

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held in City Hall, (Committee Room 1) on Thursday 1st February 2024 at 5.30 p.m.

Membership

Cllrs Chapman, Crosby, Curtis, Dunn, Gibson, McDonough (Vice Chair), Samuels (Chair), P. Smith, D. Snowdon, D.E. Snowdon and Thornton

Co-opted Members – Mrs. A. Blakey

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E. WAUGH,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance,
City Hall,
SUNDERLAND.

24 January 2024

At a meeting of the CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CITY HALL on THURSDAY 11th JANUARY 2024 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Samuels in the Chair

Councillors Chapman, Crosby, Curtis, Dunn, McDonough, P. Smith, D. Snowdon, D.E. Snowdon and Thornton, together with Mrs A. Blakey.

Also in attendance:-

Ms. Jill Colbert, Director of Children's Services and Chief Executive, TfC.

Ms. Karen Davison, Director of Early Help, TfC

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Smart Cities and Enabling Services.

Ms Natalie Effard, Service Manager, Family Hubs & Family Support, TfC.

Ms. Stacy Hodgkinson, Strategic Services Manager, TfC.

Ms. Majella McCarthy, Director of Social Care, TfC

Mr. David Noon, Principal Democratic Services Officer, Smart Cities & Enabling Services.

Ms. Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny, Members and Mayoral Coordinator, Smart Cities & Enabling Services.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Gibson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 30th November 2023

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 30th November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

TfC Meaningful Measures Report December 2023

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with performance information as at December 2023 in relation to the following Meaningful Measures: -

i) I Feel Safer and Supported.

ii) I Feel Happy at Home and Feel Connected to People that Matter to Me.

- iii) I Take a Lead in My Plans and TfC Makes Sure Workers can Support Me.
- iv) I Feel Healthier, Join Activities that are Fun and My Ideas Help TfC to be Creative

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Stacy Hodgkinson, Service Manager presented the report highlighting the areas of focus together with any trends or themes arising and addressed questions and comments from Members thereon.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor D. Snowdon regarding how long in general it took to issue an EHCP, Ms Hodgkinson replied that she did not have that figure to hand but would provide details following the meeting. Ms Colbert added that whilst the figure of 60% hitting the 20 week mark was below the performance target it was within the range of tolerance. There were many Local Authorities that would submit a figure of zero given the volume of demand. In this regard Sunderland's performance was good in the national context. There were external factors that would impact on performance such as school holidays, especially the long summer break.

Councillor P. Smith referred to the figure regarding the % of Cared for Children that have a missing incident and asked if there were any new reasons becoming apparent as to why the children went missing? Ms McCarthy replied there were no obvious new reasons and missing incidents still tended to be to result of the traditional factors such as the pull of a peer group, where the child would rather be out with friends rather than return to the home on time. It tended to involve a specific cohort and TfC were continuing to work with them. Key to this was the adoption of a nurturing approach towards the young person rather than for example, sending them straight to their room.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Crosby, Ms Davison explained action taken to track children 'missing education' i.e no longer on the school roll and clarified the difference between this and children who were periodically absent from school or truanting. In addition, Ms Davison also explained the actions that could be taken by TfC in relation to electively home educated children.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Ms Hodgkinson for her attendance, and it was:

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

Early Help Directorate Annual Report 2022/23

Ms Karen Davison (Director of Early Help TfC) presented a report of the Director of Children's Services (copy circulated) in respect of the above matter, which provided the Committee with a detailed commentary on the Early Help Directorate Annual Report for 2022/23 and an update on the current position with regard to Family Hubs.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Thornton welcomed the report and in particular the hard work undertaken to bring about the achievements highlighted in the executive summary.

Councillor Dunn echoed Councillor Thornton's comments and in particular the level of the detail included in the report. He referred to the commentary on page 42 of the agenda papers which stated, "Recording of referrals has enabled the team to identify key areas of concern including an increased number of referrals for SEN young people aged 21+ who are no longer able to remain at college or training and have limited employment or training options due to lack of local provision or supported internships. Increase in the number of young people with mental health concerns who are not attending school, but because they are not working with or known to other teams, they do not meet the vulnerable criteria so are not on the team's radar until the summer and school identifies them as potential NEET" He asked if there was anything that could be done to address this?

On the basis of 'you don't know what you don't know, Ms Davison replied that there was not a lot that could be done but acknowledged that it remained a concern. In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Dunn regarding support for NEETS, Ms Colbert explained that there was a need for creativity regarding the use of the Council's budgets and highlighted the supporting internships programme led by Simon Marshall and the focusing of available UKSPF funding into projects with the aim of getting all adults of employment age into employment.

Councillor P. Smith referred to the improved data collection in relation to NEETs and asked if this was provided through Liquid Logic system? In reply Ms Davison advised that it came via a Capita system. In response to a follow up question from Councillor P. Smith, Ms Colbert confirmed that Liquid Logic remained a very useful tool for TfC particularly in the way it drove data.

Councillor P. Smith noted the reference to 'Supporting Families' and asked if this was formerly the Troubled Families team? Ms Davison confirmed that it was. She informed the Committee that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) operated a 'payment by results' grant funding scheme. Under the scheme TfC were set a target to identify and evidence that it had made a significant difference to families over a 12 month period. In the past claims had only drawn down around 11% of the total funding available. TfC's performance had now improved to the extent that the target of 427 supported families set by DLUHC for the period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March had been reached by January 2023 allowing TfC to claim 100% of the available funding.

Councillor McDonough referred to the means tested free school meals, noting that the rejection rate seemed very high and asked if unsuccessful claimants were offered advice going forward. Ms Davison confirmed that they were and that this was provided via the Family Advice Service who operated an 'every contact counts' approach. Families would be provided with advice and signposted to benefits advisors and or support available in the voluntary sector. Mrs Blakely informed the Committee that a member of the Early Help Team attended her school one day per week. The Early Help worker had assisted one particular family to claim back dated benefits of £3,000. This was the sort of specialist advice that Mrs Blakey would have been unable to provide herself.

Councillor Crosby referred to discussion at a previous meeting regarding the issues experienced by TfC in trying to cope with an unexpected influx of families who had travelled to Sunderland by accompanying a family member who had arrived on a Student Visa. Ms Davison advised that TfC had now established contacts within the particular community and through the family hubs. Now the families had settled, the

situation was a lot quieter than it was 12 months ago. The legislation had since changed and the visas issued to foreign students no longer allowed family members to travel with them.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Curtis, Ms Davison explained the referral process in respect of cases of bullying. Mrs Blakely added that within her school cases were dealt with through the School Counsellor and Early Help worker.

There being no further questions Ms Davison introduced Ms Natalie Effard, TfC's Service Manager for Family Hubs and Family Support, who provided the Committee with a comprehensive presentation on the development of Sunderland's Family Hubs including:

- The locations of the four recently opened Hubs in Washington, Bunny Hill, Hetton and Thorney Close together with the fifth which was shortly to open in Hendon,
- The Activities provided,
- The oversight provided at each Hub by a Parent Carer Panel,
- The development of a bespoke Sunderland parenting programme (the ABC Course) in conjunction with Sunderland University following special permission granted by the DfE / DHSC,
- The work of the Community Engagement Team,
- The digital offer provided through the Hubs,
- The activity to be provided following Sunderland's successful application for 'Trailblazer Status',
- Staffing and Recruitment,
- Governance and Assurance arrangements

Ms Effard together with Ms Colbert and Ms Davison then addressed questions and comments from Members in relation to:

- The ability of the Hubs to provide early help with speech and language, to avoid the need of a formal referral to the speech and language therapy service,
- The social prescribing provision,
- The source and use of grant funding,
- Initial feedback on the operation of the Hubs
- The promotion of the Hubs through social media and the use of posters / leaflets containing QR code links.

In addition, the Chair referred to the report on the Speech and Language Therapy Service considered at a previous meeting and asked that an update was submitted back to the Committee in due course.

Ms Colbert advised that she would provide a link for Members to the 'My Best Life' webpage referred to in the presentation.

The Committee having congratulated Ms Davison on a successful Annual Report and Ms Effard for her work in the development of the family hubs it was :-

3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted.

Provision of the Short Breaks Service

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced a presentation on the current position regarding the planning process and engagement with families in respect of the Short Breaks Service as requested by the Committee at its meeting held on 2 November 2023.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Majella McCarthy, Director of Social Care delivered the presentation which informed Members that it was hoped to open the home (Red Gables) in Autumn 2024 and which would be fully staffed by 28 TfC employees. Planning permission had been submitted with a decision expected by 14th February 2024. External alterations would be required, making the property accessible for wheelchair users (ramps, low threshold doors, automatic doors etc) and adding new fencing around the garden. Internal alterations would also be made to suit the needs of the building users and would include adding accessible bathrooms and enlarged bathroom with specialist equipment. New kitchen, sensory room, office, and new finishes throughout. The timeframe was based on necessary legal activity including registering the home with Ofsted, consultation with families and the team, essential renovation work, and the recruitment of staff.

The property has extensive outdoor space giving plenty of opportunities to add facilities and would be a nurturing environment for children where they would be able to develop their independence while families were given a moment to recharge, knowing their children were safe and cared for.

With regard to current support, all children and their carers had been allocated a social worker from TfC who had been and would continue to work closely with them to explore all support options available until Red Gables opened. A letter had been sent to every family with SEND needs to inform them of the purchase of the Home and the submission of the planning application together with an invite to an in-person meeting in January 2024 to show them a video of the property, explain the plans and to provide updates on timeframes. TfC would also be asking for volunteers to join its parent/carer groups to discuss topics with them such as use of the outdoor space, technology, and services on an ongoing basis to ensure the space was custom designed to best meet the needs of children and young people in Sunderland and their families.

Interim support to children and parents/carers would include:

- For those children with the greatest need, where TfC also had parental consent, nights at the Ark Short Break Care in Redcar had been spot purchased. For some families, TfC had also funded transport provided by Ark. Ark was a relatively new, 4 bed short break home which was Ofsted registered and could meet the needs of children aged between 4 and 18 years of age.
- TfC also had a small number of children accessing fostering short breaks and it was hoped to recruit more short break foster carers.
- TfC had 8 young people accessing Grace House, who were 17 years of age and who would soon be transitioning to adult social care. TfC had

collaborated with Adult Social Care and SCAS, to offer these young people overnight short breaks in an adult, CQC registered provision to assist with their transition and reduce disruption. Not all 8 had taken up the offer, with some preferring to utilise PA support, but most were now beginning to access the adult provision.

- PA support was TfC's primary alternative for children and young people, including overnight PA support. In recognition of the cost of activities for families when children were spending time with their PA's, TFC had offered a small activity budget (10% uplift on the PA rate) which parent/carers had been able to apply for. This was being paid monthly until March 2024 when it would be reviewed. In addition to this, where overnight PA support was required but PA was not able/willing to use their own home, TfC had provided a personal budget to fund the booking of alternative accommodation for PA's or parent/carers; some families had opted for the child to remain in their own home with the PA and the parent/carer had booked a night in a hotel to utilise their short break.
- In addition to the above, TfC expanded the Family Care & Support Team to provide Leisure Link outreach support in the community (this tended to be helpful for younger children) and made use of the Breathing Space offer. For a very small number of children, TfC were spot purchasing support from an independent care provider to provide community outreach support.

In response to an enquiry from the Chair as to whether any difficulties were expected in recruiting 28 members of staff given the current issues in the market for care staff, the Committee was informed that recruitment in terms of short break care tended to attract a different cohort. There was a relatively lengthy lead in time, allowing for careful thought around a marketing strategy and to plan accordingly. Although 28 posts were a lot they were not all full time positions.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chair thanked Ms McCarthy for her presentation, and it was:

4. RESOLVED that the information be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2023/24

The Scrutiny, Members and Mayoral Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed members on the development of the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2023/24 and appended a copy of the programme for Members' consideration.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Diamond, Scrutiny Officer presented the report and briefed the Committee on the current position regarding those items already scheduled on the work programme and those waiting to be programmed in on a suitable date.

The Chair referred to discussion at the previous meeting regarding a proposal that the Committee looked into Government policy changes to provide a phased expansion of existing childcare support for eligible working parents and suggested

that an initial scoping report was submitted to either of Committee's meetings at the beginning or end of February.

Discussion ensued on accommodating the request in the context of the items already scheduled on the work programme. Ms Colbert advised that she would liaise with Mr Diamond and Ms Robinson after the meeting to find an appropriate solution.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Scrutiny, Members and Mayoral Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from the 2nd January 2024.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Committee was advised that if Members had any issues to raise or required further detail on any of the items included in the notice, (that were within the purview of the Committee), they should contact Mr Diamond, Scrutiny Officer for initial assistance.

6. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

There being no further items of business, the Chairman closed the meeting having thanked members and officers for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) A. SAMUELS,
Chairman.

Item 4

CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 FEBRUARY 2024

EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENTS EXPANSION AND NATIONAL WRAPAROUND CHILDCARE PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a report on the current position in relation to the Early Years Entitlements Expansion and National Wraparound Childcare Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 30 November 2023, the Committee agreed to include in its work programme the issue of Government policy changes to provide a phased expansion of childcare support for eligible working parents city.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 Simon Marshall (Director of Education) and Richard Cullen (Strategic Lead – School Improvement and Early Years) will provide a presentation on the background to the proposals, funding issues and the current position in Sunderland.
- 3.2 A copy of the presentation is attached.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report and presentation.

Early Years Entitlements Expansion and National Wraparound Childcare Programme

January 2024

putting
the child first



Spring Budget 2023

Childcare Reforms

The Chancellor set out large-scale childcare reforms aiming to increase availability, reduce costs and increase the number of parents using it

Extending Early Education Entitlements for working parents

National Wraparound Childcare Programme

<p>The Scope of the Childcare Reforms</p>	<p>From April 2024 Eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to claim 15 hours funded childcare per week for 38 weeks</p>	<p>From September 2024 Eligible working parents of children from 9 months old will be able to claim 15 hours funded childcare per week for 38 weeks</p>	<p>From September 2025 Eligible working parents of children from 9 months old to primary school age will be able to claim 30 hours funded childcare per week for 38 weeks</p>	<p>September 2024 Programme goes live The government's ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in the local area from 8am - 6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation.</p>
<p>The Funding</p>	<p>September 2023 EY Supplementary Grant A one-off EY supplementary grant for the period September 2023 - March 2024 for 3-4 YO and disadvantaged 2YO funded places</p>	<p>November 2023 Introduction of Childminder Grants Increased support for families on Universal Credit</p>	<p>April 2024 Increase to 2 YO and 3-4 YO funding rate</p>	<p>LAs will receive funding to develop new and expanded wrap-around places and capital grant funding to deliver the wraparound programme in their area. We are currently working on the programme budget and grant application process and will issue guidance early 2024 for place development and capital grant funding.</p> <p>Tax Free Childcare Critical for financial support and wraparound sustainability. For working families with children aged 0 - 11 years (or 0 - 16 years if disabled)</p>
<p>Capital Funding</p>				<p>Capital Funding</p>
<p>National Developments supporting the reforms</p>	<p>National Publicity and Information Childcare Choices Campaign</p>	<p>Changes to EYFS Framework Change to Staff ratios (optional)</p>	<p>Early Years Educator Apprenticeships Campaign to attract more young people (16-24) into the sector</p>	<p>National Publicity and Information Childcare Choices Campaign</p>
<p>Local developments supporting the reforms</p>	<p>Review Services and Roles within TfC</p>	<p>Proposed Funding Formula consultation open School Forum January 2024 and February 2024</p>	<p>Develop and distribute local sufficiency surveys for both programmes</p>	

Implementation Timeline

Areas of Change	Sept 2023 - March 2024	April 2024	June 2024	Sept 2024	Sept 2025	Sept 2026
Extending early entitlements for working parents	Currently, parents who work more than 16 hours a week and earn less than £100,000 are entitled to 30 hours free childcare a week for children aged 3 to 4	Programme Launch 15 hours per week for 38 weeks, for eligible working parents of 2 year olds introduced		Programme Launch 15 hours per week for 38 weeks for eligible working parents of children 9 months plus introduced	Programme Launch 30 hours per week for 38 weeks for eligible working parents of children from 9 months to primary school age introduced	
Wraparound childcare programme eg Breakfast Club, Afterschool Club 8am - 6pm	Local authorities expected to start planning and preparation for rollout of national programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DfE publishes guidance for schools LA information sessions LA to submit completed supply and demand mapping data to DfE 		Deadline for LAs to submit delivery plan for programme funding to DfE SLAs, including monitoring agreements constructed and agreed between Schools / Providers and LA and grants distributed	Programme Launch National Wraparound financial support to primary schools begins for two academic years	National wraparound financial support to primary schools continues	Wraparound financial support finishes in April 2026. All schools able to offer 8am - 6pm wraparound on their own or in partnership
EY Supplementary Grant Expected increased funding rates Childminder grants Families on Universal income	A one-off EY supplementary grant for the period September 23 - March 24 for 3 and 4 YO and 2 YO places	Expecting an increase in 3 and 4 YO and 2 YO funding rate				
New 'Provider Specific' EYFS Frameworks effective 4th January 2024	Optional changes to ratios for 2 YO flexibility to increase to 1:5 from 1:4	Further measures for flexibility of operation expected early 2024				

What funding is there to support the programmes?

Early Years Entitlements Support Funding		Wraparound Programme Programme Funding	
Early Years Supplementary Grant <i>(One-off Payment)</i>	£60,131.79	2023 – 2024	£17,310.55
		2024 – 2025	£1,116,599.73
		2025 – 2026*	£520,952.58
Total	£60,131.79	Total	£1,654,862.86
			*Not guaranteed - £1,133,910.28

Childcare Expansion Capital Funding

£457,493.00

Funding is to be spent on capital projects and is being provided to LAs to meet the capital costs associated with projects that help ensure sufficient places for:

- Children taking up an early years place through the expanded 30-hours entitlement for qualifying working parents (from the term following the child reaching 9-months to the term in which they turn 3-years-old)
- Increasing the supply of wraparound childcare for primary-school aged children.

What can the funding can be used for?

Early Years Entitlement

£60,131.79

- A one-off grant (EYSG) to meet programme and delivery costs associated with rolling out the expansion by the LA.

Wraparound Programme

£1,654,862.86

- To fund new and expanded wraparound provision, either to meet current demand or build future demand.
- Support growth of future demand, for example, improved communication with parents and advice on use of Universal Credit and Tax-Free Childcare.
- To cover costs including staffing, training, and transport costs such as minibus hire (not purchase, although capital funding could be used for this), as well as resources.
- To contribute to running costs of new places whilst demand builds, to remove any financial risk to providers of offering additional places before demand is guaranteed.
- To pay for training for wraparound staff, including specialist training for staff to ensure they feel equipped to support children with additional needs.
- Capital funding (provided separately) can be used so providers can ensure that inclusive provision is set up from the beginning.

What is the current position in Sunderland?

Early Years Entitlement

- Occupancy at the last Childcare Sufficiency data collection shows 86% occupancy across the city.¹
- Projected total additional demand hours from April 2024: 1,860 (equivalent to 124 x 15 hour places).
- Highest shortfall of supply hours within the Pallion, Redhill, Washington East, Sandhill and Hetton wards².

¹ Source: May 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Return, 74% completion rate

² Source: DfE LA Readiness Self Assessment Data

Wraparound Programme

- 11 (13.5%) of Primary Schools offer 8am – 6pm full wraparound care¹.
- 41 (50.6%) of Primary Schools offer some form of before and after school care.
- 13 (16%) of Primary Schools offer no form of wraparound care.
- 3 PVI Out of School Clubs offer full wraparound care.
- 71 Childminders offer some form of before and afterschool childcare.

¹ Source: May 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Return, 74% completion rate

What are the potential delivery models?

Delivery models

NB. These are illustrative examples and are neither mutually exclusive (i.e. there may well be overlap between different models) nor are they exhaustive (i.e. there may well be other options available).



School-based provision, delivered by school

Delivered by school staff on school site, open to all children in that school.



Private provider-run provision, on or off school site

Operated and delivered by staff employed by private provider. If on school site, they may pay school to operate wraparound provision on their premises and advertise via school channels. Could operate on other sites too.



Community model

LA co-ordinates a community-focused cluster / hub model, with children from multiple schools on one site. Not necessarily linked to any one school. Could be run by private provider, community organisation or any other appropriate body.



Childminders

Provision delivered by childminders, signposted to parents by LA and schools. Could be a group of CMs working together on a single/community site.



Other EY providers

Existing EY providers may take older children (i.e. of school-age) during wraparound hours. For example, a play group operating on a school site may run the provision, or a local nursery.

What do we need to do by 31st March 2024?

Early Years Entitlements

- Undertake a thorough analysis of supply, demand and need throughout the LA, using ward-level data.
- Take into consideration cross-border families.
- Survey providers and parents to identify further need.
- Communicate to providers proposed funding rates.
- Information sessions for providers.

Wraparound Programme

- Recruit Childcare Wraparound Coordinator.
- Undertake a thorough analysis of supply, demand and need throughout the LA, using ward-level data.
- Survey providers and parents to identify further need.
- Identify and create an EY reference group.
- Communications to schools about the wraparound programme.
- Explore models of delivery with schools, PVI's, and Childminders.

What do we need to do by 30th June 2024?

Early Years Entitlements

- Review May headcount and establish potential / market demand for September 2024.
- Undertake an evaluation of the activities and processes that took place in preparation for the April 2024 changes.
- Complete the annual Childcare Sufficiency return.
- Continue to work with delivery partners.

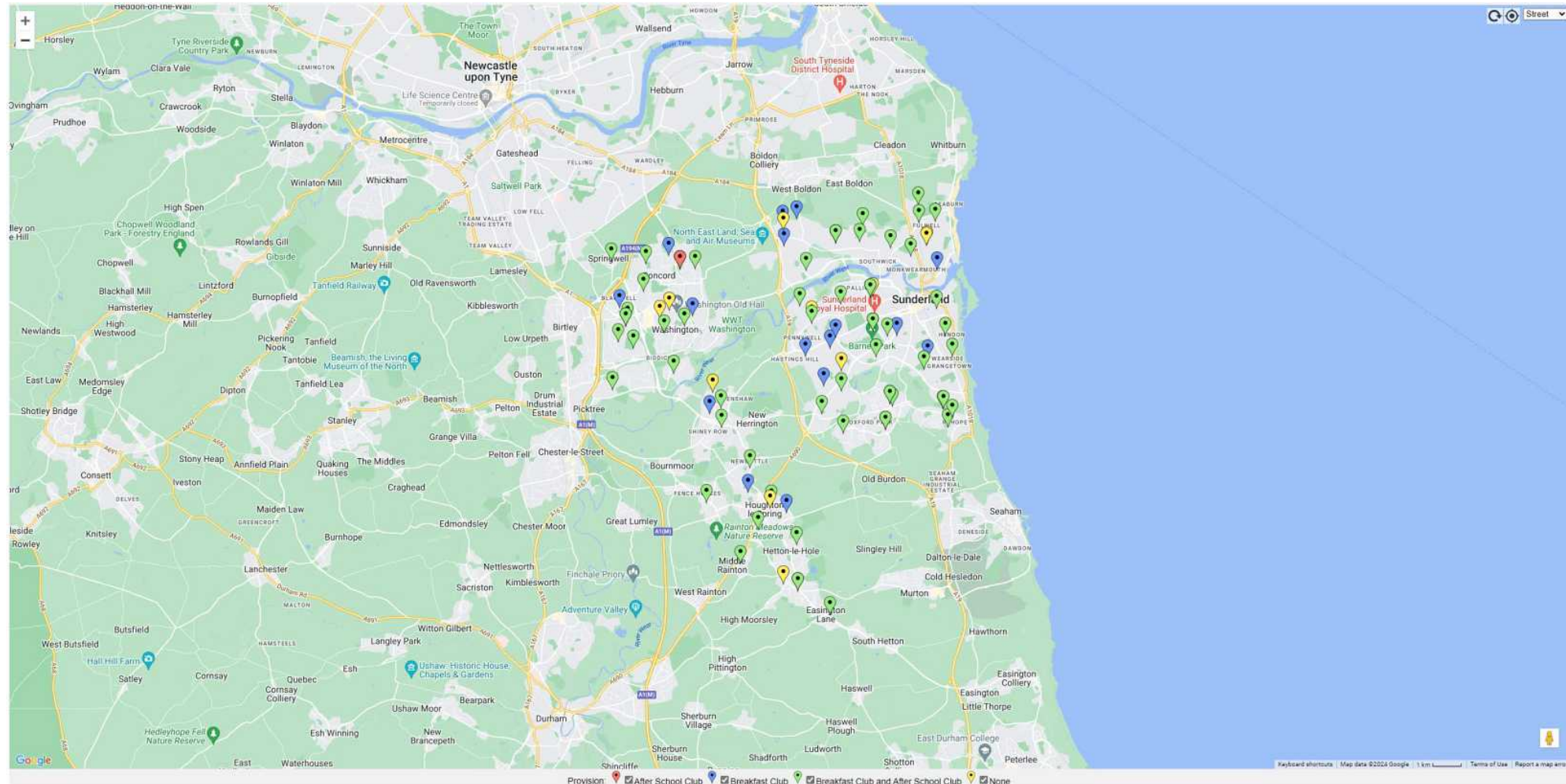
Wraparound Programme

- Complete DfE delivery plan evaluation.
- Work with providers to set up new provision.
- Establish a two year training programme for the sector.
- Evidence the Sunderland “Expand, Create & Test” policy.
- Continue to promote the Wraparound programme to providers and parents.

What are the risks and mitigations?

Risks	Mitigations
Existing capacity within the service to manage the increase in workload alongside the very tight timescales particularly for the first phase of the Entitlements Expansion in April 2024.	To mitigate this risk additional capacity is been achieved by diverting staffing resource within the service whilst the existing structure is reviewed.
A risk that the capital allocation for both expansions will not provide sufficient funds to support the scale of increase needed.	To enable maximisation of the capital element through adaptations to existing buildings will be sought rather than being reliant on new builds.
The revenue allocation for the wraparound expansion may not be enough to ensure new settings/expansion is sustainable in the long term.	The team are working with the sector to support new ways of delivery given the increase in ratios within the sector.
The amount and quality of the workforce is a huge risk to achieving both expansions as currently settings are struggling to recruit qualified staff.	Work continues to explore innovative ways of working to attract people to the sector with our local FE provision (Sunderland & Gateshead). Additionally, there are some proposed national changes and programmes of work underway to enable and support the increase in workforce.

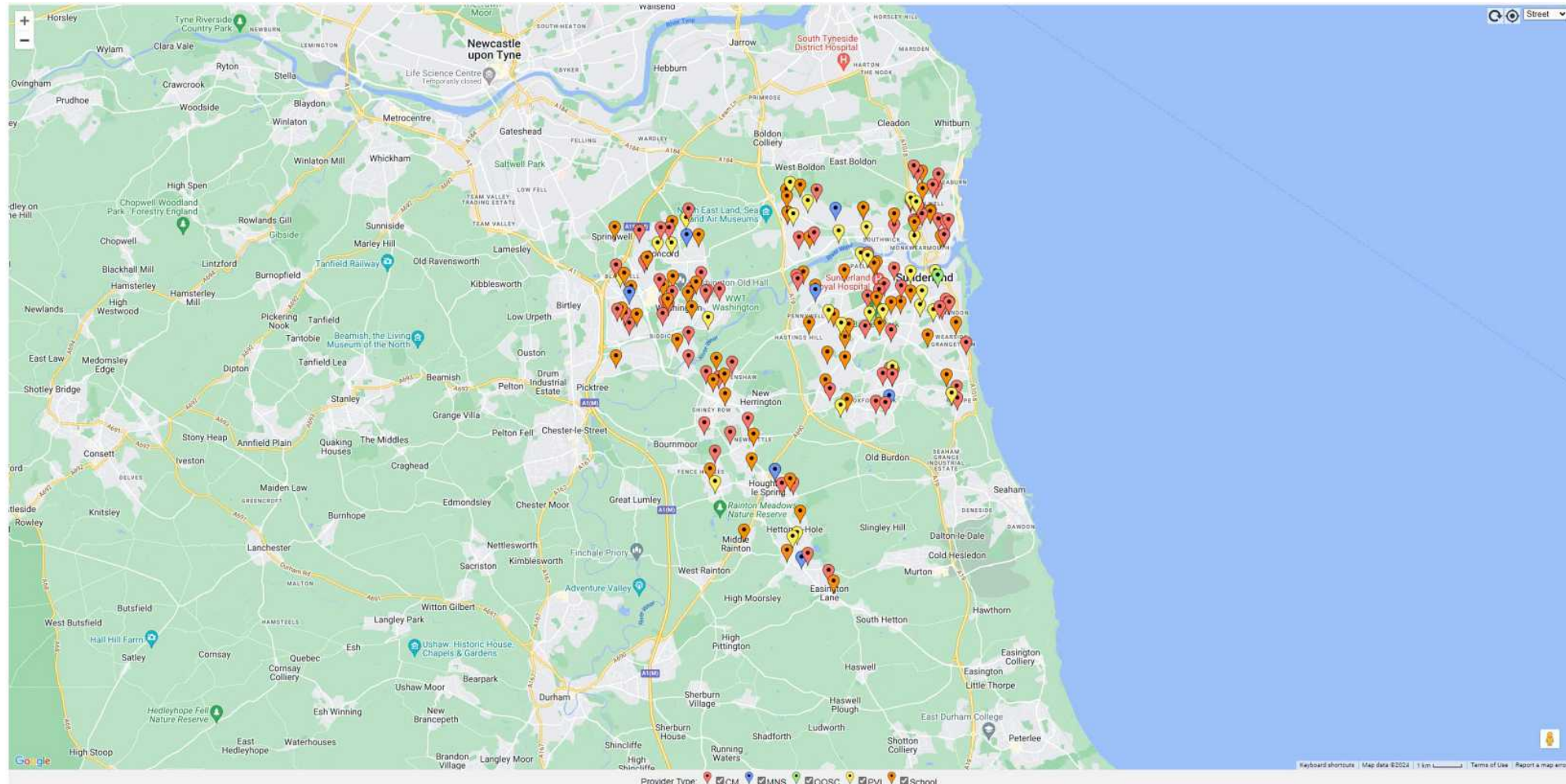
Current Wraparound Provision in Sunderland (2023 Census)



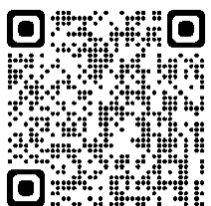
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Sunderland Schools, PVI's and Childminders



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Any Questions?

Item 5

ATTENDANCE UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To update members of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee on the local attendance landscape and provide information as to how children and young people are supported to increase their attendance at school.

2. Background

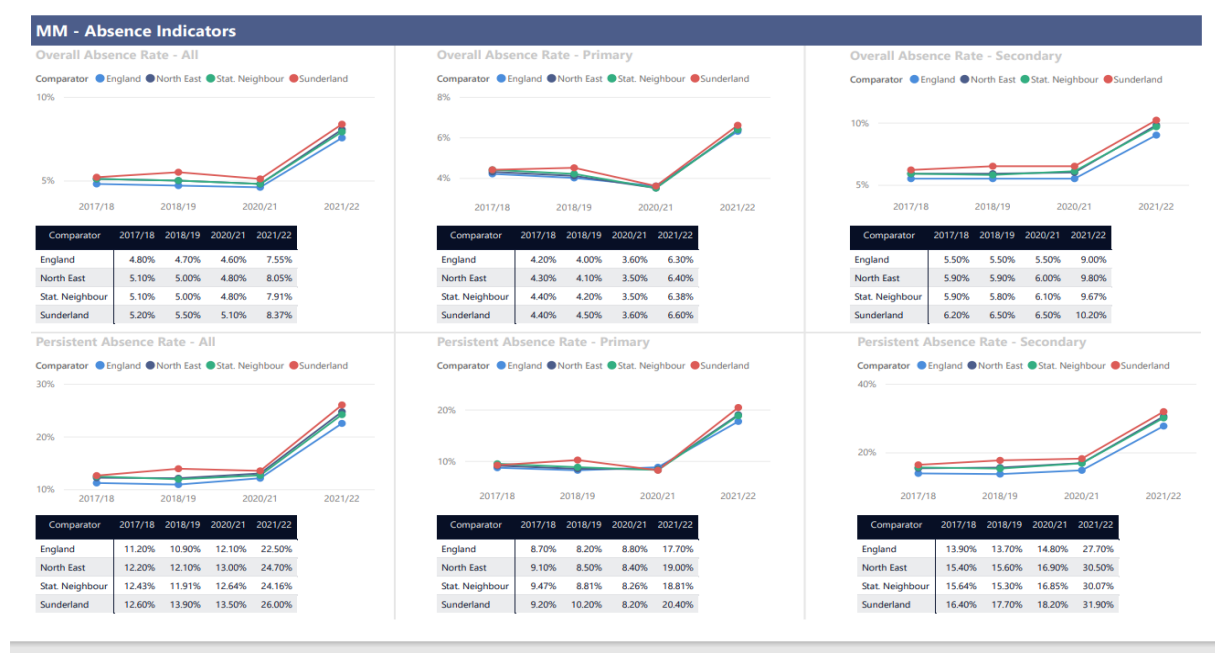
- 2.1 In addition to the DfE's guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', the DfE have also published guidance on how to support school attendance where there is a pupil experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues. This is shared with schools and parents to improve the barriers to attendance.
- 2.2 Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.
- 2.3 Persistent absence continues to be a national challenge recognised by the Government's introduction of Attendance Hubs and is one which Sunderland are continuing to robustly support.
- 2.4 The main contributing factors leading to persistent absence are the recovery from Covid, mental and physical health, disengagement from school, unmet special education need, and a breakdown in the parent/carer / school relationship. The impact of persistent absence on children and young people is nationally recognised as having the potential to lead to:
- Poor attainment
 - Substance misuse

- Crime and delinquency
- Unemployment
- Mental health problems

2.5 Pupils in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods nationally are twice as likely to be persistently absent than their peers in the 10% least deprived, this statistic is also applicable in the local context.

3. Data

3.1 The table below provides the overall absences rates and persistent absence rates split between primary and secondary phases; in comparison to National, Northeast and statistical neighbours up to the year 21/22. The data for 22/23 is unpublished however the trends remain the same and is broken down further below.



2022/23* Data – Disadvantaged Cohort

3.2 Disadvantaged children and young people in relation to attendance data include those who are in receipt of pupil premium (free school meals or other additional funding). Absenteeism for **disadvantaged** cohort of 12,433 pupils includes;

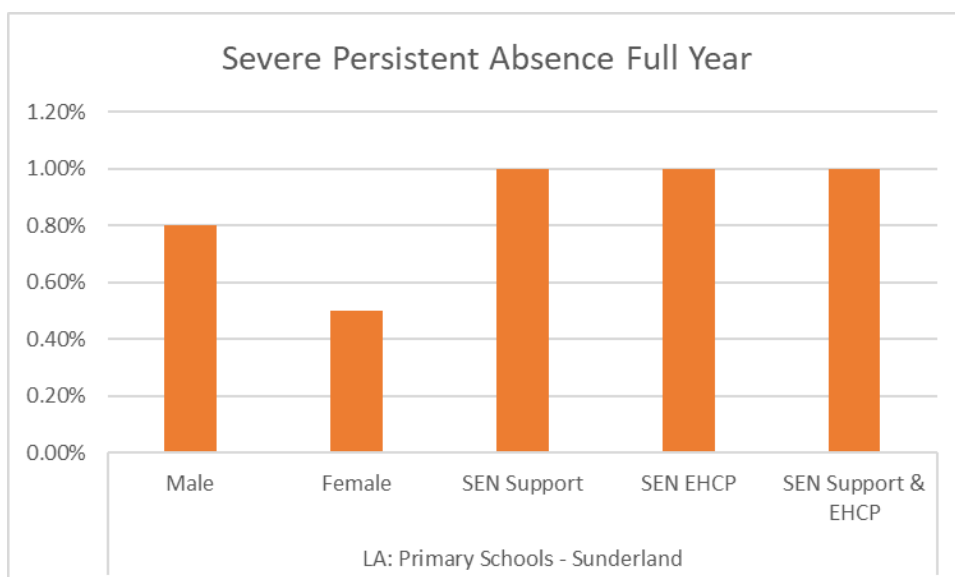
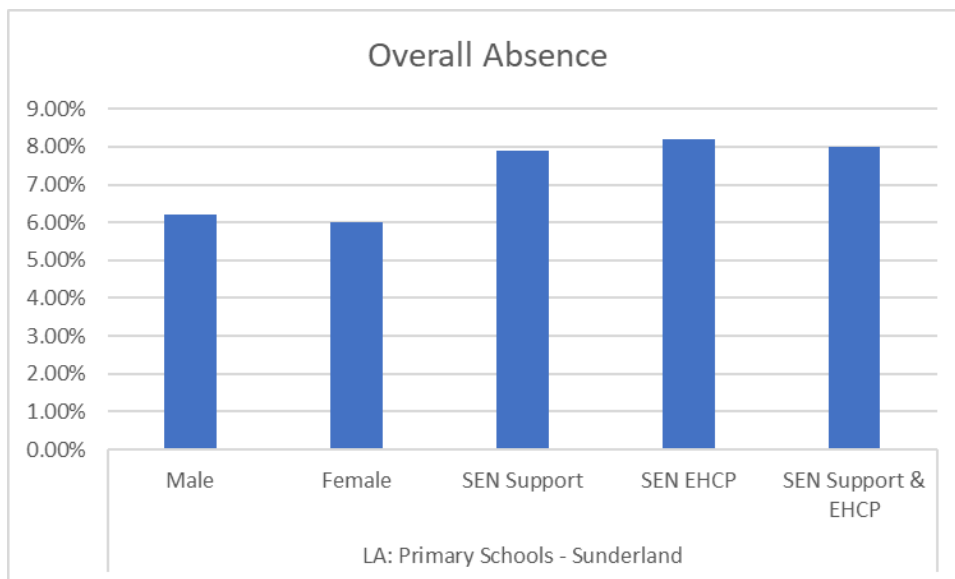
- Sunderland’s disadvantaged pupil cohort **overall absence for 22/23** is at 11%. An increase of 0.9% from 21/22. Placing Sunderland 63rd percentile for overall absence when compared to other L.A.s.
- Sunderland’s disadvantaged pupil cohort **persistent absence for 22/23** is at 37.8%. An increase of 2.6% from 21/22. Placing Sunderland 63rd percentile.

*(unpublished provision data from Sunderland Management Information System)

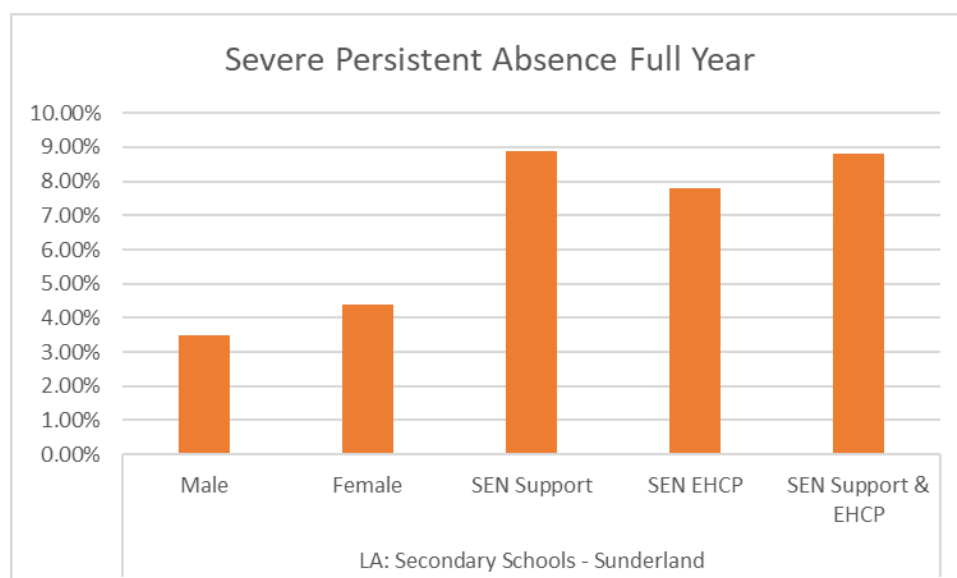
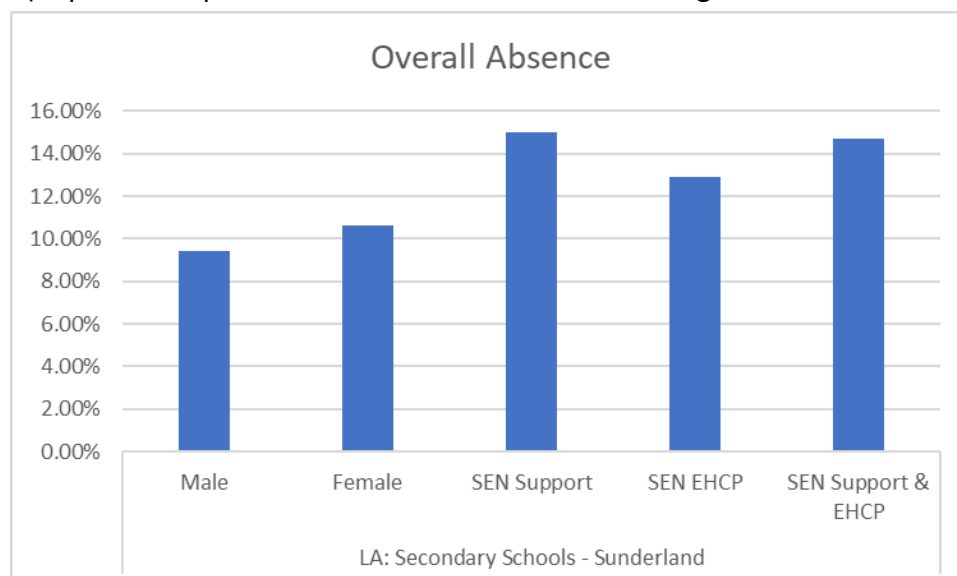
- Sunderland’s disadvantaged pupil cohort **unauthorised absence for 22/23** is at 4.9%. An increase of 1.1% from 21/22. Placing Sunderland in 83rd percentile.

22/23 Data* – SEND Pupils

3.3 The tables below demonstrate the overall and persistent absence split by primary and secondary phases in respect of special education needs.



*(unpublished provision data from Sunderland Management Information System)



4. Support

4.1 The citywide attendance provision is delivered by 4 (3.8 FTE) Attendance Officers who support 127 schools led by a Senior Attendance Officer and Attendance Team Manager. Due to the increase in attendance support required, caseloads are extremely high therefore it is essential that referrals are triaged to ensure that support is timely and targeted for greatest impact.

4.2 The local authority, statutory safeguarding partners and other local partners have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome those barriers and ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled. The

attendance officers have a multi-agency approach for those children with unmet special education needs to get the best outcomes for children.

- 4.3 Schools refer to the service when there are significant attendance concerns, particularly in relation to persistent absence. Once the referral is received and accepted an initial assessment is carried out to determine the most appropriate support. This may include, but is not limited to:
- Writing to parent/carer
 - Speaking with parents by telephone
 - Home visits
 - Meeting with the pupil in school
 - Meeting with the parents/carers in school
 - Drawing up a contract between school/Attendance Team/parents/pupil
 - Liaising with other services
 - A referral to Early help
 - Meeting with the parent/carer
 - Referral to another agency/service
- 4.4 Where there has been little or no improvement to the situation following Attendance Officer intervention and support the case is reviewed in supervision with the Senior Attendances Officer. Consideration will be given to enforcement strategies. These may include:
- Official Warning letter – Notice to Attend
 - Fixed Penalty Warning notice
 - Fixed Penalty Notice for UA absence
 - Fixed Penalty Notice for Term Time leave.
 - Final warning notice
 - Formal Attendance Review
 - Prosecution in magistrate's court
- 4.5 As detailed in the background context above successful outcomes are significantly more likely to be achieved where partners and schools build strong relationships with families, where concerns are listened to, and barriers to attendance are understood.
- 4.6 To support the governance of attendance all schools are required to have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand, and that is available on the school website.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 The challenges that families in Sunderland face are likely to continue and, in some cases, become more challenging and complex. Many of the social, health and economic challenges of our families have the potential to impact on school attendance. As a city we recognise that school is more than a place of education but for a number of children and young people a place where they feel safe, and boundaries are consistent. The attendance team will therefore continue to adapt the vital support provided to schools to meet the changing needs of our children, young people and families in line with Government policy and best practice.
- 5.2 We will also continue to work in partnership with other services i.e. CAMHS/CYPS, Early Help, Social Care, NHS services, Targeted Youth Services and encourage our parents/carers to work with multi-agencies when additional support is required.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the report.

Item 6

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 FEBRUARY 2024

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023-2024

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report sets out for members' consideration the work programme of the Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme is designed to set out the key issues to be addressed by the Committee during the year and provide it with a timetable of work. The Committee itself is responsible for setting its own work programme, subject to the coordinating role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.
- 2.2 The work programme is intended to be a working document which Committee can develop throughout the year, allowing it to maintain an overview of work planned and undertaken during the Council year.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake all of its business and respond to emerging issues, there will be scope for additional meetings or visits not detailed in the work programme.
- 2.4 In delivering its work programme the Committee will support the Council in achieving its corporate outcomes.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The current work programme is attached as an appendix to this report.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The work programme is intended to be a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2023-24.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the work programme.

Contact: Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator

REASON FOR INCLUSION	8 JUNE 23 (INFORMAL MEETING)	6 JULY 23	7 SEPT 23	5 OCT 23	2 NOV 23	30 NOV 23	11 JAN 24	1 FEB 24	29 FEB 24	18 APRIL 24
Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses										Scrutiny Annual Report – 23/24
Scrutiny Business	Work Programme 2023/24	Fostering Pathfinder (Majella McCarthy)	Respite Care Services (Jill Colbert)	Joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children and families who need help (Jill Colbert) Youth Justice Plan 2021-24 – Update (Linda Mason)	Short Break – Update (Jill Colbert) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (Sharon Wills)	Sunderland Healthy Related Behaviour Study Report (Jennifer Green/Ryan Houghton)	Early Help Update (Karen Davison) Short Break – Update (Jill Colbert)	Wraparound Child Care – Implementation Update (Simon Marshall) Schools Attendance (Simon Marshall)	SEND – Update (Pamela Robertson) Vulnerable Pupil Update from the Virtual School (Simon Marshall)	Apprenticeships/T Level Qualification (Iain Nixon/Judith Quinn Sunderland College) Child and Adolescent Mental Health (Scott Watson)
Performance / Service Improvement		Children Services Customer Feedback – Annual Report (Stacey Hodgkinson)		TfC Meaningful Measures Performance Report (Jill Colbert/Stacey Hodgkinson)		Children Services Customer Feedback (Stacey Hodgkinson)	TfC Meaningful Measures Performance Report (Jill Colbert/Stacey Hodgkinson)			TfC Meaningful Measures Performance Report (Stacey Hodgkinson)
Consultation / Awareness Raising		Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme	

Pending

Home Schooling
School Attainment

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MAYORAL AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Holding the Executive to account is one of the main functions of Scrutiny. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Notice of Key Decisions) and deciding whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. This does not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.2 To this end, the most recent version of the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions is included on the agenda of this Committee. The Notice of Key Decisions is attached marked **Appendix 1**.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In considering the Notice of Key Decisions, Members are asked to consider only those issues where the Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel could make a contribution which would add value prior to the decision being taken.
- 3.2 In the event of Members having any queries that cannot be dealt with directly in the meeting, a response will be sought from the relevant Directorate.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To consider the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Agenda
-

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is given of the following proposed Key Decisions (whether proposed to be taken in public or in private) and of Executive Decisions including key decisions) intended to be considered in a private meeting: -

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter*	Address to obtain further information
221006/744	To seek agreement to enter into the Northumbria Road Safety Initiative Partnership and Collaboration Agreement.	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220207/690	To approve the sale of the former Alex Smiles site and to undertake required remedial works.	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220524/714	To agree to the grant of an option to sell property at Richmond Street, Sheepfolds, Sunderland.	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220712/722	To seek agreement to the proposed development strategy of the Council's Self and Custom Build Sites.	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220719/723	To seek approval for the acquisition of Property at Crowtree Road and to grant a lease of the former Crowtree Leisure Centre.	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
221110/753	To seek approval for the Disposal of an Industrial Property in Washington.	Cabinet	Y	14 March 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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230428/799	To seek approval for Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2023 - 2030	Cabinet	Y	14 March 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
230718/828	To agree to enter into Inter-Authority Agreement regarding North East Screen Industries Partnership	Cabinet	Yes	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
230818/831	To update Cabinet on the Masterplan proposals for High Street West, Sunderland and to seek approval to appoint a Multi-disciplinary Design Team to progress the feasibility, design and planning work to develop the Project.	Cabinet	Yes	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter*	Address to obtain further information
230927/840	To Seek Cabinet Approval for the Siglion Business Plan	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231107/846	To procure a framework agreement for funeral and coronial services	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/847	Capital Programme Third Review 2023/2024 (including Treasury Management).	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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231110/848	Revenue Budget Third Review 2023/2024.	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/849	Council Tax Base 2024/2025	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/850	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/2025	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/851	Revenue Budget 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 – Update and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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231110/852	Capital Programme 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 and Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2024/2025, including Prudential Indicators for 2024/2025 to 2027/2028	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/853	Revenue Budget and Proposed Council Tax for 2024/2025 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024/2025 to 2027/2028	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231110/854	Collection Fund (Council Tax) 2023/2024	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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231113/855	To Seek Cabinet approval to the Letting of Space at Sunnyside Leisure	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231116/856	To consider Housing Investment and Delivery Plan Housing Disposals	Cabinet	Y	14 March 2024	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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231120/857	To approve works to address storm damage to piers	Cabinet	Y	14 March 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231121/858	To seek approval to increase housing rents for Sunderland City Council tenants with effect from 1 April 2024	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231204/861	To consider a proposal to commence statutory processes to develop a SEN unit at Mill Hill Primary School and to approve subsequent procurement of required capital works	Cabinet	Y	18 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231206/862	To seek approval to award grant funding to support the homeless drop in	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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231211/863	To provide an update on the former Civic Centre site	Cabinet	Y	During the period 31 January to 31 March 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231220/865	To seek approval to award a contract to provide support to homeless clients residing in temporary accommodation.	Cabinet	Y	31 January 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
231222/866	To consider a report on Investment Zone – Enabling Economic Growth	Cabinet	Y	During the period 31 January to 31 March 2024	N	N/A	Cabinet Report	Democratic Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

Note; Some of the documents listed may not be available if they are subject to an exemption, prohibition or restriction on disclosure.

Further documents relevant to the matters to be decided can be submitted to the decision-maker. If you wish to request details of those documents (if any) as they become available, or to submit representations about a proposal to hold a meeting in private, you should contact Democratic Services at the address below.

Subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of documents submitted to the decision-maker can also be obtained from the Democratic Services team City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, or by email to committees@sunderland.gov.uk

***Other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision maker and requests for details of these documents should be submitted to Democratic Services at the address given above.**

Who will decide;

Councillor Graeme Miller – Leader; Councillor Claire Rowntree – Deputy Leader & Clean Green City; Councillor Paul Stewart - Cabinet Secretary; Councillor Kelly Chequer – Healthy City; Councillor Kevin Johnston – Dynamic City; Councillor John Price – Vibrant City; Councillor Linda Williams – Children, Education and Skills.

This is the membership of Cabinet as at the date of this notice. Any changes will be specified on a supplementary notice.

Elaine Waugh,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

2 January 2024