

Children and Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 15th April 2026.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Katie Weston

Officers: Judy Trainer, Louise Hollick, Vanessa Housley, Elisha Dyball, Sharon Stevens and Paul Wilson

Also in attendance: Cllr Clare Besford

Apologies: Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Robert Cook and Cllr Jack Miller

CYP/1/26 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP/2/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests recorded.

CYP/3/26 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/4/26 Overview Report: Children's Services

The Select Committee received an overview report for children's social care on key achievements, challenges and emerging issues for 2025/26.

Members were informed that the report was intended to provide a high-level overview to complement in-depth scrutiny review work and provided the opportunity to ask questions of Directors and Cabinet Members on the services that fell within the remit of each Select Committee. Twice yearly overview reports would be brought to each Select Committee and from the autumn, these would be accompanied by relevant performance measures. The next overview meeting was planned for September and would cover Education Inclusion & Achievement, Early Help, Safeguarding and Children in Our Care and Early Intervention and Integration.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was in attendance and highlighted the breadth of work being undertaken in children's services; in particular she highlighted the successful implementation of the children's front door.

Key achievements included:

- The strengthening of social work practice confirmed during the focused ILACS visit
- The Launch of the Integrated Front Door
- Preparedness for Children's Social Care Reforms

- Increasing workforce stability

Challenges included:

- Increase in complexity of need
- Sufficiency and budget pressures

Emerging issues included:

- Children' Social Care Reform
- Development of the Regional Care Cooperative
- Youth Justice Modernisation
- Best Start in Life Strategy

Members commended the “grow your own” initiative expanding social work apprenticeships, investing in student placements and Newly Qualified Social Workers.

In response to a question regarding the number of new children’s homes in development and plans to bring looked after children back to the Borough, the Select Committee was advised that a three-bed edge-of-care home was currently progressing, with a further two homes were planned to meet complex needs, providing an additional three beds. It was noted, however, that not all external children’s homes were driven by cost considerations, and that returning children to the Borough would not always be appropriate where this could cause disruption or where their needs were being suitably met in existing children’s homes elsewhere.

AGREED that the Overview Report be noted.

CYP/5/26 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

The Scrutiny Officer advised that there would also be a presentation on the new SEND White Paper at the May meeting.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

Chair: