

Lead Member PDS Report 10/03/2025.

1. Policy development.

Previously the committee set up a project regarding knife crime. Today we will receive the final report. I welcome and support the report and the stated recommendations.

I am delighted that we will receive an update today on establishing the terms of reference for the Targeted Early Help/Prevention Services. This is a very important piece of work for the panel and needs to consider the significant national policy announcements, detailed below.

There has been significant DFE Policy Announcements since the last CAHW.

Families First Partnership Programme

The Families First Partnership Programme (FFP) is a new national programme set up in the Department for Education, backed by over half a billion pounds of investment (£523.5m). The programme will work in partnership with local areas (local authorities, police, health, education and other relevant agencies) to improve their local services and systems that help and protect children and families.

- All local authorities completed a readiness questionnaire in January 2025.
- Initial guidance issued December 2024 and full policy guidance is due to be issued by April 2025.
- It is expected that 2025/26 will be a transformation year, with areas investing time and resource into local design in the first stage of the programme.
- The reforms include the introduction of Family Help, strengthening multi-agency child protection, and better engaging family networks to support a child to live with their parents.
- The programme team is engaging with partner agencies at a national level, including national information sessions with the National Police Chief's Council (13 February), NHS providers and commissioners (6 March).

Bath and North East Somerset have an engagement meeting regarding "readiness" with the Department of Education (DFE) on March 10th 2025.

Bath and North Est Somerset have agreed that we will co-ordinate transformation via Children's Transformation Programme and the Bath and North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP)

We will provide a regular update on implementation plans

Children Social Care National Framework

The National Framework brings together the purpose of local authority children's social care, the principles by which children, young people and families should be supported, the enablers that should be in place so the system is effective, and the outcomes that should be achieved so that children and young people can grow up to thrive.

The National Framework puts the voices of children, young people and families at the heart of practice, so they can have a say in how they are supported. 1 Children in need, Reporting year 2023 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-educationstatistics.service.gov.uk) 2 Drivers of activity in children's social care - GOV.UK (nationalarchives.gov.uk) 4 Central to the National Framework is a belief that the lives of children, young people and families can be different, and that it is the role and responsibility of those who work in and with children's social care services to hold tight to this belief.

Achieving the outcomes of the National Framework will require the determination of the whole workforce to continually improve practice. Having high aspirations for families will not be enough. Everyone needs to ask themselves how those aspirations are shaping their practice and informing the work they do.

The National Framework will be supported by the Children's Social Care Dashboard (the Dashboard), which will bring children's social care data together in one place to understand progress towards the outcomes of the National Framework.

The Dashboard will include indicators, which will provide information on what is happening in practice. The initial indicators will be developed from data that is currently available. There are limitations with the existing data and over time the indicators in the Dashboard will evolve as government addresses data gaps and moves towards collecting data that better helps us understand outcomes for children's social care.

Bath and North East Somerset have volunteered to be pilot site for the new indicator set, awaiting confirmation.

[tps://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657c538495bf650010719097/Children s Social Care National Framework December 2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657c538495bf650010719097/Childrens_Social_Care_National_Framework_December_2023.pdf)

Department of Education (DFE) /Regions Group

I am really pleased that colleagues from the DFE Regions group have been able to attend CAHW today and give an update on Education Policy Developments. Their role in overseeing the performance of Academy schools, the work of the Regional Improvement Advisors (RISE) and the consultation to changes in the Ofsted Inspection Framework for schools.

2. Annual Education Performance Report

Chris Wilford, as Lead Officer, will present a summary of the performance of early years settings and schools for the academic year 23/24. B&NES schools continue to perform well overall, but there is still a need for improvement in supporting some disadvantaged children. Representatives from the DFE Regions Group, who oversee Academy schools, are attending today.

3. Public Health Report – Wider Determinants of Educational Disadvantage

Amy McCullough, along with Chris Wilford, will present the work undertaken to understand this important area. This report and action plan are part of the council's commitment and investment, with support from St John's Foundation, to address the disadvantaged attainment gap in B&NES.

4. Ofsted

I previously advised that the Local Authority received notification on November 27th 2024 that they would have an Ofsted Focused Visit on Care Leavers on 4/5th December 2024. The report was published on January 14th 2025.

Inspectors said the culture and warmth of the council are a strength and that a stable leadership team and workforce mean that young people benefit from enduring relationships with people who care for them and about them.

They said trusting relationships with their social workers and personal advisers helped young people to make progress and to have positive experiences. Young people are encouraged by their personal advisers to fulfil their ambitions through study or work.

The inspection report says personal advisers are warm and driven to make sure care experienced young people are helped to navigate their way through complex emotional trauma. Young people said that they feel supported and that senior leaders listen to them.

Inspectors noted that the council has committed corporate and political investment and prioritised care experienced young people across the service. The local authority continues to value the involvement of young people in shaping its services. Corporate leaders and elected members have made leaving care a protected characteristic and signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant.

Care experienced young people with additional vulnerabilities receive early support to stop their situations escalating. Care experienced young people who are former

unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are exceptionally well supported with their mental health and diverse needs.

A summary of the findings of the focused visit to the council's children's services can be found on the [Ofsted website](#)

5. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP)

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth justice and probation services in England and Wales. It reports on the effectiveness of probation and youth justice service work with adults and children

I updated at the last CAHW that the Youth Justice Service were notified of their inspection. HM Inspectorate of Probation report into its Youth Justice Service which inspectors say is Good was published in 04/02/2025 and rated the service as **GOOD**

The detailed inspection report gave an outstanding rating to staff, implementation and delivery of court disposals, and planning for out of and that outcomes for children will go from strength to strength.

Inspectors said children open to the Youth Justice Service can expect to receive a strong offer of support. The service is led effectively by a knowledgeable and meticulous management team. There are appropriate resources in place.

Inspectors set out recommendations which they said if implemented promptly, they had no doubt that service delivery will continue to flourish

To read the full report go to the [HM Inspectorate of Probation website](#)

6. Corporate Parents

Due to the Ofsted ILACS Focus Visit, we had to post-pone the December Corporate Parents Meeting . This was rescheduled for March 5th 2025

7. Safety Valve

The LA is progressing with its draft safety valve plans, meeting internal budget targets. However, there has been no update from the Department of Education on the next steps for the Safety Valve plans or the programme's future.

Meanwhile, we are enhancing services for children with SEND. The capital programme, including the development of special and alternative provision schools, a residential school, and resource bases, is advancing. The SEND & AP Advice Service is fully operational and has interacted with nearly all schools in B&NES. Staffing in the SEND team is also being increased to improve service timeliness and responsiveness.

8. Free School Meals Auto Enrolment

The process to implement our local system continues in line with our project plan, with a go live date being the start of the next academic year, September 25 being on track.

Data, information governance, and IT systems are being prepared, and privacy notices are being updated. Initial communications with headteachers have been completed, but further details will need to be shared at the appropriate time. Information for council tax leaflets is being prepared to inform residents that privacy notices have been updated and to highlight changes related to data used for determining free school meal eligibility. Additionally, staff teams are undergoing training for system changes to manage the new process. As a reminder, our timeline of work is provided below.

Dec to Feb – Initial comms and data reuse changes.

Jan to Mar – Scoping the work and process design.

March to April – Testing.

June to July – Communications to parents.

September to October – Live run.

October onwards – Business as usual