

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CHILDREN, ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 12th May 2025

Present:- Councillors Dine Romero (Chair), Liz Hardman (Vice-Chair), Paul Crossley, David Harding, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Joanna Wright, Onkar Saini and Michael Auton (in place of Bharat Pankhania)

Co-opted Members (non-voting): Chris Batten and Kevin Burnett

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Paul May

Also in attendance: Christopher Wilford (Interim Director of Children's Services), Laura Ambler (Place Director, B&NES, BSW Integrated Care Board), Carla Cooper (Head of Young People's Prevention Services), Laura Donnelly (Head of SEND), Olwyn Donnelly (Head of Education Commissioning) and Philip Frankland (Strategic Planning & Performance Manager)

108 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

109 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

110 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Bharat Pankhania had sent his apologies to the Panel, Councillor Michael Auton was present as his substitute for the duration of the meeting.

111 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

112 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Chair informed the Panel that the first meeting of the Early Help Task Group had been held and that they would be updated as work progresses.

113 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Naomi Trentham, Mitos Global addressed the Panel on the subject of the benefits of collaborative working, whole life approach and early intervention for vulnerable children and families. A copy of the statement can be found as an online appendix to these minutes and a summary is set out below.

'Mitos Global is an organisation that provides training, coaching and intervention for all ages and stages, though at the moment our provision is mainly given to children between years five to eleven.

Our offering includes Emotion Coaching, speech & language therapy, sensory assessments & profiling, vocational support, neurodiversity support, and currently 12 hours per week of Alternative Education for three vulnerable students.

We operate privately direct to families, as a service through schools and as a direct provider to the Local Authority. We serve over sixty children and young people every week, from group work in schools to 1:1 therapeutic coaching for children with complex needs. We have a number on our current caseload who are either adopted or in foster care.

Where possible, we work with the whole family.'

She gave a number of examples of the complicated caseloads they have and how these have benefited from being looked at from a viewpoint of the whole family, and not solely through education based solutions.

She highlighted the need for support to be also provided for parents and carers.

She asked the Panel to 'Imagine if all the professionals involved could work together and look at the whole family, instead of each child? If the funding was pooled and the provision broadened?

She added that 'We recognise there are many excellent providers in B&NES and incredible LA staff on the ground – how are we different?

We work collaboratively with families, schools and other agencies, taking a whole child/whole life approach, and then we stay for as long as we can or as long as we are needed, we don't stop when a goal has been reached, we stop when we're no longer needed. We seek to build healthy relationships with our clients, fostering trust and connection, which we believe lies at the heart of any long term success.

Early intervention for children is better than intervention when in crisis, of course, but we believe meaningful and sustainable impact will only come when there is a focus on the whole family.'

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what funding the organisation receives.

Naomi Trentham replied that this was through a number of different means, privately, via schools and the Local Authority. She said that any revenue that is achieved

through the training and development they deliver to schools and organisations is fed straight back into overall provision for clients.

Councillor Hardman asked who should lead on helping to ensure that there are more joined up services.

Naomi Trentham replied that she did not have a direct view on that, but acknowledged that it was important for children to be attending school and a focus on their wellbeing. She stated that she felt that a single practitioner for a child / family would be best placed to join up the dots.

Councillor Lesley Mansell asked if any data was available on the long-term impact for families in receipt of their services.

Naomi Trentham replied that they were looking into whether the University could assist with a data analysis project. She added that they have worked with a mum for the past two years, one of her daughters is now taking her exams and able to self-regulate and her younger sister is now in receipt of support also.

Kevin Burnett asked how they were contacted to begin working with individuals / families.

Naomi Trentham replied that she had a good working relationship with most schools in the area and that referrals would be made via the school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). She added that she had also made personal connections with local groups and organisations over the years.

The Chair said that she was minded to invite her to a future meeting of the Early Help Task Group so that she could share additional information with them.

Naomi Trentham replied that she would be willing to attend and support this work area as much as possible.

The Chair thanked her for her attendance on behalf of the Panel.

114 MINUTES: 14TH APRIL 2025

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chair.

115 B&NES, SWINDON & WILTSHIRE INTEGRATED CARE BOARD (BSW ICB) UPDATE

Laura Ambler, Director of Place for Bath and North East Somerset, BSW ICB addressed the Panel and highlighted the following areas from within the update.

Update on Covid-19 spring booster vaccinations

All adults aged 75 and over, as well as those over the age of six months and living with a weakened immune system, are eligible for the free vaccination.

So far, since the vaccination drive began at the beginning of April, approximately 45 per cent of people eligible for a booster and living in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire have received their top-up vaccine.

For Bath and North East Somerset alone, the uptake currently stands at around 46 per cent, which is similar to what is being seen in Swindon and Wiltshire, and above the national average, which is approximately 36 per cent.

Vaccination appointments are still available and can be arranged either over the phone by calling 119 or online at www.nhs.uk/bookcovid .

Update on responses to the ICB's Big A&E Survey

The Big A&E Survey went live in April and has, to date, been completed by 822 people.

The ICB is now working with Healthwatch to complete face-to-face surveys in each of the A&E departments throughout May, June and July.

Results will be used to develop a better understanding of what has driven walk-in visits to A&Es, and why people are visiting hospital rather than using other NHS services, such as GP surgeries, minor injury units or NHS 111.

The survey will run until the end of July, and a further update will be offered once results have been analysed.

Early data from the online survey has shown:

- 81 per cent agreed that they didn't have any other choice of where to seek treatment but A&E, while 65 per cent said they went to A&E as they felt their condition was serious or life threatening
- 79 per cent of respondents did not think they should have attended somewhere else other than A&E
- Most people visiting A&E travelled from within a five-mile radius

Drop-in sessions planned for people to find out more about new Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre

Opportunities to find out more about the new and exciting Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre will be happening at community locations throughout the spring and summer months.

Representatives from the local NHS will be on hand at drop-in sessions taking place in and around Trowbridge to provide residents with information about the new centre, which is currently being built on land opposite the town's existing community hospital.

The first drop-in session will be held on Friday 9 May at the Asda supermarket in the Shires shopping centre on Bythesea Road between 11am and 3pm.

Members of the public will be able to see images of the new centre, learn more about what services will be moving to the site and how the new facility will benefit Trowbridge and the surrounding areas.

There will also be opportunities to ask questions and share feedback.

Councillor David Harding asked how the Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre would be staffed.

Laura Ambler replied that there would be a transfer of services from Trowbridge Hospital and that the intention was to have multi-discipline teams on site.

Councillor Harding referred to the A&E Survey and asked if the responses were proportionate in respect of the numbers of people attending from within a five-mile radius, given the rural population of B&NES.

He also asked if similar surveys had been carried out in the past so that comparisons could be made.

Laura Ambler replied that she would feed those points back to colleagues and said that the five-mile radius figure was attributable to the 822 respondents to the survey.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked what the Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre was replacing and was one being planned within B&NES.

Laura Ambler replied that services were relocating into a modern facility that would enable co-location of services to be possible. She added that co-location options across BSW were being looked at and would be reliant on capital funding.

Councillor Hardman said that she felt it was important to analyse the location of all the respondents to the survey.

Laura Ambler replied that the data would be analysed in order to identify the drivers for attending.

Kevin Burnett referred to the Covid-19 spring booster vaccinations and asked if there was a target for the number of people they were trying to reach.

Laura Ambler replied that there wasn't a target figure, but a focus on specific cohorts.

Kevin Burnett asked what benefits the Trowbridge Integrated Care Centre has for the residents of B&NES.

Laura Ambler replied that B&NES residents would be able to access the centre through being part of the BSW footprint. She added she would provide a web link that would enable the Panel to view further information.

Councillor Joanna Wright asked if the current number of B&NES residents with Covid-19 was known, similarly the figures for those who have Measles, Mumps or Rubella (MMR).

Laura Ambler replied that she did not have to hand the hospital numbers for those with Covid-19 and said that it was not routinely reported on anymore across the local population. She said that she would consult colleagues with regard to the figures relating to MMR.

Councillor Lesley Mansell said that she would be interested to hear more information about the A&E Survey, especially in relation to equalities data.

Laura Ambler replied that the intention is to have the equality data from the survey as complete as possible.

Councillor Mansell asked if it was yet known of any planned changes in respect of the 50% cuts that were mentioned in a previous meeting of the Panel.

Laura Ambler replied that they hoped to be able to provide more of an update in June and reminded the Panel that this was in respect of a 50% reduction in running costs for the ICB and not related to contract(s) with HCRG or any other body.

Councillor Mansell asked why HCRG were not officially recognising any of the Trade Unions.

Laura Ambler replied that several meetings were held with Unions whilst the contract award was ongoing and added that HCRG were not in a position to recognise one single union as representative of all staff.

The Chair asked if having received 822 responses to the A&E Survey, how many people had actually attended A&E over this time period.

Laura Ambler replied that she would attempt to find out that information for the Panel.

The Chair asked if there was any update to be given regarding the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to use their powers to call in the BSW ICB's proposed changes to community-based care in Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, particularly the appointment of HCRG Care Group, which was raised in March.

Laura Ambler replied that there was no update to be given at the present time.

The Chair, on behalf of the Panel, thanked Laura for attending and the BSW ICB for their update.

116 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services addressed the Panel and highlighted the following points from his update.

He began by complimenting Councillor Joanna Wright for her work on the 'Tree of Hope' which was soon to be planted in Alice Park. He explained that children / young people were going to be asked to help name the tree.

Senior Manager changes in Children's Services

He thanked Chris Wilford for continuing to act as Interim Director of Children's Services following the retirement of Mary Kearney-Knowles last month.

He informed the Panel that Leigh Zywek, our Assistant Director of Children and Young People's Services had been successful in applying for a role in a neighbouring authority and would leave the Council in the middle of June. He said that Leigh has been a fantastic leader and thanked her for all her work.

Councillor Lesley Mansell referred to the Safety Valve update and asked how the delay is affecting the SEND work within the Council. She added that section 3.5 of the SEND Collaboration for BaNES (Safety Valve) – Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had no actions listed against it.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that work continues, especially with regard to Early Help and the SEND & AP Advice Service. He said that fewer complaints were being received as a result of improvement of their timeliness of handling enquiries.

He said that a significant grant was still expected for the new Free Schools and that a full report would be shared with the Panel when available. He added that he would look into the point raised regarding the EIA.

The Chair asked if there was any indication of a timescale for a decision from the DfE.

Councillor May replied that they have been contacted both regionally and nationally and that there was no update at the present time. He said that the delay had the potential to cost the Council £4m a year.

Councillor Liz Hardman referred to subject of Families First and asked how much more funding was required if the £400k provided by the Department of Education to the local authority to implement these reforms falls short of the resources needed to implement all of the changes.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that there was no exact figure being sought and that work was ongoing through the children's transformation programme to ensure multi-disciplinary teams will be in place. He added that he expected the design phase of the work to begin in the next 3 – 6 months.

Councillor Hardman asked for any further information in relation to Early Years Entitlement.

Councillor May replied that the team were experiencing an enormous amount of pressure relating to this work at the present time.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager added that each provider will have its own separate running costs and that there was a range of discrepancies as to how they are funded. He added that the Local Government Ombudsman had made a

decision to say that providers can't mandate that parents / carers must pay for the hot meals offered and a choice must be given to families to provide their own alternative.

He stated that the final stage of the process would take place in September 2025 when the number of hours of care would expand to 30. He said that a phonenumber and website were now live for further enquiries.

Kevin Burnett asked if providers could decide on how many children they accept through their decision to purchase hot meals.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager replied that there were no conditions attached to the Entitlement and the expectation was that any family could apply.

Kevin Burnett asked if families that qualify for auto enrolment into Free School Meals would receive a letter to inform them. He also asked who had overall control of this process.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that the Welfare & Benefits team within the Council were overseeing this process and that there was no work anticipated for schools to carry out. He said he would seek an answer as to whether a letter would be issued.

Kevin Burnett asked when the next termly meeting with Ofsted was due to take place and what topics were normally discussed.

Councillor May replied that he did not attend these meetings, but believed that the next one was due to take place in June.

The Interim Director of Children's Services added that it was a fairly open agenda, but recent topics had included the School's Inspection Framework, SEND Reviews and any concerns regarding schools. He added that in addition there would also be a once a year conversation relating to Social Care.

Kevin Burnett asked if any information could be supplied with regard to funding to the Virtual School.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that this funding was normally received year on year and was not expecting it to cease.

Councillor Paul Crossley referred to the subject of Fostering Families and welcomed the work, but asked officers to be mindful of the definition of 'family' as that can take its form in differing structures.

Councillor May agreed and replied that they were supporting six families currently on a trial period to attempt to prevent the children from going into care. He added that the idea behind the project had come from within the Council and had received interest from the Chief Social Worker who had visited in order to find out more about it.

Councillor Joanna Wright referred to the issue of Early Years funding and said that she had been contacted by a local nursery to say that they felt under duress to sign the Early Years Entitlement agreement. She asked whether the Council should have waited for further guidance and if they had received any letters of concern.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager replied that the agreement was a template supplied by the DfE and that very few Local Authorities had made changes to it. He said that any correspondence received had been shared with the DfE. He informed the Panel that a meeting with providers was due to take place next month.

Councillor Wright asked if due care regarding safeguarding had been carried out in terms of allergies to food being brought into these settings if the hot meals provided are not being purchased.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager replied that updated guidance has been published regarding this and that officers and providers were aware of these safeguarding issues.

Councillor Michael Auton stated that a similar issue had been raised within his ward where a provider had only been given a short amount of time to sign the agreement. He asked what the Council was doing to provide support.

Councillor Wright asked the Cabinet Member for Children's Services to continue to provide information regarding this matter to the Panel when he receives it.

Councillor May replied that he was sympathetic to the providers as there was hardly any leeway in the process.

Councillor Ruth Malloy commented that she welcomed the offer to receive a newsletter from the West of England Music Alliance (WEMA).

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that the newsletter was not ready to be released yet and that a representative from WEMA would welcome the opportunity to attend a future meeting of the Panel.

The Chair asked for it to be clarified as to how funding is received by the majority of education settings.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager replied that this was through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) received from the DfE, and was based on an annual census / formula basis.

The Chair asked if this was top sliced for SEND.

The Strategic Planning & Performance Manager replied that this was from a different area of the DSG and the figure for this year had decreased to 94% from 95%.

Councillor May added that funding decisions are taken through the Schools Forum annually and that the national formula is applied.

The Chair asked if any comment could be given on the high level of fines that have been issued relating to unauthorised school absences.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that he was aware of the increase in fines and would seek comparative figures for the Panel.

The Chair raised the subject of the pending demolition of the former Culverhay site and said that former pupils / residents should be allowed to view the site before this takes place.

Councillor May acknowledged this and said that he had made a commitment to putting such an opportunity in place.

The Chair thanked Councillor May on behalf of the Panel for his update.

117 UPDATE REPORT - PLACEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT FOSSE WAY HOUSE RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

The Head of SEND introduced the report to the Panel and highlighted the following areas from within it.

- The Partnership Trust were informed earlier in the academic year that the Council were unlikely to need to commission places at Fosse Way House for the following year, starting in September 2025. She added that this was not due to budget pressures but because no new B&NES children have been identified whose Education Health and Care Plans indicate that they have specific educational needs requiring a curriculum outside of school hours, also known as a 24-hour curriculum or waking day curriculum.
- The Statutory SEND team reviewed the Education elements of plans (section F) for children and young people at Fosse Way house, and consideration was given as to whether this provision could be offered during the school day. In all cases, the provision could be incorporated into a day curriculum and so the residential element of the placement was not required to meet this educational need. It is that Council's view that independence skills can usually be taught during the school day, and through extracurricular activities, as they are at other special schools.
- Only pupils on roll at Fosse Way School are eligible to attend its residential provision and when a child is placed in Fosse Way House, it is with the clear understanding that it is for one academic year. The children currently placed there will be able to complete this year-long placement. The Local Authority have not received any requests for mediation to resolve disagreement or dispute, or requests for tribunal resolution from families following this decision.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she found it difficult to understand why the service had to close and asked if the criteria for a placement had changed and how this would affect those pupils in lower age settings at Fosse Way School.

The Head of SEND replied that having reviewed the EHCPs, no child had been identified as needing this type of provision and that additional skills could be taught

to pupils during the day. She added she was confident that the needs of the children and young people of B&NES could still be met.

Councillor Hardman said that the provision had been in place for over ten years and asked what support was in place to provide learning opportunities regarding independence and social skills.

The Head of SEND replied that they expect schools to deliver on the needs set out in Section F of the EHCP. She added that a more robust process had been put in place as part of the Safety Valve work and that decisions regarding the EHCPs are made through a multi-agency panel.

The Chair asked for confirmation that it had been the decision of The Partnership Trust to cease the provision at Fosse Way House.

The Head of SEND replied that it was.

Kevin Burnett informed the Panel that he had been sent an email from The Partnership Trust that said that they were still awaiting a response from B&NES on points that they had raised.

- Evidence based proposals submitted – No response
- Parental evidence submitted - No response
- No amended EHCPs received
- 'Residential' included on one EHCP then removed.

The Head of SEND replied that when the error on the EHCP had been recognised the Council had immediately apologised to those concerned. She said that she recognises that there are those that have complex needs but explained that case law exists on what should be provided, and that 24-hour provision was very unusual.

She reiterated that decisions on EHCPs are made by a multi-agency panel and that a mediation process is available if required.

She explained that the Council has asked The Partnership Trust to continue to work with them.

Councillor Lesley Mansell asked why the provision has to stop after so many young people have benefitted from receiving its service. She said that recent Ofsted reports had consistently praised their work.

She requested that a cost benefit analysis be carried out and asked what additional support could be provided to the pupils at Fosse Way school following this decision.

The Head of SEND replied that it was not the Council's decision to close the service and that there has been a change to the process for implementing EHCPs. She added that most of the staff from Fosse Way House were expected to move to the Fosse Way School setting.

She stated that there were different ways to meet the provision and that residential college settings might be available for certain young people in the future.

The Chair asked for the Cabinet Member to keep the Panel updated on this issue through his updates to them.

Councillor Hardman asked what post-16 residential accommodation was available locally.

The Head of SEND replied that this provision was available close to B&NES, in Somerset and Wiltshire. She added that almost all pupils from Fosse Way House were likely to move to a residential setting or provision from Adult Social Care.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked if The Partnership Trust had yet made a decision on a future use of the building.

The Head of SEND replied that she was not aware that they had, but said it could be used for additional day pupils. She stated that the staff concerned are valued and that the Council would continue to work with them through this process.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Note the report
- ii) Be assured that Local Authority Officers continue to work strategically with social care, health, schools and other partners to work within statutory guidelines and support schools and other settings in delivering the very best outcomes for our children and young people.

Councillor Lesley Mansell asked for it to be recorded that she did not accept the report.

118 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024-26 - REFRESH

Councillor Paul May introduced the report to the Panel. He explained that the current two-year Plan had been presented to the Panel, Cabinet and Council in July 2024 for approval. He said that the Panel were now receiving a progress report on the two-year plan ahead of a refreshed version of the Plan being presented to Cabinet and Council in July.

He added that the service recognises the issue of over-represented groups in B&NES who are in the Youth Justice System and informed the Panel that these were groups of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services addressed the Panel. She stated that it had been a successful year overall and highlighted the following areas.

Inspection Outcome – HMI Probation

- Overall 'Good' Rating
- 3 areas = Outstanding, 9 areas = Good, 1 area = Requires Improvement

Performance Indicators

- Rate of Custody Jan 2024 to Dec 2024
 - There was one custodial sentence in this reporting period. Our rate has reduced to 0.00 per 1,000 in the population.
 - The B&NES custodial rate is better than all Comparators. The rates for Comparators are: South West Region (0.07), PCC Area (0.08) and England and Wales (0.10).
- First Time Entrants Jan 2024 to Dec 2024
 - The rate of First Time Entrants has increased in this period from 108 to 137(46.6%) per 100,000 in the population. This equates to 24 individual children compared with 16 in the previous reporting period (Jan to Dec 2023).
 - The rates for our comparators are: South West (135), PCC Area (122) and England and Wales (161).
- Re-offending Binary rate April 2022 to March 2023
 - The B&NES binary percentage of re-offending has reduced by 5% for the period April 2022 to March 2023. There were 20 children in the previous cohort, 6 re-offended, compared with 20 in the current cohort of which 5 have re-offended.
 - The binary percentage of re-offending is showing as 25%, which is lower than all of our Comparators.
 - The percentages for our Comparators are: South West Region (31.3%), PCC Area (28.9%) and England and Wales (32.5%).
- Re-offending Frequency April 2022 to March 2023
 - The rate of re-offending for this period is 2.00. This is a reduction from 3.67 (-45.5%).
 - This is due to there being fewer children in the cohort and fewer children re-offending. There were 6 re-offenders in the previous reporting period committing 22 further offences and 5 re-offenders in the current period committing 10 further offences.

B&NES Youth Justice Service Priorities

- **1.Reduce Disproportionality** – over-represented groups in B&NES include children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- **2.Strengthen Participation** – youth justice work is most effective when it consults children, parents and carers and those harmed by children's offending and works with them to co-create and develop the service.
- **3.Embed Child First Principles** – This principle is the corner stone of our approach moving forward, so appropriately it remained as a strategic priority the plan for 2024 to 2026.
- **4.Reduce Serious Youth Violence** – From participation work with children, parents and carers, it is clear that this is a key issue for them and so it remains a strategic priority for B&NES YJS. Children have shared that knife crime and the threat of serious violence are utmost in their minds.

Youth Justice Service Key Achievements in 2024 / 25

Reduce Disproportionality – Ethnicity and SEN

- Anti-Racist Vision Statement and Action Plan
- Local Good Practice Guide for working with children from minority ethnic background, based on participation work
- Continuous cultural competence and diversity training for all staff
- Speech and Language and Health Screening for all children
- Training for staff on communication and interventions and Neuro Diversity

Reduce Disproportionality

- Increased staff confidence with interventions with children with SEN
- Evidence of consideration of diversity in assessments and case work
- Continued Case Audits to scrutinise for any bias and opportunity for learning
- Develop Education Psychology input into YJS to ensure children's needs are fully understood and responded to

Strengthen Participation

- Increased participation in reparation work
- Children on all practitioner recruitment panels
- Planning parent / carer drop-in support sessions

Embed Child First Principles

- Writing Referral Order reports to the Child
- Implemented the YJB Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool, which has a child first focus
- We are working with more children on an out of court basis and on diversion programmes
- Continue to work in partnership to reduce the times children are in police custody overnight
- Continue to work in partnership to ensure timely justice for children and victims

Reduce Serious Violence

- Multi Agency Partnership to Prevent and Reduce Serious Violence
- Updated Knife Crime resources, and as a partnership created a Toolkit for Parents
- Identified learning and areas for improvement in plans re: safety and wellbeing and plans re: safety for others and implemented an action plan accordingly
- Build on our offer of support to victims, in particular young victims

Positive feedback from Children, Parents and Carers

Update on the Work of the Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)

- Strategic Needs Assessment completed
- VRP Delivery Plan submitted to the Home Office for approval for 2025/26
- Work plan to include continued engagement with the community including a survey for children and young adults about knife crime and serious violence
- Close links between VRP and Education teams, SEND and AP Advice Service.

Councillor May commented that he has the partnership working in practice and how effective it is. He explained how the team work with young people and build relationships between them and their families. He added that HCRG was also active in the partnership.

Kevin Burnett referred to page 63 of the agenda pack and asked if confirmation could be given on whether Turnaround funding had ceased in March 2025.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that they had received confirmation from the Ministry of Justice that they would be in receipt of funding for a further 12 months, but only two thirds of their previous amount.

Kevin Burnett referred to page 75 of the agenda pack and questioned if Children Looked After should also be considered a priority area for the Plan.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that the refreshed Plan would see them included as a priority area as there is a degree of over-representation.

Kevin Burnett commented that a lot of store is placed upon Trauma Informed Practice.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that this is something that the team is very passionate about, to be able to learn from those that have directly experienced trauma.

Kevin Burnett asked if any CEOs of the Multi Academy Trusts were part of the decision making process of the Youth Justice Partnership Board.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that the Principal and CEO of Bath College are members of the Partnership Board

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that there was not a direct representation for all schools on the Partnership Board.

Councillor Liz Hardman asked for any additional comments regarding the finance / budget of the Youth Justice Service.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that there is an overspend within the combined budget as costs have risen, but the level of contributions has not. She added that this matter is included on their risk register.

Councillor Hardman referred to the disproportionality of those young people from BME backgrounds and with SEND who are within the Youth Justice System. She said that there were a lot of school based issues that the Local Authority cannot tackle directly and asked to what extent can we work with schools.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services acknowledged that these were some of our most vulnerable children and that an increase has been seen as more young people are being identified with these needs. She added that this was a concern and that they need to ensure that they work in a preventative way to identify and meet their needs where possible.

The Interim Director of Children's Services added that a range of services are available for schools to access across the Council. He said that permanent exclusions have decreased and that the work of the BME Support Group was ongoing.

Councillor Hardman asked if the Youth Offending Team were able to identify at an early enough stage those children and young people who might be at risk of entering the Youth Justice System.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that mechanisms to attempt to prevent children and young people from entering the system are in place. She added that the Youth Justice Service works in partnership to prevent children entering the youth justice system, through the Compass Service. She said that referrals are also received from schools and that Prevention Partnerships were in development.

Councillor Lesley Mansell thanked the officer for the report and welcomed the Equalities Impact Assessment and the recommendations / actions within it. She asked for any examples of working with HCRG.

Councillor May replied that Val Scrase, HCRG Regional Director for the South-West had recently taken the role of Chair of the Partnership Board.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services added that they do work closely with HCRG, in particular the role of the School Nurse and Speech and Languages.

Councillor Mansell commented on the high number children and young people within the system from a BME background.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that she could circulate the Youth Justice Anti-Racism Action Plan to the Panel.

Councillor Joanna Wright commented that the increase in the number of children and young people within the system with SEND was likely due to more being diagnosed than ever before. She said that parents / carers needed better resources in place to be able to find the support they need.

She asked why the 0.16 FTE Probation Service Officer post had not been filled for over 3 years and how many youth workers were employed in B&NES.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that this post had not been filled due to a lack of funding, which was a national issue. She added that Youth Services were delivered in many different ways across the Council.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked for further information relating to Volunteer Panels / Mentors.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that volunteers could either work on areas such as Referral Orders and meet with the child / parent to address how these should be progressed or as representatives within their local community. She added that some volunteers will also act as mentors.

Councillor David Harding asked if delays in diagnosis of conditions such as ADHD were leading to an increase in numbers entering the justice system.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that she did not feel that this was necessarily a factor.

Councillor Michael Auton commented that he had recently spoken with a local police officer and Youth Connect South West about lack of provision within Midsomer Norton for safe places for young people to go to.

Kevin Burnett stated that in terms of prevention support that most support services within schools would not be at capacity.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that the service supports prevention where possible and said that all of Children's Services work in that way to a degree. She added that it was important to provide the required help as soon as possible. She explained that work can commence within the Youth Justice Service from the age of 8.

The Chair said that she felt it was important for young people to have positive role models to work with.

The Head of Young People's Prevention Services replied that where possible they would look to have mentors with a lived experience.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the progress against the two-year plan and the delivery of youth justice services in the year ahead.

119 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced the item and asked for suggestions for future reports to the Panel. She said that she would welcome the Panel receiving information relating to Youth Services.

Chris Batten asked for the Panel to be updated on the work of the Music Service.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked for the workplan to be updated with items that have been previously suggested and if any longstanding items could be progressed to come to the Panel.

The Chair and Councillor Hardman agreed and gave examples of Child Sexual Exploitation / Modern Slavery and Community Services Transformation.

Kevin Burnett asked if the Panel could see the results of the School Wellbeing Survey.

The Interim Director of Children's Services replied that he would check when those results are due to be released.

Councillor Joanna Wright raised the issue of Online Safety.

Councillor Lesley Mansell asked if the Panel could be updated on the progress of Adult Social Care Services returning in house.

The Chair said she believed that such a report was due in September.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note their current workplan and these proposals for future reports.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services