



# Children, Families and Education

## Portfolio Performance and Resources

### Mid-Year Report 2023/24



Date	14 November	Version	1.0	Approved by	WM
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# CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S INTRODUCTION



This report provides an over view of key developments relating to the Children, Families and Education Portfolio during the first two quarters of 2023/24.

In relation to our work to maximise uptake of the Early Years Entitlement, we have submitted our early years entitlement self-assessment to the Department for Education, supporting readiness for the rollout of the extended childcare policy. In addition we continue to work with providers to main high quality early years provision and the ongoing development of inclusive practice. The overall quality of early years provision in Stockport remains high. 95% of all providers are graded Good or better, in line with the national figure; and 25% (20) of group providers are graded Outstanding, which is higher than the national figure of 17%



The impact of the pandemic is still being felt by our school system, locally and nationally. Children are starting school with reduced speech and language skills and GCSE outcomes have declined nationally. Although our outcomes for our disadvantaged learners have improved in almost all measures, many remain below the national average for this group. Where this is not the case the difference between the outcomes of the disadvantaged learners and their peers remain too high. Addressing this attainment gap remains a key priority.

We are continuing to make good progress in relation to Family Hubs, with two buildings launched as family hub sites in early adopter areas on Friday 13th October and 0-19 family hub core teams co-locating from October onwards.

The Adolescent Safeguarding Framework pilot began earlier this year and was piloted by Stockport, alongside Trafford and Tameside. The framework was officially launched in Greater Manchester on 12th September 2023 at an event in Manchester. The framework will support our workforce and communities to better understand the needs of our young people, and support services to respond at all levels of need with greater flexibility.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-23 is currently being refreshed and the first of three new children's homes is scheduled to open by the new financial year 2024 with further homes to follow. A business case for new supported accommodation for care leavers (16+ and post 18) has also been drafted and sites are currently being sought to progress with these developments.

**Cllr Wendy Meikle,**  
**Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education**

Revenue Budget		Capital Programme
	<b>£000</b>	There is currently no capital programme for this portfolio across 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.
Cash Limit	42,941	
Forecast Outturn	57,691	
(Surplus)/Deficit	4,750	
<b>Reserves</b> Approved use of reserves balance was £4.535m. Planned draw down at Q2 is £3.982m		

# CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION



## 1. DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

This report is based on the **2023/24 Portfolio Agreement**, considered by Children and Families Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and approved by Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The link to the Agreement can be found by clicking [here](#).







This Quarter 2 (Mid-Year) report includes updates on all **delivery projects, programmes and other initiatives** set out in the portfolio agreement, up to the end of September 2023 where this is available.

Data is reported for all **performance measures** included in the agreement that have been updated since publication of the 2022/23 Annual Reports. These are categorised to reflect the council's influence and responsibility as Council, Partnership or Contextual. These categories are used to determine the type of target used as numerical, comparator, direction of travel or if no target is set. Definitions for these categories and target types are included within the Agreement.

The updated Portfolio Performance Dashboards are published alongside these reports, and the new Climate Change and Environment Portfolio Dashboard can be [found here](#). This contains the latest data across the full set of portfolio measures, including historical trends and comparative data (where available).

The criteria for RAG ratings and direction of travel status are shown below. The rationale for any variations to this will be clearly highlighted within the commentary.

### Key to symbols used in tables

	Red – indicator is performing significantly (>5%) below target.		Getting worse – the year-end position (forecast or actual) for this indicator is less favourable than the previous year-end.
	Amber – indicator is performing slightly (<5%) below target.		Stable – the year-end position (forecast or actual) for this indicator is within 1% either side of the previous year-end.
	Green – indicator is on track or performing above target.		Getting better – the year-end position (forecast or actual) for this indicator is more favourable than the previous year-end.

**GMS** – measure is included in the Greater Manchester Strategy outcomes framework.

## **Priority 1: All babies and children are given the very best start in life by their parents and carers and start school ready to learn**

**Our work with the Nesta Innovation Partnership** has continued to develop, with mapping and analysis of the early years delivery model completed and a spotlight on Start Well team interventions. The report is currently being finalised. In addition, development and testing of an 'enhanced antenatal integrated working' prototype has also been completed and a pilot will be carried out during quarter 3.

In relation to the **Healthy Child Programme and Team Around the Early Years**, the Start Well Week of Action took place in July 2023. A broad range of activity took place to raise awareness of the importance of the early years and the home learning environment in supporting children's development. 166 parents / carers and 104 members of the workforce participated in activities.

The health visitor and school nursing line received 803 calls during quarter 1 (792 in quarter 4), which reflects continued demand for universal support. Initial scoping has started to develop the advice line as part of the virtual family hub (see update on family hubs below for further information)

Since the launch in September 2021, we have seen 2186 registrations for Solihull online parenting courses of which 1385 have commenced at least one course. During quarter 1 2023/24 we saw 173 new registrations, of which 122 have commenced a course. We have secured funding to extend our licence until 2025, which will enable us to continue to empower families to access self-help and strengthen our universal offer.

During May – July 2023, we carried out a successful pilot of 'Invest in Play' (IiP), a new parenting intervention to replace Incredible Years. This is the first pilot of the intervention in the UK with Stockport being recognised as a trailblazer and early adopter. Routine outcome measures post course demonstrated a significant drop in parents' stress, child disruptive behaviours and the extent to which the parent finds the child's behaviour troublesome. Our Stockport pilot routine outcome measures benchmark exactly against the IiP published international data which includes a randomised control trial. The positive impact of our groups and routine outcome measures in Stockport are statistically significant meaning improvements are not down to chance.

Following a rigorous external assessment process we passed most elements of our Baby Friendly reaccreditation. An action plan is now in place to address the two elements where standards were not fully met.

Work in relation to safe sleep continues to progress as part of the Stockport Safeguarding Board. A seven minute briefing and slide deck for all staff to access has been produced to include all up-to-date information. Targeted work has also been completed with the early years sector, including sharing of key messages and follow-up during visits by the Early Years Improvement team.

In relation to our **work to maximise uptake of the Early Years Entitlement**, we have submitted our early years entitlement self-assessment to the Department for Education, supporting readiness for the rollout of the extended childcare policy.

We continue to **work with providers to main high quality early years provision and the ongoing development of inclusive practice**. The overall quality of early years provision in Stockport remains high. 95% of all providers are graded Good or better, in line with the national figure; and 25% (20) of group providers are graded Outstanding, which is higher than the national figure of 17%. (taken from the Ofsted statistical release 29.6.23, Early Years Inspections as at 31.3.23). Inspection reports also evidence the quality of the curriculum in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In addition, recent school inspections show a continuation of judgement grades of Good for early years provision; this is also the case when the overall grade for the school is below Good.

Stockport has achieved the highest take up of the Think Equal programme funded through Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The social and emotional learning programme is subscribed to by 100% of our primary schools. School leaders have shared examples of the impact on young children's learning in a short space of time and a Stockport school has recently been featured in the Greater Manchester promotional video. The

extended offer Stockport funded via the Virtual School, Ethnic Diversity and Youth Justice Service is currently at 42% take up. (Level 1 3-4 years olds). We are currently prioritising engagement of all early years settings and primary nursery classes.

We now have 15 trainers as part of the 'Train the Trainer' pilot started in June through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority physical development programme of work. The trainers include a health visitor, portage worker, PE in schools team, nursery teacher, pre-school and day nursery managers, early years improvement childminder and SEND officers. The different roles within this group is testament to the high level of integration within the Stockport early years workforce. These trainers are now in the process of delivering the agreed training specification to other members of the early years workforce. The learning from Stockport is also being used to inform the work by lead trainers in Stockport working with multi-agency colleagues in Salford and Manchester.

In relation to **Family Hubs**, 6 main buildings have now been identified and agreed; and two buildings launched as family hub sites in early adopter areas on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October. Any adaptation work required at current Start Well sites has been commissioned and transition has commenced. 0-19 family hub core teams have been defined as midwifery, health visiting, family help and school nursing and these teams will co-locate from October onwards. A strategic and partnership commitment has been secured to ensure each core team also has a linked worker from youth offending, housing and job centre plus from November. The parenting offer is being linked to family hub sites, starting with our early adopter areas.

The role and responsibilities for family hub bridges have now been defined and quality standards have been agreed. Libraries and Life Leisure have committed to a 'bridge role' in early adopter areas and library and leisure centre staff in early adopter areas have completed training alongside Start Well business support staff. Work has started on internal audits to support bridge readiness and tailor the professional development journey to each organisation. In addition network development sessions have been delivered to engage the wider network of organisations that work at a neighbourhood level with children, young people and families. The sessions focus on 'understanding family hubs in your area'.

Digital projects are developing with pace. We have adopted an iterative delivery approach to the development of the virtual family hub, which brings together a network of support for families, using all existing information, advice and guidance, whilst also creating a 'minimum viable product' for any missing information. Initial scoping has also started to rebrand and re-establish the health visiting and school nursing advice line as the family hubs contact line; and an online resource and knowledge base for networks is under development as part of the virtual hub. Process and service user journey mapping has started to support the administration of enquiries.

## Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Latest available performance on all measures relating to this priority is summarised in the table below. Commentary on any measures that have a “Red” RAG rating, as well as those rated “Amber” with a deteriorating trend, is set out beneath the table.

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE 5: % of 2 year olds benefiting from funded early education	High (Council)	90.5 %	91.2 %	87.7 % (30/09/2023)		87%	G	↓
CFE 8: Quality of Early Years Provision	High (Partnership)	95 %	98 %	98 % (30/09/2023)		98%	G	→
CFE 9(i): Early Years Attainment	High (Council)		65.5 %	67.6 % (30/09/2023)		86%	R	↑
CFE 9(ii): EYFS - GLD (FSM)	High (Council)		44.3 %	47.2 % (30/09/2023)		Maximise	G	↑

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.65: % children achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of EYFS	High (Council)		80.4 %	80.5 % (30/09/2023)		81%	A	→
CFE.66: % CIN achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of EYFS	High (Council)		52 %	52 % (30/09/2023)		N/A	N/A	→
CFE.67: % FSM achieving at least the expected level in communication and language skills at the end of EYFS	High (Council)			47.2 % (30/09/2023)		Null	N/A	○

### Commentary on performance

- Provisional Early Years attainment data for Stockport shows some improvement and the impact of our work on our key priorities. There is still more work to do to improve the outcomes for our most vulnerable children and continue this faster rate of improvement.
- Stockport Good Level of Development (GLD) has increased to 67.6% (compared to 65.5% in 2022) and is slightly above the National figure of 67.3% (2022 65.2%). There were 15 more pupils in the overall cohort this year. The Stockport rate of increase in the new measure is the same as the national increase between 2022 and 2023 at 2.1 percentage points.
- Outcomes for children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) have improved from 43.8% to 47.2%. Stockport is 4.6 percentage points below the national figure but there was a faster rate of improvement in this cohort locally (by 3.5 percentage points compared with 2.6 nationally). There were also 22 more children in this learner group with 25 more FSM eligible children achieving a GLD. The outcomes for boys have also increased and we have narrowed the achievement gap between girls and boys.

## Priority 2: All children and young people are well prepared for adulthood and engage in education, employment, and training

Our **Schools Strategy** document has been agreed and circulated to headteachers. It will frame the basis of our first formal conversation with school leaders at the Directorate meeting on 10th November 2023. We are actively involved in promoting three formal school partnerships between the Local Authority, maintained schools and academies.

Our **accountability conversations** have begun with all our maintained primary schools. These conversations are being completed by school improvement advisers, the headteacher and often the chair of governors. Outcomes from July 2023 are being discussed in detail and the school's development plan, pupil premium strategy and the school's own self-evaluation are examined. This leads to discussion about the plan for the forthcoming year in respect of raising attainment and the breadth of the curriculum offer.

In relation to secondary schools, data about key outcomes is being shared with school leaders as a group. Further individual discussion will happen at school level either with the school improvement adviser or within the schools multi-academy trust.

We have identified **improving outcomes** for disadvantaged children and children receiving special educational needs support (SEN support) as core priorities and particularly outcomes for boys in these groups. The continuing professional development offer from the School Improvement Service and the Inclusion team is focussed upon these priorities. Inclusion leaders and the School Improvement team are working together closely to co-ordinate the support provided to each school to ensure leadership decisions lead to practice change.

We are also in the process of developing several new pieces of co-produced work with our school leaders. These focus upon inclusion (with our secondary leaders), developing the offer for our disadvantaged learners (using Education Endowment Foundation resources at both the primary and secondary phase) and our SEN support offer.

A new approach to **supporting transition** from Year 6 to Year 7 is also underway, in which interventions in Year 7 are being supported by colleagues from the Inclusion Service who also worked with the children in Year 6. Early indications show that this is having a positive impact on enabling more children to settle well.

The focus of the Inclusion Service and others (School Improvement, School Nursing) has been reviewed and has a greater focus on attendance. Further work is needed to align this with the team Around the school as this is refreshed later this term and the work of the Attendance team.

## Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Latest available performance on all measures relating to this priority is summarised in the table below. Commentary on any measures that have a "Red" RAG rating, as well as those rated "Amber" with a deteriorating trend, is set out beneath the table.

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	Zyr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE 10: Quality of Primary School Provision	High (Partnership)	92 %	89.4 %	92.8 % (30/09/2023)		90%	G	↑
CFE 11: Quality of Secondary School Provision	High (Partnership)	52 %	60.1 %	62.2 % (30/09/2023)		76%	R	↑
CFE 12(ii): Attainment - KS2 (CIN)	High (Council)		30 %	25 % (30/09/2023)		Maximise	R	↓
CFE 12(iii): Attainment - KS2 (FSM)	High (Council)		39.2 %	37.2 % (30/09/2023)		61%	R	↓
CFE 15: KS4 Attainment (9-5)	High (Council)		52 %	47.8 % (30/09/2023)		56%	R	↓
CFE 16(i): KS4 - Attainment 8 Score	High (Council)		50	47.7 (30/09/2023)		58	R	↓
CFE 16(ii): KS4 - Att 8 Score (CIN)	High (Council)		25.1	(30/09/2023)		Maximise	N/A	○
CFE 16(iii): KS4 - Att 8 Score (FSM)	High (Council)		38.1	(30/09/2023)		43	N/A	○

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	Zyr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.68: % Children attaining the expected standard at Key Stage 2 in Reading	High (Council)		77.3 %	75.3 % (30/09/2023)		78%	A	↓
CFE.69: % FSM Children attaining the expected standard at Key Stage 2 in Reading	High (Council)		59.3 %	58.5 % (30/09/2023)		Null	A	↓



## Commentary on performance

- Provisional data shows reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 1 (70.2%, 61.8%, 72.1%) are all above the national average. Results for combined reading/writing/maths at Key Stage 2 (61.4%) and our GCSE outcomes for English and Maths at both the standard pass (68.3%) and strong pass (47.8%) are also above the national average.
- The impact of the pandemic is still being felt by our school system. Nationally children are entering our system with reduced speech and language skills and GCSE outcomes have declined. In Stockport the outcomes for our vulnerable learners in Early Years have either remained unchanged or improved, despite the lower starting points.
- The progress of vulnerable learners from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 has improved in reading and writing and is above national average for all 3 subjects for our disadvantaged children. This is an encouraging picture.
- Our outcomes at GCSE overall have improved from the pre-pandemic levels in 2019, when students last sat exams in comparable conditions. However, there is considerable variation between our schools particularly in respect of the outcomes for our vulnerable learners. Schools continue to focus upon the provision for these children and are being challenged to change their practice and learn from each other where appropriate.

### Priority 3: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The **investment position statement** for SEND services has stalled due to changes under Integrated Care which means costs associated with health services are difficult to extrapolate. The data for council funded services has been gathered and visualised through graphs and charts and will be considered at the November Integrated Planning, Design and Delivery Group and shared with the Performance and Quality Group, Place Planning Board as well as the SEND Board. We will continue to wait for health spend to become available and refresh the report when this data is received. When completed, the Investment Position Statement will inform the Joint Commissioning Strategy.

The **neurodevelopmental pathway** will be the responsibility of the Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism Planning and Delivery Group. The One Health and Care Board received a report in October outlining proposals for this work area.

**SEND sufficiency plans** are in progress with additional support in the form of resource bases being created in each neighbourhood, funded through the Place Planning Board available capital funds. A number of reviews currently in their infancy will inform the SEND sufficiency plans including reviews relating to social emotional and mental health (SEMH) and 16+ places.

An overall **SEND strategy** and plan is under development and will also tie in the alternative provision expectations to ensure all specialist provision is understood from the perspective of need, provision, predicted future demand and gaps.

### Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Latest available performance on all measures relating to this priority is summarised in the table below. Commentary on any measures that have a “Red” RAG rating, as well as those rated “Amber” with a deteriorating trend, is set out beneath the table.

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE 9(iv): EYFS - GLD (SEN Support)	High (Council)		23.9 %	24.9 % (30/09/2023)		Maximise	G	↑
CFE 12(v): Attainment - KS2 (SEN Support)	High (Council)		21.4 %	25.3 % (30/09/2023)		46%	R	↑
CFE 15(iii): KS4 Attainment (9-5) - SEN	High (Council)		25.8 %	20.6 % (30/09/2023)		25%	R	↓
CFE 16(v): KS4 - Att 8 Score (SEN)	High (Council)		36.6	34.9 (30/09/2023)		Maximise	A	↓
CFE 62: Education, Health and Care Plans	-(contextual)	32.7	35	36.3 (30/09/2023)		N/A	N/A	○

### **Commentary on performance**

- Provisional data shows that Early Years outcomes for children at SEN support have increased from 23.9% to 24.9%. This is 0.1 percentage point below the national figure. There was a slight increase of 12 children in this group from 209 to 221.
- Progress for our SEN Support learners at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national in reading, writing and maths. However, attainment for this group remains below the national average in the primary phase in 6 measures, especially for our younger children.
- 44% of SEN Support learners achieved a standard pass at GCSE (9-4), with 20.6% achieving strong passes (9-5).

### Priority 4: All children, young people and families have access to an effective integrated early help offer

During quarter 2 the number of Early Help Assessment completed within time scales is below expected practice delivery. This dip in performance aligns with the structural changes made to the early help service into the creation of the **Family Help Service** which went live on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023. Having carefully scrutinised the dip in performance, which has been reported to the Early Help Board, we can identify the significant service change which includes change of job roles and recruitment to vacant posts in this time period having directly impacted on performance during quarter 2 23/24 and action has been taken to address: -

- Introduction of a monthly practice and performance meetings commencing in November 2023 in line with the new Family Help model.
- Recruitment campaign leading to 100% recruitment to newly created Family Help intervention workers and 83% recruitment to Family Help social work posts bringing capacity back into the model to allow for swift allocation of Early Help Assessments.
- Review and action taken of any early help episodes without a started / completed Early Help Assessment. This continues to be reviewed by the Family Help Service.
- Recruitment to a Family Help programme lead post (due to start on 8/11/23) - a key part of this role will be weekly reviews directly with Family Help team leaders.

We are excited to have been asked by the GMCA to lead on a trailblazer (partnered with the Innovation Unit) focusing on partner agencies’ engagement and contribution to leading early help assessment and team around the family plans. We are ambitious this will seek to understand and gain external perspective to the barriers in partner agencies leading early help plans, how the local authority can support engagement and influence practice change.

### Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Latest available performance on all measures relating to this priority is summarised in the table below. Commentary on any measures that have a “Red” RAG rating, as well as those rated “Amber” with a deteriorating trend, is set out beneath the table.

#### Early help

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target	
CFE.71: Family Early Help Assessments completed within 45 working days	High (Council)			64.5 % (30/09/2023) 420 / 651		80%	<span style="color: red;">R</span>
CFE.72: Percentage of Early Help Episodes closed in period with a successful outcome	High (Council)	51.5 %	50.1 %	63 % (30/09/2023) 634 / 1007		N/A	<span style="background-color: #ccc;">N/A</span>
CFE.73: Re-referrals to Early Help within 12 months of a previous episode	Low (Council)	61 %	81 %	46 % (30/09/2023)		N/A	<span style="background-color: #ccc;">N/A</span>
CFE.74: Percentage of Early Help episodes closed in period stepped up to Children’s Social Care	Low (Council)	14.3 %	14.7 %	8.7 % (30/09/2023) 88 / 1006		N/A	<span style="background-color: #ccc;">N/A</span>

**Commentary on performance**

- Please see above for commentary relating to measure CFE.71
- In relation to CFE.72, quarter 2 data tell us that for 62% of children open to early help services, there is a positive impact and successful outcomes are achieved. This is a strong indicator at this mid-year point of improving impact of help provided to families. We did not set a target for this indicator in the PPRA as we developed our understanding of baseline data. It is now proposed that for future performance monitoring a target of 65% is set, this performance indicator and clear targets is important to ensure continued scrutiny of impact and successful delivery of the Supporting Families Programme.
- In relation to CFE.73 and CFE.74, quarter 2 data shows that 46% of children open to early help services came back into the system within 12 months and the number of children stepping up to children’s social care has decreased. Initial observation suggests this is an early indication that sustained help or change has been achieved and that needs for families have not increased leading into immediate step up to children’s social care. However further qualitative data / information is required to confirm this. A deep dive will be taken during quarter 3 which will include a sampling of those early help assessments that were re-referred.

Health and Wellbeing

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.36: Hospital Admissions (Injury)	Low (Partnership)	12.08	9.71	2.69 (30/06/2023)		10		
CFE.37: Hospital Admissions (Self Harm)	Low (Partnership)	3.07	1.82	0.29 (30/06/2023)		1.4		

## **‘Priority 5: Children and young people live safely and happily within their families, and where this is not possible, they are supported to have stable loving homes and achieve positive outcomes wherever they live**

### Children’s Social Care

The **Adolescent Safeguarding Framework** pilot began earlier this year and was piloted by Stockport, alongside Trafford and Tameside. The framework was officially launched in Greater Manchester on 12th September 2023 at an event in Manchester. As part of the pilot, a design group was established with support from the Innovation Unit. Stockport has developed a plan with the following workstreams: -

- Engagement with young people and parents (participation opportunities and ability to feed back and influence service delivery);
- Developing a safeguarding process that can respond to extra-familial harm where traditional child protection processes do not fit and where a different approach to risk is needed to think about contextual factors beyond the home;
- Workforce development offer to ensure our workforce understand adolescent development and behaviours and have the skills to respond to their needs;
- Use of data across adolescent services to broaden our collective understanding of need, risk and outcomes;
- Strategic alignment of adolescent services, with the priority being to integrate youth justice and complex safeguarding (including the response to missing children) under an umbrella service with one line management structure.

The aim of the framework is to support our workforce and communities to better understand the needs of adolescents in Stockport, and support services to respond at all levels of need with greater flexibility, using key principles to drive strengths-based approaches, and working to reduce duplication of services where adolescents may have multiple needs.

An advisory board has met twice and will be established quarterly to continually review progress against this area of work. Stockport colleagues are engaged with work in Greater Manchester to embed the Adolescent Safeguarding Framework, as well as contributing to the newly developed Adolescent Delivery Hub. We are also engaged with the work across Greater Manchester to deliver child-centred policing and are in discussions with the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory to be part of an adolescent court pathway pilot, which will ensure adolescents are able to fully represent their views to the judiciary in care proceedings. These forums and workstreams are additional to the relationships already developed for youth justice and complex safeguarding regionally.

We recognise the need to continue to socialise the framework, thinking about how all key partners can contribute, particularly considering engagement with our schools.

### Children in Care and Care Leavers

The **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-23** is currently being refreshed. The Brightspots survey led by Coram Voice has been circulated to children in care and findings from the survey have informed the revised priorities alongside events run over the summer with children in care and stakeholders. The Corporate Parenting Plan is currently being updated with the new priorities and will be presented for approval at the next Integrated Looked after Children Board and Corporate Parents Working Group.

The **Stockport Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy 2020-23** is also currently being refreshed and updated with new sufficiency priorities to respond to increasing demand for children’s placements. Recruitment for foster carers and supported lodgings providers continues to be supported by the Greater Manchester ‘unfiltered’ campaign.

We have secured approval for three new children's homes (1x 5-bed and 2x 3-beds) and the first of these new homes is scheduled to open by the new financial year 2024 with further homes to follow. The local new homes are in addition to the Greater Manchester Project Skyline which is a Greater Manchester collaboration to provide 10 new children's homes across Greater Manchester.

We have also drafted a business case for new supported accommodation for care leavers (16+ and post 18) and sites are currently being sought to progress with these developments. This will increase sufficiency and suitability of accommodation locally for our care leavers. These sufficiency projects are key priorities within the Medium Term Financial Plan and children's recovery plan.

The **Staying Close 3-year programme** launched in March 2023 and we are currently providing support to 52 care leavers to prepare for living independently in their own flats or with wrap around support. We are working with a local digital video company to produce a feedback and marketing video with young people.

We continue to develop our local offer for care leavers by working with the Care Leaver Covenant to enhance opportunities, for example the SKY DIGITAL WIFI offer for care leavers. Our Director of Corporate and Support Services has continued to chair a monthly meeting with key colleagues focused on increasing education, employment and training opportunities within the council and with partners and to optimise opportunities from social value within contracts. Recent successes include the new Jump Start programme and we received £200 from a business to purchase kit and boots for a care leaver football team.

#### Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support

The annual **Youth Justice Plan** has been written on behalf of the Youth Justice Partnership Board and is currently going through the democratic process for approval. As in previous years, the format is set by the YJB (Youth Justice Board) and therefore is prescriptive and linked to both national and local outcomes.

The '**Targeted Youth Offer**' has evolved into a 'Prevention and Diversion' offer. 'Prevention' is children who have been arrested but not charged yet and have been 'Released Under Investigation' (RUI) or the police/CPS have agreed to 'No Further Action' (NFA). These cases are picked up through the referral pathway and offered an intervention through the Youth Justice 'Turnaround' Project. Diversion is cases that come through the 'Out of Court Disposal' (OCD) pathway to the Youth Justice Diversion Panel for an OCD consideration (such as a community resolution or youth caution), which means they receive an 'out of court' intervention.

The Detached Youth Work offer continues to provide youth work interventions as part of the 'RTime' partnership in 9 areas across Stockport, particularly where anti social behaviour is affecting communities and there is a need for enhanced youth engagement. Discussions to align with the Family Hub model are underway to ensure the outreach youth offer is embedded within communities.

## Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Latest available performance on all measures relating to this priority is summarised in the table below. Commentary on any measures that have a “Red” RAG rating, as well as those rated “Amber” with a deteriorating trend, is set out beneath the table.

### Children’s Social Care

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.75: Children Social Care repeat referrals – children with a previous referral within 12 months of their latest referral	Low (Council)	18 %	21 %	19 % (30/09/2023)		22%		
CFE.76: Missing episode in period, percentage of return home interviews offered within 72 hours (of those offered)	High (Council)	80.8 %	84.1 %	84.2 % (30/09/2023) 255 / 303		80%		
CFE.77: Missing episodes in period, percentage of Return Home interviews accepted (of those offered)	High (Council)	67.2 %	70.8 %	59.7 % (30/09/2023) 181 / 303		65%		
CFE.81: Child Protection Plans starting in period who have been subject to a previous plan (ever)	Low (Council)	30 %	20 %	16 % (30/09/2023)		Minimise		
CFE.82a: Aspire outcomes - In stable accommodation	Null		50 %	92 % (30/06/2023) 11 / 12		Null		
CFE.82b: Aspire outcomes - formed a trusted relationship	Null		100 %	92 % (30/06/2023) 11 / 12		Null		
CFE.82c: Aspire outcomes - re-engaged in education	Null		100 %	58.3 % (30/06/2023) 7 / 12		Null		
CFE.82d: Aspire outcomes - missing episodes have reduced	High (Council)		0 %	70 % (30/06/2023) 7 / 10		Null		
CFE.83: Children assessed as requiring children’s social care support	-(Council)	57 %	57 %	59 % (30/09/2023)		Null		

### Commentary on performance

- In relation to measure CFE.77 ‘Missing episodes in period percentage of Return to Home interviews accepted’, there are many reasons why return to home interviews are not accepted, for example many of our missing episodes are repeats and young people often decline the offer of multiple interviews. In addition staffing issues over the past year have resulted in young people not have a consistent missing from home officer – this may have impacted on take up as young people are not familiar with the interviewing officer. Staffing issues have now been addressed and we plan to do some focussed work on the effectiveness of our return to home interviews, with a view to increasing uptake.



### Looked after Children and Care Leavers

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.53: Care Leavers in suitable accommodation (19-21)	High (Partnership)	95.6	94.8	90.8 (30/09/2023) 109 / 120		95	A	↓
CFE.54: Care Leavers the local authority remains in touch with (19-21)	High (Partnership)	100	96.5	92.5 (30/09/2023) 111 / 120		95	A	↓
CFE.55: Care Leavers living with their former foster carers (aged 19-20)	High (Partnership)	23	44	44 (31/03/2022) 15 / 34		Maximise	G	→
CFE.78: Percentage of children placed in foster care	-(Council)	72 %	72.5 %	68.4 % (30/09/2023) 333 / 487		N/A	N/A	○
CFE.79: Percentage of children in own provision	-(Council)	67.6 %	66 %	64.3 % (30/09/2023) 313 / 487		N/A	N/A	○
CFE.80: Percentage of children placed with parents	-(Council)	6.5 %	7.7 %	8.8 % (30/09/2023) 43 / 487		N/A	N/A	○

### **Commentary on performance**

- The Children's Social Care management and teams are working hard to support children at home with their families where possible and where accommodation by the local authority is required we are working hard to achieve the best placement match for children to meet their needs, seeking to understand the reasons for disruptions and moves. We are continuing to increase our internal placement provisions to enable us to meet the needs of Stockport children, this includes approval for the three new children's homes which we aim to open in early 2024 (please see narrative above for further information).

### Youth Justice and Targeted Youth Support

Indicator Name	Good Perf.	2yr Prev. (YE)	Prev. Year End	Values	Forecast	Target		
CFE.42: YOS - Custodial Sentences - per 1,000 10-17 yr olds	Low (Partnership)	0.07	0.21	0.25 (30/06/2023)		0.23	R	↓
CFE.70: Young person's open to YJS aged 10-17 years who are ethnically diverse (disproportionality)	Low (Council)		17.2	16.8 (30/09/2023)		N/A	N/A	↓

### **Commentary on performance**

- Custody numbers have been historically low but they have risen recently due to a number of extremely serious offences that have been committed, and the young people involved have received long sentences. Cabinet members have been briefed on these cases.

# CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

## 2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MONITORING



### 2.1 Revenue – Cash limit

#### Current Budget at Q2:

	Budget at Q1 £000	Increase / (Reduction) £000	Budget at Q2 £000
Education	5,600	298	5,898
Children and Family Services	45,951	717	46,668
14-19 Services	375	0	375
<b>Cash Limit</b>	<b>51,926</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>52,941</b>

#### Budget Changes since Quarter 1:

Description	Movement(s) £000
Corporate additional funding for SEN Transport inflation not allocated at Q1.	298
Corporate contingency funding to address identified pressures not allocated at budget setting	717
<b>Total Changes</b>	<b>1,015</b>

#### Outturn Forecast

The service is forecasting a net £8.732m deficit (before deployment of reserves) against the budget of £52.941m in 2023/24 which is 16.5% of the net cash limit budget. The deployment of reserves at £3.982m reduces this deficit to £4.750m, which is 9% of the net cash limit budget.

	Net Cash Limit Budget	Forecast Net Expenditure	Covid Scarring Allocations	Forecast Net Appropriations from Reserves	Forecast Net Expenditure after Scarring & Reserves	Forecast (Surplus) / Deficit Q2	Forecast (Surplus) / Deficit Q1
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Education	5,898	7,668	0	(660)	7,008	1,110	868
Children & Family Services	46,668	55,160	(1,530)	(3,322)	50,308	3,640	3,106
14-19 Services	375	375	0	0	375	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,941</b>	<b>63,203</b>	<b>(1,530)</b>	<b>(3,982)</b>	<b>57,691</b>	<b>4,750</b>	<b>3,974</b>

**Education:**

There is a forecast deficit at Q2 of £1.110m on Education.

This deficit continues to be a reflection of the ongoing demand, challenges and cost pressures associated with the statutory requirement to provide SEN transport support to our most vulnerable pupils across the borough. The demand for specialist school provision placements over the last 12 months continues to rise and put pressure on the system. The number of eligible pupils has risen from c.785 in May 2022 to c.880 in July 2023 and now 940 as at the start of the new academic year, with a further increase in routes/personal budgets, etc rising from c.260 to 300 in the same period.

Within the above, a large number of said routes relate to pupil placement in other Local Authority External provision which is costly, with the additional factor of new “solo” routes from September related to said external placements.

The service continues to review all costs and options available on a regular basis and as part of the strategic cost avoidance plan for the future is assessing all personal budgets options, increasing independent travel training numbers and seeking to reduce costs where parental preference/choice has been activated and had a negative impact on LA costs.

**Children and Family Services**

The financial resources deployed to Children and Families Services total £46.668m and the forecast outturn as at Q2 is a deficit of £3.640m.

**Children Looked After (CLA):**

The largest area of deficit is in CLA placements and has a forecast deficit of £2.110m.

All efforts continue to be made to ensure that our internal residential provision is at full occupancy whilst also ensuring that the matching of children within homes is appropriate to meet all children’s needs safely and in line with regulatory standards.

CLA Categories	Position at Q2
External Residential placements	1.791
External Foster care placements	(0.155)
Internal Foster care and Staying Put	0.474
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.110</b>

**External Provision**

The forecast for current placements as at 3<sup>rd</sup> of October is a surplus of £0.155m on External Foster care (IFA) placements and a deficit of **£0.966m** on External residential placements. There is an estimate of **£0.625m** for new placements over the remaining 25 weeks of the year which equates to approximately 5 new placements at the average costs of £5,000 per week. There are 83 young people in external residential placements as at 3 October 2023 compared with 77 as at 25 July 2023 (Q1 reporting) a net increase of 6.

There is a further forecast of **£0.200m** for the 2 bed provision on the Broadfields site established in 20/21 to respond to the demand for placements for complex young people. Both the Broadfields and Dial Park internal children’s homes are currently full to capacity. These three elements equate to the overall reported deficit of £1.791m.

The deficit is a reflection of the challenges currently facing the service in the securing of placements for looked after children, the increased complexity of cases and the rising cost of placements in the external market. There are now 32% of placements in external provision above the average weekly

cost in the GM residential framework contract. The deficit related to looked after children placements accounts for 57% of the overall deficit

### **New Internal Children's Homes**

Progress on the development of the new internal children's homes approved as part of the recovery plan has been slower than hoped due to issues with identifying and purchasing of properties. It is now expected that only one of the homes will be open in the current financial year. A small proportion of the deficit, £0.206m, is as a result of the demand allocation being reduced to account for the net saving of having the three new provisions open for one quarter of 23/24.

### **Internal Foster Care**

The forecast outturn on internal foster care placements is a deficit of £0.327m. Numbers in internal foster care continue to be maximised and have remained stable at between 287 and 293 since January 2023.

### **Non – CLA:**

#### **Placements**

There is a forecast surplus of £0.029m comprising of the following forecasts on Non-CLA placements where the Local Authority has a continued financial commitment.

<b>Placement Category</b>	<b>Position at Q2</b>
Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)	0.055
Adoption Allowances	(0.027)
Residence Orders / Child Arrangement Orders	(0.003)
Supported Lodgings	(0.054)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(0.029)</b>

### **Avoid Need to Accommodate**

There is a forecast deficit £0.592m on avoid need to accommodate and CLA maintenance payments.

There are four high cost therapeutic support packages funded from S17 to keep children with complex needs at home and prevent family breakdown resulting in the children needing to become looked after. The cost of these packages equates to 25% of the total forecast spend.

Support funded through S17 is reviewed monthly and packages lasting longer than 3 months are discussed with Service Leads. The forecast is based on the most up to date information provided on likely duration of current packages of support. Although spend in this area is high it is avoiding high cost external residential placements.

### **Disability Service**

There is a forecast deficit of £0.688m across the Children with Disability service.

This main areas of deficit are £0.422m on Direct Payments, £0.070 on section 17 spend for CWD, £0.032m on staffing and £0.132m on Respite.

At Q1 there were 87 level 3 respite packages and 96 level 2 support packages, this has risen to 124 level 3 and 133 level 2 packages at Q2. Of the 96 respite packages 15 have an annual cost above £0.020m and account for 62% of the total projected spend. These packages are supporting young people with complex needs and disabilities who would otherwise be in high cost residential placements.

Support packages, both respite care and direct payments, will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis through the short breaks panel.

The joint commissioning panel will consider support for children with disabilities receiving packages of respite care and direct payments. Analysis of spend and income from 2011/12 to 2023/24 shows a significant increase in spend for CWD but a significant reduction in joint funding from Health.

#### **Continued Accommodation 18+**

There is a forecast deficit at Q2 of £0.248m on continued accommodation for 18+ young people due to a lack of tenancies / alternative supported accommodation and who are remaining in 16+ semi-independent placements. The deficit is after an allocation of £0.200m from covid scarring contingency. This is a significant reduction of £0.268m since Q2 due to 4 placements ceasing just prior to turning 18 and a further 10, 18+ placements ceasing since the end of June.

The deficit in this area is a result of the growing cohorts of young people turning 18 year on year and requiring support under leaving care legislation and is further compounded by the increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who cannot apply for their own tenancies as they have not been awarded status or leave to remain.

The in- year deficit will be funded from the migrant communities grant reserve and therefore the £0.248m deficit does not form part of the total deficit reported.

#### **Staffing Deficits**

There is a deficit of £0.380m on staffing budgets comprising of the following; foster care social workers £0.250m, locality team social workers £0.100m and school age plus workers £0.030m.

The first two are as a result of the use of agency staff being used to fill front line, case holding vacant posts and the latter is due to incremental drift. There has been an increase in the use of agency staff due to the temporary nature of funding agreed meaning that recruitment is more difficult than if posts were able to be advertised on a permanent basis. The recent approval of the fostering staff business case and agreement of permanent funding in this area will reduce this deficit from 2024/25. There are also difficulties in the recruitment and retention of social workers nationally requiring LAs to be sensitive to regional difference in pay. The Head of Social Work and Practice Improvement is working closely with HR and Finance to work through some of the challenges in this area.

#### **14-19 Service**

The Quarter 2 forecast position for the Education, Children & Families portfolio is a balanced budget.

## 2.2 Earmarked Reserves

The majority of earmarked reserves are held at a corporate level and services produce a business case to drawdown funds, which is approved through Corporate Leadership Team and Members. This strategic approach is designed to provide financial resilience for the council and to ensure that council reserves are used on an invest-to-save basis and to support council priorities. The exceptions to this are ringfenced reserves and the Directorate Flexibility Reserve.

The table below reflects planned use of reserves at Q2 and is after the review of the council's reserve policy which was presented to Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (Agenda item 9)

[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 19th September, 2023, 6.00 pm - Stockport Council](#)

### Transfer from reserves:

Reserve Category	Reserve Narration	To be used for	Reserve / Approved Use Balance £000	Approved use of Reserves £000	Balance of Reserve £000
<b>Directorate Reserves</b>					
Directorate Reserve	Directorate Flexibility Reserve	FGC Co-ordinator	23	23	0
Directorate Reserve	Children's Reserve	New Beginnings	99	99	0
Directorate Reserve	Directorate Flexibility Reserve	Deputy Service Lead and Designated Officer SW	50	50	0
<b>Corporate Reserves</b>					
Corporate Reserves	SEND MTFP	SEND WSoA	387	387	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Education Psychology Service	273	273	0
Corporate Reserves	Legislative and Statutory Requirements Reserve	Funding remaining for serious case reviews -	79	79	0
Corporate Reserves	Third Party Monies Reserve	NW Partnership monies	156	0	156
Corporate Reserves	Revenue Grant Reserve	ASC SW Development Grant	28	28	0
Corporate Reserves	Revenue Grant Reserve	CYP SW Development Grant	19	19	0
Corporate Reserves	Revenue Grant Reserve	CYP ASYE Grant	10	10	0

Corporate Reserves	Third Party Monies Reserve	LSCB, Local Safeguarding Children's Board	139	139	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Foster carer support	100	36	64
Strategic Priority Reserve	Cabinet Positive Investments	Targeted Youth Support 22/23	146	119	27
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	IRO Staffing	29	29	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Leaving Care PA and IRO Staffing	49	49	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Leaving Care Pure Insight and Mentor Co-ordinator	30	30	0
Reserve Linked to Budget	Workforce Investment/Change Reserve	Senior Practitioner Retention	45	45	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	CWD Short Breaks	195	195	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	UASC	197	197	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	WD Staff (Formerly PIP) - 22/23 approved reserve	27	27	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	WD Staff (Formerly PIP) - 23/24 approved reserve	47	47	0
Reserve Linked to Budget	Transformation - Invest to Save Reserve	GM House Project	171	84	87
Reserve Linked to Budget	Workforce Investment/Change Reserve	Social Worker and Team Leader Market Supplement	156	156	0

Reserve Linked to Budget	Transformation - Double Running Reserve	Phased Savings	600	454	146
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	PIP	163	163	0
Reserve Linked to Budget	Transformation – Invest to Save	Intensive Support Workers	11	11	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Additional Social Worker Teams – 22/23 approved reserves	200	200	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Additional Social Worker Teams – 23/24 approved reserves	653	653	0
Reserve Linked to Budget	Children's Reserve	3 x Senior SW practitioners –Family Help model	145	72	73
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Foster care service pressures	87	87	0
Reserve Linked to Budget	Children's Reserve	Family Drug and Alcohol - programme support	20	20	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	MASSH Staffing	167	167	0
Budget Resilience Reserve	Children's Reserve	Foster carer support payments	34	34	0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>4,535</b>	<b>3,982</b>	<b>553</b>



## 2.3 Portfolio Savings Programme

The following table provides an update on the progress against the savings to be achieved in 2023/24.

Education, Children & Families	Savings Programme	Value Savings Approved 2022/23 for 2023/24 (£000)	Value Savings Approved 2023/24 for 2023/24 (£000)
Robust Corporate Governance	Children & Young People Services Review	295	905
	<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>905</b>
	<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>1,200</b>

The savings target will be met using a combination of the Family Help Service restructure, non-recurrent savings and double running reserves. As some of the savings are non-recurrent in nature, the service is working to identify savings for future years.

## 2.4 Dedicated Schools Grant

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is made up of four blocks (Schools, early years, high needs and central school services), the schools delegated budgets are considered spent at the point of delegation as individual school budgets are managed at school level with the governing body.

The remaining budgetary resources are the Centrally Held Budget (CHB) is managed by the local authority on behalf of schools and consists of a range of services to schools and pupils.

The total DSG allocation which is centrally held is £45.084m (largely the high needs block in support of our most vulnerable pupils)

The Q2 forecast outturn position provides an in-year deficit at £5.240m in addition to the planned original budget deficit set at c £1m in April 2023, thus totalling a total year-end deficit forecast at £6.240m

The significant cost pressure within the overall DSG Q2 forecast are the continued cost increase and demand in the high needs block pertaining to:

- More pupils in mainstream schools accessing HN top-up support funding;
- Requirement to increase local specialist capacity further for SEN placements;
- Increase in placements in high cost external/independent providers; and
- Increase in occupational health and speech and language support contracts for the increased special school pupil cohort.

The above deficit will be carried forward as part of the overall cumulative deficit (estimated at £17.5m for 31 March 2024).

The LA continues to seek new transformational ways of working, efficiencies and cost saving options as part of the DfE delivering better value (DbV) support program and will be working with the project team to review our spend and deploy resources to ensure a sustainable budgetary position going forward.

## 2.5 Capital Finance Update and Outlook

There is currently no capital programme for this portfolio across 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## 2.6 Allocated One-Off Resources

### Targeted Youth Support £0.150m

There was a carry forward of £0.146m into 2023/24 from the 2022/23 £0.150m allocation, this carry forward was increased due to the maximising of 2022/23 Youth Work grants.

The carry forward will assist in sustaining the detached youth work offer into 2024 for the first quarter. We are exploring additional funding streams to sustain the Detached Youth Work provision, as the external funding (Safer Streets) that was enhancing the provision has now ended and we are required to demonstrate a match up to March 2024. This has been raised as a risk with Children's Senior Management Team, as there is a new statutory duty to provide youth work for unitary authorities, and this will be informed by the current Scrutiny review of youth work provision and the recent NYA Peer Review that took place in Stockport earlier this month.