

Children and Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 11th March 2026.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Katie Weston

Officers: Vanessa Housley, Mandie Rowlands, Haleem Ghafoor and Judy Trainer

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Jack Miller and Cllr Sufi Mubeen

CYP/44/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP/45/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests recorded.

CYP/46/25 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CYP/47/25 Monitoring - Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

The Select Committee received progress updates in relation to its previous review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment.

The review had been carried out using an Appreciative Inquiry Approach. The benefit of the approach had been in the awareness raising of the issues. It had also brought all stakeholders together at events and secured support for agreed objectives and future action.

The Select Committee received progress updates in relation to the following recommendations:

Recommendation 3 - Improve communication

Design, deliver and support parent/carers communication strategies:

- Use new technologies and apps
- Implement communication strategies early ensuring that good communication is embedded across the school community
- Consider single points of contact and how best to communicate (not relying on technology alone)
- Offer parent/ carer engagement training for all staff

Recommendation 8 - Extend enrichment offer

Strengthen and extend curriculum enrichment offer which better matches pupils needs and interests:

- Extend enrichment to include kick-boxing; boxing; coding; cooking clubs; sports clubs and story
- Extend and promote the Tees Active Offer to include First Aid, paddle boards (team building) and extend offer within school holidays
- Engage with the Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Settings Programme

Recommendation 9 - Celebrate achievement

Extend the range of opportunities to celebrate achievement including recognition for out of school activities and engagement with local, regional and national awards and competitions.

Recommendation 17 - Review cost of living responses to diminish impact

Review Cost of Living responses to diminish its impact, with specific reference to period poverty, food poverty and school uniform:

- Work with Child Poverty Network.
- Work with schools to better promote/communicate Cost of Living interventions.
- Encourage all schools to 'Poverty Proof the School Day'

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Work was ongoing to improve communication with parents/carers and communities. A Starting Reception booklet had been distributed with applications for primary school
- Youth Guarantee Trailblazer had offered insights
- Recruitment was underway for a Transitions Lead to work across the education system, capturing pupil voice, working with schools around Work Experience and all aspects of transitions
- The importance of open pathways was emphasised with opportunities for apprenticeships as well as vocational routes
- A cost-of-living booklet had previously been distributed and was now available online
- The 'A Second Dance Project' was delivered in partnership with Wellington Square and provided an alternative way to prepare for prom. All items were donated by residents and local businesses and to date 72 young people had been provided with their dream prom outfit

AGREED that the progress updated be noted and assessments of progress be confirmed.

CYP/48/25 Scrutiny Review of Children Not in School

The Chair and Vice Chair gave feedback on visits to Home and Hospital and Electively Home Educated pupils. Details would be included with the Committee's summary of evidence.

CYP/49/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

Chair: