extract of a statement which had been issued by Holly's family paying tribute to her was also read out. The Council had been working closely with Northumbria Police and other organisations to provide all the help it could and wellbeing support currently being provided for both staff and students at Queen Elizabeth High School would continue to ensure that all were fully supported during this upsetting time. Members were reminded that as there was an active ongoing police investigation there should be no further comment or discussion on this during the meeting.

66 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on Thursday 5 January 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair with the following amendment noted:

Page 6 – the membership of the SEND Review Task and Finish Group should read Councillor M Swinburn and not M Swinbank.

Clarification would be sought on the timescale for revision of the Northumberland Local Plan.

67 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

68 **CABINET REPORT - SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR THE 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR**

S Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources provided an introduction to the Cabinet report which advised of the outcomes of the consultation on school admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2024/25 academic year.

It was clarified that suspected fraudulent applications would be initially investigated by the Admissions Team then passed to the Fraud Team if found necessary, however those numbers were low. The change to the catchment areas for Broomhill First School and Felton Primary School was a minor amendment and those involved had been consulted. A full scale consultation for all catchment areas was undertaken every seven years. A sibling link formed part of the application criteria and there was no plan to move this further up the list at the current time. There was an appeals process in which an independent panel would listen to any concerns from parents whose child had been refused a place at their chosen school with the panel making the final decision.

Due to the reducing birth rate there was an ongoing process to reduce the number of planned admissions to schools, however there were no school closures proposed at the current time.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

69 VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022

An introduction to the report was provided by J Walker, Virtual School Headteacher, with Councillor Renner-Thompson, Portfolio Holder, specifically highlighting the work being undertaken in relation to employability opportunities for looked after children and care leavers which supported the Council's priority of providing employment opportunities for local people.

In relation to persistent absences Members were advised that numbers were higher across all groups at the current time, but it was a particular problem for a group of school aged looked after children who had difficulty engaging in school for a number of reasons. The numbers had increased as schools struggled to deal with the diverse needs of all children, with the complex needs of some looked after children not able to be met in mainstream education, and alternative provision required to be found. The Education Committee had just commissioned a review into persistent absences across the Country and it was hoped that this would include those of looked after children. Additional support for looked after children was also provided by the Education Welfare Team and it was known that persistent absentees were safe when not in school.

Members requested additional information and feedback be provided on the headline content of the report and this would be taken on board for next year's report. It was clarified that the School Improvement Plan which was available on line provided full details of what the improvement priorities were and how these would be achieved.

In terms of looked after children with SEND or EHCPs, Northumberland always had a lower than national figure however numbers were rising and due to Covid and the lack of professional contact with children during that time, early identification of needs had been impacted with some catch up now being required. It was confirmed that work was undertaken with pre-school children and all looked after children were in the early years passport system so that all information was known and support systems in place for each child starting school. It was known that some did not engage in pre-school provision, however the service worked with foster carers etc to ensure that a child was school ready and was proactive in trying to close the gap.

In respect of absence trends nationally, no data had been provided as there had been no figures for the last three years. This information had been included in previous reports and would be included in the future. Through the National Association of Virtual School Headteachers regular meetings were held and good practice shared, the Association also had good links with Ofsted.

RESOLVED that the educational achievements of Northumberland's looked after children and care leavers and ongoing challenges caused by the disruption to education during the pandemic be noted.

A Kingham left the meeting at this point and the Chair and Committee offered their congratulations on her appointment as the permanent Executive Director for Children, Young People and Education.

70 CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL

An introduction to the report was provided by J Walker, Virtual School Headteacher who advised that whilst school attendance within Northumberland was improving this had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. The implementation of new Department for Education guidance would introduce compulsory electronic registration and give access to live data. A multi-agency approach was used to identify persistent absentees, the reasons for absence and how to get these pupils back into education. The number of elective home educated rose during the pandemic, however these numbers had stabilised but were still high. More support for home schooled pupils sitting GCSEs would be welcomed along with strengthened powers to ensure that all pupils had to be seen as part of the yearly review. A significant number of previously home educated pupils had gone on to further education colleges or school sixth forms.

In response to concerns raised by members regarding deprivation being a reason for absence, it was agreed that this was a challenge due to the volume. Multi-agency arrangements were in place to safeguard children who were not in school and at risk of missing out on a full time education, however one difficulty in identifying deprivation as a reason for absence was that families often did not like to share this type of information. It was considered that school absence due to deprivation should be raised within the Inequalities Working Group. Members were advised that there was not a consistent reason for pupils to come off school rolls, however once this happened then legislation only allowed for one visit to be made per year and this did not need to involve the child or allow access to the house and more regulation would help with this. Whilst it would be known if a child removed from a school roll had any SEND requirements, if a child moved into the County, had never been on a school roll, or was diagnosed as having SEND after being removed from a school, then these would only be known if the parent advised of these.

Members agreed that a breakdown of the data was required in order to identify those being electively home educated due to not being able to afford to attend school.

RESOLVED that:

1. The update on safeguarding arrangements for children who were not in school were noted;
2. The continued impact of Covid 19 on the number of children not in school and the potential implications of this on education outcomes be noted;
3. The implications of changes to legislation relating to children not in school be noted;
4. The identification and number of pupils being electively home educated due to deprivation be established and a report on this to be prepared for the Inequalities Working Group.

71 SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

M. Connor, Head of Service, Children's Social Care provided an introduction to the report advising that the recruitment and retention of social workers remained a national issue. In response to the consultation by Josh McAllister and in acknowledging the challenge, an announcement had been made by Government that more investment in social worker apprenticeships was to be provided and the use of agency staff looked at. It was stressed that authorities in the North East had tried to work together in respect of rates of pay and use of agency staff, however a national solution was required.

Members thanked the staff for the fantastic job they did under the pressures they were facing and in recognising the success of the ASYE Academy questioned what was being done to attract 16 year olds into social work and if there was potential for the academy route for this age group. Also whether the setting up of an in-house or North East Agency was feasible which would allow flexibility for staff to prevent money leaking out of the Authority. In response M Connor advised that there was a need to make social work a career of choice and they were working with the Learning and Development Team on this. There were opportunities for apprenticeships which allowed staff from different roles to be supported through degrees and more discussions were required on how to grow our own model and get people to commit to Northumberland. There was a staff bank which semi-retired social workers could sign up to. The creation of a Regional Agency had been discussed however there were significant challenges and legalities involved in this not least not wanting to disadvantage permanent staff members.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

72 DOMESTIC ABUSE

An introduction to the report which gave an update on the current domestic abuse multi-agency partnership arrangements and domestic abuse service provision to ensure the Council met the requirements of the statutory duties within section 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was provided by L Pyle, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Lead.

Members welcomed the amazing work being undertaken and questioned if more training should be provided to Councillors and Staff on recognising domestic abuse. It was suggested that a presentation could be made to the Local Area Councils on what services were on offer and how these could be accessed and also the signs and triggers to identify abuse and this information be publicised. Members were advised that this report was going to a range of Committees and discussions would be held with the Portfolio Holder to see what could be organised.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the request for a presentation at Local Area Councils and publicity be actioned.

**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 Northumberland College would be attending in March and in April the School Transport Review report would be presented.

Councillor Fairless-Aitken asked if a report could be provided on the procedures and policy for children accessing counselling and support services. Councillor Swinburn questioned when the report on school uniforms which was on the items to be listed would be put before the Committee and was advised that this would be raised with S Aviston and A Kingham.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

Forward Plan

FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS FEBRUARY TO MAY 2023

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p>30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account 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>Alternative Provision to Support Children Permanently Excluded from School 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>FACS OSC 2 Feb 2023</p>	<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p>Berwick Theatre Revised Outline Business Case 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>Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 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 Council 22 February 2022</p>
<p>Council Response to the Independent Review of its Cultural Investment Portfolio 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>Council Response to the Report of the Independent Future of Farming in Northumberland Inquiry 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>Council Tax Discretionary Discount and Council Tax Hardship Schemes 2023-24 The report proposes a Council Tax Discretionary Discount</p>	<p>CSEG OSC 13 February 2023</p>	<p>14 February 2023 Council 22 February 2023</p>

<p>Scheme and Council Tax Hardship Schemes for financial year 2023-24. (R. Wearmouth/Alison Elsdon 07796 652072)</p>		
<p>Energising Blyth: Energy Central Campus Governance Arrangements Update 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>Northumberland Stewardship and Rural Growth Investment Programme 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>Revenues and Benefits Policies for 2023/24 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 Council 22 February 2022</p>
<p>School Admission Arrangements for Community and</p>	<p>FACS OSC 9 February 2023</p>	<p>14 February 2023</p>

<p>Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/2025 Academic Year 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. (G. Renner Thompson/S. Aviston – 07770934182)</p>		
<p>Director of Education Final Report 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>FACS OSC 2 March 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p>Energising Blyth – Strategic Sites Strategy The report will provide an update on key acquisitions to support delivery of capital developments in Blyth as part of the Future High Street and Town Deal Funded Energising Blyth Programme (Confidential report) (W.Ploszaj/ M.Turner - 07810 756551)</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022 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>Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022 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>Market Sustainability Plan for adult social care To seek approval for the Market Sustainability Plan which the Council is required to submit to the Department of Health and Social Care as a grant condition. (W. Pattison/S. Corlett – 01670 623637)</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing OSC 7 March 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p>Permission to Award the Integrated Sexual Health Contract To seek permission from Cabinet to award the contract of Integrated Sexual Health Service in Northumberland. This service will be commissioned using the public health ring fenced grant. The grant conditions state that Local Authorities must provide sexual health services for its population. The contract is for 4 years. (W. Pattison/ John Liddell - 07929 775559)</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>
<p>School Transport Review Outcome Options At SLT on 1st 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</p>	<p>FACS OSC 6 April 2023</p>	<p>14 March 2023</p>

<p>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-up funding from the Council Transformation Fund (G. Renner Thompson/N. Dorward – 07811 020 806)</p>		
<p>The Link (Bridge Street Improvements) 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)</p>		14 March 2023
<p>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022 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</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 March 2022</p>	14 March 2023
<p>Update of Transport Asset Management Plan Policy and Strategy To seek Cabinet approval for the updated Transport Asset Management Plan, Policy and Strategy following it's periodic review, to take account of continued developments in asset management approaches and best practice including an</p>	TBC	14 March 2023

<p>increasing focus on the impact of climate change and prioritisation of active travel and minor amendments to the resilient road network. (J. Riddle/D. Laux - 01670 623763)</p>		
<p>Update on projects funded from the Public Health ring-fenced grant reserve to improve health and reduce health inequalities This report updates on the progress of projects previously approved by Cabinet to receive investment from the ring-fenced public health grant reserve for public health interventions to improve health and reduce health inequalities, for Cabinet to note the progress of the nine projects with approved investment from the ring-fenced public health grant reserve (W. Pattison/J. Brown - 07796 312409)</p>		14 March 2023
<p>Governance of Council Companies The purpose of this report is to propose the adoption of strengthened Governance arrangements in relation to the Council's companies and the relationship between the Council and those companies. The proposals address recommendations of the Caller Independent Governance Review to provide the foundation for decision making and the development of a comprehensive company governance framework for companies wholly or partly owned by Northumberland County Council (NCC). (G. Sanderson/Suki Binjal - 07592269310)</p>	TBC	11 April 2023
<p>Leisure Programme Update To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)</p>	OSC TBC	11 April 2023

<p>Service Charges in Sheltered Accommodation 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)</p>		11 April 2023
<p>Social Housing Regulations Bill To inform members of the impending Social Housing Regulations Bill and the implications that has for housing, in particular the introduction of a regulatory regime. (C. Horncastle/ S. Ogle 07976 851270)</p>		11 April 2023
<p>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of March 2023 (Provisional Outturn) 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)</p>	N/A	9 May 2023
<p>Outcomes of Phase 2 Consultation about Education in Berwick Partnership 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)</p>	TBC	9 May 2023

Leisure Programme Update To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)	TBC	12 December 2023
Leisure Programme Update To update Cabinet with progress on the Leisure programme (J. Watson/M. Donnelly 07517 553463)	TBC	9 April 2024

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Northumberland County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE / CABINET

2ND MARCH 2023 / 14TH MARCH 2023

Annual Education Report 2021/2022

Report of Cabinet Member: Guy Renner Thompson, Lead Member for Children's Services
Joint Interim Director of Children's Services, Audrey Kingham

Purpose of Report

The annual report for Members details the Education and Skills performance for Northumberland in the 2021/22 academic year and informs Members of the detailed work supporting Schools and Skills undertaken by the Education and Skills team along with wider services.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Note the education achievements of our children, young people and residents across Northumberland in 2021/22 and the ongoing challenges as a legacy from the pandemic.
- 2) Agree that Members provide scrutiny and challenge to the service responses and developments detailed in the report as appropriate.
- 3) Agree that Members receive and review the [digital annual report](#) and recognise the performance given the continued challenges of the global pandemic and the valuable support provided to all learners within:
 - Early Years Settings and Schools
 - Special Education Needs support and service
 - Virtual School
 - Learning and Skills Service including Careers Guidance Team and Employability and Skills Service
 - School Organisation and Resources
 - Performance monitoring Team and wider supporting services

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.

The key priorities of tackling inequalities, growth and value for money also focus on different aspects of the annual report and contribute to the work of Northumberland County Councils Inequalities Action Plan.

Key Issues

1. The annual report for Education and Skills is presented to the committee as a written report and is supported by an additional digitally optimised report which provides viewers with a visual overview of the performance in the 2021/22 academic year and considers the impact of the work undertaken for our children, young people and residents.
2. In 2022 external assessments and examinations returned and whilst a direct comparison to previous years should not be taken, national averages have been compared to 2019 to re establish a base line. We are counting 2022 as year zero for performance reporting.
3. Partnership working with schools continues to improve. The support and guidance from the wider Education and Skills team and support partners (Public Health, Health and Safety (H&S) and HR for Schools) is widely valued. It is worth noting that is not just relative to Covid support, 2021/2022 in terms of wider support was much more business as usual – not least with Storm Arwen and damage and closure of 48 schools in the immediate time after the storm
4. The embraced digital world has continued to provide the support for children who are absent from school and more than often now children will access more work remotely when absent but also including school messaging, homework and reporting. Access to high quality broadband as well as the kit to develop skills has continued to be supported to narrow inequalities in 2021/22.
5. The approach by the Inclusive Education service and the School Organisation Team has become even more focused and an important priority to be able to work across services supporting children in our schools. The challenges faced by some children and families are still evolving as a result of the pandemic legacy and wider services including health and care are continually adapting their work with education to support needs.
6. In March 2022 Ofsted undertook a pilot test and learn inspection in Northumberland. As a result of the work identified in the previous inspection and the distance travelled, the approach was agreed and Northumberland made a significant contribution to the shaping of the new Area SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Inspection Framework.
7. The Northumberland Skills portfolio continues to evolve to meet the priorities for the North of Tyne Combined Authority and the economic priorities and sectors in Northumberland whereby more residents are supported into employment and greater in work progression. In 2021/22 the development of provision to support those pupils at risk of becoming Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) became ever more pressing. Education development works hand in hand to identify the opportunities and partnerships to extend the breadth of offer. Northumberland

Skills provides a wider wrap around pastoral programme to support young people with their transition to support successful outcomes and to prepare them to access Further Education and succeed well.

8. In addition to school routines in 2022 the war in Ukraine and the impact upon children and families led to many families relocating to Northumberland and accessing school places and provision. 221 applications were received and all processed within the expected 15 days.
9. The priorities for Education and Skills across Northumberland were clearly set out for September 2020. The sector led Education Strategy Board has worked on the key themes and contributes significantly to the performance reported in this annual report for all to review. The summer term of 2022 academic year produced a new set of priorities focusing on the areas that are a foci for the county across the next two academic years.

Background

1. The Annual Report 2021/2022 shares with you the significant levels of resilience that our children and young people as well as our workforce have shown throughout the year. Our schools, skills and college have adapted learning environments to be able to support many of our children and young people's needs as we live and work within the shadow and legacy of the pandemic years.
2. The impact of the pandemic on children and their families has proved to be significant. Adaptations have been necessary not just because many pupils have missed out on learning, but also because many have missed out socially, got out of the routine of coming to school or are struggling with their mental health, very simply, more of our young people are struggling in education.
3. We know that many children find a school environment challenging and the work in schools supported by Northumberland Education and Skills team is significant to support continuing the education journey. Whilst many children are enjoying their journey and progress very well, the extent of the work to close gaps is still a challenge, especially for disadvantaged pupils who continue to attain below their peers.
4. The work of the School Improvement Team across Northumberland schools will continue to target school-specific areas in each school, and disadvantaged pupils specifically. They will work with Headteachers, all staff in school, and governors to achieve this and raise the levels of attainment and progress at each key stage even further.
5. It is important to remember that in 2021/2022 academic year the county like the nation was still living with Covid 19 and disruption certainly in the first half of the year was as likely as previous years. In Skills new variants of Covid 19 impacted upon particular student groups, more at risk than their peers and this interrupted learning in the first academic term.
6. The year has certainly focused on living with covid 19 in Education and Skills and has really shown the capabilities and adaptabilities of the workforce who have managed to maintain a whole system approach with another year of examination changes and supported our children and young people for assessments and examinations and positioned them to transition to the next stage of learning, university or employment with more of our young people moving to Universities of their first choice and to Russell group Universities.
7. Working with our schools and partners to support the ambition, transition and development of all of our children, young people and residents to their next stage of education, employment and life with all of the challenges that cross their paths is a privileged role that is embraced and celebrated by the whole workforce. The resilience of this workforce has again been tested. Northumberland is not alone with challenges faced, as a legacy of Covid 19, when recruiting to any management and leadership roles across the whole infrastructure for Education and Skills.

Academic Year 2021/22

8. Early Years and Key Stages

- 8.1 The quality of early years provision in Northumberland is excellent. 98% of early years providers were rated Good or Outstanding at Summer 2022.
- 8.2 Early Years settings value the support of the Early Years Team to maintain high quality early years provision with 81% of Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) group settings subscribing to Service Level Agreement (SLA) services to access training and consultancy support.
- 8.3 The take up of 2-year-old provision is outstanding. 93% of all eligible 2 year olds took up their statutory entitlement to early education in the summer term 2022. Such impressive levels of take up were seen across the 2021/22 year and were consistently better than the National Average of 72%.
- 8.4 The take up of funded entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds is exceptional with 100% of 3 and 4 year old's taking up their early education entitlements and on top of that Northumberland has supported children from out of the county. This compares with 92% nationally in the year 2021-2022.
- 8.5 The percentage of children with SEND in Northumberland achieving a Good Level of Development in Summer 2022 was 20.3% compared to 18.8% nationally.
- 8.6 The number of early years providers delivering funded entitlements remained stable in 2021-22 despite well reported challenges around staffing, recruitment and retention following the COVID pandemic. As such, we continue to have no gaps in sufficiency.
- 8.7 Early Years Foundation Stage - Outcomes for children at the end of their EYFS are positive, with 67.5% achieving a Good Level of Development, compared with 65.2% nationally in Summer 2022.
- 8.8 Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) returned in 2022, after the cancellation of the 2020 and 2021 tests due to coronavirus. Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on different students and schools, this data should be treated with caution. Comparisons with previous years are somewhat futile, but historic data has been used to try and provide some benchmarks.
- 8.9 Nationally results fell to the lowest levels since 2016. This trend was replicated in Northumberland.
- 8.10 54.2% of Northumberland pupils achieved the expected standard in Reading, Writing and maths, 5% below the national average.
- 8.11 Reading fell by 2.4% compared to 2019 (1.3% increase nationally), but writing fell by 12.8% (10.3% decrease nationally) and maths by 11.8% (7.3% decrease nationally)
- 8.12 Key Stage 4: External examinations returned in 2022 for the first time since 2019. Teacher and centre assessed grades were used during the pandemic. Nationally, it was determined that grades would, overall, fall roughly halfway between 2019 and 2021. Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on different students and schools, this data should be treated with caution.

8.13 Attainment 8: Pre-pandemic Attainment 8 scores in Northumberland were improving more quickly than nationally. That rate of improvement has slowed; Northumberland achieved 46.6 (2.3 behind the national average)

8.14 Progress 8:

- The Northumberland average score is - 0.23
- The North East region average score is - 0.27
- The England average score is - 0.03
- Only 1 region nationally achieved a positive score (London)

8.15 English and Maths:

- English and Maths at 4+ (4+ is deemed to be a standard pass) and 5+ (which is a strong pass) were above the national average in 2019. Outcomes have continued to improve in 2022 but sit slightly behind the national average in 2022.
- English & Maths 4+ 66.3% (2.7% below the national average)
- English & Maths 5+ 45.7% (2.2% below the national average)

8.16 Key Stage 5:

External examinations returned in 2022 for the first time since 2019. Teacher and centre assessed grades were used during the pandemic. Nationally, it was determined that grades would, overall, fall roughly halfway between 2019 and 2021. Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on different students and schools, this data should be treated with caution.

8.17 Over 1200 pupils sat A levels, achieving an average grade of B, an improvement on 2019.

8.18 415 pupils sat Applied General Qualifications, achieving an average grade of a Distinction, an improvement on 2019.

8.19 Over 65% (600 pupils) secured a place at their first-choice university, including around 400 going to Russell Group universities, again an improvement on 2019.

9. Inspection Outcomes

9.1 Ofsted inspections returned to normal from May 2021. Between May 2021 and July 2022:

- Six schools that are Inadequate/Requires Improvement were judged to be “Taking Effective Action”
- Two schools moved from Inadequate to Requires Improvement
- Five Requires Improvement schools moved to Good
- One Good school moved to Requires Improvement (but was judged to be Taking Effective Action in July 2022)
- Thirteen Good schools retained their Good rating
- Five schools that had not been inspected since academisation were judged to be Good
- Two Good schools moved to Outstanding
- Two Outstanding schools were judged to be Good
- One Outstanding school retained its Outstanding rating

9.2 The hard work of school leaders, supported by the Local Authority School Improvement Team, means that inspection outcomes were at the highest they had ever been in July 2022.

10. Northumberland Inclusive Education Services

10.1 The Northumberland Inclusive Education Service (NIES) continued the delivery of a full face to face offer in September 2021, enhanced by the new ways of working developed during the COVID pandemic.

10.2 The Service has expanded and adapted in many ways. Some areas have seen staff increases, with new staff having been quickly and successfully inducted and have added both capacity and a wealth of experience to their new teams.

10.3 Our teams have remained well connected with colleagues on a regional and national basis over the past year to ensure that we have opportunities to share best practice and keep abreast of new developments in the different specialist fields.

10.4 This service demand has exceeded capacity in some teams as the year has progressed leading to some longer than optimal waiting times for support. To provide immediate guidance a consultation line was opened in June 2022 for schools seeking support.

10.5 427 new Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) for children and young people with special educational needs were completed in the 2021/22 school year compared to 288 in the previous school year. 68% were completed in time scale





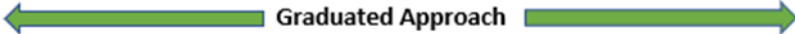
compared to 92% in the previous period. This compares to a national average of 58%.

10.6 Joint working with parents, carers and colleagues in all settings has supported the development and launch of the Northumberland Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance document in September 2022. The document promotes Northumberland's vision that learners with SEND have the best start in life and are supported, through highly effective and inclusive educational provision, to attend settings as close to home as possible.

10.7 Actions and Impact:

- There has been a 44.6% increase in referrals for support for individual learners and an increase in the complexity of the challenges faced by them.
- 76% of the younger pupils and 97% of older pupils indicated that the support that they had received from the High Incidence Needs Team (HINT) staff had helped them.
- 99% of the parent/carers completing a service evaluation indicated that the support that their child had received from the Low Incidence Needs Team (LINT) staff had made a significant difference at home, particularly during the lockdown periods.
- The teams have delivered an extensive training programme. In 92 schools, 126 courses have been delivered and 1677 delegates reached.
- The Whole Education Project on school self-evaluation and improvement from a SEND perspective now has 69 schools working in partnership across the County.
- Additionally, the teams have seen an increase of 98% in the requests for advice to contribute towards statutory assessments.
- Over 150 delegates attended the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) Conference 2022, held at Linden Hall Hotel on 1st July. The focus for the event was on Preparing for Adulthood, with keynotes and workshops running throughout the day.

10.8 The diagram below shows how we expect to provide the right service for the right families, following the principle that the further to the right, the greater the likelihood that families will also need the support of health and social care services, in addition to those received from schools and the local authority education department.

			Highly personalised support	EHCP
		Personalised support	Personalised support	SEN Support
	Targeted support	Targeted support	Targeted support	
Universal support	Universal support	Universal support	Universal support	Ordinarily available provision
				
<u>All</u> children and young people	<u>Some</u> children and young people	<u>A few</u> children and young people	<u>Very few</u> children and young people	
 Graduated Approach				

11. School Organisation and Resources

- 11.1 £37.9m has been invested and finalised in 2021 in new build schools for Hexham Middle and Queen Elizabeth High Schools which was a combination of refurbishment of a grade 2 listed building together with new building teaching blocks and enhanced sporting facilities which included a 3G pitch, an all weather hockey pitch, and 6 court sports.
- 11.2 The excellent work of the team that delivered the project has also been recognised nationally with the project voted as education project of the year for 2022. This has been a significant achievement for everyone involved as the whole project was delivered during the pandemic.
- 11.3 Atkinson House SEN School relocated into the former Richard Coates Primary School Site, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The project created a 100 place 11-18 co-educational SEND school with a primary designation of SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health). The works included refurbishment of the internal fabric of the building and some internal remodelling to create the required range of teaching and ancillary spaces to service the needs of the pupils and staff – including an upgrade to some aspects of the mechanical and electrical (M&E) services. The main car park was remodelled to facilitate the safe access and egress of the pupils and provide the required amount of staff car parking. In addition, there were works to the site boundaries to ensure appropriate levels of safeguarding were put in place along with landscaping works to provide external play and social spaces for the pupils. The school was renamed the Emily Wilding Davison SEN School.



11.4 The School Capital Improvement Programme has continued through the year and between September 2021 and September 2022 has seen 13 projects completed on site, with a combined value of approximately £1.3 million. Geographically, these projects have ranged from Berwick in the North, to Slaley in the West and to Holywell in the South East, and have undertaken a range of works including replacing and upgrading roofs, upgrading heating systems and replacing existing lighting with new energy saving light-emitting diode (LED) systems. As well as maintaining the school estate, these projects seek to reduce operating costs for the schools and help the Council in achieving its climate change objectives.

11.5 The Outline Business Case (OBC) for Astley High/Whytrig Middle School was approved by Cabinet and a large amount of work was undertaken to develop the designs in readiness of a Planning application with detailed design and construction to follow soon after. Work also began to develop the OBC for James Calvert Spence College to explore the options for refurbishment or a complete rebuild of the school.



Astley High/Whytrig Middle Schools 1

- 11.6 Children and young people at risk of exclusion and those with SEMH needs require consistency, positive relationships with adults, structure and boundaries. Whilst now in place more consistently, there remains some lasting impact of COVID measures on young people in Northumberland
- 11.7 Data released by the government in July 2022 for the academic year 2020-21 demonstrates that, nationally, children and young people identified as receiving SEN support are five times more likely to be permanently excluded or suspended. Those with EHC plans were twice as likely to be suspended or excluded.
- 11.8 A disproportionate number of children with SEMH needs come from challenging home environments where the pressures of the pandemic would have been exacerbated e.g., financial worries, cramped living conditions, domestic violence etc. This would contribute to an escalation in stress/anxiety often manifesting in poor behaviour.
- 11.9 For several months, external professionals were unable to visit schools/homes. Young people/families often rely on this intervention to support them in making better choices.
- 11.10 Due to the regulations re: self-isolation, schools were required to rely heavily on supply teachers/cover supervisors. All children, but particularly those with SEMH, respond better to staff they have developed relationships with. It is widely acknowledged that supply teachers experience more challenging behaviour in lessons leading to more serious incidents that escalate to fixed term exclusions (FTEs) or Suspensions.
- 11.11 FTE's rose sharply in the last half of the 2021/22 academic year; this could be attributed to increased child anxiety linked to their needs and to continued challenges to staff resilience within schools. Everyone has been affected by the pandemic and it has been an extremely challenging period for schools, ensuring that they follow regulations in order to keep everyone safe.

11.12 Table of fixed term and permanent exclusions 2021/22 (from 2014/15)

	Permanent Exclusions			Fixed Term Exclusions		
	Total	EHCP	SEN Support	Total	EHCP	SEN Support
2014/15	44	4	16	1599	143	355
2015/16	41	0	26	1270	221	704
2016/17	75	3	39	1967	133	767
2017/18	115	6	53	4514	291	1347
2018/19	83	4	23	3490	180	769
2019/20	50	0	12	1696	112	391
2020/21	44	0	11	2144	172	642
2021/22	94	1	56	4027	372	1100

11.13 Since Jan 2021-July 2022, the team have worked with 249 children at risk of permanent exclusion. Only 29 of those pupils actually went on to be excluded meaning that 88% of those referred have remained in mainstream education.

11.14 Previously only an average of 1 in 5 managed moves were successful but this year, of the 29 completed moves, 19 have been successful and 10 have been unsuccessful; the success rate has more than tripled from 20% to 65%.

11.15 The Inclusion Panel launched in Sept 2022-this panel considers all referrals into the PRU, Alternative Provision (AP) and Primary Support Bases.

- 85% of the 2021/22 Year 11 Permanent Exclusion (PEX) cohort achieved a qualification in English
- 79% of the 2021/22 Year 11 PEX cohort achieved a qualification in Maths
- 83% of the 2021/22 Year 11 PEX are currently in EET (education, employment, training)
- Number of PEX learners in AP Sept 2021=70
- Number of PEX learners in AP Sept 2022=112

11.16 School admissions:

- Primary=97.3% of children were allocated their first choice Primary school, 5% better than the national average.
- Secondary=97.2% of children were allocated their first choice Secondary school, 14% better than the national average.
- 2172 'in year' applications were processed within 2021/22
- Between Apr 2022 and Aug 2022 the team have processed 221 applications for Ukrainian children, all of which were allocated within 15 school days.
- The portal trial was successfully rolled out enabling other Admission Authorities to access their applications and carry out their ranking electronically

11.17 The School Organisation team continue to support families across the county through the HUGGG voucher scheme for school holidays. From December 2020 to May 2022, 97,143 vouchers were issued valuing £4.3m+ and with a redemption rate of 95%. The vouchers have been used to provide uniforms and food during school holiday periods.

11.18 School Funding and the National Funding Formula –Rural Schools within Northumberland received a £700,000 boost to their budgets with sparsity funding being increased by Department for Education. This increase has previously been strongly supported by Northumberland's Schools' Forum.

11.19 Progress towards the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) for schools continued with the Council classified as a local authority which "mirrors the NFF in most factors". Only the Mobility Factor, newly introduced into Northumberland's formula for 2022/23 is different to the national factors. Despite the many financial pressures faced by Schools and Services alike, Schools' Forum was informed in July 2022 that the previous high needs deficit had now been eliminated, and of an overall balanced Dedicated Schools Grant position.

11.20 The Services to Schools SLA portal was responsible for agreeing over £6 million of services to support Schools across the whole Council, from premises to various other professional services including a range of services from Education and Skills.

11.21 Homes for Ukraine Funding distribution to Schools - To support schools receiving students from the Ukraine, payments of £147,000 were made of DfE funds

specifically targeted to families arriving under the Home for Ukraine visa scheme. Further payments will be made for the Autumn 2022 and Spring 2023 terms.

12. Northumberland Skills and Employability

- 12.1 There were 1097 enrolments onto programmes across eight campuses in 2021-22 for adult learners and 120 enrolments for young people aged 16-18 with the largest majority (89.1%) of enrolments being adult learning.
- 12.2 Overall achievement rates across the whole Service [exc Apprenticeships] for 2021-22 were 91.9%.
- 12.3 Apprenticeship recruitment continues to remain a challenge in 2021-22, with vacancies in many advertised apprenticeships not being filled from the local & regional labour markets. Northumberland skills continues to provide training models through apprenticeships in various vocational sectors and have availability in various roles across the county to work directly with internal (NCC) and external employer (Northeast employers)
- 12.4 2021-22, another year of disruption and change and without a return to a more typical training and skills environment. Northumberland Skills self-assessment grade the service as GOOD, in terms of Ofsted gradings for 2021-22.
- 12.5 The achievement rate excluding English and mathematics is 94.6% which is an increase of 1.6% from 2020/21 and is above the National Rate of 93.6%. Pass rates for learners with an EHCP is outstanding at 100% (learning continued on site throughout various restrictions and therefore experienced less disruption)
- 12.6 Adult Learning for those aged over 19 years forms the largest majority of the service and remains as a GOOD performance with an achievement rate overall of 94.1% which is an increase of 10.1% from 2020/21.
- 12.7 Achievement stabilised in 2021-22, showing a small decline against standard National Rates. Covid19 is still showing an historical impact on withdrawal numbers, in particular this can be attributed to learners who were disproportionately affected by new Covid 19 variants and with risk assessment undertook much more remote learning. As English as a second language is really challenging without face to face engagement, building trust. Some learners left the programme in the first term of the academic year.
- 12.8 Given the legacy challenges to ensure learners remained on programme, engaged and making good progress throughout the Omicron phase of the pandemic the achievement rate is reassuring.
- 12.9 Apprenticeship End Point Assessment achievement remains positive with a high number of apprenticeships achieving Distinction grades at the end of their programme of training.
- 12.10 Learner Voice surveys - (Student feedback) demonstrate positive examples of good practice and positive outcome data.
- 12.11 Learner's attitudes to their education are positive and have been shown to have improved over time. Behaviour and attitudes of learners is good, with learners

demonstrating effective behaviours for learning supporting what we know to be the expectations of employers.

- 12.12 The Employability and Skills Service has continued to work throughout the pandemic restrictions and challenges and the service has grown in response to resident's needs. There is an increased offer of employment-focussed programmes to respond directly to the expected high rise in unemployment.
- 12.13 The team delivered 4 employment programmes supporting approximately 750 residents across the various programmes – The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) JETS Programme (job entry targeted support), DWP Restart Scheme and DWP Building Better Opportunities, along with a new programme funded by NCC's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Unit. All DWP programmes continue to perform well regionally, and many residents have been supported into training and sustainable employment, along with support for health and wellbeing, financial inclusion etc.
- 12.14 The new Refugee and Asylum Seeker support programme helped 51 people in its first year and 25 residents have already gone into meaningful employment helping to maintain the skills of the individuals, and in turn helping them to integrate into their host community. An Employment Adviser works in partnership with the Refugee and Asylum Seeker support team, Northumberland Skills English as a Second Language (ESOL) team and internal colleagues to ensure that the groups needs are met by helping them to access help and services to gain English qualifications, improve their confidence to help them to navigate the UK jobs market and into employment that can sustain them and enable them to thrive
- 12.15 The DWP Jets (Job entry targeted support) Programme continued, delivered with Reed in Partnership, as a remote digital employment support programme, that was started at the height of the pandemic. Referrals are from Job Centres across Northumberland and participants are newly unemployed. The programme will cease in March 2023. The speed with which DWP awarded the JETS contracts to established employability providers allowed for a rapid response to an emerging situation. As a result, participants received fast and much needed support at an unprecedented and uncertain time. Delivery of services to existing participants will continue until April next year, when the statistics of the JETS legacy will no doubt speak for themselves.
- 12.16 Learners excel in an environment in which they feel safe because staff and learners do not accept bullying, harassment or discrimination. Attendance remained strong across all curriculum areas whilst engagement posed some challenges during restrictions. Engagement was closely monitored throughout restrictions and all campuses remained well managed to be COVID-19 safe learning environments.
- 12.17 The Service continues to be well positioned to respond particularly to North of Tyne Inclusive Growth projects where the prime aims are to support residents into gaps,

reduce inequality and disadvantage gaps and to support progression into employment as well as in work progression through training.

12.18 An independent survey carried out by J2research in August 2022 focused on all learners from 2021-22 cohort returned the following:

- 92.4% of former learners stated that it helped them achieve their principal reason or motivation for attending the course
- 100% of former learners achieved their motivations of:
 - Becoming more active in the community
 - Progressing onto another course afterwards
 - 96.2% of former learners achieved their motivation of hobby and interest
 - 95.8% of former learners achieved their motivation of upskilling for their current or future career
- Former learners were asked questions in relation to the impact of the course and the time they spent learning:
 - 90.1% agreed that their course helped keep themselves physically and mentally well
 - 86.1% agreed that their course helped them pursue their goals and ambitions
 - 82.6% agreed that their course helped them socialise, work and communicate with others

12.19 Learners receive good links to industry throughout all curriculum areas, leading to the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours required to progress into high-quality destinations. The links are provided by staff and with business engagement being strengthened this year but with a recognition that even more engagement will benefit more of the study programme development.

12.20 At July 2022 NEET (including unknown) was 5.0% in Northumberland compared to the all-England figure of 5.2 %, a continuing focus for future improvement.

12.21 At July 2022 SEND NEET (including unknown) was 16.4% in Northumberland compared to the all-England figure of 9.4%.

12.22 The Careers Guidance team performs the Council's statutory duties to encourage, enable and assist young people over statutory school age but under 19 (or 25 with an EHCP) to participate in education and training.

12.23 Careers advisers work with a range of external agencies to effectively source post 16 education and training from a range of providers.

12.24 The team is also responsible for the statutory duty to track, record, report and support Northumberland residents in this cohort in relation to their post 16 education

and training and works with Northumberland schools to support pupils with an EHCP at key transition points in order to better prepare them for adulthood.

13. Education Development

- 13.1 Blyth Welding & Fabrication Training Centre - Work to fit out Northumberland Skills recently acquired industrial premises within the Port of Blyth industrial cluster is underway. By March 2023 the building will be developed into Blyth Welding & Fabrication Training Centre. This flagship technical skills delivery facility is a unique approach for NCC to answer the workforce challenges of employers locally and regionally in a niche sector, to fast-track young people and adults into technical and high value careers, and to reduce productivity and growth obstacles related to this niche skill area, predominantly supporting manufacturing, engineering, construction, marine and energy sectors.
- 13.2 Northumberland Model for Preparation for Adulthood - During 2022 NCC has finalised the model, guiding principles and brand which will create a community of like-minded education providers within the SEND education provider community, working toward the shared objective of more children and young people (C&YP) with SEND achieving sustainable careers with 3 special schools on board as part of a pilot programme.
- 13.3 JDR Cables Section 106 Agreement - During 2022 NCC Education Directorate influenced the planning application of major inward investing employer JDR Cables. The £130m JDR Cables facility in Cambois is planned to be operational by Q1 2024 at which time JDR Cables will provide NCC with a Training & Skills Plan and an Employment Plan. NCC will collaborate with JDR Cables in the delivery of the plans aiming to maximise opportunities locally within Northumberland.
- 13.4 Project Choice Supported Internships in Northumberland County Council - Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate supported Health Education England's Project Choice team to develop Supported Internship Provision within Northumbria Health Care Trust settings during the academic year 21-22. Academic year 22-23 sees the continuation of provision within NHCT but also commencement of placements within Northumberland County Council, it is recognised that more volunteering departments are required to host interns, however, so this work continues.
- 13.5 Globalbridge - Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate continue to work with the team behind the Globalbridge opportunity platform with over 8000 pupils across 18 Northumberland schools now having access to build their profiles. The data around pupil aspirations that is now fed back from Globalbridge is also insightful and is informing which education development projects to pursue and where to target them for greatest impact. Developments are also underway for SEND specific opportunity showcase events to close the inequality gap on this community of young people.
- 13.6 Rural Investment Plan & Borderlands Place Programme - Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate continue to work closely with Regeneration Colleagues in ensuring that the skills agenda is firmly represented as part of the ongoing Rural Investment Plan & Borderland Place Programme in order to seek

targeted investment toward skills for those beyond the more densely populated areas of the county.

- 13.7 Northumberland Line economic corridor -Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate have worked closely with Advance Northumberland and Planning & Economy colleagues to form plans to support the need for more skilled people which will be an effect of opportunities arising from the opening of the Northumberland Line. Work continues to have Northumberland Skills positioned to support business growth around the line via the provision of related apprenticeships and other emerging training requirements.
- 13.8 Home to School Transport Review - From January 2022 Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate has led on the system wide Home to School Transport Review, working closely with colleagues in local services, with committee approval for thirty eight strategic recommendations underway.
- 13.9 Morpeth Group Riding for the Disabled Association- Northumberland County Council's Education Directorate have collaborated with Morpeth Group Riding for the Disabled Association and Northumberland College to deliver the transition of the group from their previous location at Tranwell to a more sustainable future with potential to grow at Kirkley Hall campus. Weekly sessions have since commenced at Kirkley Hall for over 125 riders travelling from all over the county to attend riding lessons which encourage co-ordination, develop muscle strength, and build self-confidence. Meanwhile NCC continue to roll out plans to upgrade the riding facilities to allow greater participation of children and young people with disabilities.

14. Virtual School

- 14.1 Being in care has a positive impact on education outcomes for Northumberland's children in care and care leavers because:
- 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
 - our whole council approach is driving better corporate parenting.
- 14.2 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. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in Early Years and attainment at Key Stage 2 are both a focus for future improvement.
- 14.3 Excellent transition work took place for the 92 pupils starting new schools in September, involving 43 phase changes and 49 Year 11s progressing into education, employment and training. 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.

- 14.4 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.
- 14.5 For the 14th consecutive year there has been no permanent exclusion of a care-experienced child.
- 14.6 Our track record of successfully raising the aspirations of children in care and care leavers continues. 87% of our Year 11 school leavers had 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%.
- 14.7 100% of our learners completing Level 3 courses have achieved well and are now progressing into Higher Education and employment.
- 14.8 100% of our care leavers in Higher Education completed their university degrees and are progressing into employment and postgraduate courses.
- 14.9 For further details about the education of looked after children see the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report 2022
https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/Looked%20after%20children/Virtual-School_Headteacher-s-Annual-Report_AY-2021-22_Approved_Print-quality_Single-pages.pdf
- 14.10 School attendance in Northumberland is moving in the right direction and reflects the national picture, but is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels (2018-19).
- 14.11 Covid is having a lingering impact on school attendance and it is challenging for schools and the local authority to reduce persistent absence (PA) which is high in all phases. A new attendance strategy for 2022-23 will specifically target this issue.
- 14.12 Safeguarding arrangements for identifying children at risk of missing education (CME) have grown from strength to strength. Membership of the monthly CME

tracking panel has widened to include the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), Early Help and social care.

- 290 children were referred to the CME tracking panel and by July 257 had returned to school full time.
- 220 of those children are no longer CME following the tracking panel.
- 290 children were discussed at the CME tracking panel this year compared to 83 last year.
- Being in alternative provision and part time timetables are the most common reasons for CME.
- There has been a reduction in the number of children on a Child Protection Plan recorded as CME, from 56 in 2019-20 to 22 in 2021-22

14.13 Relationships with families that electively home educate (EHE) their children are good and there has been a rise in the number of families agreeing to annual visits from Education Welfare Officers which is encouraging.

14.14 The number of children being electively home educated in Northumberland is 357, which is a reduction since earlier in the academic year. 221 children became EHE from September 2021 to July 2022, and 63 returned to school places.

- 88 EHE children have returned to school this year
- Additional capacity in the team has helped ensure that annual reviews from parents who EHE are completed within timescales
- There has been a reduction from 35 students with an EHCP being EHE in 2020/21 to 28 in 2021/22.
- All year 11 EHE students had contact with Education Welfare and were signposting to post 16 options was provided.

14.15 School engagement with the Northumberland Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) is good:

- of all school inspections during the year, safeguarding has been judged to be at least Good
- recommendations from 3 learning reviews were implemented in education settings
- schools completed the NSPCC's audit exploring sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools
- training for Designated Safeguarding Leads has been well attended and the programme has responded to contextual safeguarding needs in Northumberland
- school completion of the Section 175 audit has provided re-assurance to the NCASP about safeguarding standards in our schools

14.16 Pupils with health and medical needs who attend Northumberland's Education other than at School (EOTAS) provision enjoyed a better teaching and learning experience this year.

- Pupils with attendance over 80% achieved the highest grades at GCSE.
- Even though their attendance at school before joining EOTAS was very low, almost half the Year 11 cohort achieved at least a grade 4 in English, maths and combined science GCSEs. 19 pupils achieved Level 7 in English and 7 more achieved Level 8!
- A hybrid of online and face to face lessons for every pupil improved engagement and attendance.
- A new curriculum with new resources was introduced for PSHE and for primary age pupils.
- Support for pupils was co-ordinated by a new Team Around the Pupil process, which meant we could listen to what our pupils were saying about their experience of education.

15. Education and Skills Key Priorities for 23/24

15.1 This report presents a self evaluation of where we are now and also seeks to demonstrate our aspirations for the future. As a result it is fitting for the last words to be our 'Key Priorities' for further improvement. These priorities have been developed by the sector led Education Strategy Board, our lead member and multiple officers. They represent the views, aims and aspirations for many

Northumberland residents and are therefore the main driver for the actions of the Education and Skills teams for 2023 and 2024.

1. Know the strengths and weaknesses of our schools and other educational providers and report their performance to the Council and the community.
2. Challenge and support improvement in the performance of our schools and settings so that all children and young people, including disadvantaged and SEND learners, achieve the best educational outcomes:
 - We will support across the early years sector to ensure all children are school ready and that the schools are ready for every child
 - We will support all first, primary and middle schools to ensure their pupils have the skills and knowledge required to access the secondary curriculum
 - We will support improved transition, progress and performance for Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 to promote access for all learners to their first-choice destination
3. Improve the lived experience and outcomes for learners with SEND:
 - We will work in partnership with all stakeholders, including championing the voice of children, young people and their families, jointly working with Health and Social Care, to fully implement the Local Area 0-25 SEND Strategy
 - We will lead on the development of a fully inclusive education system
4. Develop the vocational education offer to provide clear pathways into apprenticeships, further education, higher education, and employment for all our young people and adults:
 - We will develop a curriculum and facilities which both supports the ambition of learners and links to the workforce requirements for Northumberland
 - We will build on key relationships between education & industry
 - We will produce clear guidance for schools and settings on what good careers advice looks like to ensure all young people are supported to achieve their aspirations.
5. Develop appropriate high quality educational provision that meets the needs of all children and young people as close to their home communities as possible:
 - We will strive to deliver the right number of places to meet all learner needs in the right place at the right time
6. Ensure the Education and Skills Service fulfils its statutory duties within the legislative framework (including the School Admissions Code, Exclusions,

Attendance, Virtual School, School Organisational Regulations, Early Years Sufficiency and those relating to SEND):

- We will meet our own statutory duties
- We will further develop relationships with the Regional Director and Academy Trusts to ensure they adhere to their statutory duties whilst ensuring equality of access to education
- The Local Authority will work closely with children, young people, their families, schools, settings and all other partners to deliver on these priorities.

Each of these priority workstreams 'package' will be monitored and evaluated and by the sector led Education Strategy Board with an annual report update.

Implications

Policy	<p>The actions set out in this report support the vision and values of the Council's Corporate Plan.</p> <p>All Department for Education (DFE) / Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) policies and guidance are reviewed, interpreted and shared.</p>
Finance and value for money	All budgets and decisions conform to expected DFE / ESFA funding requirements
Legal	<p>Northumberland County Council has statutory responsibilities with schools and academies as well as colleges and post 16 providers. The statutory responsibilities are clearly defined within policy and priorities for Education and Skills; within specific officer roles and also within the Board structures that engage with schools and academies and wider stakeholders to engage and to assure that all statutory duties are met. Formal reporting routines are embedded across the corporate calendar to ensure oversight and decision making is clear.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.</p>
Procurement	none
Human Resources	none
Property	Eight delivery sites around the county – 7 are shared sites, one is the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Service. Schools have delegated responsibility for buildings.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	All schools and staff have individual risk assessments. All sites are risk assessed. All Schools and Skills sites are covid/ HS risk assessed. Skills sites undertake reviews routinely as well as spot checks on premises to ensure routines and expectations are being followed.
Crime & Disorder	The report has considered Section 1 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it
Customer Consideration	Service plans and systems are approached from the pupil/family/customer perspective. All learner facing

	approaches include the learner/ customer journey to improve satisfaction
Carbon reduction	The increase in digital and remote learning as well as digital meeting spaces has significantly reduced the travel and carbon footprint in 2021/22.
Health and Wellbeing	Staff well-being is of high importance. Systems such as Kooth and Qwell are in place to support pupils and staff as well as bespoke arrangements to meet the needs of particular circumstances.
Wards	All aspects of the service support all wards in Northumberland, the digital reach has now expanded this opportunity.

Report Sign Off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Audrey Kingham
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AP	Alternative Provision
CME	Children Missing Education
C&YP	Children and Young People
CYPS	Children and Young People Service
DfE	Department for Education
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EET	Education, Employment and Training
EHC	Education Health Care
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
EHE	Elective Home Education
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EOTAS	Education Other than at School
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESOL	English as a Second Language
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusions or Suspensions
H&S	Health and Safety
HINT	High Incidence Needs Team
HR	Human Resources
JETS	Job Entry Targeted Support
LINT	Low Incidence Needs Team
NCC	Northumberland County Council
M&E	Mechanical and Electrical
NCASP	Northumberland Children's and Adult's Safeguarding Partnership
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NFF	National Funding Formula
NHCT	Northumbria Health Care Trust
NIES	Northumberland Inclusive Education Service
NSPCC	National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children
OBC	Outline Business Case
PA	Persistent Absence
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PSHE	Personal, social, health and economic
PVI	Private, Voluntary or Independent
SATs	Standard Assessment Tests
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SENCo	Special Education Needs Coordinator
SEN	Special Education Needs
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SLTG	School Led Tutoring Grant
STAN	Supporting Transitions Across Northumberland



Northumberland County Council

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **2ND MARCH 2023**

PERFORMANCE & FINANCE REPORT (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

Report of Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, Lead Member for Children's Services
Audrey Kingham, Executive Director of Children, Young People and Education

1. Purpose of report

To consider current performance and the budgetary position as at December 2022 for services within the Committee's terms of reference.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current performance, how it compares to benchmarks, and identifies any areas for further scrutiny.

3. Link to Corporate Plan

This report relates to the Living, Learning and Tackling Inequalities elements of the Corporate Plan.

4. Key Issues

1. External scrutiny of Children's Services shows that performance continues to be strong. Evidence of this can be seen in: the Annual Report for Education and Skills; the much-improved Ofsted ratings of our schools; the Children's Social Care self assessment; and July's positive Ofsted focused visit. To fully understand the overall performance of Children's Services, the above areas need to be taken into consideration alongside the content of this report which focuses on how Children's

Services benchmarks against the national average on the performance indicators in the service statements. Appendices A and B show that, compared to the national average, Northumberland was better on 15 indicators, the same on 3, and poorer on 11, at the end of December, 2022.

2. Increasing levels of demand at the higher levels of intervention within children's social care along with the associated pressures on the workforce are reflected in the current performance figures in appendix A. However, it should be noted that whilst these indicators have been identified as being the key ones for the service statement, they alone do not provide the full picture of performance of the children's social care service. The comprehensive programme of quality assurance work as well as external scrutiny undertaken by Ofsted provide an overall positive picture of how service's impact on the lives and experiences of vulnerable children, young people and families.
3. Headline education data shows that more and more Northumberland pupils are learning in schools that Ofsted judge to be Good or Outstanding. This report marks the first time since 2019 that validated results on education achievement outcomes have been shared with elected members. Northumberland continues to perform well in the first years of primary school and at post 16, but there are some areas for those aged 11 and 16 that have dipped as a result of covid legacy and this is also being seen nationally. The School Improvement Team continues to support schools to improve performance, and whilst each school is responsible for its own performance, the Education Strategy Board which is chaired by the local authority, will review actions with school representatives.
4. Given the impact of the pandemic on education services in particular, benchmarking data against previous years is provided not only for the 2020/2021 school year, but also against 2018/19, which was the most recent "normal" academic year prior to 2021/22 in terms of how services and education providers were operating.
5. There is a clear understanding of the underlying data for those indicators in need of improvement, and appropriate actions have been identified and communicated to the relevant parties.
6. The budgetary position continues to be challenging. The report provides the end of December data. The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Children's Social Care shows that the position at the end of December is £0.656 million forecast underspend. The underspend significantly increased from the November position largely due to the Family Hub and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) grant income. Savings of £1.332m were proposed for 2022-23, £0.829 million is expected to be achieved with a shortfall of £0.503 million primarily due to delay in the building of the children's home and an increase in out of county placement spend. The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Education and Skills shows that the position at the end of December is a £2.107 million forecast

overspend. The key factor is the rising cost of commissioning SEN home to school transport along with further growth in pupils accessing the service. Savings of £0.150m relating to transfer of funds to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and reduction in enhanced pensions are expected to be achieved in full. In addition, 5% of budget has contributed to savings in year which assist with the cost of SEN Transport and wider NCC budget pressures in year.

7. This committee is receiving another benchmarking data report, but that relates specifically to activity levels within children's safeguarding whereas this report focuses on performance across the whole of Children's Services' key performance indicators that are in the service statements.

This report is for discussion.

5. Background

The Service Statements across the Council set out priorities for delivering the Corporate Plan together with a performance framework covering past performance levels and future targets. The performance measures are captured on a web-enabled system and current performance is updated regularly so that the most recent information is available.

This report uses the performance data for the quarter ending December 2022 for Children's Social Care (CSC) and Education & Skills (E&S). The suite of indicators in both services were reviewed during 2021 and were rationalised to reflect priorities. In May 2022, the targets and amber tolerances were reviewed for each indicator taking into account our knowledge of the recent trends and demand levels in Northumberland, the latest national averages and where we most want to improve in light of corporate priorities.

This report provides analysis of performance on those indicators that can be benchmarked against the national average where available, as well as providing the direction of travel against previous years, and against the targets set. Where there is no national average, i.e., if the indicator is a local one, the December 2022 figures are benchmarked against the position for the previous year in the case of CSC and against the position for the previous year and 3 years ago in the case of E&S (i.e., prior to the impact of the pandemic). The report also provides the budgetary update for the period up to December 2022.

For details on how Children's Services performs against its targets within the context of the whole Council, please refer to the quarterly reports produced by the Business and Intelligence team. Members should note that in addition to this report, the Corporate Parenting Advisory Group receives bi-monthly performance reports on data relating to children looked after children (CLA) and care leavers, and the Audit Committee receives

a 6 monthly update on external inspection scrutiny that has taken place in Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Those reports are available on request.

5.1 Children's Social Care:

It remains the case that effective and creative early help and preventative work has ensured that statutory services have not been overwhelmed by the Covid legacy, This has positively led to low rates of early help cases being subsequently escalated to the social work teams, low rates of first time entrants into the youth offending system, social worker caseloads that are broadly equal to the latest national average, and almost all older care leavers being deemed to be living in "suitable" accommodation.

With reference to Appendix A, of the 16 CSC indicators where there is a national average, the department is currently performing better on 8, similar on 2, and poorer on 6. (The national averages are not contemporaneous with the local authority's more current data and in general are 9 months old.)

The context behind this is that an increase in demand levels was seen in early 2022 and by the year end we were seeing more children and young people subject to higher levels of intervention, namely child protection plans and being looked after in the care system. This, combined with continued challenges with recruitment and retention of social workers, has led to an increase in caseload pressures for some workers in some teams, and senior management oversight of these instances has been swiftly provided. The issue of increased case complexity continues to be reported by managers and a workforce report has recently been received by this committee. Children's Social Care continues to actively recruit to the academy and senior managers are looking at a range of options to fully utilise staff appropriately who are not social work qualified. This will also link into preparation for the plans to implement the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Comments and actions being taken for measures that are poorer than the national average are as follows:

Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders

Unusually for Northumberland, the latest percentage figure has increased considerably and is now poorer than the national average. However, as the number of first time entrants into the youth offending system is very low in Northumberland, the cohort each quarter is small and therefore subject to considerable fluctuation. This is the case in the latest cohort, where out of a cohort of 8 young people, 3 re-offended. The figure of 37% is similar to the latest regional average. It is expected that the long term trend of low and therefore better than national average rates of re-offending will continue to be seen in Northumberland in the future. The latest figure should be viewed within the context of

Northumberland having consistently lower re-offending and first time offending rates than the national average in each of the last 3 years.

% of 19-21 yr old care leavers in education, employment or training

The headline result for this indicator is taken at March each year from the national return on children looked after and Northumberland was better than the national average at that point, having previously been similar to it. Internally, we undertake quarterly monitoring during the year and the latest figure at the end of December had reduced. A range of actions have been identified in the plans of the Adolescent Service and the Virtual School, namely: The Virtual School is part of a national pilot of Pupil Premium Plus for post 16 care leavers, with strategies focussing on retention in further education; New electronic Post 16 Personal Education Plan is being developed; Recruiting for a post 16 PEP education intervention worker; Employment, education and training clinics have been reviewed and strengthened with more meaningful data; Part of a working group for Post 16, with the first meeting being in March; Collaborating with Northumberland Skills regarding English language courses for unaccompanied asylum seekers wanting college access; Developing a monitoring framework (with the Performance team); Participating in a national Virtual Schools' working group to share good practice.

Rate of children and young people subject to child protection (CP) plans per 10,000 population

The figure for quarter 3 of 77 per 10,000 is an increase on the position previously reported for quarter 1. The figure of 77 is similar to the regional average, but higher than the national average of 42. Application of thresholds, decision-making, and case planning are all reviewed during practice days and audit activity that take place in Children's Social Care. Whilst ideally we would like to see fewer children and young people being subject to child protection plans, the key test of how effective service provision is relates to the decisions that are taken on a multi-agency basis on each individual case, and our quality of practice intelligence demonstrates that such decision making is overall sound and in the best interests of the child.

Rate of Children Looked After (CLA) per 10,000 population

The number of children in our care has increased each quarter in the last year, significantly so between January and March 2022, but then very slightly each quarter thereafter. Analysis showed that the number of children entering care had remained fairly constant since the last report to this meeting, but the number exiting care had reduced significantly, in particular via the adoption and special guardianship order route. Positively, Northumberland's figure at the end of December of 76 per 10,000 remains the lowest in the region, but is above the national average of 70. The legal gateway panel ensures that all safe and relevant options are considered and if care is needed, that clear

plans are in place to proceed for the child. Tracking and review meetings oversee the timely progression of plans.

% of Children Looked After who have been in care for 2.5 years or more, and who have been in the same placement for 2 years or more

From our data analysis, we understand why the figure remains lower than it traditionally has been and that is due to just one of the children or young people who are in adoptive placements having been in care for over 2.5 years. Typically there have been between 9 and 12, adding between 6-10% to the figure. Placement orders have reduced in quantity during the peak of the pandemic, but are now increasing so we expect that to result in more children coming into the cohort who have been in care for 2.5 years or more and are on placement orders, and that will positively impact on the figure. The latest figure for Northumberland remains below and therefore poorer than the national average of 71%. Over the last 3 quarters it has ranged from 63% to 65% and at the end of December was 64%.

Although this figure is poorer than the national average of 71%, an audit of the reasons for the most recent placement move had shown that almost two-thirds of the children had moved for positive reasons – with most either returning home or moving into a long-term placement. We have further developed our monitoring to support timely achievement of long-term placements where this is the plan for our Children Looked After, and Ofsted's focused visit in the summer provided positive feedback about how permanency is planned for and achieved.

% of Children Looked After who have had 3 or more placements in the last 12 months

An audit of the reasons behind the placement moves revealed that around 40% of children had moved due to a disruption in their previous placements. More positively, however, half the children had moved (according to their plan) into a long-term placement. Whilst the latest figure for the end of December is higher than we would wish, more integrated working between the Family Placement service, Virtual School and foster carers has been a significant factor in bringing about better school placement stability. The implementation of the sufficiency strategy is continuing and there are a range of actions in place to increase sufficiency and further develop resilience and support for carers, which in turn is expected to positively impact on placement stability.

The good work around placement stability and progressing plans for children who are looked after has manifested itself in the positive Ofsted focused visit that took place in July relating to the local authority's arrangements for planning and achieving permanence. The report can be found [here](#). The headline findings include the statement: *“Social workers identify permanence plans for children at the earliest opportunity. This helps most children to achieve permanence in a timely way. Social workers know their children well.*

They use personalised and sensitive tools to communicate effectively with children and prepare them for permanence. An established quality assurance framework assists senior leaders and managers in monitoring the progression of children's plans and the quality of social work practice."

5.2 Education and Skills (E&S):

Headline education data shows that more and more Northumberland pupils are learning in schools that Ofsted judge to be Good or Outstanding. 89% of Northumberland schools are now judged to be Good or better compared to 76% in 2017 and a national average of 86%.

With reference to the Education and Skills data in Appendix B, this is the first report since 2019 when we have been able to share the latest validated education achievement outcomes. The context being that the impact of the pandemic on children and their families has proved to be significant. Whilst many children are enjoying their journey and progress very well, the extent of the work to close gaps is still a challenge, especially for disadvantaged pupils who continue to attain below their peers. The work of the School Improvement Team across Northumberland schools will continue to target specific areas in each school, and disadvantaged pupils specifically. They will work with headteachers, all staff in school, and governors to achieve this and raise the levels of attainment and progress at each key stage even further. The detail behind the figures in Appendix B is provided below; those areas that were poorer than the national average and improvement actions are stated were: Key Stage 2; Attainment 8; Progress 8; Education Health and Care Plans in time scale and pupils in good or outstanding secondary schools.

Primary school outcomes

Outcomes for children in primary school are good overall with attainment at Early Years Foundation Stage, Phonics and Key Stage 1 being better than the national average, although, as was the case nationally, results at Key Stage 2 dipped. The School Improvement Team continue to support schools to improve performance in reading and writing. They also continue to encourage schools to access the support of the local English Hub. Whilst each school is responsible for its own individual performance, the local authority-chaired Education Strategy Board will review actions with school representatives.

Secondary school outcomes

External examinations at Key Stage 4 returned in 2022 for the first time since 2019. Teacher and centre assessed grades were used during the pandemic. Nationally, it was determined that grades would, overall, fall roughly halfway between 2019 and 2021. Given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on different students and schools, this

data should be treated with caution. Attainment 8 scores continued to improve, but at a slower rate than pre pandemic, and progress 8 scores, like those for all regions other than London, showed a need for improvement. A small number of schools (academies) disproportionately affected the Progress 8 score. Conversations have taken place with those schools and the School Improvement Team continue to monitor the performance of those schools where possible. The Education Strategy Board will review actions with school representatives.

The context described above for Key Stage 4 also applied to Key Stage 5. Outcomes were positive with improvements on 2019 being seen in the number of pupils sitting A levels achieving an average grade of B, those sitting Applied General Qualifications achieving an average grade of a Distinction, and those securing a place at their first-choice university and going to Russell Group universities.

With reference to Appendix B, there is outstanding performance on: meeting parental choice of primary and secondary school; the take up of entitlement to free education for 2 year olds where Northumberland is in the top 5 nationally; and all schools that are judged to be Requires Improvement deemed to be Taking Effective Action and therefore are well-placed to move to Good at their next full inspection.

There are 13 indicators for which there are national averages (NA), and Appendix B shows that of the updated measures, 7 are better than the NA, 1 is similar and 5 are poorer.

Permanent exclusions (PEX) from school

A higher number of pupils have been permanently excluded from secondary schools than was the case last year, and the figure at the end of December was the same as the corresponding period in 2018/19 (prior to the pandemic). This is a major challenge for the local authority and its partners and the Exclusions Strategy Group meets regularly to discuss alternatives to permanent exclusion. More positively, from September 2022 the multi-agency Inclusion Panel has been set up to review admission into the Pupil Referral Unit, primary support bases as well as providing support to schools and pupils at risk of PEX. The panel meets monthly and includes colleagues from schools (on a rota basis) and other agencies e.g health, social care, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to ensure decision making is holistic, transparent and robust.

Since September 2022, the panel has considered 48 referrals for children at risk of permanent exclusion, none of which been excluded to date. In the current year we have facilitated 40 managed moves 18 of these have been already successful with 11 on going and 11 being unsuccessful.

Meeting the time scale to place pupils quickly back into another form of education following a permanent exclusion has proved a challenge so far in the current school year, having held up relatively well last year. Receipt of the relevant paperwork from schools and securing appropriate places remain challenges. Communications are regularly sent to the schools concerned regarding their responsibilities to submit the relevant paperwork to the local authority within time scale.

For the 2 other Service Statement performance indicators where Northumberland figures were poorer than the national averages, the explanatory comments and actions are as follows:

% of Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP) finalised within 20 weeks

Those who need an Education, Health and Care Plan used to receive one quicker than is the case nationally, although that has not been the case in Northumberland in the last 6 months. Whilst the timeliness does fluctuate during the year, the overall picture is lower than the previous 6 month period and 7% poorer than the national average. The percentage in timescale from Oct – December 2022 was 51% whereas between July - September 2022 it was 58%, and in April - June 2022 it was 76.1%. The national average is 58%. The quality of those plans is subject to audit and has improved in the last 2 years. Achievement of the 20 weeks' time scale has become increasingly challenging as demand for Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) increases, a phenomenon also seen nationally. Significant pressures on the Education Psychology team due to high demand are impacting on timeliness as has the challenge of completing those plans whose request came in just prior to the summer break. A further recruitment drive is being undertaken and there is a continued review of internal processes within the Educational Psychology team. We are making the request for an Education Health Care Needs Assessment clearer to schools in Northumberland and we are increasing support in schools for learners without EHCPs through targeted use of SEND Advisors, the Inclusive Education Service (NIES) training offer and Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance.

% of pupils who are in good or outstanding secondary schools

The figures in the last 4 quarters have improved considerably and the latest figure of 78.2% is now just below the national average of 82%. The actual proportion of secondary schools judged as Good or Outstanding was 83% at the end of December 2022, which equates to 25 / 30 schools, and this is above the national average of 78%. Where there are concerns that schools may drop below Good, an appropriate level of support is provided by the LA's improvement partners. Of the inspections where reports have been published in the current school year, 5 were graded good and just 1 was graded Requires Improvement.

This improving picture for secondary school pupils is also seen for post 16 year olds. The proportion of young people in years 12 and 13 who are either Not in employment, education or training (NEET) or whose destination is unknown has held up well and is better than the latest national average due to Northumberland being able to track the destinations of these young people more quickly than is the case nationally, and this is reflected in the relatively low unknown figures in the county. We know that those with SEND are disproportionately more likely to be NEET and tackling it continues to be a key focus for the Council and its partners. The action plan referred to in September's report continues to be rolled out and there has been a review of internal structures resulting in the staff formerly in the careers team moving into the SEN 14-25 team to ensure their work is better aligned.

6. Children's Services Forecast Outturn 2022-23 Position

6.1 Children's Social Care

The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Children's Social Care shows that the position at the end of December is £0.656 million forecast underspend. There is a detailed report that provides information on where within the service the projected under and overspends are. The underspend significantly increased from the November position largely due to the Family Hub and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) grant income. Savings of £1.332m were proposed for 2022-23, £0.829 million is expected to be achieved with a shortfall of £0.503 million primarily due to delay in the building of the children's home and an increase in out of county placement spend.

6.2 Education and Skills Service

The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Education and Skills shows that the position at the end of December is a £2.107 million forecast overspend. The key factor is the rising cost of commissioning SEN home to school transport along with further growth in pupils accessing the service. Providers have incurred escalating fuel costs and driver shortages, which has led to some operators being unable to fulfil contracts, and the need to re-tender has resulted in overall increased costs. The forecast position regarding the Capital programme in Education and Skills is shown below.

	Current 2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Actual Exp.	Forecast Exp.	Net Variance	Over / (Under) spend	Forecast Reprofiling
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total	19.676	9.651	17.428	(2.248)	(0.507)	(1.741)

The Director is provided with details of the position on each scheme, actions being taken within the year and plans for re-profiling the budget.

Savings of £0.150m relating to transfer of funds to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and reduction in enhanced pensions are expected to be achieved in full. Education and Skills have contributed 5% of budget to savings in year in addition which will contribute to the cost of SEN Transport and wider NCC budget pressures in year.

7. Implications

Policy	Indicators in this report relate to the Living, Learning and Tackling Inequalities elements of the Corporate Plan.
Finance and value for money	Many of the measures included in the framework have a value for money component. The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Children's Social Care shows that the position at the end of December is £0.656 million forecast underspend. The underspend significantly increased from the November position largely due to the Family Hub and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) grant income. Savings of £1.332m were proposed for 2022-23, £0.829 million is expected to be achieved with a shortfall of £0.503 million primarily due to delay in the building of the children's home and an increase in out of county placement spend. The Projected Revenue Outturn 2022-23 for Education and Skills shows that the position at the end of December is a £2.107 million forecast overspend. The key factor is the rising cost of commissioning SEN home to school transport along with further growth in pupils accessing the service. Savings of £0.150m relating to transfer of funds to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and reduction in enhanced pensions are expected to be achieved in full. In addition, 5% of budget has contributed to savings in year which assist with the cost of SEN Transport and wider NCC budget pressures in year.
Legal	The report refers to children and young people in the care system and to re-offending rates.
Procurement	n/a
Human Resources	Having enough experienced social workers is essential for a high performing Children's Social Care service.
Property	n/a
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	n/a

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	n/a
Crime & Disorder	The performance framework includes measures on offending.
Customer Consideration	The framework includes a number of measures relevant to providing services to customers
Carbon reduction	n/a
Health and Wellbeing	Indicators referenced in the report impact on the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families.
Wards	All

8. Background papers:

Details of the County Council's performance management arrangements including access to the Northumberland web-enabled performance system can be found at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy/Performance.aspx#corporateperformancemanagementarrangements>

9. Report sign off

Monitoring Officer	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Jan Willis
Joint Interim Directors of Children's Services	Graham Reiter & Audrey Kingham
Interim Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

10. Author and Contact Details

This report has been prepared on behalf of Audrey Kingham, Audrey Kingham, Executive Director of Children, Young People and Education

For further information, contact Alan Hartwell at Alan.Hartwell@northumberland.gov.uk.

Appendix A – Children’s Social Care benchmarking against national averages / previous year *

	Indicator	Current performance Dec 22 vs Dec 21	Current Performance vs target	Current Performance vs National Average
1	% of EHFV cases closed because desired outcomes have been met *	68 vs 76	68 vs 75	Not applicable
2a	% Staff turnover within the social work workforce (annual DFE return)	15.9 vs 15.8	15.9 vs 15.4	15.9 vs 15.4
2b	% absence rate of the social work workforce	1.9 vs 3.6	N.A.	1.9 vs 3.0
2c	% of the social work workforce who are from agencies	6.2 vs 10.0	N.A.	6.2 vs 15.5
2d	% social work vacancy rate	8.1 vs 11.6	N.A.	8.1 vs 17.0
2e	Average social work caseload	17.1 vs 15	N.A.	17.1 vs 16
2f	% of social workers where caseload weighting is within desired points level *	62 vs 78	62 vs 76	Not applicable
3	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	37.5 vs 19.0	37.5 vs 25.0	37.5 vs 29.2
4a	Rate of children and young people subject to child protection plans per 10,000 popn	77 vs 65	77 vs 67	77 vs 42
4b	% of s47 child protection enquiries resulting in an Initial Child Protection Conference	55 vs 56	N.A.	55 vs 34
5a	Rate of Children Looked After (CLA) per 10,000 popn	76 vs 65	76 vs 73	76 vs 70
5b	% of CLA who returned home to their families after leaving care	35 vs 29	N.A.	35 vs 28
5c	% of CLA who were adopted when they left care or left care via a special guardianship order	32 vs 42	N.A.	32 vs 23
5d	% of CLA who have had 3 or more placements in the last 12 months	14 vs 9	14 vs 9	14 vs 10
5e	% long term CLA in same placement for past 2 years	64 vs 68	64 vs 69	64 vs 71
6a	% of 19-21 yr old care leavers in touch with the local authority	100 vs 97	100 vs 95	100 vs 92
6b	% of 19-21 yr old care leavers living in suitable accommodation	98 vs 96	98 vs 95	98 vs 88
6c	% of 19-21 yr old care leavers in education, employment or training	49.4 vs 56.3	49.4 vs 61	49.4 vs 55

Appendix B - Education & Skills benchmarking against national averages / previous years *

	Indicator	Current performance Dec 22 vs 18/19	Current performance Dec 22 vs Dec 21	Current Performance Dec 2022 vs target	Comparison with national average
1	% children taking up the Statutory entitlement to early education for all eligible 2 year olds	96 vs 90	96 vs 94	96 vs 85	96 vs 72
2	% getting their 1 st choice of primary school	97.3 vs 98.2	97.3 vs 98.1	97.3 vs 95	97.3 vs 92.2
3	% of pupils in primary schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding	87.8 vs 86.0	87.8 vs 87.4	87.8 vs 89.0	87.8 vs 89
4	Early years foundation stage - % of pupils achieving a Good Level of Development	67.5 vs 74.9	N.A.	67.5 vs 72	67.5 vs 65.2
5	Phonics - % of year 1 pupils working at the expected standard	78.5 vs 85.0	N.A.	78.5 vs 82	78.5 vs 75.5
6	Key stage 1 - % achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined	N.Av	N.A.	54.6 vs 66	54.6 vs 53.4
7	KS2 - % of pupils achieving the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths	56.1 vs 60.5	N.A.	56.1 vs 65	56.1 vs 58.9
8	Number of permanent exclusions from primary schools in academic year *	0 vs 1	0 vs 0	0 vs 0	Not Applicable
9	% getting their 1st choice of secondary school	97.2 vs 98.4	97.2 vs 97.6	97.2 vs 95.0	97.2 vs 83.3
10	Number of permanent exclusions from secondary schools in academic year *	39 vs 39	39 vs 27	39 vs 29	Not Applicable
11	% permanently excluded pupils receiving full-time education by 6th day following PEX *	66.7 vs 77.5	66.7 vs 92.6	66.7 vs 95.0	Not Applicable
12	KS4 - average Attainment 8 score	46.6 vs 44.4	N.A.	46.6 vs 44.7	46.6 vs 48.8
13	KS4 - average Progress 8 score	-0.23 vs -0.17	N.A.	-0.23 vs -0.15	-0.23 vs -0.03
14	% of 16-17 year olds NEET and Not Known	5.5 vs 5.4	5.5 vs 6.0	5.5 vs 5.9	5.5 vs 6.0
15	% of pupils in secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding	78.2 vs 66.5	78.2 vs 69.0	78.2 vs 75	78.2 vs 82
16	% of new Education Health and Care Plans completed within time scale	51 vs 50	51 vs 47	51 vs 70	51 vs 58
17	% of Schools taking effective actions following a less than good Ofsted judgement *	N.A.	N.A.	100 vs 100	Not Applicable



Northumberland County Council

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2ND MARCH 2023

Safeguarding Activity Trends and Benchmarking Report

Report of Cabinet Member: Guy Renner-Thompson, Lead Member for Children's Services
Joint Interim Director of Children's Services, Graham Reiter and Audrey Kingham

Purpose of report

To provide analysis of trends within social work activity in responding to safeguarding concerns regarding Northumberland's children and young people; highlighting key indicators of performance, with comparisons to national and regional variations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) Identify any issues for further scrutiny.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'Living and Learning' priority included in the Corporate Plan 2021-2024 and the inequalities priority as work is undertaken with some of the most vulnerable children in Northumberland

Key Issues

1. Re-referrals to children's social work services remain low, indicating the right service at the right time, and that families can sustain the successes that led to case closure.
2. A small proportion of child and family assessments were taking longer than 45 working days to be completed in the second and third quarter of 2022. This was due to staff sickness and a lack of agency staff; performance has since improved to the expected level.
3. Where children are at risk of significant harm, cases are responded to appropriately and in a timely manner. Where children are subject to a child protection plan, these are reviewed regularly, with very small numbers of plans lasting longer than two

years.

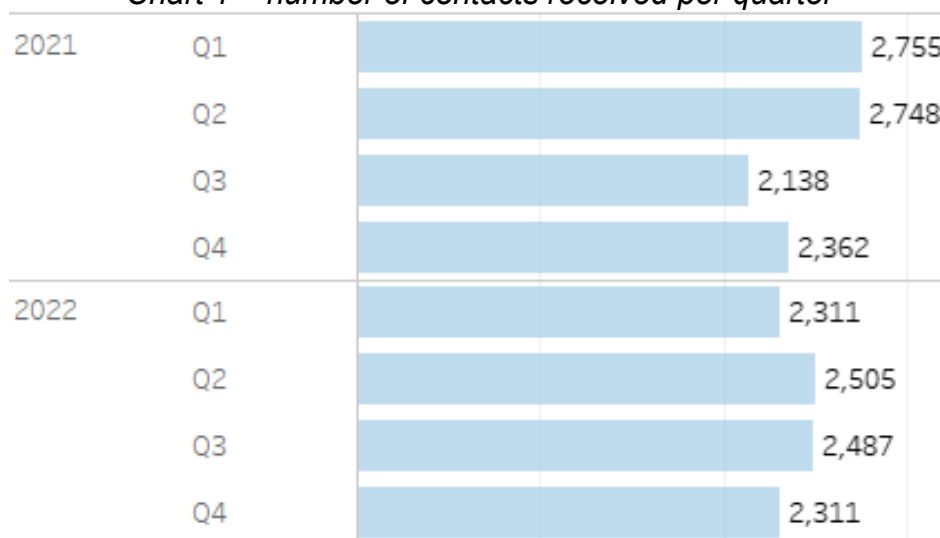
4. Numbers of children in care increased across the first half of 2022 but have levelled off in the second half of the year. Despite the increase, Northumberland continues to have the lowest rate of children in care in the region.
5. Indicators of placement stability for children in care are currently a challenge, although a recent audit of placement reasons shows that a significant proportion of recent placement moves were for positive reasons, for example a child moving into a long-term placement or returning home.

Background

TRENDS WITHIN THE SAFEGUARDING PROCESS

1. Northumberland children's services established their 'front door' in 2017, which in a social care context, is an arrangement where professionals gather information and make decisions about which pathways to follow with regards to the health, well-being, and safety of children.
2. In the most recent inspection of children's social care services in 2020¹, Ofsted praised Northumberland's safeguarding processes, including the 'front door' by saying that children's needs were identified promptly and that decision-making from the first point of contact was robust and proportionate to need. The report also stated that partner agencies work well together meaning that the next steps for the children and families are well considered.
3. Within the realms of the 'front door', an initial 'contact' is when an organisation or individual gets in touch with them about a child. This contact can sometimes be a request for general advice, or a request for a service in the form of a 'referral'. A referral, as defined by Department for Education (DfE) is 'a request for services to be provided by local authority children's social care'

Chart 1 – number of contacts received per quarter

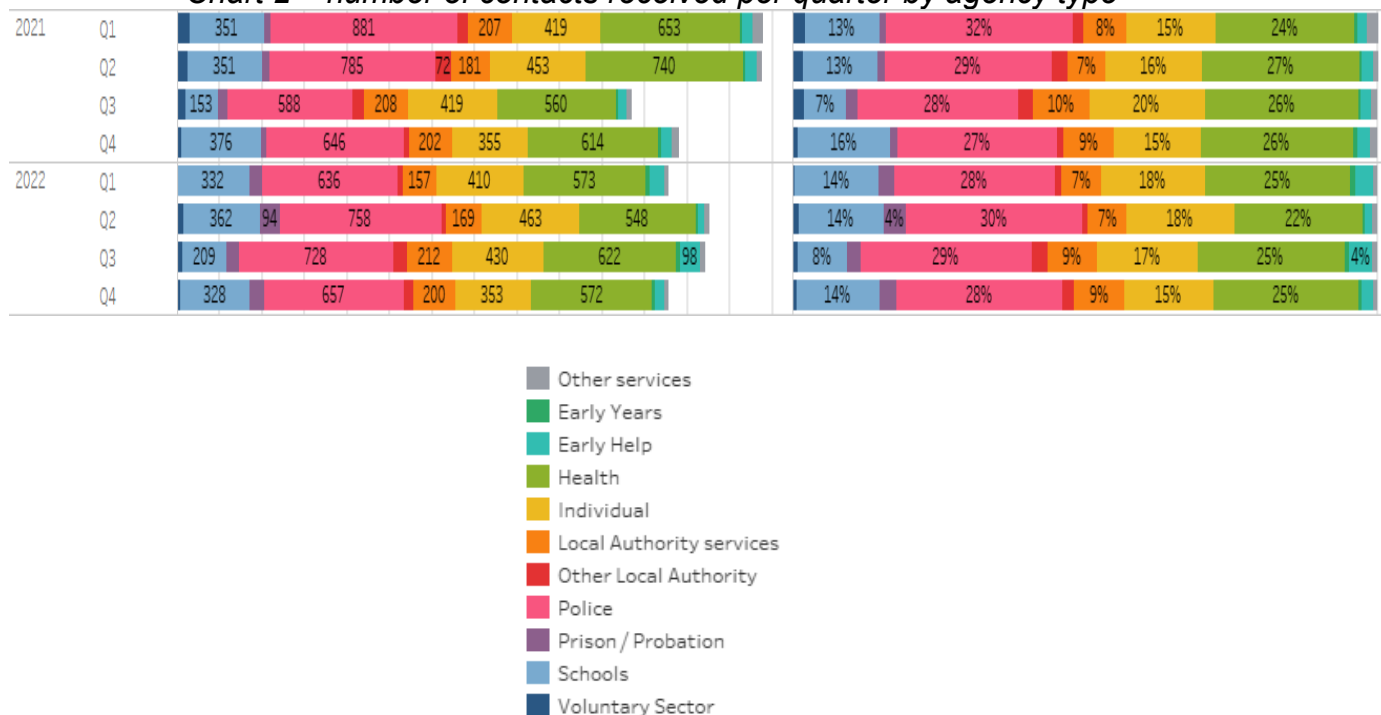


4. Chart 1 shows the number of contacts received per quarter between January 2021 and December 2022. The numbers received have been fairly consistent: there is usually a dip in Q3 due to the school summer holidays (as seen in 2021), however in 2022 there was an increased number of contacts from Health and Local Authority services which 'cancelled out' the reduced number of contacts from Schools.
5. Chart 2 shows the proportion of contacts from each agency type. Typically, contacts from the police account for the highest proportion, followed by contacts from Health

¹ Children's services inspection report, 20th March 2020
<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50147382>

(includes GPs, health visitors, hospital), then contacts from 'individuals' (relatives, friends, neighbours and anonymous sources) and then those contacts from schools. Completing the top five sources are contacts from 'Local Authority services', which includes those from colleagues in Adult Social Care or Housing as well as contacts from social workers within the locality teams.

Chart 2 – number of contacts received per quarter by agency type



6. Over the course of 2022, Northumberland's 'front door' received 13,650 contacts in total for 9,283 children living within 5,496 households. Of the total contacts, 9,614 of these (70%) were triaged by social work services, with the remainder being directed towards early help services².
7. From the 9,614 contacts triaged by social work services in 2022, 31% of these (2,973) converted to a referral – which is a similar proportion to 2021 (28%) and slightly above the latest national figure of 24%³. 2,973 referrals, when equated to the most recent child population figures in Northumberland⁴, gives a rate of 508 referrals per 10,000 children: below the latest national figure (2021/22) of 538 and the latest regional figure (2021/22) of 644.
8. One of the national performance indicators that is monitored closely within children's services is the proportion of repeat referrals (re-referrals) within twelve months of a previous referral. To count as a re-referral, the case must have been open to a social worker previously but is now closed. New information about a child

² Early Help is about working with children, young people and their families who would like support. It is a consent-based service which involves the whole family and their Networks to come up with solutions to any difficulties or challenges experienced at the time.

³ ADCS Safeguarding Pressures Phase 8 2021/22 – <https://adcs.org.uk/sageguarding/article/safeguarding-pressures-phase-8>

⁴ Latest estimate of under 18 year olds is 58,428

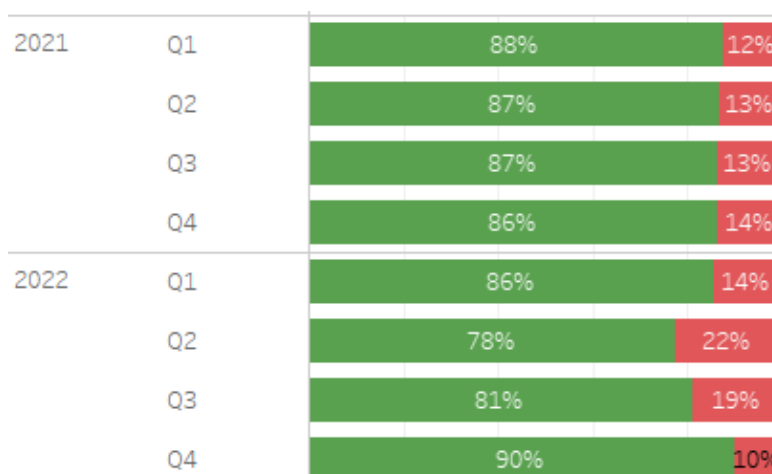
who is part of an already open case does not constitute a new referral for the purpose of this indicator.

*Chart 3 – number and proportion of re-referrals within 12 months
blue indicates re-referrals*

Year	Quarter	Re-referrals	Total Referrals	Proportion (%)
2021	Q1	117	568	17%
	Q2	101	609	14%
	Q3	91	461	16%
	Q4	133	612	18%
2022	Q1	106	636	14%
	Q2	104	636	14%
	Q3	92	587	14%
	Q4	154	658	19%

9. Chart 3 shows that the proportion of re-referrals in Northumberland each quarter has consistently been below 20%. The overall calendar year figure for 2022 was 15% (compared to 16% in 2021). This relatively low figure is generally seen as a positive reflection on children receiving the right service at the right time, and that when cases are closed, families can sustain the successes that led to case closure without ongoing social worker support. The national and regional re-referral figures in 2021/22 were 22% and 21% respectively.
10. The vast majority of referrals (99%) lead to an assessment by a social worker within the 'front door'. The child and family (C & F) assessment was introduced across England in March 2014, and it allows social workers to gather information about a child and their family in order to assess what services are needed, and who should provide them. There is an expectation that this assessment should be completed within 45 working days of the referral being accepted.

*Chart 4 – proportion of 'front door' assessments completed within 45 working days
Green = within 45 working days, red = over 45 working days*

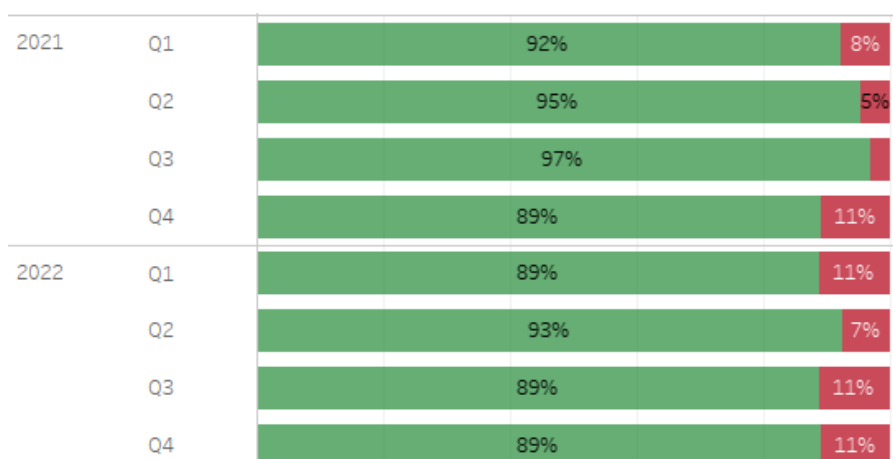


11. Chart 4 shows that performance with regards to assessments being completed by the 'front door' dipped slightly in the second and third quarters of 2022 with 78% and 81% being completed within the 45 working days respectively, before improving to 90% in the final quarter of the year. Overall, performance reduced from 87% in

2021 to 83% in 2022, which is just below the latest national and regional figure of 84%. The main reason behind the dip in performance was staff sickness which led to less worker availability coupled with a lack of suitable agency staff to cover.

12. Where the information gathered during a contact, referral or assessment results in the social worker suspecting that a child is suffering (or likely to suffer) significant harm, a strategy discussion meeting should be held to determine whether to initiate enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. A multi-agency assessment is the means by which Section 47 enquiries are carried out and this should be completed within a maximum of 15 working days.
13. Citing the inspection report from 2020, Ofsted praised Northumberland’s approach to child protection concerns, stating that where identified, they were swiftly progressed for consideration by a multi-agency group of professionals. In 2022, Northumberland completed 1,134 Section 47 enquiries, which equates to a rate of 194 per 10,000 children – slightly above the national rate of 180 and below the regional rate of 267.
14. If the outcome of a Section 47 enquiry concludes that the original concerns were substantiated (meaning that the child is judged to be suffering (or likely to suffer) significant harm), then an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) should be held within 15 working days of the date when the Section 47 enquiry was initiated. The purpose of the ICPC is to bring together family members, the child (where appropriate) and key professionals to share information, assess risks and then come up with an agreed way to keep the child safe. 59% (670) of the 1,134 children who were subject to a Section 47 enquiry in 2022 were subject to an ICPC – a higher proportion than the national figure of 34% and the regional figure of 36%. Although the figure is higher, Northumberland’s appliance of thresholds is scrutinised regularly through audit, which has given assurance that they are being applied appropriately and not intervening unnecessarily.

Chart 5 – proportion of ICPCs held within 15 working days of strategy discussion
Green = within 45 working days, red = over 45 working days

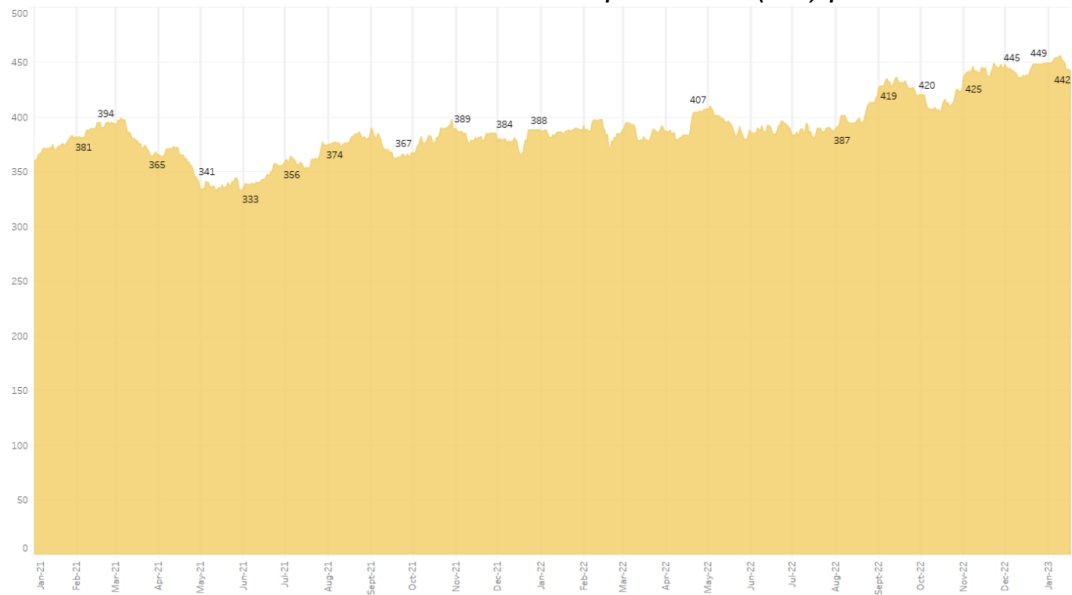


15. Chart 5 shows the timeliness of ICPCs held over the last eight quarters. Overall in 2022, 90% of ICPCs were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion

being held, with this figure being better than the most recent national figure of 79% and the most recent regional figure of 85%.

16. Of the 670 children subject to an ICPC in 2022, 84% (563) commenced a child protection plan. This proportion is below the 2021 figure (91%) and is slightly below the latest national (87%) and regional (90%) averages. A child protection plan outlines the nature of the concerns, and sets out what needs to be done to ensure that the child is safe and prevent them from suffering further harm. Equating the 563 children to the under eighteen population gives a rate of 96 child protection plans starting per 10,000 children; a higher rate than the latest national rate (53), and the latest regional rate (87).
17. One way to look at the success of child protection plans is to monitor the proportion of children who are made subject to second or subsequent plans. A higher proportion of children with multiple plans would suggest that the decision to end a plan was premature or that the child protection process is not effective in bringing about lasting improvements for children. Of the 563 children who started a child protection plan in 2022, 24% (134) had previously had a plan, which is a similar rate to 2021. A figure of between 20% and 25% is generally deemed to indicate good performance on this indicator (as it is accepted that some children and families will enter the child protection threshold more than once, and often for different reasons). The latest national and regional figures are 23% and 21% respectively. This figure is closely monitored, with increases leading to a themed audit of cases to investigate whether plans were started appropriately.
18. During the course of a child protection plan, there are regular review conferences held to monitor how the plan is progressing, and if a child is judged to no longer be at continuing risk of harm then the plan will end. 99% of these reviews were held in timescale in Northumberland, compared to 89% across England and 90% in the North East. Across 2022, there were 501 child protection plans ended, which equates to a rate of 86 per 10,000 children – above the latest national figure of 52 and below the latest regional figure of 91. The duration of child protection plans can vary, but plans should aim to be completed within two years (although it is recognised that some children will need plans for longer than this). Of the plans that ended in 2022, 11 plans ended beyond two years (2%); comparing favourably to the national figure of 4% and in line with the regional figure of 2%.

Chart 6 – total number of child protection (CP) plans

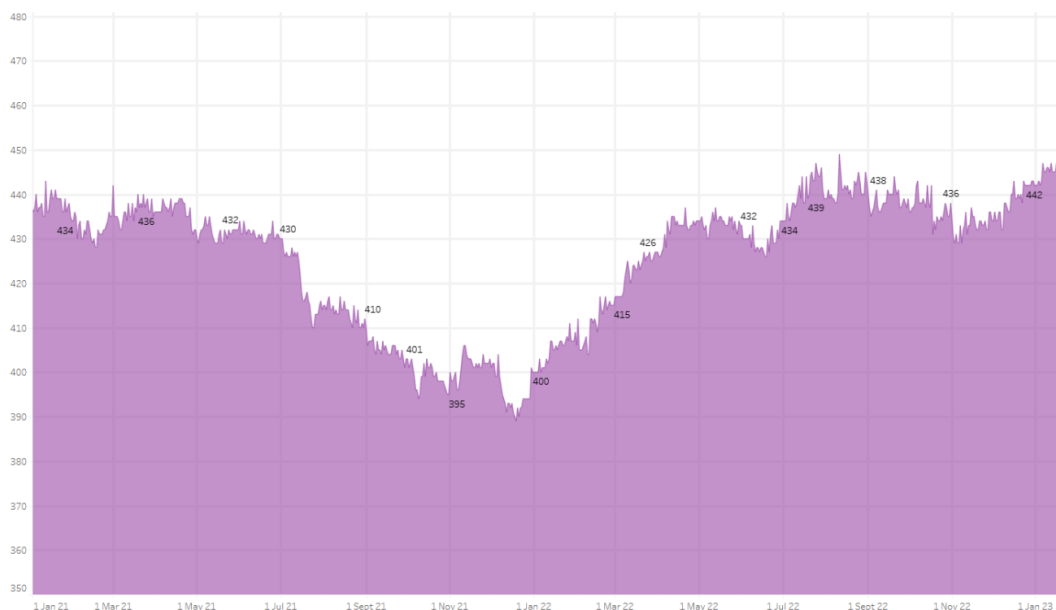


19. Chart 6 shows the total number of child protection plans since the start of 2021. Other than a slight reduction between March 2021 and June 2021, there has been a steady increase in the total number of child protection plans in Northumberland, with the figure at the end of December 2022 being 449. Converting this to a rate gives a figure of 77 child protection plans per 10,000 children; higher than the national rate of 42 and the regional rate of 63, but lower than the rate of 80 per 10,000 in March 2020.

CHILDREN IN CARE

20. Where it is necessary to take immediate action to protect a child, or where parents are unable to care for children (and there are no agreed alternative family to do this), a child may enter the care of the local authority.

Chart 7 – total number of children in care



21. Chart 7 shows the number of children who were being cared for by the local authority since the start of 2021. The numbers decreased from around 440 at the start of 2021 down to 390 at the end of 2021, and then have slowly increased back up to 442 at the end of December 2022. Converting this to a rate gives a figure of 76 children in care per 10,000.
22. The reasons behind the increase in children in care appear to point to a slow-down in the numbers of children leaving care in 2022; especially those who are adopted or made subject to a special guardianship order⁵ (SGO) from care. Numbers of children adopted reduced by 55% in 2022 (compared to 2021) and those children made subject to an SGO reduced by 29%. Both of these processes are reliant on court timetables which were very much impacted upon during the Covid pandemic. Despite the recent increase in Northumberland's rate of children in care, it remains the lowest in the region and is only slightly above the national rate of 70 (and well below the regional rate of 110).
23. A panel of senior managers meet regularly to assess and oversee the children who may need to enter care, and this 'gatekeeping' arrangement has been successful in accommodating children after suitable appropriate alternatives have been fully considered. For children who are in care, their plans for permanency are considered as part of the reviews held by an independent reviewing officer, and permanency clinics have been set up with social work team managers to monitor their progress.
24. Permanence in the context of children in care is defined in the Children Act 1989 as providing children with:
- 'a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity ... a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond'*
- Permanence can be reached through different pathways:
- a return to birth parents
 - shared care arrangements
 - permanence whilst in care as part of a residential placements, long-term unrelated foster carer or friends and family care
 - legal permanence via adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders
25. With regards to permanency for Northumberland's children in care, in the calendar year 2022, 13% (18) of the 143 children who left care were adopted; with this figure being higher than the national figure of 10% and in line with and regional figure of 13%. A further 19% of children who left care were subject to a special guardianship order (higher than the national average of 13%), with 35% of children returning home to birth parents (also higher than the national average of 28%).
26. Regarding children's plans for permanency, Ofsted visited Northumberland in July 2022 to undertake a focused visit on the arrangements for planning and achieving

⁵ A special guardianship order is usually granted to a family member. They take on parental responsibility for the child, allowing them to make parenting decisions in their interests, but without the separation of family ties that adoption may bring

permanence of children in care⁶. Their feedback was very positive: social workers know their children well and identify permanence plans at the earliest opportunity. Workers also use personalised tools to communicate effectively with children and prepare them for permanence, whilst an established quality assurance framework assists senior leaders and managers in monitoring children's plans and the quality of social work practice.

27. The stability of a child's placement is important to help them build security in their lives by developing secure attachments, to support their ability to form relationships in the future as adults, and also to help them develop a strong sense of belonging and identity⁷.
28. There are two indicators of performance that look specifically at placement stability. The first indicator looks at the proportion of children in care who have experienced three or more placements within the previous year. 14% of Northumberland's children in care experienced this number of placements at the end of December 2022. This is higher than the latest national and regional figure of 10%. A recent audit of placement moves showed that over half the children's most recent placement move was into a long-term placement.
29. The second indicator looks at the cohort of children below the age of 16 who have been in care for at least two and a half years. Of the children in the cohort, the indicator looks at the proportion who have been in the same placement for at least two years (or are living with prospective adopters). At the end of December 2022, Northumberland's figure was 64%: worse than the latest national average of 71% and regional average of 70%. Again, the audit of placement moves showed that almost two-thirds of the cohort had moved for positive reasons – with most either returning home or moving into a long-term placement.
30. As part of the children looked after (CLA) return that is submitted to the Department of Education, there are a number of annual 'outcome' indicators that are published. In the reporting year ending March 2022 (2021/22):
 - 86% of children in care were up to date with their immunisations (compared to 85% nationally and 86% regionally).
 - 71% of children in care had their teeth checked (compared to 70% nationally and 72% regionally).
 - 97% of children in care had an annual health assessment (compared to 89% nationally and 92% regionally).
 - 81% of children under five had an assessment of their development (compared to 89% nationally and 95% regionally).

⁶ Focused visit letter to Northumberland children's services, 31st August 2022

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50191898>

⁷ The Care Inquiry, "Making not Breaking – Building Relationships for our Most Vulnerable Children" – April 2013

- 5% of children in care had a substance misuse problem identified (compared to 3% nationally and regionally).
 - 1% of children in care aged ten or above were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand (compared to 2% nationally and regionally).
 - 8% of children in care had at least one missing episode (compared to 11% nationally and regionally) with an average of five missing episodes per child (compared to six on average nationally and seven on average regionally).
31. When children leave care after the age of 16, if they have been in care for at least thirteen weeks since the age of 14 then they become a 'care leaver'. Care leavers are young people who the local authority must continue to keep in touch with, maintain their pathway plan (a document that sets out how services will be provided to respond to young person's needed), and to help them achieve the goals within it. The support must go on until the young person turns 21 (or 25 if the young person wishes).
32. As part of the same CLA return submitted to the Department of Education, there are a number of indicators that monitor care leaver's outcomes across an older (19 to 21 year old) and younger (17 to 18 year old) cohort. In the reporting year ending March 2022 (2021/22):
- 95% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in touch with their link worker (compared to 92% nationally and regionally).
 - 100% of care leavers aged 17 to 18 were in touch with their link worker (compared to 94% nationally and 93% regionally).
 - 95% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were living in suitable accommodation (compared to 88% nationally and 90% regionally).
 - 100% of care leavers aged 17 to 18 were living in suitable accommodation (compared to 90% nationally and 93% regionally).
 - 57% of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in employment, education or training in the period around their birthday (compared to 55% nationally and 52% regionally).
 - 70% of care leavers aged 17 to 18 were in employment, education or training in the period around their birthday period (compared to 66% nationally and 67% regionally).

Implications

Policy	Performance and monitoring of social work activity is a key part of safeguarding children.
Finance and value for money	Figures provided in this report allow officers and Members to monitor workloads and activity to ensure resources are allocated appropriately.
Legal	<p>The report includes information relating to children who are in care for whom the authority has corporate parenting responsibility, with a number of these being subject to care proceedings.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 confirm that the matters within this report are not functions reserved to Full Council.</p>
Procurement	None.
Human Resources	The council should continue to monitor the impact of resource investments with regards to workloads to ensure effective targeting to support staff and to improve performance. At present, there is a national focus on supervision, training and stress-levels of social workers.
Property	None.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	Social work does focus on the most vulnerable children and young in Northumberland.
Risk Assessment	Children's Services should prioritise and respond to children who are most at risk of significant harm.
Crime & Disorder	The prevalence of domestic abuse and substance misuse are monitored during case reviews, and influence workload management decisions.
Customer Consideration	The data in the report indicates the extent to which service user's needs are being met.
Carbon reduction	None.
Health and Wellbeing	The report highlights activity to safeguard children, which in the long-term will promote better health and wellbeing.

Wards	None.
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Background papers:

- Lord Laming – The Victoria Climbié Inquiry
- Lord Laming – The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report Findings and recommendations of the Care Inquiry 2013
ADCS Safeguarding Pressures Report Phase 8
- Letter from Ofsted regarding their Focused visit to Northumberland children’s services (August 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's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2022 - 2023

Page 71

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17 February 2023 - CA

Agenda Item 8

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 March 2023

Page 74	Director of Education Annual Report: Key Educational Outcomes (2021-2022 Academic Year)	Annual report on the key educational outcomes of the previous academic year. The Committee will be asked to identify any further areas for scrutiny.
	Finance & Performance	To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference
	Safeguarding Activity Trend	To provide analysis of social work activity trends and case allocation as well as highlighting national developments regarding the Department for Education safeguarding indicators.

6 April 2023

	Annual Report of Principle Social Worker	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.
	School Transport Review Outcome Options	To understand how the recommendations of the review will be implemented and to agree a timeframe for receiving further updates.

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

Page Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
75	5 May 2022	Informal Consultation on School Organisation for The Coquet Partnership	RESOLVED 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	Update On Future Arrangements for The Delivery of Early Help Locality Services in Northumberland	RESOLVED that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed changes to the current commissioning arrangements be agreed; and 2. The temporary increase in expenditure during 2022/23, 2223/24 and 2024/25, which would be covered by the additional 	No further action

			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.	
3	26 May 2022	Education Strategy Board Annual Update	RESOLVED 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	The Impact of the School Improvement Team	<p>It was unanimously RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The performance of the team and their ability to develop the quality of education in Northumberland be noted; 2. The changes to funding imposed by the DfE and the possible impact of service be noted; 3. A further report be received once it was known how the reduced funding would be accounted for; and 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 	A further report to be received at a later date

5	7 July 2022	Send Strategy Progress Report	RESOLVED 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	The Annual Report of Northumberland County Council Fostering Service 2021/22	RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the performance information for the period April 2021 – March 2022 be acknowledged.	No further action
7	7 July 2022	Briefing Note - Potential Multi Academy Trust Opportunity	RESOLVED that the contents of the briefing note be noted	No further action
8	8 September 2022	Finance and Performance	RESOLVED that the current performance and how it compared to benchmarks was noted.	No further action
Page 77	8 September 2022	Outcomes of Consultation on Proposals for the Coquet Partnership	RESOLVED 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	Children's Services Annual Representations 2021- 2022	RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.	No further action
11	8 September 2022	Children's Social Care – Annual Self Assessment	RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted	No further action
12	8 September 2022	OFSTED Focused Visit to Northumberland	RESOLVED that the information be noted	No further action

		Children's Services		
13	8 September 2022	Proposal In Relation to Future Arrangements For The Youth Service	<p>RESOLVED that :-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The activity undertaken during the review be noted; and 2. Option 1, as outlined in the report, be agreed as the way forward. 	No further action at this time
14	8 September 2022	Family Hub Development	<p>RESOLVED that the Committee:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Support for Children and Young people with mental health needs in Northumberland	<p>RESOLVED 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.</p>	No further action
16	6 October 2022	Regional Schools Director's Overview		No further action

17	6 October 2022	Outcomes of Consultation on Berwick Consultation	RESOLVED 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	Supported Accommodation Tender	RESOLVED 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 outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers.	At its meeting on 11 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments. A report outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers to be brought back in 2023
29	6 October 2022	The Northumberland Inclusion Strategy	RESOLVED 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
Page 79	6 October 2022	Pegasus Centre Update	RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted.	No further action
21	3 November 2022	Proposals for Coquet Partnership: Outcomes of statutory consultation and final decision	RESOLVED 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	SEND Place Planning and Capacity Strategy	RESOLVED that 1. Cabinet be advised that this Committee unanimously supported the	At its meeting on 17 November, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.

			<p>recommendations as outlined in the report; and</p> <p>2. A Task and Finish Working Group be established as outlined above.</p>	
23	1 December 2022	Care proceedings and Public Law Outline: Annual Report on progress	RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.	Report to return in 12 months
24	5 January 2023	National Funding Formula and School Funding 2023/24	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>At its meeting on 17 January, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.</p> <p>A report on Council's education funding position and comparator information to be provided in the new municipal year.</p>
25	5 January 2023	Update of School Organisation Plan 2021-24	<p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	RESOLVED that the contents of the report and responses to comments from the Committee be noted.	No further action
27	5 January 2023	Review of Send Provision in Northumberland: Scoping Report	RESOLVED that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The terms of reference and scope of the review be agreed; 2. The membership be agreed as: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Councillor R Dodd (Chair) Councillor C Ball Councillor A Dale Councillor M Swinbank Mr J Sanderson (Co-opted Member)</p> 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. 	Task and Finish Group meeting dates to be confirmed
28	2 February 2023	School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2024/2025 Academic Year	RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations in the report.	At its meeting on 14 February, Cabinet considered the Committee’s comments.

29	2 February 2023	Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021-2022		
30	2 February 2023	Children who are Electively Home Educated (Summary and Guidance)		
31	2 February 2023	Social Work Workforce and Recruitment and Retention		