



People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held at the Council Chamber, Lodge Road, Daventry NN11 4FP on Tuesday 25 January 2022 at 6.00pm

Agenda

1.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members
2.	Declarations of Interest Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	Notification of requests from Members of the Public to address the Meeting To receive notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting on an item on the public part of the agenda.
4.	Minutes (Pages 5 - 14) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 November 2021.
5.	Chair's Announcements To receive any communications from the Chair.
6.	Children's Services Performance (Pages 15 - 40) To consider an update on matters supporting children's services performance in Northamptonshire and the outcomes of the latest Ofsted monitoring visit.
7.	School Improvement (Pages 41 - 50) To consider an overview of activity by West Northamptonshire Council to support school improvement.

8.	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Support and Alternative Provision (Pages 51 - 62)</p> <p>To consider an overview of SEND support and alternative provision in West Northamptonshire.</p>
9.	<p>Review of Committee Work Programme 2021/22 (Pages 63 - 68)</p> <p>To review and note the Committee Work Programme.</p>
10.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>The Chair to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>
11.	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>In respect of the following items the Chair may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: "That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them."</p>

Catherine Whitehead
Proper Officer
17 January 2022

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillor Rosie Herring (Chair)

Councillor Karen Cooper (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Azizur Rahman

Councillor Harry Barrett

Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM

Councillor Raymond Connolly

Councillor Cheryl Hawes

Councillor Nigel Hinch

Councillor Greg Lunn

Councillor Bob Purser

Councillor Wendy Randall

Councillor Emma Roberts

Councillor Sue Sharps

Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex

Councillor Mike Warren

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

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Queries Regarding this Agenda

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact James Edmunds, Democratic Services via the following:

Email: democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council
One Angel Square
Angel Street
Northampton
NN1 1ED



People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Chamber, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester NN12 6AD on Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present	Councillor Rosie Herring (Chair) Councillor Karen Cooper (Vice-Chair) Councillor Azizur Rahman Councillor Harry Barrett Councillor Imran Ahmed Chowdhury BEM Councillor Nigel Hinch Councillor Greg Lunn Councillor Bob Purser Councillor Emma Roberts Councillor Nick Sturges-Alex Councillor Mike Warren
Substitute Members:	Councillor Julie Davenport
Also Present:	Councillor Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Raymond Connolly Councillor Wendy Randall Councillor Sue Sharps
Officers	Stuart Lackenby, Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Katie Brown, Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Wellbeing Ashley Leduc, Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance James Edmunds, Democratic Services Assistant Manager Kathryn Holton, Committee Officer Philip Mandeville, Director, Newton Europe Sam Newton, Principal Consultant, Newton Europe

21. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

Apologies were received from Councillors Connolly, Randall and Sharps. Councillor Julie Davenport attended as a substitute for Councillor Sharps.

22. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Notification of requests from Members of the Public to address the Meeting

There were no requests from members of the public to address the meeting.

24. Minutes

Councillor Roberts highlighted that at the previous meeting the Committee had recommended that minutes should attribute comments to individual councillors in future. She had since been advised that this would not be implemented because it was not in line with the style that West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) would be using for minutes. Councillor Roberts asked for it to be noted that she disagreed with this approach.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the minutes of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 September 2021.

25. Chair's Announcements

The Chair advised that she had continued to build links with key partners relevant to the remit of the Committee and had recently met with Naomi Eisenstadt, the Independent Chair of the Northamptonshire Health and Care Partnership and prospective Chair of the new Integrated Care Board. Ms Eisenstadt had an extensive background of work on child poverty, which could be very useful to the Committee's anti-poverty work.

The Chair thanked Councillor Cooper, the Vice-Chair, for chairing the previous Committee meeting in her absence.

26. Residential and nursing care for older people

The Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing introduced the agenda item and highlighted the following contextual points:

- Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for care home staff from 11 November 2021 increased recruitment and retention challenges in the care sector. This requirement was due to be extended further to all services subject to inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from 1 April 2022.
- Vacancy levels in West Northamptonshire care homes were quite low. However, there was a challenge in how data on this was captured. Care homes were required to complete a national tracker, which reported vacancies but not the reasons for them. This could lead acute care colleagues to question why delayed transfers of care occurred when there were apparently vacant care beds in the area.
- There was a continuing need to lobby the government for a better settlement for adult social care, which would support recruitment and retention.
- WNC needed to consider potential future scenarios that could arise from pressures on the care sector, given that service users could look to WNC as a provider of last resort.

The Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance presented the report and gave an overview of current performance and trends relating to residential care provision in West Northamptonshire, highlighting the following points:

- The profile of performance ratings for care homes took into account that the CQC had not been able to carry out inspection visits during the pandemic and was now working on a risk-led basis.
- Comparisons of performance with neighboring authorities showed that WNC was not where it wanted to be but was broadly comparable with those authorities.
- WNC had terminated seven contracts with providers in 2019 and two in 2020, reflecting that fewer monitoring visits were possible during the pandemic. There had been five terminations so far in 2021. This was due both to the situation of care homes after the pandemic and an increase in WNC monitoring capacity.
- Approximately 60% of WNC's contracted providers had been subject to recent assurance visits. WNC was committed to reaching 100% by 31 March 2022. Additional resources had been employed to support providers and to sustain performance improvement.
- Four contracts had been terminated since July 2021 due to the quality of care. WNC aimed to work with providers to ensure effective care and did not take this decision lightly. However, the ultimate priority was to keep residents safe.
- There were 16 providers currently subject to improvement plans, who were receiving additional support.
- The current overall position regarding occupancy and declared vacancies in residential care homes for older people suggested that providers were declaring fewer unused beds or that some providers were ceasing to operate. Providers were reporting concerns about accepting placements that WNC needed to make, due to pressures on staffing.
- WNC had worked with care homes following the announcement of mandatory vaccinations to support them in meeting this requirement and to mitigate associated risks as far as possible. As of 1 November 2021, 96% of care home staff had received one vaccination dose, 92% had received both doses and 4% had not been vaccinated. There was a lag in data reporting. It was anticipated that an additional 4% of staff would go on to receive their second dose, but that a total of 143 staff would leave employment from the start of November 2021. This position was reviewed on a daily basis. WNC was working with care homes on options for providing extra support where necessary.
- For the future WNC was encouraging providers to join a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) procurement framework. It needed to consider sustainable fee levels, including engaging with providers on this. It was also considering potential alternative options to residential care such as extra care and hybrid models.

The Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that a care home being rated as inadequate could ultimately result in the closure of the home and the need for WNC to relocate residents. However, pressures on staffing reduced the capacity to act in this way. The current position was manageable but a significant increase in the number of care homes rated as inadequate would represent a challenge. WNC would need to consider different responses involving sustaining providers whilst securing improved performance.

The Committee considered the report and members raised the following points:

- How did WNC capture data on people waiting to go into a care home but not able to do so due to a lack of capacity?
- There were currently 16 providers subject to monitoring and five contracts had been terminated so far in 2021. How was this affecting the geographical spread of care homes and was it increasing the likelihood of people having to move from one part of West Northamptonshire to another to receive care?
- Concern was expressed regarding the increasing cost of care due to demand, both from a budget and an individual perspective. WNC should look at increasing the number of local authority owned care homes: it currently owned eight homes whereas Derbyshire County Council (DCC) owned 23. Doing this would reflect shortfall in private sector provision as well as increasing WNC's ability to shape new developments in the authority.
- Could comparison figures for care home contract terminations be provided for WNC and other neighboring authorities?
- How would assurance visits to care homes be put back on schedule if current visits were only due to be completed in March 2022?
- WNC needed to ensure that it was able to identify all care homes that were experiencing problems.
- If WNC terminated a contract with a care home this could affect the provider's ability to meet the needs of other clients not placed there by the local authority. How did WNC seek to manage this risk?
- There was a clear need to increase the earnings for care workers but this would in turn increase providers' operating costs. WNC needed to work out the best way of managing these competing factors.
- When a care home was rated inadequate was it an option for the facility to be taken into WNC's control?
- The Committee had previously requested an update on Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) utilisation, which had not yet been received. This should be provided as soon as possible.

The Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing and the Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance made the following points in response:

- WNC operated a brokerage service that dealt with all care placements and would record when people were waiting for any form of care. WNC worked with providers to address issues affecting care provision but also had an escalation process that could include the use of other providers of assured quality. WNC would not leave an individual without necessary care, even if this resulted in the authority incurring additional costs.
- Care homes were mostly located in and around Northampton. Additional information regarding location could be provided to the Committee. Reductions in provision increased existing pressures on choice.
- DCC's in-house residential care gave it greater capacity to step in and respond to current pressures on overall provision. Until recently, the cost to local authorities of in-house provision had been too high compared to the independent sector. However, it was now more feasible for WNC to consider increasing in-house provision as an option for the future. This would support its role of intervening

when care was not meeting needs. It could also assist in dealing with issues such as the limited availability of independent domiciliary care in Daventry and South Northamptonshire.

- Additional resources would be used to support assurance visits to care homes until they were back on the normal schedule.
- Changes had been made to primary care contracts and as part of Integrated Care System development to improve day to day intelligence on care homes and collaborative working to support effective provision.
- WNC would work to support all residents of a care home if cancelling a contract affected the home's overall viability. WNC had a statutory duty of care to all service users in the area, regardless of the source of funding for their individual care packages.
- It was anticipated that WNC's future approach to residential care would bring in a contractual requirement for providers to pay staff at a set level. This would mean that higher funding provided by the authority would support staffing. However, the ability to take this approach was affected by the fact that the likely increase in the adult social care precept would not cover the cost of increasing care staff pay to the level of the National Living Wage and above. A 1% increase in Council Tax would raise £1.1m in West Northamptonshire: increasing care staff pay to £9.50 per hour would cost £5m and to £10.50 per hour in order to be competitive would cost much more. There was also a question about whether it was fair to increase Council Tax in this way to meet the cost of adult social care.
- A cost of care exercise was due to be done in December 2021 – January 2022.
- It was only financially viable for WNC to take over a care home if it was a unit of at least 60 beds that was constructed in the last 20 years. Smaller and older or converted buildings were not ideal.
- Relevant Cabinet Members were due to be briefed on the current position and planned action regarding DFG utilisation. Further information could then be provided to the Committee.

The Committee considered potential resolutions on this matter, including the scope for it to recommend further action by WNC to make the case for a better funding settlement for adult social care. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration advised that WNC was already highlighting this need and advised that he liaised regularly with Andrew Lewer MP, whose position on the Health and Social Care Select Committee gave WNC a good link into national discussion.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed to write to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration supporting representations to the government concerning the need for adult social care to be funded at a level that recognises current pressures on services.
- b) Requested to be provided with a geographical breakdown of the care homes in West Northamptonshire subject to performance improvement plans or contract terminations in 2021/22.
- c) Requested to be provided with further information on the number of care home contract defaults and terminations in West Northamptonshire's neighbouring authorities.

- d) Requested that the further information to be provided to the Committee on Disabled Facilities Grant utilisation be circulated to Committee members as soon as it is available.

27. **Adult Social Care Transformation**

The Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Wellbeing presented the report, which gave an overview of the aims, development and implementation of the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model (TOM). The TOM had been introduced and funded by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). It had now been operating for 13 months and it was important to review that it was achieving its purpose. The Assistant Director highlighted the following points:

- The need to develop a new approach had been informed by feedback from service users that the previous service model was not clear to them, involved too many different contacts and not enough coordination between organisations providing services.
- Diagnostic work had made clear the proportion of time that practitioners were spending outside of contacts with service users and their families, which added to the need for a different approach.
- Newton Europe had provided expert support for the development of the new TOM. The fact that they were also now supporting the Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN) programme gave continuity.
- The design of the new TOM had been led by practitioners and had included work with Northamptonshire Healthwatch on service users' views.
- New care pathways had operated from 19 October 2020 using the footprint for the unitary authorities. Services were linked in to local communities, used the 'three conversations' approach and supported a more flexible, outcome-focussed response to service users' needs.
- The TOM was delivering clear benefits in terms of outcomes for service users. It was ahead of target on financial delivery in all areas, which was assisting WNC to manage current demand on services. The iCAN programme would further build on this progress.
- WNC would continue to develop its service offer using a place-based model to deliver positive outcomes for service users and staff and that left flexibility for partnership working. The next phase of development would focus on linking in to wider issues around housing and communities and the Integrated Care System.

The Committee considered the report and members raised the following points:

- It appeared that one of the challenges in getting appropriate care in a timely manner was the need for occupational therapy (OT) assessment. Could this be carried out in a different way?
- Where did the voluntary and community sector (VCS) fit into the model for care provision? Age UK had lost staff at Northampton General Hospital due to the termination of a previous NCC contract. There seemed to be a better position at Kettering General Hospital.
- How did WNC deal with the implications of people being discharged from hospitals in neighbouring areas into the authority?

- How could WNC ensure that support was in place before people reached the point of being unable to cope, particularly if this resulted in them feeling unable to engage with reablement support?
- The reported performance outcomes for the TOM pre- and post-vesting day did not align. It would be helpful to have further information that would enable a better comparison to be made.
- What risk to WNC would result if current service outcomes declined?
- What measures were in place to ensure that telehealth devices were working properly and that risks to service users were not increasing?
- How would the outcomes for an individual needing support now be different from a few years ago?

The Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing and the Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Wellbeing responded as follows:

- Occupational therapists were aligned to all community teams and the reablement team. Other professionals could be used to carry out functions where appropriate. There were challenges relating to capacity: OT was challenging area for recruitment although WNC did relatively well. There were currently no OT-related delays in community teams, although there were issues with DFG that would be reported separately.
- WNC had not been party to discussions about the previous contract with Age UK but a vibrant VCS was central to the approach that the authority was seeking to take. VCS collaboration with the acute trusts had helped to change their thinking about ways of supporting hospital avoidance and safe discharge. The VCS was also important for people who did not want formal support but help within the community, for example provision of allotments as part of social prescribing.
- WNC had different arrangements in place to engage with the various acute trusts that served West Northamptonshire. WNC tried to repatriate people to their local area to access reablement services but the relative scarcity of care provision in some areas such as rural south Northamptonshire could make this challenging.
- Providing timely support was more of a challenge in relation to disabled children and young adults than for older people. WNC sought to engage with service users and their families when they presented, whether they were new or returning. In the current situation with busy hospitals and pressures on external care different risk-based conversations were taking place. There was an emphasis on providing support in communities and working collaboratively with other groups that could contribute to this. As a general principle the earlier that WNC could engage with people the better.
- The ways of working put in place as part of the TOM were intended to be sustainable. There would be a risk if necessary community-based solutions were not available and bed-based solutions then had to be considered, which would have a greater impact on budgets. WNC used a series of processes to identify if any negative trends were developing. A money management meeting was held each week to monitor the flow of people through services to understand how that translated to packages of care and to give early warning of any financial spikes. Performance was also monitored against indicators for numbers in care

placements and the average cost of placements. It was important to identify any issues early to put mitigations in place.

- Data on outcomes included in the report showed the full year effect across the whole county and was difficult to disaggregate. The data could be looked at again and WNC performance would become clearer over time.
- Assistive technology was used when agreed by the individual service user and it was assessed that it could be safely managed. It was subject to appropriate safeguards. It would be monitored by a WNC team of responders and as part of the annual review cycle. Individuals could use assistive technology as well as having a care package and their case worker would be able to identify any concerns that might arise. Exciting work around proactive monitoring was being implemented, which picked up early signs of risk.
- In terms of improvements in outcomes compared with services before implementation of the TOM, the focus now was on meeting the needs of the person rather than on process. Service users would now be on an annual review cycle. If contact with them identified an issue they would be put through to speak to an adult social care duty worker, who would determine the next steps needed to support them. If the individual was already receiving care this would trigger an early discussion at the third stage of the 'three conversations' approach about finding the most independent outcomes to resolve their issues.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration considered that the implementation of the TOM had been an excellent piece of work. He was proud of what had been achieved. Money had been saved and people's outcomes improved. The development of the TOM had put WNC in a better position than counterparts who had not taken the same approach.

Committee members commented that the TOM did seem to put WNC ahead of the national direction and to be delivering better outcomes for service users whilst also using resources more effectively. This was commendable work.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Recorded its thanks to staff involved in the successful implementation of the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model.
- b) Requested to be provided with aligned data for the outcomes produced by the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model in the periods before and after vesting day for the new Northamptonshire authorities.

[The meeting was adjourned briefly at this point.]

28. **Carried Motions on Notice - Predecessor Councils**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager presented the report, which invited the Committee to comment on carried motions on notice from predecessor councils within its remit. This matter was being considered by each of the Overview and Scrutiny committees at meetings in November. This was intended to inform action by the Democracy and Standards Committee and Full Council in response to a motion agreed by Full Council on 15 July 2021.

The Committee considered the report. In response to questions from members the Committee was advised that the identification in the report of motions that could be treated as no longer required was not definitive. It was open to the Committee to consider whether issues raised by previous motions should be included in its work programme or to comment on motions that might be adopted again by the Council. However, when doing so, the Committee was asked to recognise that it might not serve a useful purpose for the Council to re-adopt an original motion that was now several years old even if the subject of the motion was still a live issue.

Committee members commented that it was not feasible for the Committee to consider in detail each of the previous motions within its remit to establish whether or not they had been adequately resolved. However, this work needed to be done by WNC to avoid losing previous motions that were still valid. It was felt that the Committee should comment to the Democracy and Standards Committee that previous motions should be considered for re-adoption by the Council unless it was clear that they were closed.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed that no further action is necessary on those motions within its remit where it has been identified that the matter is already closed, as indicated by notes included in the report.
- b) Agreed that the Committee is not in a position to identify that other motions within its remit are closed and therefore recommended that these motions should be considered for re-adoption by Full Council.

29. **Scope for Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel - Child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm**

The Chair advised that the task and finish scrutiny panel had met to agree the proposed scope for the scrutiny review, which was now presented to the Committee for approval.

The Chair invited members to raise any points concerning the proposed scope that they wished the Committee to consider.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the scope for the task and finish scrutiny panel on child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm.

30. **Review of Committee Work Programme 2021/22**

The Democratic Services Assistant Manager introduced the report inviting the Committee to review and update its work programme for 2021/22 following the work programming event on 21 October 2021. The final work programme would be presented to the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Group for approval.

The Committee considered potential topic areas identified at previous meetings and at the work programming event. Members discussed the best way of scheduling forthcoming business to group together relevant items and to take account of the departure of the Director of Children's Services early in 2022.

RESOLVED that: the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Agreed the inclusion in its work programme for 2021/22 of topics arising from the work programming event, as set out in the report.
- b) Agreed that items of business be scheduled at forthcoming Committee meetings in 2021/22 as follows:
 - 25 January 2022: scrutiny of children’s services performance; school improvement; special educational needs and disability (SEND) support and alternative provision; and an initial briefing on the Healthwatch function
 - 1 March 2022: scrutiny of the interim housing strategy; anti-poverty strategy; and Healthwatch function.

31. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Achieving consistently good quality practice

Outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visits

Measures to further improve recruitment and retention of social workers



**Northamptonshire
Children's Trust**

Areas to provide update on:

Achieving consistently good quality practice

Outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visits

Measures to further improve recruitment and retention of social workers



Achieving consistently good quality practice for all children, supported by full implementation of the practice model



A journey of improvement....

In January 2020, the Ofsted monitoring visit of the 'front door' found:

- An acceleration of progress at the 'front door' over the last three months
- The quality and impact of assessments remain highly variable. The local authority's model of practice is not embedded within the workforce or fully understood by partner agencies. Frontline managers are not consistently challenging poorer practice. Although audit activity has increased, quality assurance systems remain underdeveloped.
- Senior leaders are focused on recruiting and retaining a skilled and stable workforce, raising standards of practice, and ultimately improving the experiences and progress of all children in receipt of services. Given the scale of improvement needed, senior leaders rightly recognise that it will take time to fully implement their plans and to see their impact.



In October 2020, the Ofsted focused visit of children's social care found:

- Despite unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, inspectors found convincing evidence that services for children and young people in Northamptonshire are starting to improve, albeit from a very low base.
- Children's services leaders, together with safeguarding partners, responded quickly and effectively to challenges during the pandemic. Their main priorities were to ensure that vulnerable children, young people, their families and staff were helped and protected.
- Effective actions taken by senior leaders are resulting in tangible improvements to both compliance with statutory requirements and to the quality of social work practice.
- A revised quality assurance framework and the findings from audit activity are underpinning improvements to practice.



In February 2021, the Ofsted monitoring visit of children in care found:

- The stable and committed senior leadership team is steadily achieving improvements in the quality of services for children in care, including for disabled children
- However, the overall quality of the service remains inconsistent and management oversight is not sufficiently robust.
- The vast majority of children have an up-to-date assessment that identifies their needs. Some assessments are comprehensive and help to identify the progress made; this appropriately informs their care plan. However, this is not consistent for all children. Some assessments are limited in analysis and do not consider children's wider needs. Some care plans are not actioned in a timely way and this can result in delays in meeting needs and in achieving permanence.
- Children in care practice weeks, together with auditing and a strong focus on getting the basics right, are all contributing to the quality assurance process.



In July 2021, the Ofsted monitoring visit of children in need and child protection found:

- Throughout the challenges of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, senior leaders have continued to focus relentlessly on improving practice. This has resulted in tangible progress, which continues to gain traction in improving the experiences, progress and outcomes for children.
- The quality of social work practice is improving in the children's safeguarding and disabled children's teams, although it still varies in quality.
- The practice model is already enabling positive experiences and progress for some children. However, the model of practice is not used consistently across all safeguarding and disabled children's teams.
- However, the frequency and quality of direct work with children to inform their assessments and plans are variable.
- Although improving, the quality of assessments remains variable.
- The quality of children's plans is improving, although it is still variable.
- Senior leaders have comprehensive and thorough oversight of the quality of practice, strengthened by the development of a quality assurance board which is chaired by the chief executive of the trust.



In November 2021, the Ofsted monitoring visit of care leavers found:

- Senior leaders have made progress in improving services for care leavers since the 2019 inspection of local authority children's services in Northamptonshire. However, the quality and consistency of practice are still too variable; senior leaders have realistic and achievable plans for improvement.
- The quality of support provided to care leavers by personal advisers varies.
- The quality and timeliness of written pathway plans have improved since the 2019 inspection
- Safety planning is inconsistent for older children in care and care leavers who are particularly vulnerable
- Improvement plans are realistic and continue to be implemented, with success, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic
- The comprehensive quality assurance framework provides senior leaders with a clear understanding of children's and young people's experiences, practice strengths and areas for improvement

At this time on our journey

Whilst practice remains variable, Ofsted and our own quality assurance activity has identified improvements are being made and some examples of great practice

Our Improvement Plan, reviewed monthly, provides our focus

A strong and stable workforce underpins improving the consistency of practice and we continue to relentlessly prioritise this – more stability has been achieved in managerial posts, we have improved our recruitment and retention offer and are delivering on our conditions for success

We are focused on improving the quality of assessments and plans, informed by the voice of the child and understanding and supporting their individual and diverse needs. More front line managers have undertaken training, coaching and mentoring to support them in uplifting practice

Our collaborative quality assurance activity, including practice weeks with young inspectors, is helping practitioners and managers to uplift quality

At this time on our journey cont.

We continue to implement and embed our strengths based, child focused practice model to achieve sustained outcomes for children

Our workforce is now better supported with a more tailored continuous professional development offer, access to best practice and research and sharing our quality assurance through our learning hub

Our comprehensive quality assurance activity provides a measure of progress, and we are also focused on ensuring managers are confident and competent in undertaking this





Children, Young People and Families at the Heart of the Trust
Northamptonshire Children's Trust

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Supervision Policy and Procedure

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter sets out how supervision is carried out within Northamptonshire Children's Trust and applies to all members of our workforce whose role relates to children, young people and family practice.

RELATED GUIDANCE AND LEGISLATION

[Research in Practice \(RiP\) Reflective Supervision: Resource Pack \(2017\)](#)

Practice Standards for Practitioners and Managers:

Improving Outcomes for Children in Northamptonshire



Our practice model

We have implemented revised

- Practice Model
- Practice Standards
- Supervision Policy and Procedure
- Quality Assurance Framework

So all practitioners and managers have greater clarity on how we work and what the expectations are for quality of practice and support for practitioners

Children, Young People and Families at the Heart of the Trust
Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Northamptonshire Children's Trust
Quality Assurance Strategy And Framework 2021/25

Practice Standards



Signs of Safety is embedded in practice



All children have an outcome focused plan that reflects the assessed level of need and / or risk



Good quality communication to ensure positive engagement



We will work honestly and openly with families and partner agencies



Practitioners use a holistic approach to assessments



Professional development will equip all with the skills and knowledge to perform effectively



Visits are meaningful and purposeful



Direct work will be undertaken with creativity and respect



Practice Standards



The workforce receives high quality supervision



Managers provide leadership



Meetings have a clear focus that inform, engage, inspire and achieve progress



Children and families receive the right intervention at the right time



All are entitled to carry out their duties without fear or risk to their own personal safety



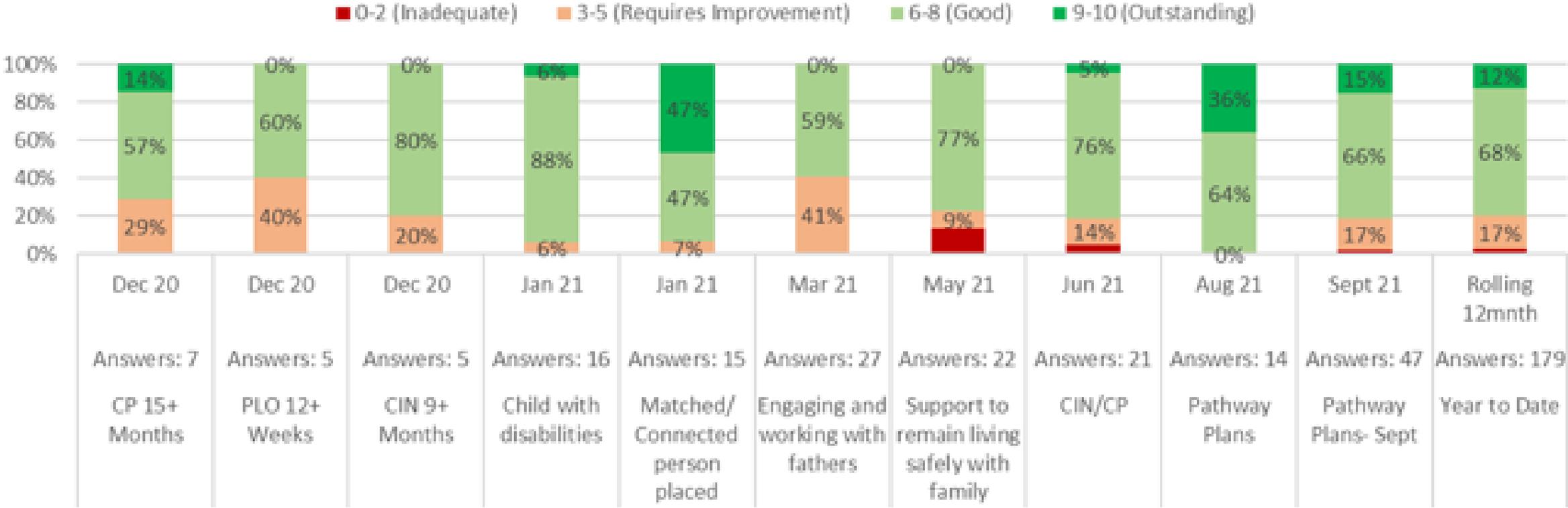
Voice of the Child



Policies and Procedures



CRPD Gradings Trend - Outcome Improvements



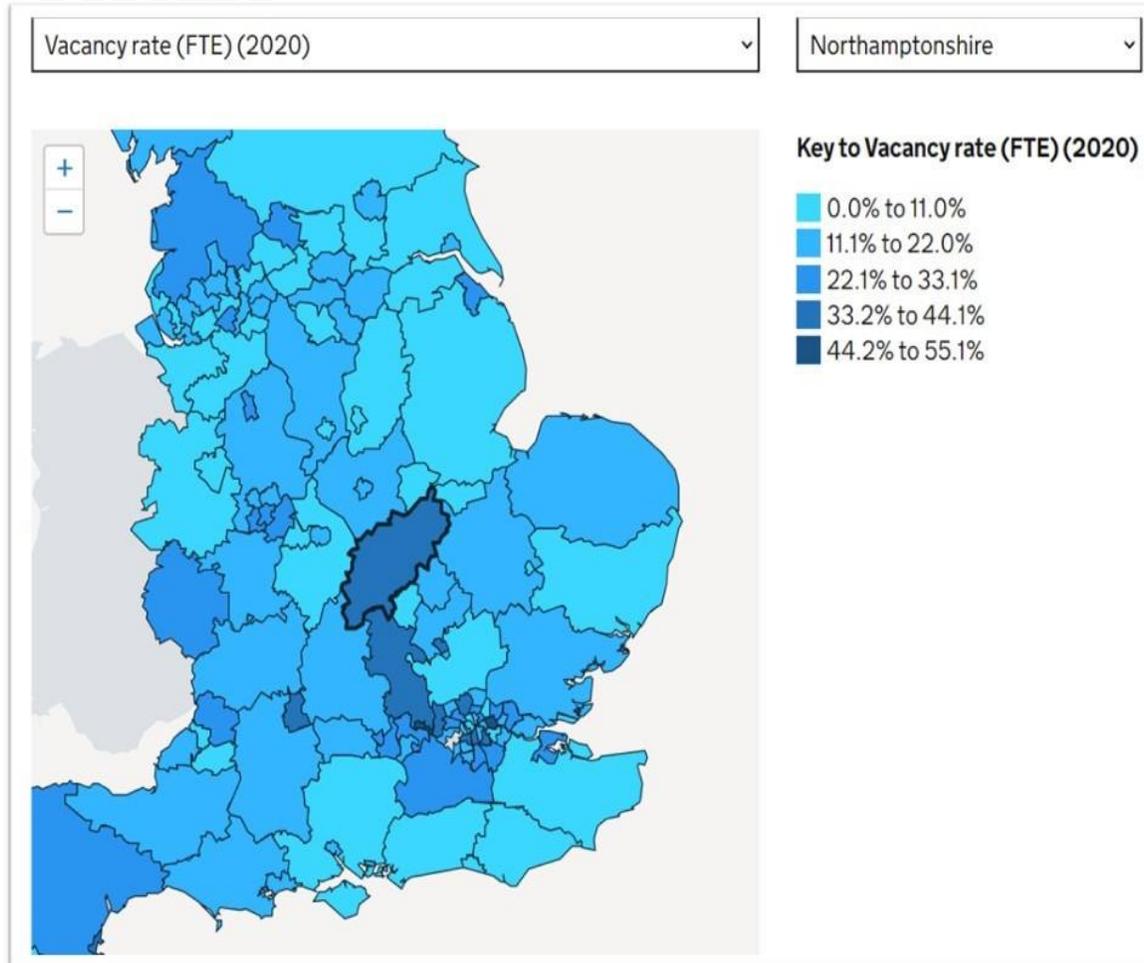
Our at a glance picture of collaborative reflective practice discussions (audits) give us an overall picture of the quality of our practice that continues to improve.

Workforce Strategy

Measures to further improve recruitment and retention of social workers



The Local & National Picture



The data to the left is taken from the National Statistics for 2020
The data for 2021 is due to be released in February 2022.
The points under the local picture (below) advise how the picture has changed in the past 12 months.

National Picture

In September 2020 there were 31,854 children and family social workers in England.

The number of FTE vacancies in 2020 was 6113 (16.1%)

The number of FTE agency workers was 5806 (15.4%)

There were 5,200 FTE social worker starters in the year ending 30 September 2020, a decrease of 12.5% compared to 2019. *

Demand outstrips supply and nationally all authorities are competing for the same limited resource. Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on workforce and increase in demand/ complexity

Local Picture

The social worker vacancy rate for NCT in December 2021 is 22.5%

The rate of agency social workers for NCT in December 2021 is 16.6%

Opus who support NCT, and a number of other authorities in the region, confirm that whilst historically Northamptonshire paid higher than surrounding authorities for locums, this is no longer the case.

Those that didn't previously struggle are now experiencing extreme difficulties on both the permanent and locum side. As such rates on the locum side have been increasing throughout the region.

Great news is that Northamptonshire is receiving higher application volumes which showcases that the activity and hard work on attraction is starting to pay off.

Strategic Framework

Vision

Children, Young People and Families at the heart of all we do
- in every action we take and every decision we make.

Our Commitment

(co-produced with children
and young people)

What we do today affects your tomorrow, we promise to
walk side by side with you

Outcomes Framework



Conditions for Success

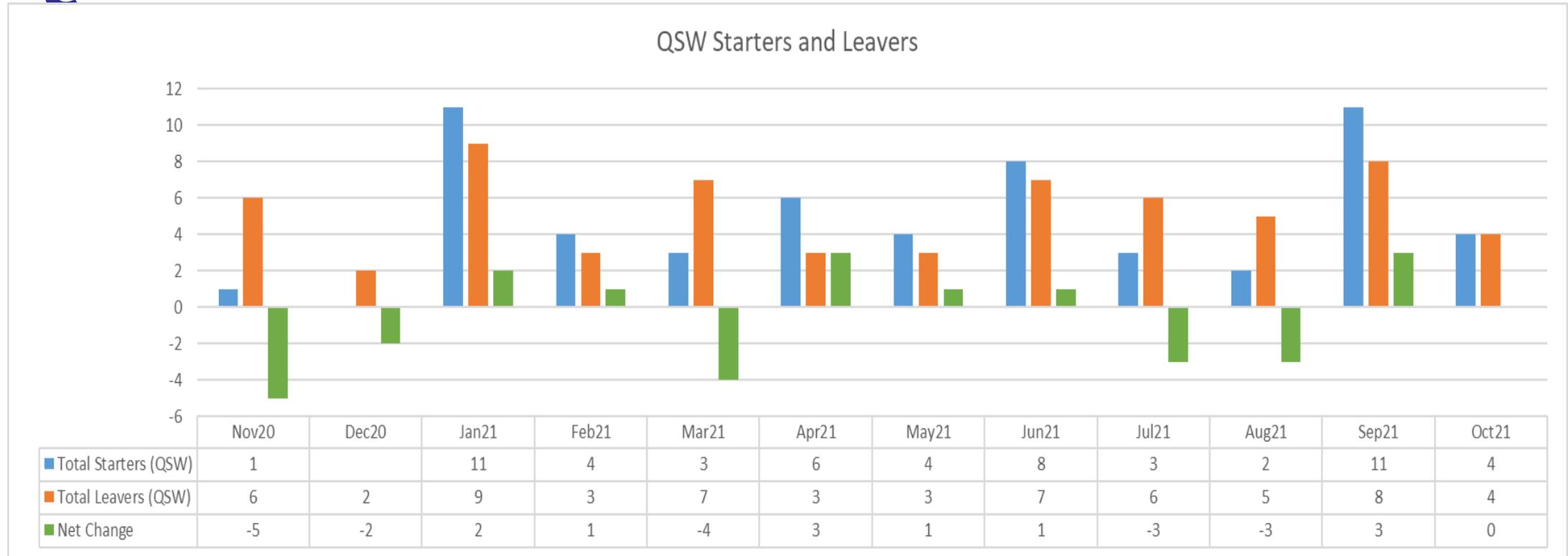


What are our priorities?

- Effective Leadership
- Recruit and Retain an Awesome Workforce
- Strong Relationship-Based Practice
- Insightful Quality Assurance and Learning
- Healthy Partnerships
- Robust and Effective Resource Management



Overall Starters and Leavers- Trend QSW.



Recruitment - High Level Overview

- 48 new permanent qualified social workers this year
- 47 existing qualified social work moved into new career opportunities within the Trust
- Improved attraction so now more qualified social workers are applying to work for us in Northamptonshire than in any of our surrounding boroughs.
- 4 international workers started since April 2021 and a new cohort of 10 set to join us in May 2021
- 30 ASYEs (assessed and supported year in employment) in the organisation currently who will be completing and moving into Social Worker roles in the next 12 months

Demonstration of Success Rates:

- CV : Interview = 77% of CVs we receive get an interview.
- Offer : Start = 72% of people we offer to, accept and have started with us.
- For every 5 people we interview we offer someone a new role.





Measures to improve recruitment and retention

- 'Growing our own' social workers due to the local and national challenges in social work recruitment

Social work apprentices, Step Up to Social Work students and NQSWs supported by Social Work Academy and learning and development team. Also part of the Front Line programme

- Support career aspirations and development of current staff.
- Additional temporary capacity / managed service teams are in place to manage the demands the pandemic has created and mitigate risks of increased caseloads in services
- Recruitment to a peripatetic social work team, to provide flexible resource wherever it is required, help to keep caseloads manageable, and achieve more stability across our services.
- Implementation of our '**conditions for success**': changing our culture to being strengths based and empowering; improving processes and systems; and investing in our staff, through our leadership development programme and professional development opportunities (eg Research in Practice programmes).



Additional routes into Social Work

- NCT host University Student Placements in NCT - currently we have students from University of Northampton, Cambridge, Nottingham and Birmingham Universities.
- Students qualify each year and the Social Work Academy recruit NQSWs three times a year with cohorts starting in January, May and September each year.
- Each team in Children in Care, Safeguarding and Support, DCT, DAAT have NQSW posts within their establishments and NQSWs are placed according to vacancies and ensuring appropriate support and skill mix is in place.
- The Social Work Academy delivers the ASYE programme in partnership with Learning & Development and provides support to NQSWs during this year alongside their teams. The SWA also provides support post-ASYE to aid retention.

Routes into SW roles – January 2022 onwards.

- **10 Step up to Social Work students** start in NCT on placement in January 2022, qualify April 2023.
- In **September 2022** we will have Frontline Students start in NCT, the number is yet to be decided but **potential 8**. These will qualify in September 2023.
- **3 SW Apprenticeships** currently in NCT, qualify June 2023. They are currently in Safeguarding teams
- **9 NQSWs** started in Jan 21; 13 in May 21 (including 8 Step Up graduates); 14 in Sept 21
- We have a new cohort of **3 NQSWs** due to start in January 2022.

Future Strategic Direction

- We have reviewed the recruitment and retention package offered for social workers to improve our competitiveness within an employees' market- impact to be reviewed
- Monitor the impact of recruitment campaigns, review and adjusting them as needed
- Broaden our Teaching Partnership, in conjunction with the University of Northampton and West and North Northamptonshire Adults' Social Care to further develop professional development opportunities for our workforce
- Broaden focus on the workforce narrative - consider additional key indicators and areas for improvement.
- Consider existing SLAs with West Northamptonshire Council to support effective engagement of apprentices, university students and ongoing support and training for the SW workforce.
- Retention – Focus on checkpoints for new workers to help improve retention and highlight concerns early.
- Revised models of delivery e.g. reach out to Family Support Workers for better attraction to non SW roles that support delivery.
- Implement conditions for success : improve the quality of learning and practice to enhance the reputation of all parties and attract and retain staff





West
Northamptonshire
Council

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 25 January 2022

Agenda Item 7

An overview of activity by West Northamptonshire Council to support school improvement

1 Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the legal powers and duties of the council relating to school effectiveness. There is a crucial difference between school improvement and school effectiveness. School improvement is a matter for individual schools, schools that have agreed to work together, or academy trust groups (which often make their own school improvement arrangements).
- 1.2 School effectiveness describes the local authority's (LA) legal duty under the Education Act, 1996 (as amended by the various subsequent acts). Section 13a of the 1996 act (see [here](#)) sets out the duty (of LAs responsible for education) to promote high standards and fulfilment of pupils' potential.
- 1.3 This report focuses on:
 - school effectiveness, including school improvement for schools 'of concern' as defined by the Department for Education (DfE);
 - the school effectiveness duties relating to academy schools, and the way West Northamptonshire engages with academy schools where there are concerns about performance;
 - the number and type of schools, and latest Ofsted inspection outcomes; and
 - the number of schools causing concern, with action taken and future risks.

2 The school effectiveness service: duties and powers

- 2.1 The school effectiveness service (SES) fulfils the council's statutory duty to ensure that maintained schools are at least 'good' and to intervene – using powers vested in it through the Education and Inspections Act, 2006 – where a maintained school is 'of concern'.
- 2.2 We recognise that academy trusts, headteacher and governors are responsible for the performance of the schools they lead and for making the best use of the resources available to them. However, the SES monitors the performance of academy schools in West Northamptonshire, using publicly available data, and the school effectiveness strategy sets out the engagement process with academy trusts where we have concerns about the performance of an academy. This fulfils the duty we have as a council under the 1996 Act as set out in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 2.3 The SES facilitates change and works directly with settings, or deploys partners, for example, partnership head teachers (PHTs) and associate head teachers, to support, challenge and drive improvement. As part of the commitment to school effectiveness, the school effectiveness team will review key priorities based on data analysis, school intelligence and/or changes to current educational thinking and where appropriate will provide county wide continuing professional development (CPD) to address the needs. This may be in addition to or as part of the training offer provided by the teaching school hub.
- 2.4 As noted above, school improvement becomes a matter for the LA where a maintained school is formally 'of concern' as defined in the government's statutory guidance (see [here](#)) and the school effectiveness team will take appropriate action. This may be through informal processes such as the implementation of a targeted improvement group (TIG) or through formal schools causing concerns processes. The threshold for triggering 'targeted support' may include but is not limited to:

- data declining significantly, or being below national average in one or more key indicators;
- the school is at risk of an inadequate judgement or is given an inadequate judgement by Ofsted;
- safeguarding is not effective as judged by the local authority or by Ofsted;
- leadership and management is a cause for concern (including governance);
- the school is at risk of a requiring improvement judgement or is given a requires improvement judgement for a first or second time by Ofsted; or
- significant concerns with finance, attendance, behaviour or exclusions.

2.5 The appendix to this report details the powers of intervention in maintained schools through the Education and Inspections Act, 2006. The powers are extensive, ranging from requiring a governing body to enter contracts for specified services to removing governing bodies and replacing them with an interim executive board.

2.6 The school effectiveness team has undergone extensive transformation in the last 18 months. Following a period of reduced capacity and subsequent recruitment, it comprises a head of service; three school improvement partners; one school improvement partner – governance; one school improvement partner – early years and one associate headteacher.

3 The schools estate

3.1 Table 1 shows that there are 186 schools in West Northamptonshire, of which 148 (almost 80 per cent) are primaries. A majority of primary schools – 83 out of 148 (56 per cent) – are academies, and all secondary schools are either single academies or part of a multi-academy trust (MAT). There are five ‘all-through’ (primary and secondary) schools, all of which are academies.

3.2 Geographically, the greatest number of schools, and pupils, are in Northampton. However, most schools are still outside the Northampton area, which has 43 per cent, with 33 per cent of schools in South Northamptonshire and 24 per cent in Daventry.

3.3 The percentage of primary schools in Northampton is lower, with 37 per cent against 36 and 27 per cent in the other two areas. However almost half the secondary schools, including all through schools, (50 per cent) are in Northampton, with 32 and 18 per cent in South Northants and Daventry.

Table 1: schools by stage and status as of 01/09/21

Type of Provision	No. schools by type	Northampton	S Northants	Daventry
SEND, AP, hospital	11	9	1	1
LA Maintained Nursery	5	5	0	0
All-through Schools	5	3	1	1
LA Maintained	0	0	0	0
Academy	5	3	1	1
Primary Schools	148			
LA Maintained	65	17	29	19
Academy	83	38	24	21
Secondary Schools	17			
Academy	17	8	6	3
LA Maintained	0	0	0	0
Total Number of schools	186	80	61	45

4 Ofsted outcomes

4.1 Table 2 below shows the percentage of maintained schools in each grading band at their last inspection. The table also shows the percentage that are ‘good or better’ or ‘worse than good’. This is the key measure, as schools in England are expected to be at least good, and (as noted above in paragraph 1.2) LAs retain a duty to ‘promote high standards’.

Table 2: percentage of Schools by Ofsted inspection outcome (LA maintained)

School type	outstanding	good	RI	SM/SW	number
Nursery	40	60	0	0	5
	100		0		
Primary	11	83	6	0	64*
	94		6		
Special	67	33	0	0	3
	100		0		
Total	15	79	6	0	72
	94		6		

* 1 school has yet to be inspected

4.2 The table shows that all maintained nursery schools, and all maintained special schools are at least good; and moreover that almost 19 out of 20 maintained primary schools are at least good. This means that West Northamptonshire maintained nursery and special schools are top of the table (along with a range of others), while maintained primary schools would rank 29th out of 151 LAs – top quartile performance. This would rank third out of 10 East Midlands LAs.

4.3 Table 3 shows the performance of academy schools in the last inspections. The table shows that four primary academies are in special measures and one special school, with a further eight ‘requiring improvement’ to be good. That is, a total of 12 primary schools that are not yet good.

4.4 While there is no secondary school graded ‘special measures’ required, or ‘serious weakness’, 27 per cent – six academies – are not yet good. The two alternative provisions (APs) – Spires free school and CE academy – were both graded inadequate last year, mainly due to safeguarding concerns. For more detail about the Ofsted outcomes of the APs see section 7 of the report on SEN and alternative provision.

4.5 LA school effectiveness officers have offered to work with the trusts concerned to assist with the improvement required. However, it must be made clear that the greater number and percentage of academy schools that are not yet good should not be seen to indicate the academy sector is weaker than maintained schools. A significant number of academy schools became a part of an academy trust as ‘sponsored academies’ because of a poor outcome – generally a serious weaknesses / special measures outcome) – in an Ofsted inspection.

Table 3: percentage of schools by Ofsted inspection outcome (academy)

School type	outstanding	good	RI	SM/SW	number
Primary	11	73	10	5	79*
	84		15		
Secondary	18	55	27	0	22
	73		27		
Special	50	25	0	25	4**
	75		25		
AP/Hospital	33	0	0	66	3
	33		66		
Total	14	68	13	5	108
	82		18		

** 4 schools have not been inspected so are not included in the data.

** 1 SEN school has not been inspected so is not included in the data.

4.6 Tables 4 and 5 show the percentages of primary and secondary schools respectively that were graded ‘good or better’ at their last inspection by area as at 31/10/21. Table 4 shows that primary schools in Daventry (maintained and academy) have the best outcomes, with those in Northampton being weakest. However, secondary schools in Northampton had the best outcomes, with schools in the south the poorest. The outcomes in Northampton would put schools there 65th out of 151 ‘top-tier’ LAs – secondary quartile performance.

Table 4: Ofsted outcome by area – primary schools

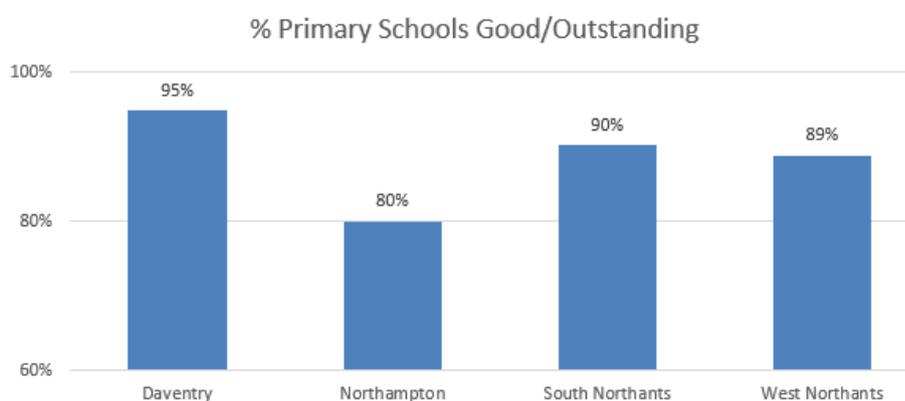
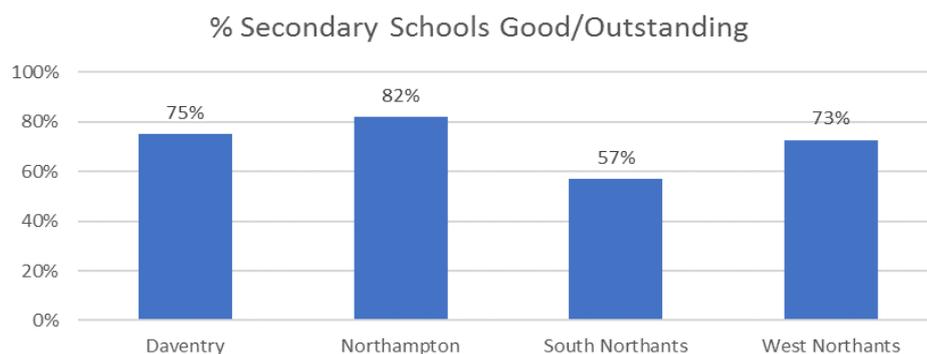


Table 4: Ofsted outcome by area – primary schools



5 Schools causing concern

- 5.1 The LA will undertake risk assessments in order to categorise all West Northamptonshire schools on an annual basis. Progress will be reviewed termly. School improvement partners have a key role in categorising schools but work with other LA services to ensure a holistic picture of the school is obtained.
- 5.2 Where an LA school has been identified as a school of concern (see paragraph 2.4), the school effectiveness team will take appropriate action either through informal processes (TIG) or through formal schools causing concerns (SCC) processes.
- 5.3 As of September 2021, action has been taken in five primary schools and one maintained nursery school. Of these, three are subject to the informal TIG process and three are subject to formal schools causing concerns processes. Support offered has included the deployment of an LA associate headteacher, 2-3 weekly school improvement partner visits, the setting of clear actions and regular monitoring and evaluation to assess impact of the actions taken and the brokering of additional support from outside agencies. In addition, the service has commissioned independent reviews. In all cases, progress is reviewed six-weekly.
- 5.4 As a result of measures taken, the positive impact of actions can be clearly seen in all but one school. Leadership has been strengthened through support offered and clear actions for improvement identified and implemented. Where improvement has not been seen in one school, the school is in the process of joining an academy trust. Examples of impact seen include:
- one school with an RI grading was deemed to be taking effective action in order for the school to be good by Ofsted in a recent monitoring visit;
 - one school (good but declining) has shown significant improvement and will be moved from the formal SCC process to informal process (TIG) at the next review;
 - in one school (good but at significant risk of inadequate judgement), the head has been managed out, the chair of governors has resigned and an associate head teacher and a new chair of governors has put in place until September 2022;
- 5.5 The SE service is also working in partnership with a MAT following an inadequate judgement.

6 Planned activity for 2022/23

- 6.1 There is planned activity in three areas: standards, partnership development and risk mitigation. For standards, the priorities and associated activity for the forthcoming year are:
- as the 2022 KS1, 2 and 4 assessment will provide the first set of validated school data since 2019, the SE team will analyse and identify key priorities and develop action plan accordingly;
 - changes to new education inspection framework may leave some schools vulnerable: therefore SIP visits have identified that curriculum development is an area of concern, and training for schools and deep dives will be conducted in all LA maintained primary schools to assess the risk;
 - continue to use intelligence from visits, data scrutiny and the single conversation to identify training needs for schools and link with teaching school hub as and where required;
 - to develop a good to outstanding CPD programme to ensure schools are aspirational; and
 - work with other LA services to reduce the rate of exclusions and off-rolling particularly at Secondary school level.
- 6.2 In terms of partnership development the service will continue to engage with MAT CEOs and strengthen leadership forums to ensure that these are sector led.
- 6.3 For risk mitigation, we will work with school place planning team to identify pressures on schools due to falling roll linked to drop-in birth rate and develop a strategy to mitigate risk to LA and to support schools.

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Local authority powers of intervention in schools

1 Background and context

1.1 This guidance is for use by the school effectiveness officers, and for information for head teachers and members of governing bodies. First, the legislation and guidance defining a 'school of concern' is summarised. Then 'early intervention' proposals and process for issuing an early warning notice and the use of the local authority's (LA) intervention powers are explained.

2 Schools of concern

2.1 There are 10 relevant acts, which are listed on page 7 of the DfE's schools causing concern guidance, which was updated in September 2020 (see [here](#)). However, the principal one is the Education and Inspections Act, 2006 as set out in part 4 of, and schedule 6 to, the Act. In addition, section 72 requires LAs to have regard to guidance given by the secretary of state for education.

2.2 It is important to note that the guidance makes clear that 'schools causing concern' are not solely those that are 'eligible for intervention'. The category includes schools about which the LA has 'serious concerns'.

2.3 Schools 'eligible for intervention' are as follows:

2.4 First, where a performance standards and safety warning notice has been given (s 60) and the school has failed to comply (see [here](#)). Such a notice may be given when 'standards of pupil performance are unacceptably low; where there has been a 'serious breakdown' in the way the school is managed'; or the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened. The definition of 'low standards' is when standards are low one or more of the following:

- the standards that the pupils might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to attain;
- where relevant, the standards previously attained by them; or
- the standards attained by pupils at comparable schools.

2.5 Second, where a teachers' pay and conditions warning notice has been given, and the school concerned has failed to comply. (section 60A of the Act, which was inserted by the 2009 Act).

2.6 Third, where a school requires 'significant improvement' under section 61 of the Act (see [here](#)). This is any school given 'notice to improve' by Ofsted.

2.7 Fourth, a school requiring special measures under section 62 (see [here](#)).

3 LAs' powers and the types of intervention

3.1 Section 2 explains eligibility for intervention (see paragraphs 2.4 to 2.7 above). The LA will consider using its statutory powers in the case of all such schools (except where those schools are academies, where these statutory powers do not apply), and in this section explains its powers of intervention as set out in sections 63 to 66 of the 2006 Act. The section does not touch on the powers of the secretary of state for education to intervene, or to force local authorities to do so.

SECTION 63 – TO REQUIRE THE GOVERNING BODY TO ENTER INTO ARRANGEMENTS

3.2 See [here](#). In essence, a LA may give a school's governing body a notice requiring it to enter into a contract for 'specified services' giving it advice, where the contractor might be, for example, an individual, a company or the governing body of another school, or to collaborate with another school's or college's governing body. The LA can specify under section 63 that the school takes specified steps to create or join a federation including other schools.

3.3 The LA will consult, as required, the school's governing body, and any trust or diocesan authority responsible for the school's governance, before exercising the power. The LA will ensure that the power

is exercised within any statutory timescales that apply when the school concerned has been issued with a safety notice. This is currently within two months of the end of the compliance period.

SECTION 64 – THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTRA GOVERNORS BY AN LA

3.4 See [here](#). Section 64 enables the LA to appoint additional governors where a school is eligible for intervention. The council is likely to appoint additional governors when it wants the school concerned to be provided with additional expertise and may appoint as many additional governors as it thinks fit.

(Note: In the case of a voluntary aided school where the LA has exercised the power to appoint additional governors, the appropriate appointing authority in relation to that school may appoint an equal number of governors to those appointed by the local authority).

3.5 There is no requirement for a LA to consult before appointing extra governors to a governing body of an 'eligible' school. However, the power must be exercised within two months of the end of the compliance period.

SECTION 65 – THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD (IEB)

3.6 See [here](#). The purpose of an interim executive board is to accelerate improvement in standards and attainment and provide challenge to the leadership of the school to secure rapid improvement. An IEB can also be applied for where there has been a serious breakdown of working relationships within the governing body of the school. There is no time limitation with reference to any warning notice, and the LA might determine to exercise this power at any time where a school is eligible for intervention.

3.7 The LA must consult the school's governing body, and any trust or diocesan authority responsible for the school's governance, before exercising the power. At least 14 days will be allowed for interested parties to respond. This period can be longer if this is considered reasonable.

3.8 If the secretary of state for education consents to the establishment of an IEB, the LA's director of children's services must write to the governing body of the school to give notice that an IEB will be established. The letter must specify the date of commencement of the IEB and the intended cessation date.

3.9 The IEB's main functions are to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school concerned and to promote high standards of educational achievement. The IEB should be considered as the governing body of the school although statutory requirements regarding the GB's constitution (2007 regulations) do not apply.

3.10 The IEB's responsibilities include the management of the budget (this is fully delegated – any previous withdrawal of delegated powers will be restored), the curriculum, staffing, pay and performance management and the appointment of the head teacher and deputy head teacher. An IEB may recommend to a local authority, or recommend that the secretary of state give a direction to a local authority, that a school should be closed, but it cannot publish proposals for closure. The IEB may also seek an academy order from the secretary of state to convert the school to an academy with a strong sponsor'.

3.11 The LA must constitute the IEB in line with the requirements of the 2006 Act. That is, the initial board shall comprise at least two members, and further members might be added. The intention of the Act is that an IEB should be a small, focused group appointed for the full period which it is expected to take to turn the school around, and LA officers should choose members of an IEB on a case by case basis, depending on the needs of the school. Existing governors may be appointed to an IEB. Copies of the notice of appointment of IEB members should be sent to all the school's governing body members, and, in the case of foundation or voluntary schools, the diocesan or other appropriate appointing authority.

SECTION 66 – SUSPENSION OF THE DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR THE GOVERNING BODY TO MANAGE THE BUDGET

3.12 See [here](#). A LA has the power to consider suspending a school governing body's right to a delegated budget in cases where a maintained school is eligible for intervention by giving the governing body of the school notice in writing. A copy of the notice to suspend the right to a delegated budget must be given to the head teacher of the school and the governing body. The LA is not required to consult before withdrawing delegated financial powers from a governing body; moreover the LA can appoint additional governors in cases where financial delegation is withdrawn.

3.13 Where a school is eligible for intervention as a result of being given a performance standards and safety warning notice, this power must be exercised within a period of two months following the end of the compliance period. If the local authority fails to exercise this power within this time, a new warning notice must be given in order to do so. Again, there is no requirement for the local authority to consult before exercising this power.

3.14 The council must set out to the head teacher and members of the governing body what the suspension of the right to a delegated budget means in practice. In summary, arrangements in the school concerned revert to those that applied before the implementation of the Education Act, 1988 (as amended by subsequent legislation, principally the Education Act, 1996). Governors remain responsible for school discipline and the curriculum but can have only an advisory role in the recruitment and dismissal of staff. The council has the flexibility to allow governors to retain certain decisions that involve spending, which may be considered on a case by case basis and set out in writing to the school's head teacher and members of the governing body.

4 Summary

4.1 This appendix is solely concerned to set out the powers available for use by the director of children's services in the governance and management of schools that meet prescribed criteria.

4.2 It should be read in conjunction with West Northamptonshire Council's strategy relating to 'intervention' and procedures to be used in any instance where a school meets a criterion or criteria as set out in government acts or regulations and the school's governors and management cannot or are unable to comply with officers' reasonable requirements.

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**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 25 January 2022

Agenda Item 8

An overview of SEND support and alternative provision in West Northamptonshire

1 Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- explain the statutory duties of the council in regard to provision for the education of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and children who require ‘alternative provision’ (AP) from mainstream schools;
- set out key issues for the council in these areas – the provision of sufficient places to meet the requirements of pupils with significant additional needs; the timeliness of the education, health and care plan (EHCP) assessment process – and the way in which they are being addressed;
- inform members of the Committee about the plan to bring the high needs block (HNB) of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) back into balance, dealing with the structural overspend inherited from Northamptonshire County Council; and
- outline the work being done to develop a strategic approach with our statutory partners – the health and social care services and the Northamptonshire parent carer forum group (NPF) – across the county, that will contribute to our preparation for the inspection of SEND by Ofsted.

2 The statutory duties of the council in SEND and AP

2.1 Appendix A to this report lists the wide range of statutory duties that apply in both areas. The number in the leftmost column is the reference to the then department for culture, media and sport (DCMS) list of all council duties, and also the Children and Family Act (2014) list. The background colour refers to the relative importance or frequency of the requirement to address a duty. In the lead officer column, the abbreviation is of job titles, and is there to ensure the relevant postholder knows s/he is responsible for ensuring compliance. Where a row has a black box in the lead officer column, it indicates the duty does not apply locally.

2.2 The duties can be grouped in clusters comprising identifying and assessing need; providing sufficient places; reviewing plans; ensuring a ‘local offer’ is in place for children with SEN(D), including the involvement of parents and children in all aspects of provision; and securing transport to and from settings where a pupil is eligible. The focus of government inspectors in area SEND inspections is on:

- outcomes (as described in the code of practice) for children and young people with SEND;
- attendance and exclusion information, taking appropriate account of how these have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- data relating to the identification of SEN at SEN support and education, health and care (EHC) plan levels;
- information about the destinations after leaving school, including about young people not in education, employment or training;
- performance towards meeting expected timescales for statutory assessment;
- inspection reports for the local area, its services and providers; and
- the published local offer.

3 Key issue one: the provision of sufficient places for pupils with SEN

- 3.1 There is currently a significant shortfall of sufficient specialist places. This has resulted in a large increase in the use of independent schools, which are much more costly to the council in terms of both fees and transport costs, but in many cases do not provide either teaching and learning experiences, or outcomes, that are better than state-funded schools. Currently, the council spends £12m annually on independent school places, £3m over the budget.
- 3.2 There are three main reasons for the shortage of state school provision in West Northamptonshire. The first – and main – reason is large increase in the number and percentage of all pupils of EHC plans, since the government replaced ‘statements of educational need’ in 2016 following the implementation of the Children and Families Act, 2014.
- 3.3 Nationally, there were 3.7 per cent of pupils in England with an EHSP in 2020/21, compared with 2.8 per cent in 2015/16 – an increase of 32 per cent. Moreover, the most significant increase is in school age pupils. It does not include adults aged over 19, who are entitled to support through an EHC plan until their 25th birthday.
- 3.4 While it is true that in Northamptonshire this percentage growth was not with a large increase in the number and percentage of EHCPs since April. There are now 2,126 pupils with EHCPs. The only proxy for EHCP growth here is the NCC numbers for 2015 – 3,199 – and 2021 – 3,655, a 17 per cent increase.
- 3.5 The other key reason for a lack of places is the relatively low percentage of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools. While it is true that the only comparison available until the Department for Education (DfE) updates its local authority interactive tool (LAIT) is between Northamptonshire, the East midlands, its statistical neighbours and England, it is likely to be the case for schools in West Northamptonshire. The two tables below illustrate this clearly. The tables show the percentage of pupils with statements / EHCPs in mainstream primary and secondary schools respectively against comparators.

LA, region and England - the percentage of pupils with a statement / EHCP in primary

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Northamptonshire (NCC)	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0
East Midlands	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.3
NCC percentage difference	9.1%	0.0%	-11.1%	-22.2%	-30.0%
Statistical neighbours	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.3
NCC percentage difference	9.1%	0.0%	-11.1%	-22.2%	-30.0%
England	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8
NCC percentage difference	-18.2%	-30.0%	-55.6%	-77.8%	-80.0%

- 3.6 The table shows that the percentage of pupils with statements / EHCPs in primary schools has declined marginally between 2016 and 2020 in Northamptonshire – but significantly against comparators. In 2016, such pupils were 10 per cent more likely to be in mainstream schools than in the East Midlands (EM) or statistical neighbours (SNs). However, by 2020, 30 per cent more pupils with EHCPs were in mainstream primaries in the EM and SN areas, and 80 per cent less likely than in England as a whole.
- 3.7 The table below shows a different pattern in mainstream secondary schools: a very sharp decline in the percentage of pupils with statement / EHCPs in Northamptonshire – from nearly 2 per cent (400) to one per cent (250), a 90 per cent decline but broadly static percentages in all three comparators.
- 3.8 In 2020, the number of pupils with an EHCP was 40 per cent less likely in mainstream school, 60 per cent less likely than statistical neighbours and 90 per cent less likely than in England respectively.

LA, region and England - the percentage of pupils with a statement / EHCP in secondary

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Northamptonshire (NCC)	1.9	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.0
East Midlands	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4
NCC percentage difference	21.1%	12.5%	0.0%	-8.3%	-40.0%
Statistical neighbours	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6
NCC percentage difference	10.5%	0.0%	-7.1%	-25.0%	-60.0%
England	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.8
NCC percentage difference	10.5%	-6.2%	-14.3%	-41.7%	-80.0%

- 3.9 A third factor is the insufficient government capital build funding – through specialist capital allocations, including ‘special free schools’ – for extra SEN provision. In West Northamptonshire, despite capital allocations of £4.8m between 2018 and 2021 and £2.8m in 2020/21 the current deficit of provision means the need for an extra 380 places in funded school provision in mainstream schools, and a 250 place all-through special school – ideally by 2024.
- 3.10 SEN and place planning officers have agreements in place with 6 primary, 5 secondary and three schools for 170 extra places, which will cost approximately £6.5m, for which £3m is available. There is currently an evaluation of possible sites and buildings that might be appropriate for a special school. However, there is currently no free school bidding round so the free school presumption process would be required which means any capital build will need to be locally funded and therefore prudential borrowing would be needed to commission a special school.

4 The timely and good quality assessment process for pupils with high-level special needs

- 4.1 With regard to education, health and care (EHC) plans, the number of requests for statutory assessment was higher in November 2021– 94 – than any month since the creation of the new unitary council. The number of SEN assessments completed each month has varied significantly. From an initial low point of around 20 in April and May 2021, there was a significant improvement to 60 by July 2021. This reduced to between 40 and 50 in August and September 2021, and 32 in November 2021.
- 4.2 The key performance measure, however, is EHC plans completed within 20 weeks – including exceptions, which allow some discretion where there is an accepted reason for a delayed assessment. Between April and July 2021, only 20 to 25 per cent of assessments were completed in 20 weeks. This improved to 60 per cent in September – against a statistical neighbour average of 55 per cent – but has since dropped to 20 per cent in October and only nine per cent in November.
- 4.3 The reasons for the low level of assessments being completed within 20 weeks are:
- The large numbers of vacancies in the SEN assessment team, with 11 casework officer / caseworker vacancies;
 - A significant difficulty in recruiting and retaining educational psychologists (EPs), due to a national shortage in EPs, exacerbated by a historical dispute between the council and the national EP association, due to the council not using the national pay scale used in most LA areas (the Soulbury grading and pay system); and
 - Variable performance by health service and schools partners which contribute to the plan.
- 4.4 The local authority has recognised the significant increase in requests for EHC needs assessment will result in higher levels of plans being needed than previously. Accordingly, the chief executive has agreed to increase the capacity of the team. Recently, the head of the SEN assessment team has recruited five additional SEN caseworkers and two additional case officers, and has commenced

another recruitment process for the three remaining vacancies. The principal educational psychologist has recruited to one of the eight vacancies in her service and we believe we will reduce the vacancy rate by the end of the current school year.

- 4.5 We are in discussion with schools and health colleagues about health and education advice, and the importance of timeliness and we will be challenging colleagues to use some of the investment set aside in the shared Children and Young People collaborative with health, to invest in more resources so we can secure the right outcomes for our children. Taken together, the target is to reach the statistical neighbour average of assessments within 20 weeks by the end of the school year 2022 and to consolidate consistently from this in the 2022/23 school year.

5 The high needs block (HNB) recovery plan

- 5.1 The high needs block is one of four in the dedicated schools grant (DSG). The council is responsible for the management of this budget, and must work with Schools Forum to ensure it is managed efficiently, effectively and equitably. It must be emphasised that, as nationally reported, the HNB is a significant challenge in most top-tier LAs, and that two of the major reasons for this situation are increase in the number of pupils (and adults) with EHCPs since 2016, and the lack of funding for increasing special school places.
- 5.2 For some context, Appendix B shows the level of overspend in 2020/21 in the five LAs with the highest percentage overspend. These are between 65 and 93 per cent of the HNB budgets, compared with 4.2 per cent in West Northants (or its share of the inherited NCC deficit) the same year, 2020/21. However, without the actions in the recovery plan being delivered, the deficit is forecast to increase to 12.4 per cent, which is £6.8m at today's costs, by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 5.3 There are eight strands to the recovery plan, as follows:
- (1) to define what is ordinarily available and apply the graduated approach to HN funding;
 - (2) commission resourced places in mainstream schools;
 - (3) implement a capital programme to increase special school places;
 - (4) consult on a banding system for implementation in the 2023/24 financial year;
 - (5) cease funding of outreach services through a top-slice;
 - (6) reduced funded alternative provision (AP) places;
 - (7) cease non-EHCP top-up aside from exceptional cases (eg trauma); and
 - (8) visit all independent providers, view to improving value for money (VFM).
- 5.4 Action has been put in place to achieve savings in strands 7 and 8. However, SEN and place planning officers are currently setting up a capital programme for more specialist places – this will be the major area for cost avoidance and bringing the block back into balance. The plan is subject to regular review from the council's chief executive, director of finance and lead member for children services. Schools Forum will receive regular reports on progress made in reducing the structural deficit.

6 The development of a strategic approach with our statutory partners

- 6.1 Education service partners are the health and social care services and the parent carer forum. These all work across the county, and are key in terms of our preparation for the inspection of SEND by Ofsted. Additional capacity has been commissioned to support strategic improvement in SEND across the local area. Issues identified to date include:
- co-production at every level is not yet embedded and there is not a consistent understanding of what this means. Development of a shared understanding of co-production is a priority for the SEND accountability board;

- a lack of a shared and agreed understanding of the issues, and the steps being taken and needing to be taken to address these; and
- expectations of all partners regarding implementation of the graduated approach need to be clearly articulated and linked into processes, including pathways and guidance for accessing additional support (linking into leadership for SEND, improving practice and outcomes and improving the experience for families);

6.2 In order to address these issues, we need – across the county area – to:

- co-produce a clear vision, agreed priorities and strategy based on a strong evidence base that will support a shared commitment to improving SEND across Northamptonshire – making improving SEND everyone’s business; and
- develop a communication strategy and plan to ensure all partners are supporting and influencing the delivery of the strategic plan.

6.2 A SEND accountability board, which comprises representatives from all key partners, including representatives from Northamptonshire’s parent carer forum has been set up to:

- enable partners to come together to agree the self-evaluation of SEND across the local area and oversee the development and implementation of the local area SEND strategic plan;
- secure the engagement of all key partners;
- be responsible for the delivery of the strategic and operational functions of the SEND strategic plan and associated strands of work;
- monitor the implementation of the strategic plan, providing a framework for reporting progress to key stakeholders and partners;
- agree the communication from the board to partners;
- make recommendations regarding how the work can be integrated across other key areas; and
- provide challenge and support that will improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

6.3 A joint agency SEND data group has been set up to collate multi-agency SEND related data and feedback which will inform our self-evaluation and strategic plan. A range of initial data has been collated and further data has been requested, including key themes from feedback and audits to inform a comprehensive SEND Dataset and SEND Dashboard.

6.4 Schools, families and other partners have told us that there is not a clear vision and strategy for SEND in the local area. A shared understanding of priorities and strategy is required to ensure all partners support its delivery, making improving provision and support for children and young people with SEND and their families everyone’s business. A multi-agency working group has been set up to review other LA SEND Vision and Strategies and make recommendations for Northamptonshire. West Northamptonshire will have a clear delivery plan to support this which will incorporate actions identified in the High Needs Block Recovery Plan and ensure that use of resources, including High Needs Block funding, is having an impact on outcomes.

6.5 A working group comprising all key partners has been set up to co-develop clear guidance and support to settings and schools regarding expectations of SEND provision across universal, targeted and specialist provision. This will support clarity of the Local Offer.

6.6 A multi-agency quality assurance framework and tool is being developed to quality assure EHCPs and secure improvement in quality and consistency of quality of EHCPs. This will be rolled out from February 2022. West Northamptonshire is also involved in a regional pilot project to develop a tool for measuring improvement of outcomes in EHCPs. These pieces of work complement each other.

7 Alternative provision

- 7.1 Alternative provision (AP) is education for children who have been excluded from school, or are placed there by schools under independent commissioning arrangements by schools. Local authorities have a legal duty under section 19 of the Education Act, 1996 to make provision for children excluded from school. Most do this by placing at another school where possible (this is very difficult in most cases), either immediately or after a period in 'alternative education'.
- 7.2 West Northamptonshire (WN) funds two AP academies. Spires provides primary places (although registered for pupils aged 4-16), while the CE academy provides secondary places (year 7 to 11). This section explains the Ofsted status of the two APs; the funding arrangements; the use of APs by mainstream schools; the use of independent and unregistered providers and commissioning intentions in future.

WN APs: RECENT OFSTED OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS

- 7.3 The CE academy was inspected between 25 and 27 May 2021. It was rated inadequate. Inspectors noted that it required significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it is expected to perform. The main area of concern was safeguarding. The report stated:
- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders cannot be certain that all pupils are safeguarded when they are supposed to be in the school's care. Leaders must ensure that there are adequate safeguards in place for all pupils at all times, including all occasions when they are learning away from the school site. This should include appropriate risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and updated
 - Leaders have not checked that registers are accurate. The information recorded on registers is routinely inaccurate. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate understanding of attendance and absence. Leaders must ensure that registers are accurate in order to provide precise records of daily; and attendance and attendance over time, including to commissioning bodies, such as other schools.
 - Governors rely too heavily on what leaders tell them about what is happening in the school. As a result, they do not hold leaders to account well enough, including over safeguarding and attendance. Governors should ensure that they are assured of the accuracy of what leaders tell them about all aspects of the provision, so that they can hold leaders fully to account.
- 7.4 The Spires academy was inspected on 12 and 13 October 2021, with an additional day on 21 October. It too was rated inadequate. The report stated:
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils and staff are safe at school. They do not identify quickly enough when a pupil is at risk or provide them with the right support. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are too low. Leaders do not make sure that all staff know how to spot and respond to the signs that pupils are struggling to control their behaviour.
- Staff do not consistently challenge pupils when they use offensive language to others. This includes racist language. Not all staff respond appropriately when pupils are aggressive. This means that some pupils continue to be disruptive, risking harm to themselves and others. Other pupils learn to manage their emotions and their behaviour improves.
- 7.5 The report stated specifically regarding safeguarding arrangements:
- Trustees have not met their legal duty to make sure that pupils are safe. Leaders have not created a culture where all staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may need support. They are too slow to identify possible risks facing pupils, for instance involving harmful sexual behaviour or pupils' poor mental health. They do not always make sure that pupils who are at risk get swift support. This leaves pupils at potential risk of harm.

Leaders do not have a secure oversight of records for safeguarding, behaviour, physical restraint or the administration of first aid. Some of these records are inaccurate, lack precision and omit information about leaders' actions. Trustees do not check whether leaders' responses to serious safeguarding and behaviour concerns are appropriate.

Permanent staff have received recent safeguarding training. They know they must report any worries they have about a pupil promptly. Temporary staff do not have the information they need to support individual pupils appropriately.

- 7.6 Council education officers assessed the safety of pupils attending both APs and a safeguarding review is being completed to ensure that there is confidence that all issues have been addressed. It is intended to recommence the placement of excluded pupils, and be able to recommend to schools that they can commission safely, once the safeguarding review has been completed and evidence provided on the actions taken to address the issues.

AP FUNDING AGREEMENTS

- 7.7 As academy schools, both APs are funded for an agreed number of **places**. These are determined annually, under slightly different arrangements. For CE, as an academy, the council submits its proposed places required to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The ESFA assesses this proposal, usually with comments from the provider if numbers vary. For 2022/23, West Northamptonshire has proposed to fund 85 places. We have not heard from the ESFA about whether this has been agreed. For reference, North Northamptonshire has proposed funding 80 places. The total – 165 places – is significantly fewer than the 230 places agreed for Northamptonshire for the current and the past three years.
- 7.8 Spires was previously funded for 100 places by Northamptonshire County Council. As a free school, it is for Spires to put forward proposed places it can provide in the following year. West Northamptonshire council has agreed 36 places (as has North Northamptonshire). This means that Spires will provide 72 places in the 2022/23 school year. Note that as both academies are in Northampton, WN is the commissioning council. As such, the ESFA has removed £2,300,000 (£10,000 for 230 places) for CE, and £1,000,000 (£10,000 for 100 places) for Spires. For 2022/23, WN will need to recoup the place funding from North Northamptonshire for both APs.
- 7.9 For each child placed at an AP, a 'top-up' is agreed on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis. For example, a pupil who is on roll for 19 weeks, full time, the total top up would be £10,070 divided by 2 (because the pupil was on roll for half the school year). The pupil funding is paid by the council on the basis of FTE pupil numbers each month. Currently, both councils pay for a set number of pupils at Spires, irrespective of whether the actual pupils are at this level. Catch 22, the trust within which Spires is located, has agreed to cease this agreement from April 2022 and top up funding will revert to actual number of pupils placed.

THE USE OF APs BY MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS, AND UNREGISTERED AP PROVIDERS

- 7.10 Some mainstream schools commission places directly – this is often to support pupils at risk of exclusion, or (for example) pupils who have temporary, identified issues with managing in classes of 30. These schools agree individually the funding to meet pupils' needs – most often on the pupil funding on an FTE basis. The council has funded the place.
- 7.11 Mainstream schools – and APs – often commission places from other providers, including specialist providers not registered by Ofsted. This is both legally compliant and beneficial to pupils. There is clear guidance on when an unregistered provider must become registered: when it provides full time education to five or more full time pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked after or has an Education, Health and Care Plan. The school concerned is responsible for overseeing arrangements at any commissioned provider and any Ofsted inspection of a school will assess commissioned places for its pupils.

COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS IN FUTURE

- 7.12 The council will recommence placements at both CE and Spires as soon as specialist officer assurance about pupil safety has been received. It will also pass this information to mainstream schools.
- 7.12 Council officers will also continue to assess the potential for more diverse geographical provision. At present, schools outside Northampton are not always well-served in terms of local availability of AP. Therefore, council officers will engage with heads in Daventry and Towcester about complementing existing provision in other localities.

	LA duty	Lead
Alternative provision (AP)		
11	establish management committees for every pupil referral unit	ADE-W
14	ensure that all children get a suitable education, including the issue of a school attendance order	SM,SSS
60	control how pupils are removed from school with independent scrutiny.	SM,SSS
111	provide careers guidance for pupils in pupil referral units	SM,SSS
191	arrange suitable education for permanently excluded / not receiving suitable education children	SM,SSS
193	make arrangements to support pupils at school with medical conditions	SM,SSS
Special educational needs (SEN)		
5	ensure maintained boarding schools are funded for the cost of board and lodging by parental fees	
9	ensure that children who cannot be in mainstream schools continue to receive full-time education	SM,SSS
16	Identify and assess SEN, making / reviewing EHCPs and a transition plan from age 14	EHC
17	secure SEN provision for pupils with SEN	ADE-W
19	re-affirm eligibility criteria and assess free H to S transport eligibility for low income families	HoTD, E, D&T
42	publish information on the local authority's SEN policies and their implementation	ADE-W
43	pathway planning for the child for the transition to adulthood	EHC
116	provide pupils at boarding academies with the same remission as at maintained boarding school	
117	Enable direct payments for services for special educational needs.	EHC
120	support and involve children and young people with special education needs or disabilities	DCS
121	identify children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities	SM,SSS
122	determine LA responsibility for a child or young person	DCS
123	promote integration / inclusion	DCS
124	keep education and care provision under review	DCS
125	co-operating generally: governing body functions	DCS
126	ensure duties to children and young people with EHC plans are fulfilled	EHC
127	assessment of education, health and care needs	EHC
128	put in place education, health and care plans	EHC
129	preparare draft EHC plans	EHC
130	Finalise EHC plans, including requests for particular school or other institution	EHC
131	finalising EHC plans: no request for particular school or other institution	EHC
132	secure special educational provision and health care provision in accordance with EHC plan	EHC
133	ensure reviews and re-assessments take place as appropriate	EHC
134	release of child or young person from an EHC plan	EHC
135	pay fees for special educational needs provision at non-maintained schools and post 16 institutions	EHC
136	assess post detention education, health and care needs of detained persons	EHC
137	keep EHC plans for detained persons	EHC
138	support pupils with medical condtions	SM,SSS
139	publish a local offer (LO) for the area	IPO(LO)
140	include provision outside the local area in the LO	IPO(LO)
141	involve the parent, and child in developing and reviewing the LO	IPO(LO)
142	include eligibiltity criteria for services, location of advice and complaints about provision	IPO(LO)
143	involve children with SEN and their parents in in planning the content of the LO	IPO(LO)
144	engage a cross section of young people to develop and review the LO	IPO(LO)

	LA duty	Lead
145	ensure partner bodies and agencies co-operate in the development and review of the LO	IPO(LO)
146	ensure that officers co-operate with each other in respect of the LO	IPO(LO)
147	keep the education, training and social care provision under review and sufficient	DCS
148	publish annually comments received about the LO	IPO(LO)
149	publish the LA's reponse to comments received within the LO	IPO(LO)
150	include information about the area specified in SEND regulations	IPO(LO)
151	include in the LO information about areas in section 4.30 of the SEND COP	IPO(LO)
152	set out in the LO SEN and training provision it expects to be available	IPO(LO)
153	in securing funded early years education promote equality of opportunity for disabled children	SSITL
156	Information re education to include the location of establishments catering for children with SEN	IPO(LO)
157	include information in the LO about provision made by health professionals for children with SEN	IPO(LO)
158	work with partner CCGs to ensure relevant information is available through the LO	IPO(LO)
159	include information in the LO about social care services supporting CYP with SEND	IPO(LO)
160	provide an information and advice service for adult care (up to 25)	IPO(LO)
161	provide a range of short breaks for disabled children and young people and their families	AD-C&P
162	publish a short breaks statement on their website and review this on a regular basis	IPO(LO)
163	set out in the LO groups and others supporting parents of SEND children and contact information	IPO(LO)
164	assess on appearance of need as well as on request and have regard to the wellbeing of carers	TRUST
165	decide whether a parent or carer needs support to enable them to support their disabled child	TRUST
166	identify in the LO support to young people to provide a smooth transition from education into employment	IPO(LO)
167	include in the LO information about transport provision up to the age of 25 with an EHC plan	IPO(LO)
168	ensure suitable free travel arrangements are made to facilitate an eligible child's school attendance	HoTD, E, D&T
169	publish an annual transport policy statement to support young people 16-19 and LDD aged up to 25	HoTD, E, D&T
170	include in the LO information about specialised transport and support available for transport costs	IPO(LO)
171	set out in the LO the support available to help CYP with SEND move into adulthood	IPO(LO)
172	include in the LO information about how to request a needs assessment for an EHC plan	IPO(LO)
173	include in the LO information about the option of having a personal budget	IPO(LO)
174	provide in the LO information for parents and CYP about where to get information and advice	IPO(LO)
175	make arrangements for information and advice, tailored appropriately for young people	ADE-W
176	make the LO widely accessible on the website	ADE-W
177	publish arrangements for enabling those without access to the internet to get information	IPO(LO)
178	educate children in accordance with parents' wishes	ADE-W
179	contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development by sufficient education provision	ADE-W
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heat map' key

- high importance, frequent
- high importance, infrequent or as required
- low importance but requires resourcing
- low importance, requires little if any resource
- does not apply

West Northamptonshire local authority High Needs Block deficit 2021 to 2026 compared with local authorities receiving ESFA assistance

Budget / deficit all £m

	Bury	Hammersmith	Kingston	Richmond	Stoke on Trent	W Northants
HNB budget 2020/21*	£33.1	£24.6	£25.3	£27.1	£36.9	£55.0
HNB deficit 2020/21	£25.5	£22.9	£25.1	£17.6	£25.5	£2.3
O/S percentage of HNB budget	77.1%	93.0%	99.4%	64.9%	69.0%	4.2%
DfE support 2020/21	£6.0	£6.0	£9.0	£6.0	£3.0	£0.0
O/S after DfE support	£19.5	£16.9	£16.1	£11.6	£22.5	£2.3
O/S percentage after DfE support	58.9%	68.6%	63.7%	42.8%	60.9%	4.2%
HNB deficit 2021/22	£25.6	£23.3	£28.6	£18.6	£24.3	£1.5
O/S percentage of HNB budget	77.4%	94.6%	113.2%	68.6%	65.8%	2.7%
DfE support 2021/22	£4.0	£4.0	£5.0	£4.0	£3.0	
O/S after DfE support	£15.6	£13.3	£14.6	£8.6	£18.3	£1.5
O/S percentage after DfE support	47.1%	54.0%	57.8%	31.7%	49.5%	2.7%
HNB deficit 2022/23	£25.0	£23.0	£31.4	£19.4	£18.3	£3.4
O/S percentage of HNB budget	75.5%	93.4%	124.3%	71.5%	49.5%	6.2%
DfE support 2022/23	£4.0	£4.0	£5.0	£4.0	£2.0	
O/S after DfE support	£11.0	£15.0	£21.4	£11.4	£13.3	£3.4
O/S percentage after DfE support	33.2%	60.9%	84.7%	42.0%	36.0%	6.2%
HNB deficit 2023/24	£21.9	£22.9	£32.2	£19.9	£9.1	£5.1
O/S percentage of HNB budget	66.2%	93.0%	127.5%	73.3%	24.7%	9.3%
DfE support 2023/24	£3.0	£3.0	£5.0	£3.0	£2.0	
O/S after DfE support	£4.9	£5.9	£8.2	£2.9	-£0.9	£5.1
O/S percentage after DfE support	14.8%	24.0%	32.5%	10.7%	-2.4%	9.3%
HNB deficit 2024/25	£16.0	£21.9	£31.6	£20.0		£6.8
O/S percentage of HNB budget	48.4%	88.9%	125.1%	73.7%		12.4%
DfE support 2023/24	£3.0	£3.0	£3.0	£3.0		
O/S after DfE support	-£4.0	£1.9	£4.6	£0.0		£6.8
O/S percentage after DfE support	-12.1%	7.7%	18.2%	0.0%		12.4%
total DfE support	£20.0	£20.0	£27.0	£20.0	£10.0	£0.0

* WN share of NCC's HNB overspend

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People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Residential and nursing care for older people	The Committee to receive an overview of current provision and planning towards meeting future needs.	20 July 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	No	
Integrated Care System / Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN)	The Committee to receive an overview of the aims of the Northamptonshire ICS and iCAN, and plans for implementation.	20 July 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	No	
Integrated Care across Northamptonshire (iCAN)	The Committee to scrutinise progress made with the development of iCAN and the position on key risk factors.	21 September 2021 – A task and finish panel has been set up and will conclude its review in January 2023	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	Yes	The task and finish panel will meet 5 times from January 2022 to January 2023, aligned to iCAN contract gateway review points, to scrutinise delivery of iCAN programme outcomes.
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy	The Committee to receive an update on progress with the development of the Strategy.	21 September 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
Northamptonshire children’s services performance	The Committee to receive an update on the Ofsted monitoring visit in July 2021 that will focus on children with child protection plans and with children in need plans.	21 September 2021	Director of Children’s Services Chief Executive, Children’s Trust	No	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Residential and nursing care for older people	The Committee to scrutinise trends relating to performance and capacity of current care homes.	16 November 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
Adult Social Care transformation	The Committee to scrutinise outcomes from the implementation of the Adult Social Care Target Operating Model (TOM)	16 November 2021	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	
Task and finish scrutiny review: child and adolescent mental health and the risk of self-harm	The Committee to confirm the scope for the review.	16 November 2021 – A task and finish panel has been set up and will conclude its review in April 2022	Relevant input was sought on the proposed scope for the review before it was finalised.	Yes	
Northamptonshire children's services performance	The Committee to receive an update covering the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional measures to further improve recruitment and retention of social workers • Achieving consistently good quality practice for all children, supported by full implementation of the practice model • Outcomes of the Ofsted monitoring visit due to take place in November 2021. 	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education Chief Executive, Children's Trust	No	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
School improvement	The Committee to receive an overview of activity by West Northamptonshire Council to support school improvement.	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	
Special educational needs and disability (SEND) support and alternative provision	The Committee to receive an overview of SEND support and alternative provision (education outside school arranged by the local authority or schools) in West Northamptonshire.	25 January 2022	Director of Children's Services Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	
Healthwatch function	The Committee to receive a briefing paper giving an overview of the Healthwatch function in Northamptonshire.	25 January 2022	NA	No	This item aims to enable the Committee to identify focus areas / questions for a potential substantive item on this topic on 1 March 2022.
West Northamptonshire Council Interim Housing Strategy	The Committee to provide scrutiny input in the interim Housing Strategy.	1 March 2022	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	No	The Committee has been advised that an interim Housing Strategy will be produced in 2022 ahead of the development of a full Strategy informed by data from the 2021 Census.
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy	The Committee to receive an update on progress with the adoption and implementation of the Strategy.	1 March 2022	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	No	

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Healthwatch function	The Committee to scrutinise arrangements made to deliver the Healthwatch function in Northamptonshire.	1 March 2022	Director of Public Health	No	
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22	The Committee to consider the Annual Report on its activity in 2021/22, for submission to Full Council.	1 March 2022	NA	No	
Provision of free broadband to young people leaving local authority care.	The Committee to provide scrutiny input into the potential development of proposals by West Northamptonshire Council.	To be confirmed	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education	No	The Full Council meeting on 23 September 2021 referred a motion on this topic to the Committee, to consider the issues involved. The Committee has been advised that the matter has since been subject to further corporate work.
Rough sleeping	The Committee to provide scrutiny input on responses to rough sleeping in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	To be confirmed	The Committee has identified the following potential focus areas for scrutiny: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the potential to continue to apply the principles of the 'everyone in' approach used during the COVID-19 pandemic severe weather shelter provision.

Topic	Proposed purpose	Date of Committee meeting	Cabinet Member / Executive Director / other senior leader	Proposed Task and Finish Group	Comments
Adult Social Care social worker recruitment and retention	The Committee to scrutinise the latest position, focussing on posts supporting the delivery of statutory social care services.	To be confirmed	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	To be confirmed	
Support for people living with dementia	The Committee to scrutinise how well people living with dementia are supported in West Northamptonshire.	To be confirmed	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration	To be confirmed	The Committee has identified that work on this topic might take as a starting point the response to the Northampton Borough Council scrutiny review on dementia-friendly communities.
Sports and leisure provision	Scrutiny of how West Northamptonshire Council works together with other service providers and community groups to provide the best overall offer to residents from all parts of the community.	To be confirmed – early 2022/23	Executive Director Adults, Communities and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure	The Committee to consider setting up a task and finish panel to carry out an in-depth scrutiny review.	The Committee considers that this work could be an example of scrutiny on the wider theme of the community impact of Council services: looking at how the Council identifies needs, other support available in the community that help to meet them, and can therefore focus resources to have the most impact.

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates in 2022-23

25 April 2022	
21 June 2022	13 December 2022
30 August 2022	21 February 2023
25 October 2022	24 April 2023

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