

## Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update July 2025

### Scrutiny Review – Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

The Select Committee's review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment culminated in a report setting out 17 shared objectives.

Given the breadth of the work, a recommendation lead has been identified for each objective and it is the intention that progress updates will be provided at each future Select Committee meeting on particular recommendations with the relevant recommendation lead attending each meeting.

At the June meeting the Select Committee received action plans in respect of:

#### **Recommendation 3 - Improve communication**

Design, deliver and support parent/carers communication strategies.

#### **Recommendation 4 - Identify and support young carers**

Raise awareness of young carer identification and support for pupils.

Extend the range of opportunities for young carers to link with others socially.

#### **Recommendation 8 - Extend enrichment offer**

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

#### **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.

The lead officer for implementing the recommendation attended the meeting and presented an action plan setting out planned actions and progress to date on a range of initiatives supporting delivery of the objective.

Final action plans are scheduled into the Select Committee Work Programme for September. After this the Select Committee will be receiving progress updates from the lead officers.

### Scrutiny Review – Holiday Activities and Food Programme known locally as Holidays Are Fun (HAF)

At the June meeting, the Select Committee received an action plan in respect of its previous review of Holiday Activities and Food Programme following approval of the review recommendations by Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People also attended the meeting to provide an update. A presentation was given outlining:

- The Team
- Funding
- Latest booking data
- Update on the new booking system, including a demonstration at the meeting
- Plans for the summer programme

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Key issues highlighted and discussed included:

- Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility had increased year on year in England although Government funding had reduced slightly. If the funding remained the same, there would be less funding for each Local Authority
- Stockton undertook an auto enrolment exercise in Autumn 2024 and identified over 300 children that were eligible for free school meals, taking Stockton's total to over 9,000 eligible children
- In Easter, there were 6,042 universal spaces and 267 dedicated SEND spaces. 1345 unique children booked 5,500 spaces, broken down into 1100 primary and 245 secondary aged children, equating to approx. 4 places per child. There were over 40 different activities across the borough through 28 individual providers
- In Easter, there were a few new providers including Stockton Libraries and Stockton Sixth Form College bringing new activities such as Lego @ the Library
- The new booking system had been extremely well received with positive feedback from parents and providers. The booking system was accessible on different devices and also sent reminders about bookings which had made a huge impact on reducing non-attendance. Within the booking system, it would be possible to identify and target children who lived in the 10 most deprived wards
- Rules could be applied to the booking system for example to limit the number of places that could be applied for a particular child. The system also prioritised FSM children and sent details to providers to ensure that they were equipped to meet the needs of individual children. The system also flagged up clashes and identified immediately when a child did not attend a session
- Bookings for summer were opening on 4 July but interest could be registered a week before
- As well as making bookings through the new booking system, the website provided details on how to speak to a member of the team
- Members commented that there needed to be improved visibility of the programme and booking system on the Council website
- For summer, around 50 providers had applied, creating over 17,000 spaces. Based on suggestions from young people, new providers are offering:
  - Cycling
  - Tees Active gym passes
  - Football School
  - 3D pen project
  - Storytelling and games for the 5-8 at the libraries
- Members acknowledged the need to lobby the government for continued funding. One lobbying route was through the CYP Board of the LGA

### Scrutiny Review – Additionally Resourced SEND Provision

After receiving an introductory presentation, the Select Committee approved the scope and project plan for the Select Committee's next review.

The overall aim of the scrutiny review is to receive an update on the implementation of the transfer from September 2025 and engage with secondary schools to secure additional applications from the secondary sector, exploring the barriers to the schools becoming Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) and identifying ways in which we may overcome this to secure the provision required for children and young people in the borough. Not having a full complement of secondary schools taking up the places risks undermining the effectiveness and reach of this key element of the local SEND Strategy and means that there may be implications for children upon transition to secondary that there may not be

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the same type or level of support available to them, potentially creating pressure on special school places and missed opportunities for inclusive education in mainstream settings. The Select Committee will therefore be exploring the following key lines of enquiry as part of the review:

- How will the transfer improve the outcomes for children with special educational needs across our Borough?
- How does the project support the Council's vision and strategy for SEND provision?
- What does DfE Guidance tell us?
- Will the changes ensure that there is sufficient and suitable educational provision for SEND pupils in both primary and secondary?
- What are the barriers to secondary schools becoming additionally resourced provision? How can the number of ARP placements in secondary be increased?
- To what extent do families and schools understand the changes and how will they be engaged during implementation?
- Can lessons be learnt from the primary ARP model and the higher uptake?
- Is the funding provided to ARP adequate and sustainable for them to provide the support needed?

The July meeting will be hearing from the Stockton Parent Carer Forum and North East and North Cumbria ICB about their involvement in the work to date, feedback from parents/ carers, the opportunities from moving to ARPs, challenges and next steps.

### Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance

<b>Key Issues / Problems or concerns</b>	No reports since last update.
<b>Problems or concerns</b>	None
<b>Requests for more information</b>	None

### Monitoring

<b>Key Issues / Problems or concerns</b>	<p>Outstanding monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships - A further progress update to be scheduled in due course</li> <li>• Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment - Ongoing</li> </ul>
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### Next Scrutiny Review

Children not in School

## **Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update July 2025**

<b>Remaining 2025-2026 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)</b>
16 July 2025 17 September 2025 15 October 2025 12 November 2025 17 December 2025 14 January 2026 11 February 2026 11 March 2026