



## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

# AGENDA PAPERS MARKED 'TO FOLLOW' FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, 26 September 2023

Time: 6.30 pm

Place: Committee Rooms 2&3, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford, M32  
0TH

<b>A G E N D A</b>	<b>PART I</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.	<b>ATTENDANCES</b>	
	To note attendances, including officers, and any apologies for absence.	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
	Members to give notice of any interest and the nature of that interest relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct.	
3.	<b>QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>	
	A maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated to public questions submitted in writing to Democratic Services (democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk) by 4 p.m. on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must be relevant to items appearing on the agenda and will be submitted in the order in which they were received.	
4.	<b>MINUTES</b>	1 - 14
	To receive and, if so determined, to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023.	
5.	<b>TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE</b>	15 - 34
	To receive a report from the Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care.	
6.	<b>TRANSITIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH EHCPS</b>	35 - 46

To receive a report from the Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance.

7. **TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT ON ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES** To Follow

To consider a report from the Task and Finish Group.

8. **WORK PROGRAMME** 47 - 50

To consider the latest version of the work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

9. **URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)**

Any other item or items which by reason of:-

(a) Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the Chairman of the meeting, with the agreement of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency as it relates to a key decision; or

(b) special circumstances (to be specified) the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

(a) **RAAC REPORT** (Pages 51 - 54)

51 - 54

To consider a report from the Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance, as a matter of Urgent Business for reasons of special circumstance to be presented by the Chair.

10. **EXCLUSION RESOLUTION**

Motion (Which may be amended as Members think fit):

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

**SARA TODD**

Chief Executive

### Membership of the Committee

Councillors D. Western (Chair), R. Duncan (Vice-Chair), J. Bennett, Z.C. Deakin, S. G. Ennis, S. J. Haughey, E.L. Hirst, E.R. Parker, R. Paul, S. Procter, O. Sutton, D. Acton (ex-Officio) and D. Butt (ex-Officio).

### Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

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This agenda was issued on **21st September 2023** by the Legal and Democratic Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall; Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0TH.

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## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**25 JULY 2023**

### **PRESENT**

Councillor D. Western (in the Chair).

Councillors R. Duncan (Vice-Chair), J. Bennett, Z.C. Deakin, S. G. Ennis, E.L. Hirst, E.R. Parker, S. Procter, O. Sutton, D. Acton (ex-Officio) and D. Butt (ex-Officio)

### In attendance

Jill McGregor	Corporate Director for Children's Services
Sally Atkinson	Specialist Commissioner – Children's Clinical Commissioning
Pamela Wharton	Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care
Karen Samples	Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance
Sally Smith	Head of SEND & Inclusion
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer
Harry Callaghan	Governance Officer

### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. J. Haughey and R. Paul

#### **9. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2023/24**

RESOLVED: That the Membership of the Committee be noted.

#### **10. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023-24**

RESOLVED: That the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

#### **11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

#### **12. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **13. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Questions from Elizabeth Stanley

1. How many tribunals appeals were there in 2022, including numbers that went to a hearing and cost to the council including staff time in defending those tribunals?

*11 appeals were lodged, with Council's position being upheld at 0.*

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Written response sent by the Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance

*We pay legal £15,000 a year for advice on all cases which would include Tribunals. Staff time would need to be calculated on a case-by-case basis.*

2. How of those tribunals in 2022 was the outcome that the tribunal agreed with the Local Authority?

Verbal response from the Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance

*0*

3. How many tribunal appeals have been submitted in 2023 so far?

Verbal response from the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance

*Five from January*

4. Number of complaints about the EHCP Team and process to date in 2023?

Written Response from the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance

*There have been 12 complaints.*

5. Number of EHCP case managers and their current case load?

Verbal Response from the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance

*One Service Manager, One Senior EHC coordinator, and 11.49 coordinators, with their case loads are roughly between 220 to 280 EHC Plans.*

6. Number of vacancies in the team?

Verbal Response from the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance.

*None at this time, with temporary additionality in place at this time and looking to continue.*

7. How many EHCP needs assessment requests are there per month, (average)?

Verbal Response from the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance.

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*Data taken from 2022 as this was a complete year. The lowest number was 28 during the summer holidays. 62 was the highest in June and July, with the average being around 40.*

8. Number of children and young people with EHCP's without a school place for September?

Written Response provided by the Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance.

*For Year 6 transition placements, we named 94% prior to the February statutory deadline and all of the remaining 6% had placements named for September 23. Year 11 placements are currently going through the enrolment process and as such, the team are working through these to establish confirmed placements and any that will be deemed as NEET.*

9. Number of children and young people who do not have an EHCP naming their new school/college placement for September?

Written Response provided by the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance.

*All CYP have either a named provision or establishment type.*

10. How long are the wait times for health assessments, occupational therapy, autism assessments, mental health assessments, Physiotherapy assessments, are they completed in time for draft EHCP's to be sent to families?

Written Response provided by the Director of Education Standard, Quality, and Performance.

*May 2023 data, wait to first contact:*

- *Autism assessment – 55 weeks*
- *Occupational Therapy – 27 weeks*
- *Physiotherapy – 21 weeks*

<i>Waiting Times / RTT (Referral to Treatment)</i>	<i>Weeks</i>
<i>Average Ref. to 1st contact / Appt (6 wks target)</i>	<i>0.6</i> <b>11.</b>
<i>Average Ref to 2nd contact / Appt (12 wks target)</i>	<i>13.7</i> <b>12.</b> <b>13.</b>
<i>Average 2nd to 3rd contact/Appt (6 wk target)</i>	<i>7.9</i> <b>14.</b> <b>15.</b> <b>16.</b>

11. How does the SEND partnership board ensure it hears the voices of young people with special needs including those who are non-verbal?

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Verbal Response from Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance.

*This is part of the first ambition from the report provided to the Committee. Often seek views from SEND conferences that have been organised through Gorse Hill and the Youth Cabinet. There is a commitment to person-centred reviews, with any EHC plans being reviewed and SENCOs receiving training on how to make sure that the voice of the child is shared through the review. Karen made very clear that they are aware that this is something that can be improved, and that there is a commitment to getting better.*

*The Corporate Director for Children's Services added that there is a section included on each EHC plan titled 'My Plan', that helps to provide the young person with their own voice, and helps those who are non-verbal to capture their views.*

*Head of SEND & Inclusion added that there was recently a well-attended SENCO Forum, where good practice has been shared to focus on the child's voice.*

12. Why are the numbers of refusals to assess higher this year, the test for requesting an EHCP needs assessment is that the child or young person 'may' have Special needs, it's a very low bar?

Verbal Response from the Director of Education

*We had sought clarification on which part of the report the question had come from, following this, it can be seen from the table being referred to that it says the end of June, so a full data set is not available yet, and this is likely to change.*

Questions from Jayne Dillon

Regarding SEND update and Education, Health and Care Plan Quality Assurance & Timeliness

13. The EHCP caseload has dropped in 2023 compared to 2022. Why is this please?

Verbal Response from the Director of Education Standards, Quality, and Performance.

*Same point as above, that due to being part year, we don't currently have the full data.*

14. What is the current situation with annual reviews? Are changes families need being incorporated in the Plans in a timely manner (rather than just at transition stages).



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Written Response from the Director of Education.

*Most changes happen at transition periods unless there has been a change in needs or placement that relates to the need for 'significant' change as outlined in the Code of Practice. Within our SEND Ambitions and service plans we have actions in regard to developing our timeliness of response to parents relating to requested change. Progress is reported to the SEND partnership board.*

**14. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

The Chair provided some context on the Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group had been a joint piece of work conducted with the Health Scrutiny Committee and the topic of mental health services for young people was something the Chair had wanted to do for a long time. The Chair highlighted her concerns with young people's mental health and the increase in the number of referrals, during and post-Covid.

The Chair presented the report to the Committee and asked the Committee to agree the recommendations within the report for submission to the Executive for a response.

The Chair moved the recommendations of the report, and they were approved.

Thanks was offered by the Chair to Councillor Whetton, who was Vice-Chair of the Task and Finish Group, as well as Councillors Haughey, Maitland, and Hartley for their support on the Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED: That the report and its recommendations be approved for submission to the Executive.

**15. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE**

The Corporate Director for Children's Services highlighted how the organisation was now out of formal intervention and had its improvement notice lifted. The report provided an update to the committee on children's social care's improvement journey.

The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care stated that the report had been titled 'Continuous Improvement' as the service recognised that although the service was no longer under special intervention, this was not an end point, and members were very reassured by this. The Committee were asked to acknowledge there was still a long way to go to reach a point where the organisation was confident services were consistently good. The report detailed how the service had used the Isos Research method to improve children's services.

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The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care went on to say that, following the recent inspection, OFSTED had set out six areas for improvement, which had been built into the existing Ambitions Plan. The report provided detail of each of the eight ambition areas set out by the Council. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care assured the committee that each of the plans had additional plans underneath which contained a greater level of detail. Through consultation with board members and partner agencies, an Ambitions for Children Board had been established, which had had its first meeting, and was to be chaired by the leader of the Council, which signified the importance of the continuing improvement journey. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care highlighted how some of the ambitions, such as neglect, were linked with the strategic safeguarding partnerships, to avoid duplication of work and to be mindful of judicious use of resources.

The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care followed up with several recommendations for Committee Members to know regarding the reconfiguration of the Ambitions board. These included detail of the improvement activity within the plan; to note the enhanced role of some of the ambitions leads jointly with the TSSP; also, to receive updates on progress against key areas of activity; and for the committee to supply constructive challenge to ensure the board continues to make a difference to the children and young people of Trafford.

The Chair asked if there were any questions regarding the report.

Councillor Parker asked a question regarding ambition 6 on domestic abuse. The Corporate Director for Children's Services answered that there was a dedicated domestic abuse board, which responded to changes in legislation. The board had responsibility over the commissioning of resources and sat under the auspices of the Council's community safety partnerships. Further to this, the Corporate Director for Children's Services underlined that there was a costed plan, with commissioning resources in place. Two examples were highlighted, being that in Trafford, the council has opened a male domestic abuse refuge, and the council had also commissioned services dedicated for children. The Corporate Director for Children's Services finished that there was always more the Council would like to do, and the team would always seek to gain more funding to set up further preventative services.

Councillor Hirst asked what the plans were for the participation and engagement service. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care responded to the question, firstly mentioning that the participation and engagement service had been moved into the wider youth engagement service to make better use of resources. The service was hoping to increase engagement with children to make sure the service was providing support to a wider footprint of children. The service wanted to work with organisations to ensure that children's voices would be central and listened to, which would make the service more effective. The Corporate Director for Children's Services provided examples of how the organisation was engaging with children, by taking the ambitions plan into schools and meeting with school councils, as well as the children in care council and the aftercare forum, who had provided really good questions and ideas. The service planned to meet again with these groups of young people, and to present to them

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what had been done and how their advice had been put into action. The Specialist Commissioner in Children's Clinical Commissioning spoke passionately about the recently commissioned provider Youth Focus Northwest which had launched two groups. One of those would provide operational support, looking at how the service should be delivered, whilst the other would carry out more strategic work, feeding into GM strategies around some of the region's health services. The groups had identified two key areas for review, the first being the Greater Manchester CAMHs offer, and the other looking into children presenting in crisis to hospitals.

Councillor Procter asked why annual reviews and assessments were done for those on an EHC plan if their needs had not changed. The Corporate Director for Children's Services responded that the council had a statutory duty to conduct annual reviews, and while some Children's needs might not change, some would. The Director of Education also responded that it was a review aimed at ensuring the plan was still relevant for the young person rather than a reassessment. Councillor Procter said that this was an important distinction, so children do not lose their support, which had happened when complete reassessments had taken place in the past.

Councillor Procter asked how the council would achieve Ambitions 2 and 3 so that children received the help they needed when they needed it and ensuring that a child in every area of the borough had access to the same quality of service. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care responded saying that the family help offer and co-production within the different communities was pivotal to ensuring that the right help was offered at the right time. In response to the second question the Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care assured the Committee that it was important for the quality of services in Trafford to be consistent across the borough, however, she noted that there were different service users with different needs within different areas of the borough. The Director for Education mentioned that the needs assessment and data informed the service that it was important to start in the North of the borough, however, the council fully intended to offer opportunities to areas in central and south Trafford as well, with a clear recruitment drive ongoing. The Corporate Director for Children's Services also answered that the council had worked hard over the last few years to ensure that people in social care received the right support at the right time. The Committee were assured that the Council was working hard to understand the needs of the people in Trafford and see what was working well and what was a challenge to some of the young people in the borough.

Councillor Ennis asked how high turnover within the social care workforce impacted strategic planning. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care mentioned that high turnover did have an impact on the work the council was trying to achieve. However, there was a relentless focus within Trafford social care to be an attractive place to work, both corporately and within the services. The Committee were assured that the services recognised the importance of a sustainable workforce for the children and families who used the service, and to enable continuous improvement. The Corporate Director for Children's Services said that if the conditions were in place to look after people in the right way, offer shared values and visions, and inform the workforce of the difference they made,

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they would act as key enablers in building a consistent approach. The Committee were asked to note that it was tough nationally to maintain a low turnover within the public sector.

Councillor Ennis also asked how the role of third sector factored in at a strategic level. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care responded that the Council's former DfE (Department for Education) advisor saw this as a key strength within Trafford. There was a representative from the third sector on the improvement board, and they were to be a key partner in the Ambitions for Children board. The Committee were informed of the integral role played by the third sector across the services available to children and families within the borough. The Corporate Director for Children's Services referred to the needs assessment within the report which encouraged the Council's third sector partners to think creatively about how they would meet the needs of young people in the borough, and what they, as a vital part of the service, could do to support the social care improvement journey the Council was on. Finally, the Corporate Director for Children's Services outlined that as a Council Trafford were already seeing some of the positive effects of working collaboratively with third sector partners.

Councillor Parker asked a question regarding the rollout of the Trafford Team Together (TTT) service to the centre of the borough. The Corporate Director for Children's Services responded that this was expected to be rolled out by autumn 2023, which was a delay from the original Spring 2023 target. The Committee's attention was then drawn to an event which was expected to be held in Autumn to showcase the benefits of the TTT model.

Councillor Acton enquired how the council planned to measure the success and outcomes of the eight key targets. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care replied that there was a performance framework in place, which she would share with the Committee post meeting. Each of the ambitions had a series of measures which contained both quantitative and qualitative methods of measuring success. She also mentioned some stretch targets were being set to ensure that the service remained ambitious. The Corporate for Children's Services said that the ultimate test for success was to receive feedback from the families and those who used the service, and that they felt the service and the council had been helpful to them. Councillor Acton felt it would be useful to hold a review periodically to manage performance. The Chair asked if they would be happy to come back in six months with a progress update. The Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care confirmed that they would.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a further update be submitted in six months time.

**16. SEND UPDATE AND EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND TIMELINESS**

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The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance opened by lifting some of the highlights of the report and the vision for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) system. The Council was committed to improving the experience and outcomes for all who used the service. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance informed the Committee that more needed to be done to ensure the system providing as much support to service users as possible, with areas for improvement being identified by listening to the lived experience of those service users.

The Committee were provided with an outline of the renewed governance arrangements. The governance arrangements had been reviewed in response to changing needs post-pandemic and system wide pressures within the education sector. An independent chair had been appointed to the SEND strategic board, who brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role. The board wanted to establish a co-chairing arrangement, which could involve the families and parents. As part of the SEND approach the service wanted to make sure that children received the right support at the right time.

The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance then went on to highlight the Ambitions for Children plan, how the SEND approach fitted into the plan and would be held to account against the plan. The Committee's attention was drawn to the data within the update around growth plans and how there had been a rise in requests for very young children post-COVID. The data showed that the areas of deprivation were where the Council saw the highest SEND need. The Committee were informed that 20 weeks was the statutory time for a plan to be issued and the frustrations of families when plans were not completed in a timely manner, "There is a no 21<sup>st</sup> week" was the mantra of the team. However, there were some cases where it was beneficial to take extra time to formulate to ensure it was as effective and robust as possible. The service also aimed to have the highest quality assurance mechanisms in place to guarantee every plan produced was effective and high quality.

The Chair thanked the Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance, highlighting that a former Task and Finish Group's recommendations have been implemented.

Councillor Sutton questioned why the proportion of plans issued in 2022 was much higher. The Head of SEND and Inclusion responded that it was due to an overlap of years. Councillor Sutton asked another question regarding EHC plans and how the report suggested an increase from years 4 to 5, and a reduction in years 3 and year 4. The head of SEND and Inclusion responded that the report showed a peak in year 2 as well and added that EHC plans tended to come at different key stages as schools focused on submitting referrals at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Councillor Sutton asked about transition to secondary schools, and if there was an issue with limited school resources being focused on getting EHCPs in place before SATs. The head of SEND and Inclusion responded that transition to secondary school was an area of concern, however, both primary and secondary SENCOs were working together, and looking at what needed to be done within

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secondary sector to ensure that children's needs are met. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance did not believe the trend Councillor Sutton was looking related to SATs but rather the fact that secondary school was a very different environment. It was therefore important for support to be in place to ensure a child was able to move seamlessly from Primary to Secondary School.

Councillor Sutton asked a question in relation to 'SEN rates by gender', would be better titled, 'SEN diagnosis rates by gender'. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance replied that the data covered children with an EHC plan and those who have had SEND support. Councillor Sutton was informed that the data could be looked at in relation to primary need, but it would require a significant breakdown identify any trends of males and females against specific need. Councillor Sutton responded that it would be interesting to see that breakdown as there was a known issue of gender bias and diagnosis. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance responded that they were aware there was a higher proportion of girls who were neurodivergent that may mask the symptoms. The head of SEND and Inclusion followed this by saying that with special needs they tended to talk about it as presenting need, rather than diagnosis, as those who were neurodivergent may need different levels of support. The head of SEND and Inclusion also informed the Committee that there was lot of work going on in schools around identification and girls with autism.

Councillor Sutton asked whether alternative methods of engagement had been considered to provide non-verbal children the opportunity to engage, and whether audio and visual evidence was used as well as physical evidence. The Head of SEND and Inclusion responded that this had been considered and SENCOs were encouraged to think about how they could gather information from those children. Methods such as the emotionally based school non-attendance toolkit were used to encourage young people who did not want to use their voice to use cards to represent how they felt.

Councillor Deakin asked about the status of the communication strategy, whether it had been implemented, and what it looked like. The Head of SEND and Inclusion responded that it was incorporated within the ambitions plan, although it was at an early stage. Two different models had been identified, and a decision would be made once a new member of the EHC team started. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance responded that several forums and providers were being involved in the development of the strategy including the communication engagement group, who were leading on it. The Corporate Director for Children's Services added that a development day was due to take place with the EHCP team to evaluate best practice from other authorities, for when contact was made, to ensure service was responsive as possible. The Head of SEND & Inclusion reiterated that the communication strategy needed to be clear and as bespoke as possible for every service user, including those who did not have EHC plans accepted.

Councillor Parker what was being done to support boys with SEN in low-income families. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance responded that the organisation working to address during the early years stage.

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The service was aware that boys did not perform as well as girls. The team was working hard to make sure there was provision of support for the most disadvantaged children. The Head of SEND and Inclusion noted that work by the TTT was also focused on picking up the most disadvantaged families. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance highlighted how the handling of data by the team had improved, allowing the council to identify trends easier, through more regular reports from the performance team. Some of the best SENCO teams at schools in Trafford were providing good data and aiding the Council to support schools that were of greater concern through bespoke peer to peer support. The Corporate Director for Children's Services highlighted how ongoing work with the service's partners was important to get a richness of data captured and then understanding the data to ensure that the council was data intelligent, not just data rich.

Councillor Ennis asked what the financial impact of the government's recent pay deal for support workers was upon SEND schools. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance responded that Trafford was within the lowest forty funded boroughs in the country and financial pressures were having an impact. Schools were finding it challenging to recruit people who could support children with additional needs, however, the council was working with schools to empower them and develop their capacity to meet those needs, without additional staffing. The Corporate Director for Children's Services mentioned that strategic planning was being done to look at how the council could offer additional resource to schools. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance ended by saying that some schools were saying they could not meet need and that this was a challenge for the council, as it was an ambition to ensure children with additional needs could be educated at their local school.

Councillor Hirst asked what was being done so that co-production was consistent and meaningful across the service. The Head of SEND and Inclusion responded that work had started with it being discussed at the development day and at a northwest event where co-production was a theme across local authorities. Work was being done to increase involvement from all those involved in the formation of EHC plans. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance added that the communication engagement group was clear around the co-production charter and the Council was committed to the co-production ladder. The Corporate Director for Children's Services highlighted how parents had doubts around the service in the past, but the current strategic approach was to ensure that the service was listening and acted upon the information they received. The aim was for parents and carers to be not just a stakeholder, but also a strategic decision maker.

Councillor Hirst what quality assurance was performed within the first 12 months to check if a plan was being implemented correctly. The Head of SEND and Inclusion responded that this was done on a term-by-term basis within schools, with the council's duty being the annual review.

Councillor Acton raised concerns around funding in schools and the support given to those young people who had additional needs within schools. The Corporate Director for Children's Services responded that there was a lobbying meeting at a

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national level in September and Trafford would be represented at that meeting. The Director for Education Standards, Quality, and Performance added that Trafford schools worked well with the council to support those who were most vulnerable and to enable schools to be as supportive and inclusive as possible. The Corporate Director for Children's Services mentioned that recent external assurance came out that the quality of SEND support in Trafford was positive, so whilst there were pressures around finance and class sizes, there was strong support for children.

Councillor Proctor asked whether data around the percentage of fostered children within SEN was documented. The Director for Education noted that this data was monitored, and the virtual school had a dedicated SENCO to support those children. The Corporate Director for Children's Services acknowledged the point and assured the Committee that the council went even further for children with a disadvantage in life experience and special educational needs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**17. DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair opened item 10 and referred an online meeting at which Committee Members had outlined the work programme for the upcoming municipal year. The Chair discussed the plan for the September meeting, which was to be around transitions and split into two topics, one about transition for children in care and the other for the transition of children with EHCP's. The Chair then reminded the committee that if there was anything they would like to add to the work programme across the year the committee would try and incorporate it.

Councillor Sutton suggested that the Committee look at the ongoing impacts of the COVID Pandemic upon young people. The Corporate Director for Children's Services offered a slight nervousness to looking at this as there was not an understanding yet of post-pandemic recovery, with the national audit office saying that it was likely to take ten years to catch up. The Chair expressed that while she understood where Councillor Sutton was coming from it was too difficult a topic for the Committee to scrutinise effectively.

Councillor Ennis asked whether the growing number of migrants and refugees within the borough and the challenges that come with this, was something that could be considered over the municipal year. The Chair responded that this was something looked at in the past municipal year, and something that to committee could continue to keep a watching brief on.

Councillor Butt referred to the discussion on the COVID situation, and whether general long-term sickness among the population was a covid related issue. The Director for Education referred to Public Health as possibly being able to provide that information. The Specialist Commissioner mentioned that there was information on the pathway of children who have been diagnosed with long covid which could be shared with the committee.



**Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee**  
**25 July 2023**

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Councillor Hirst mentioned how migrant and COVID discussion could be had at the next meeting on transitions. It was agreed that Councillor Hirst was to be invited to the next agenda setting meeting to give her the opportunity to offer what she wants to be discussed.

Councillor Proctor asked whether exit interviews took place for foster carers who retired and what happened with the information. The Corporate Director for Children's Services responded that they were conducted, and the Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care added that information from the interviews was included in monthly performance meeting within her team, and in a quarterly report from the Head of Service for Fostering. The information was then considered in the development of the fostering modernisation plan and captured within annual report of the fostering service.

Councillor Proctor also asked about co-opted members and that we don't have any. A Governance Officer reported that we do advertise these positions, but they rarely get a response. Another recruitment drive would take place.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the work programme be noted.
- 2) That Councillor Hirst be invited to the agenda setting meeting.
- 3) That information on the pathway of children who have been diagnosed with long covid be shared with the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.41 pm

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# Trafford Children's Social Care CYP Scrutiny Committee Transition from Cared 4 to Care Experienced

**Tracey Arnold**  
Head of Service Cared 4 Children & Care Experienced Service





# Overview

This presentation will consider:

- Corporate Parenting Strategy in relation to Preparation for Adulthood
- What our Young People tell us about their experience of the transition from Cared 4 to Care Leaver
- National & Regional Picture
- Legal Framework and Categories
- Who our Care 4 & Care Experienced Young People are
- How we measure our Performance
- Accommodation Options
- Work undertaken to date
- Next Steps Plans for the Future



## Legal Framework

- The context for supporting our care experienced young people is set out in legislation
- - Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
- This states what we have to do to help young people who have been looked after by a Local Authority to support them move from care into living independently .
- It defines the type of support that we should provide “in as stable as way as possible”- with the right support at the right time and to continue further into adulthood.
- It places a duty on a Local Authority to assess and meet the needs of their Care Experienced Young People and Adults.
- In effect this legislation defines our Corporate parenting responsibilities up to the age 25

In Trafford this means – doing what we would do for our children – parenting doesn’t simply end !



# Legal Framework – Duties and Responsibilities

Key features of the Children (Leaving Care) Act include:

- Clear definitions as to who are care leavers - eligible, relevant, former relevant and qualifying young people, and as such who is entitled to services
- A duty to keep in touch with care leavers (*extended to age 25 in 2018*)
- Requirement for all care leavers to have “Pathway Plans” – this is the plan that identifies that areas that our Care Experienced young people and adults require support in to enable them to be the best that they can
- Requirement for all young people leaving to have a Personal Advisor
- Requirement to provide assistance with employment, education and training.

How ever we know nationally and locally that providing the right support at the right time to our care experienced young people can be challenging

# Legal Framework - Care Leaver Categories

Category	Definition
Eligible	Young people who are 16-17 still in care
Qualifying	Young people/adults age 16-21 (25 if in education) who were in care for 13 weeks or more on or after 16 <sup>th</sup> Birthday
Relevant	Young people aged 16-17 who left care on or after their 16 <sup>th</sup> Birthday
Former Relevant	Adults aged <b>18 up to age 25</b> and you were in care on or after your 16th birthday.



# National & Regional Picture

- “**Ready or not**” OFSTED Research published in January 2022 highlighted the need to improve the support for care leavers. They conducted surveys and group consultation sessions to seek the experience of care leavers *“For many young people in care, approaching adulthood and leaving the care system is a time of moving on, ambitions planning and hopes for the future but it can also bring with it **extra challenges, anxiety and fear.**”*
- *More than a third of care leavers felt that they left care too early. This was often because the move out of care happened abruptly and they were **not ready for all the sudden changes.***
- *Of those who did feel that they left care at the right time, not all felt they had the required skills to live more independently.”*

Key themes identified from this research :

Feeling that they left care too early with a sense of isolation and fear

Not involved in pathway planning or having choice of accommodation

Feeling unprepared to manage their money and have a limited understanding of their rights and entitlements

Good relationship with a personal advisor introduced early makes a difference, many meet them too late and nearer to 18

- Greater Manchester Care Leaver Pledge





# Voice of our Care Leavers

- Our care leavers have told us similar things and this is shaping the work we are progressing and influencing our plans .....
- They tell us that sometimes it feels like ‘ Care leaves us rather than we leave care’ and can feel like a ‘cliff edge’
- They would like clarity on what they are entitled to
- They would like more options for housing/accommodation
- They would like continued support to access support from health partners post 18
- They speak positively about their Personal Advisors
- They have asked for clarity about what the Protected Characteristic means
- Critically we are needing to take action and respond to this through our Corporate parenting strategy which now has a clear priority in respect of care leavers and preparing for adulthood



# Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out our commitment and intention for our cared for children and care leavers. A key principle of the Strategy is ‘Would this be Good Enough for My Child?’

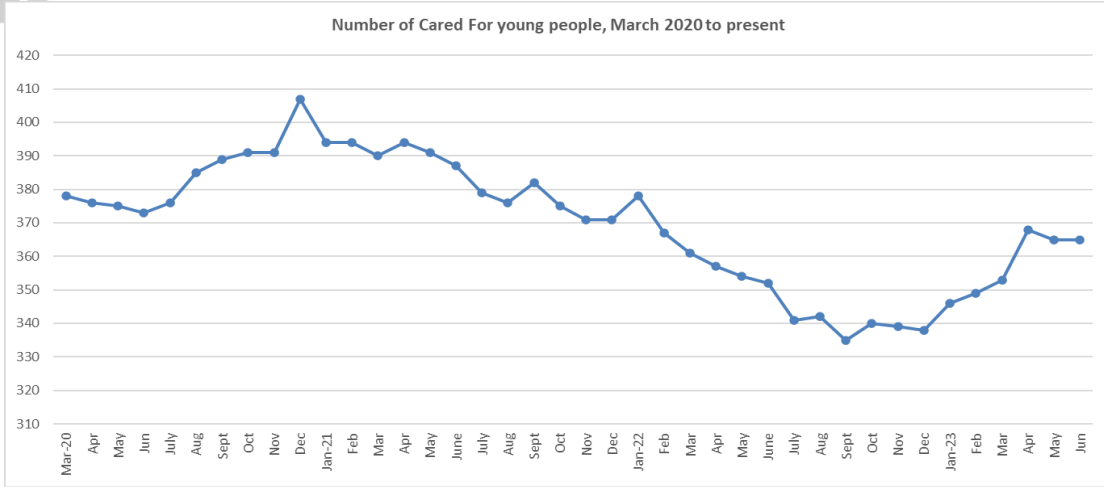
It has 5 Strategic Priorities:

## **Participation and Engagement, Health, Education, Providing a Stable Home, Preparing for Adulthood**

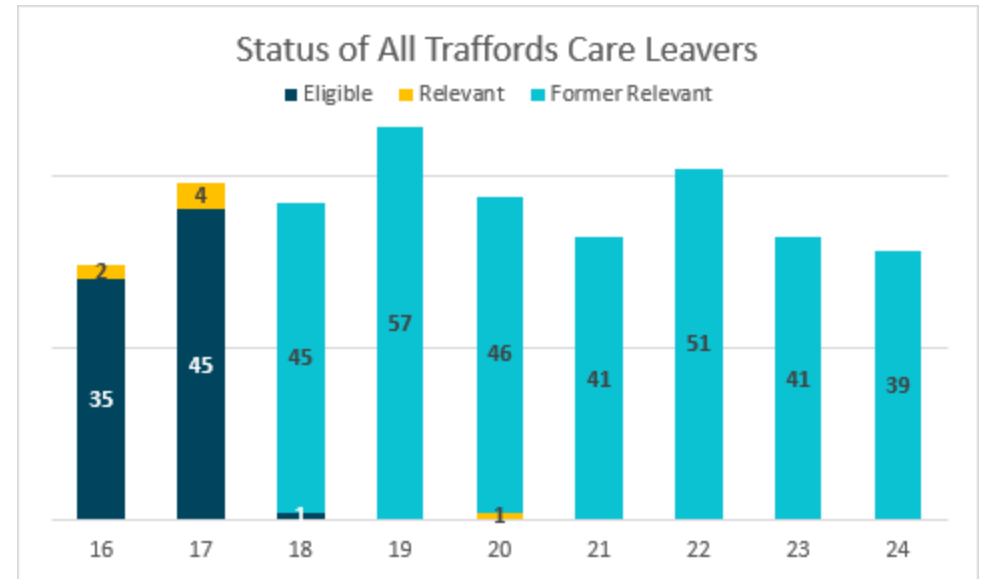
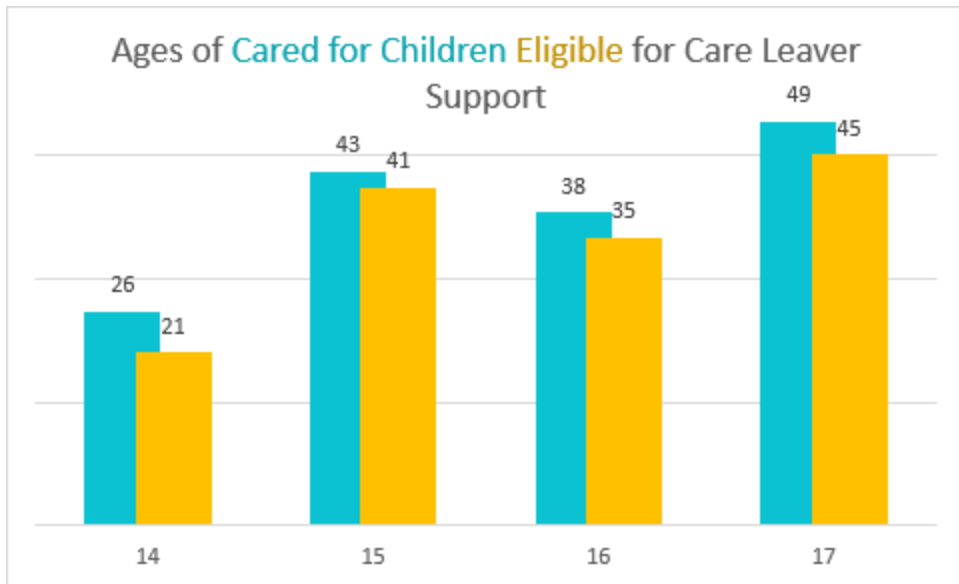
Under the Preparing for adulthood priority we have committed to:

- Engage with GM care leavers workstream to shape service delivery for care leavers -
- Update the care leaver offer – so that our care leavers are clear about the support that we will offer and how this provided is clear about
- Improve the quality of pathway plans for all young people
- To develop a clear pathway into adult services for those young people with vulnerabilities,
- Ensure all providers work with the independent living skills handbook,
- Early identification of suitable young people who would benefit from the House project
- To implement an “accommodation panel” for young people between 16 and 25 years to focus on transitions planning and readiness for independent living
- Explore the health offer for Care Experienced young people and adults

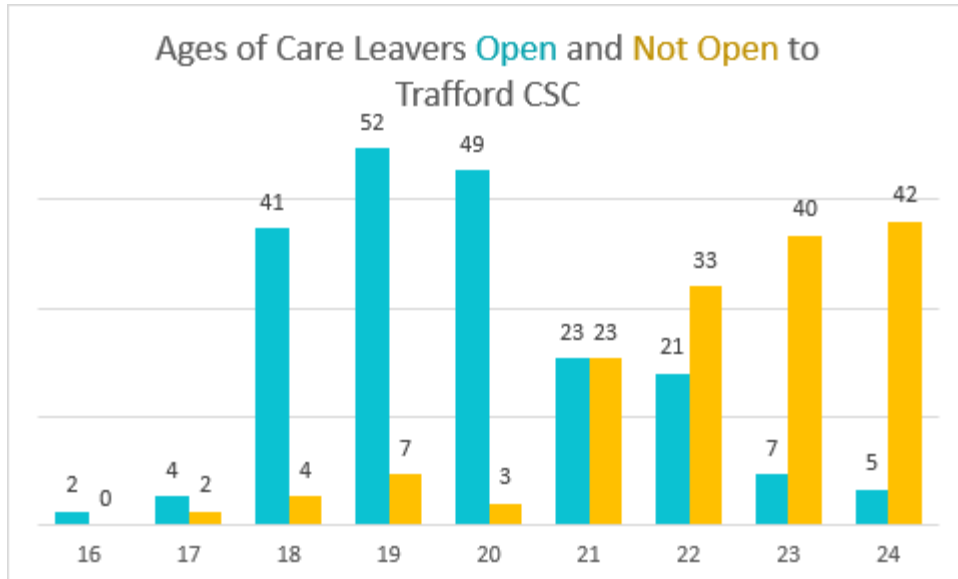
# Who our Cared 4 & Care Experienced Young People Are



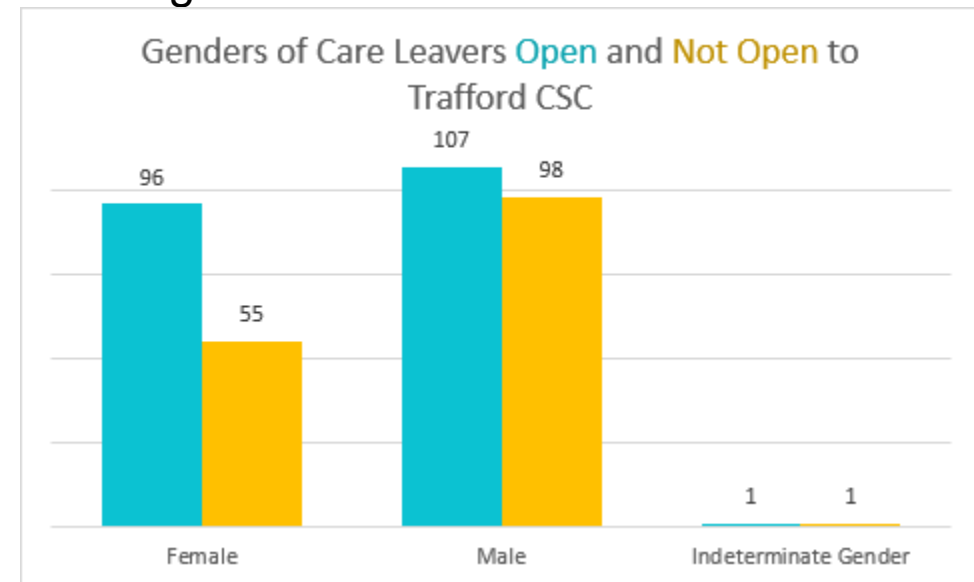
- Cared 4 numbers from 409 (January 2021) to 365 (June 2023) but we know our previously high number of cared for children means we have a growing cohort of young people that will become Care Experienced and require support
- 86 in the 16-17 age bracket
- 163 are in the 10-15 age bracket



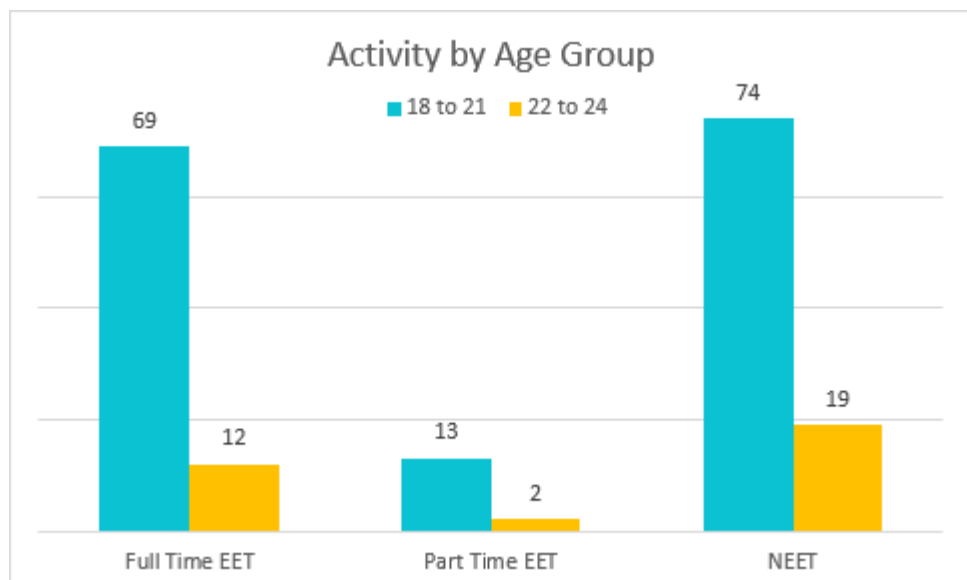
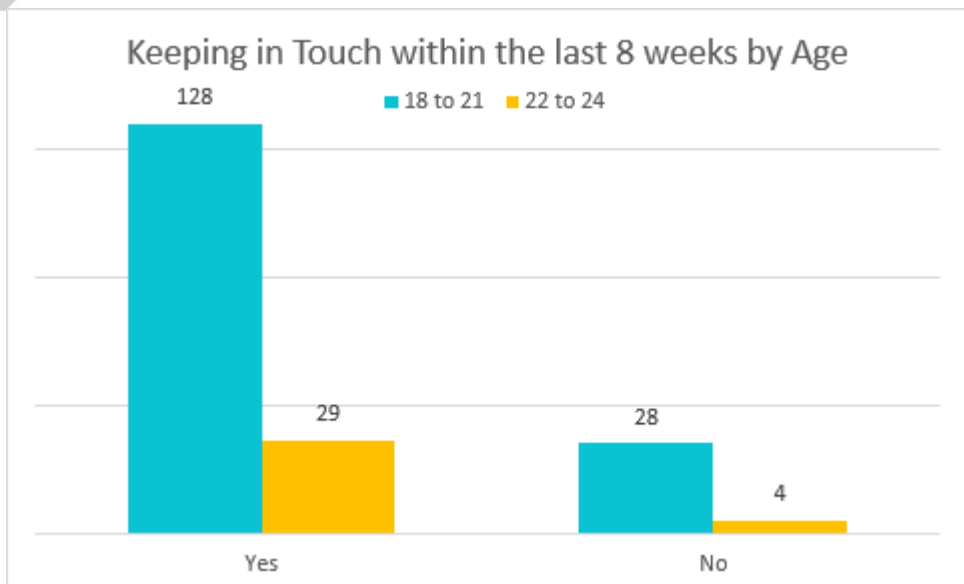
# Who are Cared 4 and Care Experienced Young People Are



- The provision of advice and support to those Care Experienced adults 21-25 has previously been reliant on their requests to us
- As part of our approach we have moved to an 'opt out' rather than an 'opt-in' model with a more proactive reach out offer which is underway
- This means we will be actively supporting more of young people for longer

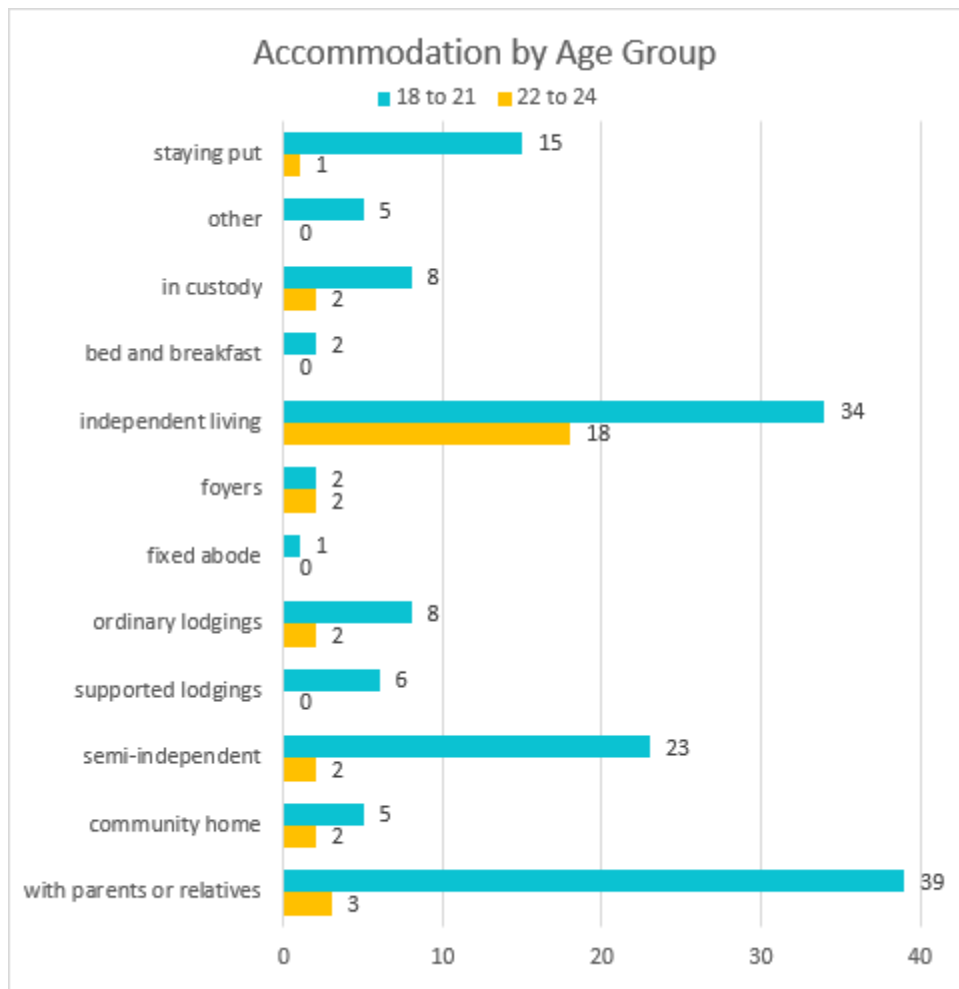


# How we measure our Performance



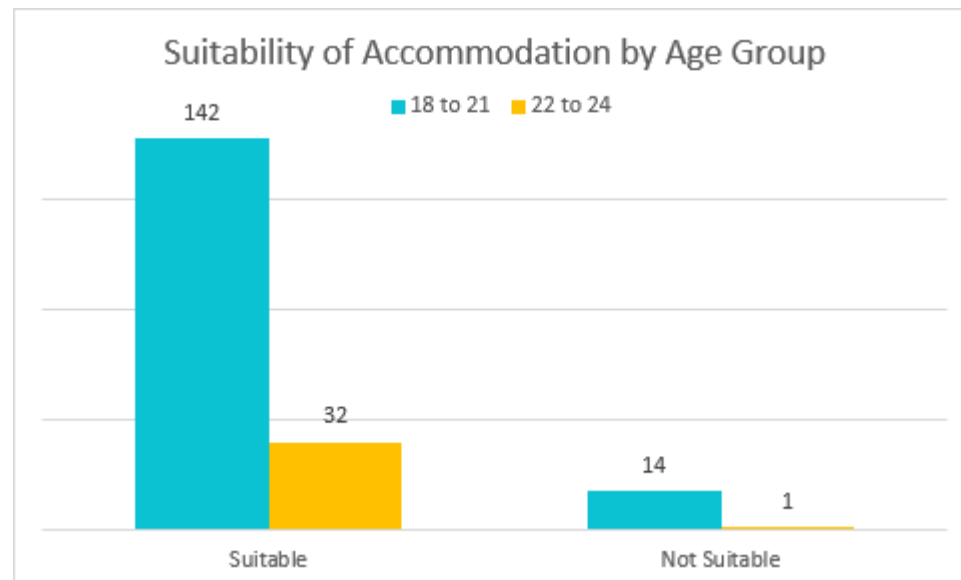
- The service have improved performance on the number of young people who are open to us having meaningful conversations which is known as 'keeping in touch.' We have more to do to increase the number of those aged 21-25 who we are providing a service too
- A significant number of Trafford Care Experienced young people & adults are positively engaged in further and higher education and apprenticeships. Several young people have gone on to university and are or have completed degrees and masters. However there more of our Care Experienced 18-21 year olds who are not in Education, Employment or Training. This decreased significantly during Covid and although we have seen some improvements there is more to do to improve in this area

# How we measure our Performance



The suitability of accommodation is an important indicator as it is from a solid foundation of having a home that young people. The vast majority of our young people are positively classified as residing in suitable accommodation.

We do not count custody, no fixed above and bed and breakfast as suitable accommodation and have mechanisms in place to oversee decision making about any of our Care Experienced young people and adults in bed and breakfast at Director level.





# Accommodation and Support Options

Having stable, secure base is fundamental to helping our young people achieve. Providing a range of choices and different types of accommodation for care leavers has been a priority. We have a range of options including :

- **Staying Put** - where the young person can choose to stay with their former foster carer
- **Supported Lodgings** – provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home where they are a member of the household – currently we have 5 households with availability for 6 – projected to increase to 9 by March 2024
- **2 supported accommodation options** specifically for Trafford young :
  - **Mary House** – a group living provision for 4 young people with support on site 24/7. A satellite flat for 2 young people is also supported by the staff team
  - **Forest Court** – 5 individual flats in one building with support staff and/or a concierge team on site.



# House Project

The **House Project** is a way of young people securing a home at 18, having a support network, (including therapeutic intervention) around them of staff and other young people and achieving a sense of community and belonging well into their adulthood. There is a programme of support to prepare young people ahead of them moving in. Cohort 1 has been successful with 7 young people having been through the programme - 3 are currently in their homes, further 2 identified and awaiting to move in to new build properties

[Manchester and Trafford's first move-in of cohort 3: Mya receives the keys to her very own property through Jigsaw Homes | The House Project | Manchester and Trafford](#)

We have identified a further **7 young people** for co-hort 2 of the project with 7 young This is a joint commission with Manchester City Council, we work with them and our young people across both Authorities











# Service Development

## Delivered to Date:

- Service Improvement Plan in place
- Care Leaver Assurance Meetings – Corporate Director chairs
- Established link & involvement with Greater Manchester Care Leaver Group
- Partnered with Salford for Sector Led Improvement, delivered bespoke 2 day training session to date to Cared 4 & Care Experienced Service
- Focussing on key vulnerable groups – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, those who are parents and those leaving custody
- Reviewed the Care Leaver Offer with young people
- Protected Characteristic endorsed by Council
- Targeted recruitment of Personal Advisors and Practice Manager with Care Experience expertise



# Service Development

We have more to do to improve the service provided to our Care Experienced Young People so that they receive a consistent and quality service.

## **Next Steps:**

- Deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy actions linked to the Preparing for Adulthood priority
- Induction programme for our newly appointed Personal Advisors
- Ensure that Personal Advisors have consistent support supervision and management oversight from managers with expertise in Care Experience
- Training on legislation, guidance, Care Leaver Offer for all aftercare workers, residential workers, foster carers and social workers across Children's Social Care
- Establish clear offer of support in relation to the Protected Characteristic for Care Experienced young people and adults
- Event with key employers in Trafford to be planned led by the Leader of the Council
- Strengthen the quality and consistency of pathway plans



**Any Questions**



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## **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Karen Samples: Director of Education  
Sally Smith: Head of SEND & Inclusion  
Justin Coleman: Designated Social Care Officer  
Emma Brown: Director of Adults  
Colin Reynolds: Service Manager - Community Learning Disability Team

### **Report Title: Transitions in SEND- Preparing for Adulthood**

#### **Purpose**

**This report will provide an overview of the transition process for young people with an EHC Plan in Trafford, with a particular focus on Preparing for Adulthood.**

#### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the contents of the report are noted and to receive further updates as appropriate.**

#### **Summary**

Trafford is ambitious for children and young persons with special educational needs and disability. We recognise the importance of ensuring a smooth transition to adulthood and to providing an integrated approach across education, care and health to ensure a smooth transition into adult services.

As young people with special educational needs move into adulthood it will be important for their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to support their aims for employment and training, for independent living, for good health and community involvement.

Transition remains a priority for all our children and young people. Further to external validation, we know we have more to do to ensure our young people and their families are supported at all key points in their lives especially in respect of preparing our young people for adulthood, independence, and employment, as well as maintaining positive relationships with others. Preparation for Adulthood is a key priority in our Strategic SEND Ambitions Plan (Ambition 4 - We will ensure that our young people with SEND have the same opportunities as all young people, so that they could have the same life outcomes).

#### **1.1 Background**

Section 8 of the SEND Code of Practice states:

*'Professionals across education (including early years, schools, colleges and 16-19*



*academies), health and social care should support children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities to prepare for adult life and help them go on to achieve the best outcomes in employment, independent living, health and community participation.*

*Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life transforming for children and young people with SEND. This support needs to start early and should centre around the child or young person's own aspirations, interests and needs. All professionals working with them should share high aspirations and have a good understanding of what support is effective in enabling children and young people to achieve their ambitions'.*

Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- higher education and/or employment – this includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies
- independent living – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living
- participating in society, including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community
- being as healthy as possible in adult life

## **1.2 Starting Early**

When a child is very young, or SEN is first identified, partners from across the SEND system should seek to understand the interests, strengths and motivations of children and young people and use this as a basis for planning support around them.

Early years providers and schools should support children and young people so that they are included in social groups and develop friendships and ensure that, with the right conditions, children with SEN can engage in the activities of the nursery or school together with those who do not have SEN and are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the nursery or school and in any wider community activity.

Transitions from Early Years settings into schools are well managed. Transition events between schools and early years settings are held in the summer term providing an opportunity for them to come together to discuss children who may need extra transition support. This support is provided by the SEN Advisory Service (SENAS) workers for any child they are supporting, who is moving to school. SENAS also works closely with families to advise and support decisions about which educational setting may best meet the needs of their child, whilst also providing guidance and support to early education providers about how best to support a child/children attending their setting or school.

The strength of the education offer is reflected in the educational outcomes our pupils with SEND across the Early Years have achieved. Strong school leadership, high quality learning environments with support from Inclusion services ensures these outcomes remain strong.



The percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception and the Year 1 Phonics standard have both improved this year (2023) for all SEND pupils. Despite a 3 point improvement to 18%, the proportion of Reception pupils with SEND achieving the GLD remains below the national level of 20%. In the Year 1 Phonics check, the performance for pupils with SEND has moved from the national level of 39% to over 45% compared to national level of 42.5%. This performance in phonics has occurred because both cohorts (pupils with SEN Support and pupils with EHCP) have improved; over 54% of pupils with SEN Support achieved the threshold whilst nearly 26% of those with an EHCP achieved it, up from 15% last year.

### **1.3 Year 6 to Year 7**

Every child who is identified as going through the key stage transfer process should have either a specific setting or a type of setting named by the statutory deadline, as per the SEND Code of Practice, which is 15 February.

Transition from year 6 to year 7 in Trafford is complex due to the nature of our education system, coupled with a pressure for school places. We also know that some of our families would say that they are truly worried about transitioning into secondary education. Last academic year, we named 94% prior to the February statutory deadline and all of the remaining 6% had placements named for September, however, we remain committed to ensure this position improves and the SEND Service Manager and EHC Manager are working with Trafford Parent/Carer Forum to agree the necessary actions.

In addition, during the SENCO Forum in June 2023, colleagues from Primary and Secondary settings were tasked to discuss the details of their provision and what reasonable adjustments looked like, at both phases of education to get a shared understand from both sectors. The groups were also divided by need, to enable a more forensic look at specific provision around Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Autism, Dyslexia and ADHD. Each group was facilitated by colleagues from the SENCO development group, who were able to draw out the key features of provision from colleagues. This direct comparison between adjustments at Primary and Secondary level, enabled high quality discussion about the barriers and potential solutions to Year 6 / 7 transition. The main points of the discussions were recorded and will be used to influence further guidance materials about preparing SEND learners for transition.

### **1.4 Year 9 onwards (Preparation for Adulthood)**

Through our internal governance we recognised that our systems and processes for young people transitioning into adulthood were not sufficiently robust and were not adequately meeting the needs of all children and young people. Our externally commissioned exercise has confirmed that our self-view is accurate, and this is reflected in feedback from our parents and carers, who are clear that the decision making around support is confused.

Most recently **in June 2023, Paula Thompson-Jones, an Ofsted SEND trained inspector**, carried out sampling work to replicate the process Trafford will go through

when we have our Local Area SEND Inspection. This included a focus on the experience of children and young people transitioning into adult services.

**A summary of the findings are below.**

- Children's educational needs and their transitions are addressed as part of the EHC plans, and most children move into suitable education provision with support. Young people with very complex needs were seen to have a variety of educational and development opportunities and were being well supported to access these. However, EHC plans do not support broader transition planning to meet health and social care needs or help transfer to adult services.
- Due to the current PfA protocol, or pathway not being consistently implemented, it is a difficult experience for young people, parents, and carers, who do not feel well supported during a what is a crucial and difficult time.
- Children allocated in the CAN team (CLA or CIN) do not benefit from effective transition planning into adult services. Children are not consistently referred at the right time by children's social workers, and adults services do not get involved quickly enough when they receive a referral. This leaves families with great uncertainty and unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- Young people do not benefit from a timely response from adult social care and await allocation alongside other adults. Assessments of needs are undertaken by workers from generic adult social care teams alongside their other work, rather than by workers with specialist knowledge of working with young people, their needs, and available services. This approach does not consider the on-going intensive work required to respond to the inevitable continued changes and transitions during the early stages of adulthood for this group of service users.

The pathway for children with complex needs transitioning from Childrens Social Care into Adults Social Care, has recently been strengthened and although we have more to do, early indications are that this functioning more effectively.

In relation to children without a learning disability who may need to transition into adult social care we know we have more to do on these pathways to ensure early identification and better-quality experiences for children and young people.

Additionally, we have more work to do to ensure that young people not open to Childrens Social Care, but who may need ongoing support into adulthood receive support from the correct services and that health transitions are well managed. Though plans are in place to address this it is too early to see any impact.

### **1.5 Lived Experience Advisory Panels (LEAP)**

Trafford Parent/Carer Forum have worked with the SEND Partnership in Trafford to establish LEAP Panels. These provide an effective mechanism to hear the lived experience of families with children and young people with SEND to enable us to improve and shape our services going forward.

During the month(s) of June/July 2023, Health & Social Care jointly met with our parents/carers to listen to their lived experience of transition/Preparing for Adulthood

(PfA). These sessions took place at varying times of the day/evening to ensure that as many carers as practicably possible could attend.

The sessions were led by our parent/carers and were subsequently followed up with a meeting with the Director of the Parents forum to ensure we could collaboratively agree our learning.

To hear some of the experiences of our young people and their parents/carers was powerful. It enabled the panel to reflect on the impact professionals can have upon people's lives. There were examples of good practice, however there was also some feedback that has informed our improvement plans.

#### **Feedback following the session from our parents/carers:**

- ✓ Facilitation & 'follow up' (by the Parent Forum) was described positively
- ✓ The sessions were deemed to be supportive, and our parents/carers felt listened to
- ✓ Information was pitched at a level which was easy to understand
- ✓ Professionals can make a positive impact on our young people/carers outcomes

#### **Themes/issues raised**

- Increased support for people experiencing poor Mental Health
- Repeating our story- Streamlining reviews/meetings/minimising changes in professionals
- Communication, engagement and listening to our young people and their parents/carers
- Proactive support from professionals ahead of families reaching 'crisis'
- Strengthening our workforce learning and development offer
- Preparation for Adulthood needs to start earlier and incorporate Education, Health & Social Care professionals
- Enhance our Local Offer to include community resources available for young people who are preparing for adulthood (including 18-25 year olds)

Ambition 4, "**We will ensure that our young people with SEND have the same opportunities as all young people, so that they could have the same life outcomes**" will drive activity to improve transition.

#### **1.6 – Planning for Transition**

Current planning takes the form of the following

- i) Weekly report generated by the performance and development team that outlines young people aged 14 upward who have an EHC plan
- ii) 4 weekly Complex Care Pathway meeting (Children and Additional Needs Team, Community Learning Disability Team, Cheshire Wirral Partnership)
- iii) 6 weekly Neighbourhood Pathway Planning Meeting
- iv) Fortnightly Dynamic Risk Meetings

Referrals for young people can be made to adult services when they are aged 14 upward and thereon a process of information gathering and screening to ensure they are on the correct pathway is made. An adult screening process is to commence

between all Locality Service Managers and the Community Learning Disability Service Manager September 2023 onward.

Currently, there are 3 named pathways:

#### Independence Pathway

The Independence Pathway is for young people with an EHCP but are unlikely to need care and support into adulthood. This is determined by the discussion at the Year 9 Annual Review. A Care Act screening tool is under development to support these conversations too. The Preparing for Adulthood EHC plan from Y9 needs to be focused on the young person's education, employment, independent living, community inclusion and health and include advice and guidance. If specialist advice and guidance is required, a referral into Adult Social Care will be necessary.

#### Neighbourhood Pathway

This Pathway is for young people who are likely to need care and support into adulthood and those interventions will be delivered through the four Adult Locality Teams.

#### Complex Pathway

When a young person has a diagnosed Learning Disability, they enter the complex pathway. This is based on access to community health colleagues (Cheshire Wirral Partnership) and the offer of support applying for those people who are identified with an IQ below 70.

Should a person meet eligibility for Continuing Health Care Funding, then their care and support will be commissioned and monitored via a complex case manager within Trafford NHS / Trafford Integrated Care Board.

In addition to the pathway work we are also undertaken a series of work with key stakeholders, including parents and carers, regarding what good transition should look like with a view to co-producing a transitions strategy which will include PfA. We are working to ensure that the voice and experience of children and young people is driving work around PfA at the earliest opportunity, and we are also developing a range of employment opportunities to ensure that our young people with SEND have a diverse offer in terms of employment and training.

We are now ensuring that children are allocated an adult social worker within the CAN pathway at 17 years and 1 month. Performance reporting has been strengthened to ensure monitoring and compliance with this. As part of the reviewing and redesigning of the CAN service, we are also exploring the structure and resource that exists within our transition pathways to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Support for our young people to gain employment, continue their onwards journey through Education includes:

#### **1.7 – Supported Internships and the SEND Employment Forum**

Supported internships are a structured, work-based study programme for 16 to 24-year-olds with SEND, who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The core aim of a supported internship study programme is a substantial work placement, facilitated by the support of an expert job coach. They provide the opportunity for young people to achieve sustained, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. The supported internship should contribute to the long-term career goals of the young person and match their capabilities. Alongside their time with the employer, supported interns complete a personalised study programme delivered by the school or college, which includes the chance to study for relevant qualifications, if appropriate, and English and maths at an appropriate level.

The aim of supported internships is to support young people with EHC plans to gain paid employment by:

- ✓ supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
- ✓ enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace
- ✓ developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work

The measure of success of a supported internship is a transition to sustained and paid employment.

Every young person is supported in the work placement by a trained job coach, put in place by their education provider. The job coach provides in-work support that tapers off, if appropriate, as the supported intern becomes familiar with their role. Job coaches also work with employers, increasing their confidence in employing individuals with additional needs and helping them to create and support a diverse workforce.

Established in January 2023, the SEND Employment Forum meets quarterly and is the driver and monitoring group for the Supported Internship (SI) work which received grant funding from DfE for two years until March 2025. A part time SI Adviser has been appointed with the funding to lead this work. There has been excellent progress in Trafford already with a new SI pathway established by Trafford Council with Pure Innovations and Trafford College in addition to the current partnership offer through Trafford General Hospital. There are 10 funded places on each. Partners in this offer include Kier Construction and Amey. 12 young people are currently signed up across the two programmes.

The progress on Supported Internships and the representation across partners of our Forum was acknowledged by our National Development Team for Inclusion Regional lead, who attended the most recent Forum. Awareness raising work of availability of SIs and other employment opportunities is being developed by the SI Adviser in coproduction with young people and families and the Family Information Service will develop the Local Offer and information to be shared directly with families.

Of the 9 young people signed up to the Hospital based programme in 2021-22, 6 secured paid employment and in 2022-23, of the 8 young people, 2 gained paid roles within the year, 3 were offered paid roles due to start in September, one has a work

trial imminently starting, one will continue in a volunteering role one unfortunately was withdrawn (a likely 75% paid progression rate).

The forum has an action plan which covers a number of initiatives to reduce the over-representation of SEND young people in the NEET group (those not in education, employment, or training) and reports into the Youth Employment and Skills Group. The SEND Employment Forum and new SI Adviser will strengthen the tracking of, and support for, the 16-24 EHC cohort of young people.

#### Careers Support for young people with and EHC Plan

The EHC service are proactively referring NEET young people with EHCPs to the **ESF (European Social Fund) NEET projects**. Young people work with a professionally qualified mentor who provides one to one support for up to 9 months. There are 2 projects, covering young people aged 15-24, where over 30% of participants have a presenting SEND need. During May and June 2023, the service specifically targeted young people with EHCPs who were not in learning which resulted in 11 young people with EHCPs signing up to the projects in these two months alone – this represented over 30% of all referrals. ESF is due to be replaced by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in Sept 2023, and young people with EHCPs will continue to be a key target group.

The **Connexions Service** has a lead manager for SEND transition and specialist qualified Careers Advisers who work in all our special schools and the vast majority of our other secondary schools. The service is a MATRIX accredited provider of Information, Advice and Guidance and staff work across 17 schools providing additional support to all SEND young people within these Trafford Schools. For cared for Children with EHCPs who are educated out of borough, professional Advice is coordinated via an embedded Adviser in the Virtual School

#### **1.8 – Accommodation**

There is a range of accommodation for adults learning disabilities in Trafford, e.g., we have a respite provision of 5 beds. This service was developed during 2021 to support those families in need of a break. We know we have more to do to develop our range of accommodation options for young people with SEND. This includes a exploring additional internal resource in addition to reviewing our commissioned activities as part of the Short Break action plan. As part of this work, we will review whether any of our commissioned services should be commissioned up to the age of 25 as opposed to our current arrangements of separate commissioning for children and adults. However, we recognise that accommodation needs change and evolve over time and having a differentiated offer is part of our transformation programme.

We recognise that we need to work with our parents and carers to enhance the support and offer to them as their young people progress towards to independence. We have more to do to ensure communication to parents and carers regarding the differences in the legislative context for children and adults is clear. We will also use our LEAP panel processes to ensure that our focus us inclusive of key areas identified by parents and carers.

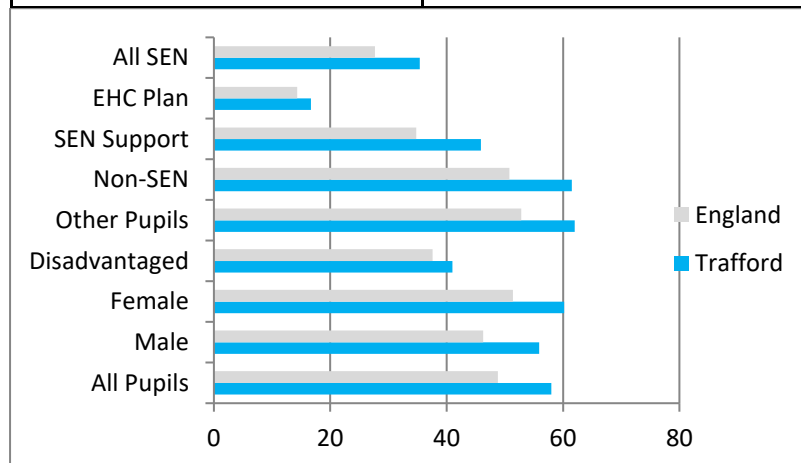
### **1.9 – Key Stage 4 outcomes (2022)**

At the end of Key Stage 4, young people with SEND performed exceptionally well in 2022. The average ‘Attainment 8’ score for young people with SEN Support was 46 against a national score of 35. For students with an EHC Plan ‘Attainment 8’ score was at 17 compared to the national figure of 14.

The ‘Progress 8’ score for all young people with SEND remained better than national comparators.

54.5% of pupils at SEN Support and 17% of pupils with an EHCP achieved grades 5-9 in English and Maths in 2022, both achieving well above national comparative data.

Average A8 score by pupil characteristic	Trafford			England		
	2021	2022	Change	2021	2022	Change
All Pupils	60.2	58.0	▼	50.9	48.8	▼
Male	57.0	55.9	▼	47.4	46.3	▼
Female	61.6	60.2	▼	53.1	51.4	▼
Disadvantaged	43.4	41.0	▼	40.2	37.6	▼
Other Pupils	60.4	62.0	▲	53.7	52.8	▼
Non-SEN	62.7	61.5	▼	53.7	50.8	▼
SEN Support	43.0	45.9	▲	36.4	34.8	▼
EHC Plan	19.0	16.7	▼	15.2	14.3	▼
All SEN	34.7	35.4	▲	30.7	27.7	▼



*\*2023 data has not been validated at this point*

### **2.0 – Next Steps - what will good transition look like across Trafford?**

Parents/Carer confidence in transition for their young people is rightly low – parents share their frustrations, confusion, and fear through the parent forum as they are not clear about what will happen for their young people. We recognise that we have more to do get this right and that we need to gain pace and traction. Therefore, the following actions have been agreed to improve outcomes for our young people:

**Ensure that the outward facing communication to parents, carers young people and key stakeholders is clear and co-produced**

Communication with families needs to be improved across the SEND system and is a feature across all the ambitions, but particularly PfA. A co-produced PfA and Transitions Strategy will be developed through engagement events with families and key stakeholders during this term and we will use the Communication & Engagement Group to ensure the Local Offer reflects accessible information. Part of this work is also about developing assistance for parents and carers in supporting their children through transition.

**Ensure that plans support good transition at all stages of child development by enabling children and young people to build their skills towards independence in line with their needs and ambition**

Through the improvement work that is taking place in SEND, the quality of EHC Plans is a priority. This includes developing practice standards across the wider SEND system, to enable improvements in the quality of advice and ensure they are person-centred.

**Develop the performance metrics to support strategic understanding of transition across both health and social care**

It is clear that there is a lot of commitment to SEND children and young people in the borough and this is accompanied by excellent operational knowledge of individual children. However, we also need to improve the use of performance metrics and accompanying analysis to promote a shared evidence-based understanding of need, demand and outcomes across the SEND system. This would also ensure increased system wide accountability.

**Ensure that young people, voice, wishes and aspiration are central to all transition planning.**

Both SEND Ambition 1 and 4 are committed to ensuring young peoples' voices are heard and affect change and part of the transition work is determining the resource requirements to enable the development of a forum to truly capture the voice of the child and to co-ordinate the mechanisms that are already in existence.

This will also include working with young people to understand what behaviours, values and skills are required to understand what good transition looks like and share learning and good practice with partners from across the SEND system.

**Conclusion**

We all go through periods of transition and change during our lives, and we know that these can be difficult or stressful times. For children and young people with SEND and their families, the transition from childhood to adulthood can be particularly challenging for many reasons.

Adapting to changes in school, living arrangements, health services or transport can be very difficult. This can be made all the more challenging when these changes happen all at once, and when at the age of 18, the services that young people and families are so used to relying on seem to disappear. Uncertainty about the future leads to increased anxiety for families and young people themselves, and the



changes in support structures and thresholds for services often leave families feeling as though they have 'fallen off a cliff edge' and feeling like they must battle the system to access the support they need. One message that we have heard time and time again is that transitions planning and work with young people and families is not happening early enough.

We are committed through our SEND Ambitions Plan, to ensure we work in partnership to move in the right direction, and ensure that all our young people with SEND have a successful transition period and are enabled to thrive as adults.

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**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24**

MEETING DATE AND VENUE	AGENDA ITEM	SUMMARY OF ISSUE	CABINET PORTFOLIO (link to Corporate Priorities)	RESOLUTION/RECOMMENDATION	Responsible Officer
Other topics the Committee wish to explore in 2023/24					
<b>25<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b> <b>Committee</b> <b>Rooms 2&amp;3, TTH</b>	SEND & EHCP Update				Karen Samples
	Children's Social Care Update				Pamela Wharton
	Task and Finish Group Report				Alex Murray
<b>26<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b> <b>Committee</b> <b>Rooms 2&amp;3, TTH</b>	Transition for Children in Care				Pamela Wharton
	Transition for Children with EHCPs				Karen Samples
<b>21<sup>st</sup> November 2023</b> <b>6:30 p.m.</b> <b>Committee</b> <b>Rooms 2&amp;3, TTH</b>	Placement Planning	To review the Council's Plans to handle the demand for school places in 2024/25			Karen Samples
	School Absence	To look at the Council's plans to reduce school absence			Karen Samples

	Complex Safeguarding Annual Report				Pamela Wharton
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 6:30 p.m. Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, TTH</b>	Vulnerable Adolescents Service	To look at what the Council and Partners are doing to address rise in knife crime and complex Safeguarding Service			Tracey Stains and Pamela Wharton
	Substance misuse	To look at what Early Break and the Council are doing to support young people suffering from substance misuse.			Helen Gollins
	Healthy Start	To look at what the Council are doing to address health inequalities among children			Helen Gollins
<b>12<sup>th</sup> March 2023 6:30 p.m. Committee Rooms 2&amp;3, TTH</b>	Hand over to Trafford College	Students from Trafford College to set the agenda.			

**TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

Date	Title	Summary of issue	Directorate	Timescale	Notes	Outcome

**Items to be scheduled**

Date	Title	Summary of issue	Directorate	Timescale	Notes	Outcome

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## **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Karen Samples: Director of Education

### **Report Title: Schools in Trafford affected by RAAC building safety concerns**

#### **Purpose**

This report will provide an overview of the impact of RAAC on schools and colleges in Trafford.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the contents of the report are noted and to receive further updates as appropriate.**

### **1.1 Background**

RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete and is very different from traditional concrete and because of the way in which it was made, much weaker. RAAC was used in schools, colleges and other building construction from the 1950s until the mid-1990s. It may therefore be found in any school and college building (educational and ancillary) that was either built or modified in this time period. RAAC has a lifespan of around 30 years after which time it deteriorates. The DfE has been helping schools and Responsible Bodies to manage the potential risks of RAAC since 2018 by providing guidance and funding to address any issues.

Dependent on the status of a school, the Responsible Body (RB) will differ. The Local Authority is the RB for all Community, Foundation and Voluntary Controlled schools. The relevant Diocese is the RB for Voluntary Aided Schools and the relevant Trust is the RB for Academies.

In February 2021, the DfE published technical guidance to assist RBs to identify, assess and manage RAAC. In 2022, they sent a questionnaire to all RBs asking them to provide information on RAAC in their estates and recently commissioned structural engineers to visit education settings with the purpose of confirming whether their buildings contained RAAC panels and to assess the panels' condition.

In 2023 there were a small number of cases where RAAC failed with no warning. The engineers have previously risk rated the severity of RAAC found in education settings, from Critical (requiring immediate action with rooms/blocks/entire buildings requiring closure) to High, Medium, or Low. DfE has continued to assess the latest technical evidence on managing RAAC in light of the cases where RAAC has failed and is taking a cautious approach to prioritise safety whilst minimising the disruption to learning.

### **1.2 Action taken by Trafford Council since the House of Commons Standing Committee issued its alert to schools in 2019**

In December 2018, the Local Government Association made the LA aware of the potential risk of RAAC, stating the building material was that used between the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s. This information was shared with all schools via the schools e-bulletin (including Academies) and with Diocesan representatives in January 2019. Any relevant Local Authority building information and/or local knowledge for Academy or Voluntary Aided schools was also shared with the relevant Responsible Body.

The Schools Capital team also undertook a desktop exercise using the schools asset management database to establish which buildings fell within this age range. Information was reviewed by the Amey Area Surveyors and schools that were identified as a 'system-build' construction were eliminated.

Surveyors then visited a number of schools to review potential areas that could have contained RAAC, some of which required a follow-up visit from a Structural Engineer and intrusive testing was undertaken where the Structural Engineer was unable to rule out the potential for RAAC. In these cases, no RAAC was identified.

A reminder article was once again, placed in the Jan 2020 Schools e-bulletin for all schools.

In Feb 2021, the DfE issued guidance which expanded on the original building age range stated by LGA. The above process was repeated in order to capture any additional schools within the revised age range of mid-1930s and mid-1990s. Following any necessary follow-up visits from a Structural Engineer and intrusive testing, no RAAC was identified.

In 2022, the DfE opened an online portal to capture the responses from Responsible Bodies and Trafford completed this exercise for all the schools where it was the RB.

In 2023, the DfE asked for support from all local authorities, to chase any RBs that had not completed the online portal information. This was done promptly by Trafford officers. The Capital and Estates Teams in Trafford have acted in a timely and robust way over time according to DfE guidance

### **1.3 Managing RAAC in Schools**

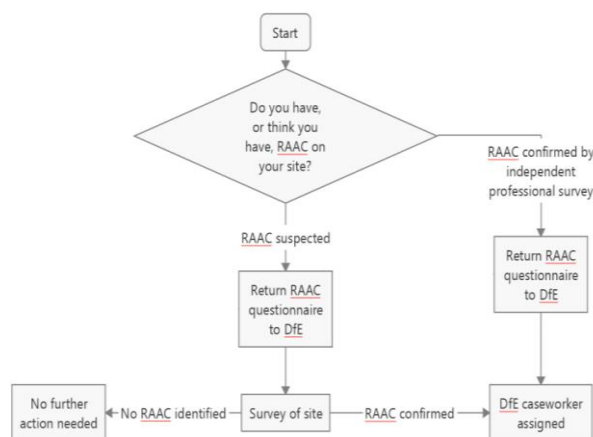
The DfE issued guidance in September 2023, for Responsible Bodies on the management of RAAC.

This stated that areas where RAAC has been confirmed, should be vacated and restricted access implemented to ensure that they are out of use. If the RAAC is in a small enough area, it is likely that there will be minimal disruption to the operation of the school or college.

The DfE expects that most local authorities and education settings will be able to manage the mitigation works themselves.

Where it is agreed in the initial triage that additional support is required or the scale of works is large, the DfE will allocate an additional project delivery manager to support.





## 1.4 Emergency Accommodation

Emergency or temporary accommodation may be needed for the first few weeks until the building has been made safe through structural supports.

This may be:

- ✓ space in a nearby, local school, college, or nursery that you can use for a period of time
- ✓ semi rigid temporary structures that can quickly be brought to your school, college, or maintained nursery school
- ✓ space in a community centre or empty local office building

DfE will provide funding for all mitigation works that are capital funded. This includes propping and temporary units on the estate. Where schools and colleges need additional help with revenue costs, like transport to locations or temporarily renting a local hall or office, agreement will be sought through liaison with DfE and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

## 1.6 – Impact on Trafford Schools

The Local Authority is the Responsible Body for 39 Schools. Of these, **none** of our schools required some form of temporary or emergency accommodation as a result of RAAC.

Two academies were identified to have RAAC present, namely Altrincham College and Sale Grammar School. Both schools had already taken proactive steps to ensure that the risk of the RAAC identified has been fully mitigated and this was confirmed by the DfE.

In addition, the Local Authority requested additional intrusive testing take place at any settings where concerns were raised to ensure a rigorous approach was adopted and assurances provided to the DfE.

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