



NOTICE OF MEETING

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2023 AT 5.00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER - THE GUILDHALL, PORTSMOUTH

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Councillor Suzy Horton (Liberal Democrat)

Group Spokespersons

Councillor Ryan Brent, Conservative

Councillor Chris Dike, Portsmouth Independents Party

Councillor George Fielding, Labour

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

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AGENDA

1 School Funding Arrangements 2024/25 (Pages 5 - 34)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member with an update on the latest developments in respect of the future schools' revenue funding arrangements for the financial year 2024-25.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet Member:

- i) Notes the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2024-25, as set out in this report.
- ii) Approves the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report in particular to:
 - Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1
 - Implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least 0.0% and up to +0.5% subject to affordability, for 2024-25 as set out in paragraph 5.22 of the report.
 - The methods of managing affordability as set out in paragraphs 5.23 to 5.27 of the report.
- iii) Endorses the proposal not to set up a Falling Rolls Fund for 2024-25.
- iv) Endorses the Growth Fund Criteria as set out in Appendix 2, with the primary and secondary values being brought to the January 2024 meeting for approval.
- v) Notes the recommendation that maintained Primary Schools approve the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in Section 7 of the report.
- vi) Notes the recommendation that maintained Secondary Schools approve the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in paragraph Section 7 of the report.

**2 Dedicated Schools Grant Quarter 2 Monitoring and Revised Budget
(Pages 35 - 44)**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Member of the projected revenue expenditure of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the current financial year 2023-24 as at the end of September 2023, along with proposed budget revisions.

RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member:

- i) Notes the forecast year end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 September 2023, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.
- ii) Approves the revisions to the 2023-24 budget as set out in Appendix 1 and section 8 of the report.

3 PSCP Annual Report (Pages 45 - 76)

Purpose

To introduce the Annual Report 2022-23 of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) on the effectiveness of multi-agency early help and safeguarding arrangements for children in Portsmouth.

4 Fostering Annual Report (Pages 77 - 104)

Purpose

The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service for the period 01/04/22-31/03/23.

5 Adoption Agency Annual Report (Pages 105 - 116)

Purpose

- This report will update the Lead Member on the activity of the Portsmouth Adoption Service for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, as required by the Adoption regulations.
- The Portsmouth Adoption Service is provided directly by the Adoption Team within the Council. The team is responsible for the work with children who have a plan of adoption and works with Adopt South our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) who find, assess, and support adopters.
- This report will describe the work of the in-house adoption team and Adopt South and provide data to support the outcomes achieved in the previous year 2022/23.
- Lastly it will provide an update on the progress on the priorities set out in the previous report and the priorities for the year ahead.

6 SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 (Pages 117 - 132)

Purpose

This report provides the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education with the opportunity to note the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23.

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Agenda Item 1



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member Children Families and Education

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

Subject: School Funding Arrangements 2024-25

Report by: Sarah Daly, Director Children, Families and Education

Cabinet Member: Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member with an update on the latest developments in respect of the future schools revenue funding arrangements for the financial year 2024-25.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Member:

2.1.1 Notes the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2024-25, as set out in this report.

2.1.2 Approves the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report in particular to:

- Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1
- Implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least 0.0% and up to +0.5% subject to affordability, for 2024-25 as set out in paragraph 5.22.
- The methods of managing affordability as set out in paragraphs 5.23 to 5.27.

2.1.3 Endorses the proposal not to set up a Falling Rolls Fund for 2024-25.



2.1.4 Endorses the Growth Fund Criteria as set out in Appendix 2, with the primary and secondary values being brought to the January 2024 meeting for approval.

2.2 Notes the recommendation that maintained Primary Schools approve the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in Section 7.

2.3 Notes the recommendation that maintained Secondary Schools approve the de-delegation of funding to support the Education Functions as set out in paragraph Section 7.

3 Background

3.1 In July 2023 the Government published the Policy Document "The national funding formula for Schools and High Needs 2024-2025", followed by the "Schools operational guide 2024 to 2025" and "High Needs funding: 2024 to 2025 operational guidance along with local authority indicative funding allocations. In October 2023 the government published a correction to the Schools Block Funding Formula for local authorities and revised the National Fair Funding (NFF) Factor Values for schools.

3.2 The publications contain further detail regarding the final year of the three-year funding settlement announced in the 2021 Spending Review providing nationally £4.0bn in 2022-23, £1.5bn in 2023-24 and £1.7bn in 2024-25.

3.3 This report is intended to provide Cabinet Member with an overview of the main changes to school funding highlighted in the Policy Document and Operational Guides and the progress being made towards agreeing the Schools Funding arrangements locally for the financial year 2024-25. As the Portsmouth Funding Formula has been using the NFF for all Primary and Secondary schools there has been no detailed consultation with schools in relation to 2024-25 formula factors, but the authority has asked schools for feedback on the proposed methods of managing overall affordability, the notional SEND budget and the Growth Fund. The results of the consultation are set out in the relevant sections of this report.

4 Dedicated School Grant (DGS) Funding

4.1 The DfE Policy Document and Operational Guides for 2024-25, set out how the authority will be funded through the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the changes for 2024-25 along with any changes to the Schools Block and funding for mainstream schools, Central Schools Services Block and High Needs Block.

4.2 The DfE has advised that whilst local authorities will continue to have flexibility to set a local formula in consultation with Schools Forum for 2024-25, they must either mirror the NFF (be within plus/minus 2.5%) or move 10% closer to the NFF.



In 2023-24 Portsmouth mirrored the NFF factor values on all factors and is expecting to do so for 2024-25.

- 4.3 Revised indicative funding allocations for 2024-25 were published to local authorities in October 2023. Portsmouth's indicative allocations (inclusive of academies' funding) for 2024-25, together with current allocations for 2023-24 are shown in the table below.

Table 1 - DSG Indicative Funding 2024-25				
	2023-24 Allocation July 2023¹²	2024-25 Indicative Allocation October 2023	Change	Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Schools Block	151,584	154,936	3,352	2.21%
Central Schools Services Block	1,055	1,088	33	3.15%
High Needs Block	35,770	37,206	1,436	4.01%
Total	188,409	193,230	4,821	2.56%
Early Years Block	14,797	14,797	0	0.00%
Total	203,206	208,028	4,821	2.37%

- 4.4 Local authorities may again request a one-off transfer of the Schools Block funding to the High Needs Block to support pressures. Schools Forum can agree up to 0.5% of the Schools Block, and any transfer above this requires Secretary of State Approval. There are no restrictions for transferring funding from the Central Schools Support Block, the Early Years Block or the High Needs Block to other funding blocks. There are no proposals to transfer additional funding to the High Needs block for 2024-25.

- 4.5 The following sections provide an update on the main changes to the block funding and the impact on Portsmouth.

5 Schools Block

- 5.1 The Schools Block covers the mainstream (maintained and academy) schools individual budgets and the growth fund.

- 5.2 In 2023-24 the authority received a Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) for mainstream schools in addition to the Schools Block Formula funding. This grant was passed directly to schools either from the local authority (Maintained schools) or via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (Academy schools). For 2024-25 the DfE are rolling the MSAG into the Schools Block by

¹ Includes the 2023-24 Mainstream Schools Additional Grant which was paid separately to schools in 2023-24 but forms part of the Schools Block in 2024-25

² Excludes Growth funding, this will be announced in December 2023.



increasing certain factors by the value paid as part of the MSAG as set out in the table below.

Table 2: Addition of the Mainstream Schools Additional Grant to the 2024-24 NFF values			
NFF Factors	NFF values 2023-24 (excluding ACA)	Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	NFF 2024-25 values before inflation
	£	£	£
Basic Entitlement - Primary	3,394	119	3,513
Basic Entitlement - KS3	4,785	168	4,953
Basic Entitlement - KS4	5,393	190	5,583
Primary FSM6	705	104	809
Secondary FSM6	1,030	152	1,182
Primary Lump Sum	128,000	4,510	132,510
Secondary Lump sum	128,000	4,510	132,510
Primary MPPL	4,405	143	4,548
Secondary MPPL - KS3	5,503	186	5,689
Secondary MPPL - KS4	6,033	208	6,241
Secondary MPPL	5,715	195	5,910
All through MPPL	4,950	165	5,115

5.3 Additionally, both the minimum per pupil funding levels (see Table above) and the 2023-24 baseline funding will be increased to reflect the inclusion of the MSAG grant to the mainstream formula.

5.4 The 2024-25 policy document on the Schools Block funding to the local authority will allow for the increase in NFF formula values due to the MSAG grant and in addition will be increased by:

- 1.6% on the free school meals NFF funding factor
- 1.4% on other core funding factors such basic entitlement, Free School Meals Ever 6 (FSM6), Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), English as a second language, low prior attainment, mobility, sparsity, and lump sum.
- 1.4% will be added to the minimum per pupil funding levels as set out in Appendix 1
- An increase to the PFI factor in line with the retail price index³ (10.4%)
- Provides a minimum funding guarantee of between 0.0% and plus 0.5%.

5.5 As in 2024-25 the policy document also:

³ RPIX - Retail Price index for all items excluding mortgage interest.



- Confirms that the underlying data sets for the low prior attainment factor, continue to be adjusted to allow for the unavailability of national assessment data due to Covid-19.
- Formularised the split sites and sparsity funding factors and confirmed that they are now mandatory.
- Stipulated changes to the Growth Fund criteria and set a minimum funding level for schools.
- Requests local authorities to review the Notional SEND identified as part of the mainstream formula.
- consider implementing a Falling Rolls fund due to specific Falling Rolls funding being issued for the first time in 2024-25.

Funding for Schools

5.6 Since 2020-21 Portsmouth schools have been funded using the national funding formula factor values as published by the DfE with the addition of the Portsmouth area cost adjustment (ACA) of 1.47%⁴. Appendix 1 sets out the Portsmouth factor values used to calculate the 2023-24 school budgets and the 2024-25 NFF factor values published by the DfE in the revised Policy Document.

5.7 Following the national consultation in 2021 both the Policy Document and operational guidance reflect the move towards a Direct National Funding Formula for schools. The DfE continues to tighten the flexibilities around local authorities ability to pay outside of the national formula funding factor values. Whilst the changes for Portsmouth are minimal, a briefing has been sent to schools providing an update to the formula changes and an illustration as to how this will impact their funding based on the October 2022 census data.

5.8 This section sets out the changes that have been made in relation to the:

- Growth Fund
- Falling Rolls Fund
- Notional SEND
- Minimum funding guarantee (MFG) and
- Sets out proposals as to how the authority will manage affordability following receipt of the 2024-25 Allocation in December 2023.

Growth Fund

5.9 The methodology for funding local authorities for growth has not changed for 2024-25, but the DfE has issued two changes for the distribution:

5.9.1 Set a minimum funding rate for Primary and Secondary schools based on the per pupil funding received by a local authority multiplied by the number of pupils. For both Primary and Secondary schools Portsmouth pays lump sums in excess of the minimum funding.

⁴ Area Cost Adjustment factor for 2024-25 of 1.01472 or 1.47%



5.9.2 Widened the criteria to include the provision of Growth Funding where schools have agreed to provide an extra class to meet basic need (either as a bulge class or as an on-going commitments) regardless of whether the additional class is within or outside of the PAN.

5.10 Schools have been consulted on the Growth Fund criteria, and since the criteria have been updated. The criteria states that where schools meet the eligibility criteria and are admitting additional pupils under PAN, funding will be payable from beginning of the academic year 2024-25. The revised guidance is set out in Appendix 2.

5.11 The authority has reviewed the estimated growth funding it expects to receive for 2024-25 along with the funding requirements of the Schools Funding formula (based on October 2022 forecasted pupil numbers). For 2024-25 it is not proposed to increase the current funding values for 30 pupils of:

- Primary - £60,900
- Secondary - £144,000.

5.12 Following the receipt of the December 2023 funding allocation and the October 2023 census data, the authority will review the available funding and consider increasing the allocation. Any proposals to change the allocation will be brought to the January 2024 Schools Forum and Cabinet member meetings.

5.13 All schools that responded to the consultation agreed with the proposals.

Falling Rolls Fund

5.14 For the first time in 2024-25 the DfE will be allocating falling roles funding to local authorities. It will be allocated based on a reduction in pupil numbers that local authorities experience year on year based on the difference between October 2022 and October 2023 census data measured at MSOA⁵ level.

5.15 To qualify for funding the authority must see a reduction in pupils per MSOA of 10% or greater, and authorities can only provide funding to schools where a school capacity survey (SCAP) shows that school places will be required in the following 3 to 5 years.

5.16 It remains a local authority decision to hold a Falling Rolls Fund. Financial modelling of the 2023 Admissions data and the 2022 SCAP have indicated that Portsmouth is not expected to meet the criteria and therefore will not receive any funding for falling rolls in 2024-25. Schools were consulted on the proposal not to set up a falling rolls fund and those that responded agreed with the proposal. It is therefore proposed that Portsmouth does not set up a Falling Rolls Fund.

⁵ Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) used by the Office of National Statistics based on population data in small geographical areas within local authorities.

Notional SEND

- 5.17 The regulations require local authorities to identify within each school's budget share an amount for the support of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or in receipt of SEN support. Known as the Notional SEN Budget it forms part of the mainstream budget and is an indicative amount to guide school's spending decisions and is neither a target nor a constraint on how schools choose to spend their budget. It does not impact on the funding received by the local authority, or the funding received by schools through their individual budget shares.
- 5.18 The Notional SEN budget is calculated using percentages of specific funding formula factors. There is no requirement to use specific formula factors in the calculation of the notional SEND budget, but the DfE requested local authorities review their calculation to see if the funding identified within the mainstream budget to support pupils with SEND is realistic and how it compares with other local authorities.
- 5.19 A review of the Portsmouth notional SEND formula and estimated funding for 2024-25 has identified that the Portsmouth formula is in line with the majority of other local authorities.
- 5.20 Financial modelling of the notional SEND formula identifies that it provides an amount of funding as per the theoretical guidance identified by the DfE. However anecdotal evidence from schools is indicating that there are financial pressures being felt in some schools due to the numbers of pupils with SEN. Changing the notional SEN budget will not increase funding to schools as it is by its very nature an indicative budget and schools are free to spend it how they choose. The authority has set up a working group to look at the impact of pupils with SEND and identify options for supporting Inclusion in schools.
- 5.21 It is therefore proposed that the Notional SEND formula remains as set out in the table below.

Table 3 - 2024-25 Notional SEN Budget factors	
Funding Factor	Percentage of unit rate
Basic per pupil entitlement	6%
Deprivation – <i>(from the free school meal elements)</i>	20%
Deprivation – <i>(from the IDACI elements)</i>	20%
Prior attainment	100%



Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

- 5.22 Local authorities will have the freedom to set a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) in their local formula of between +0.0% to +0.5% per pupil, without application to the Secretary of State. The MFG is applied to the individual school funding formula after the minimum per pupil funding is applied.

Proposals for managing affordability.

- 5.23 The authority normally receives the initial funding allocation in mid to late December, which is too late to come back to Schools Forum and Cabinet Member to obtain any further formula approvals before presenting the final budget for approval in mid-January.
- 5.24 In the unexpected event that funding does not cover the cost of the funding formula to ensure that Officers are able to present an affordable budget to Schools Forum and the Cabinet Member it is proposed that the following factors would be adjusted:
- The area cost adjustment of 1.47% would either be reduced or not added to the NFF formula factor values.
 - The level of MFG would be reduced to a level lower than plus 0.5%, but not less than 0.0%.
 - Use part of the Growth Fund (as in 2023-24) and reduce the value of the carry forward in future years, whilst ensuring there is enough to meet future requirements.
- 5.25 In 2024-25 the authority is not expecting to have surplus funds as the administration of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) has been centralised removing the ability for the Schools Block to gain/or lose funding due to changes in rateable value. In addition, the DfE continue to tighten the restrictions on the flexibilities authorities have to vary the funding provided through the national funding formula factor values.
- 5.26 Following the receipt of the December 2023 allocation, the funding formula will be calculated, and should there be surplus funds, it is proposed that the authority will:
- Consider increases to the Growth Fund Primary and Secondary School allocations,
 - Add the remaining surplus to the Growth Fund.
- 5.27 All schools that responded to the consultation agreed with the proposals.

6 Disapplication requests

- 6.1 Each year, local authorities can submit disapplication requests to the ESFA, where strict adherence to the legislation as set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) regulations (as amended each year), would generate perverse



results for specific schools. No disapplication requests have been submitted to the DfE for the financial 2024-25.

7 De- Delegation of Education Functions

7.1 In January 2022 the DfE informed local authorities that the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokerage grant would be cease. The legislation changed to enable de-delegation from maintained schools to fund the services previously covered by the grant. These services include fulfilling the statutory school improvement functions under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the additional school improvement expectations as set out in the Schools Causing Concern Guidance (collectively referred to as core school improvement services) for both primary and secondary maintained schools. In summary these activities require councils to monitor the performance of maintained schools, broker school improvement provision and intervene as appropriate. This includes the monitoring, moderation, and assessment for primary schools (Key Stage 1 and 2 including Year 1 phonics screening).

7.2 In 2023-24 Maintained Schools agreed to de-delegate funding to support the Education Functions⁶ of the local authority as set out in the Schools Forum report in December 2022⁷.

7.3 Funding was de-delegated at £10.42 per primary and secondary pupil in 2023-24.

7.4 It is proposed that for 2024-25 the total funding de-delegated remains at the same value as 2023-24 less any contribution made by schools that have since converted to academy.

7.5 Whilst the final per pupil rate will be dependent on the total number on roll as per the October 2023 census, the estimated per pupil rate is expected to be £10.42 per primary and secondary pupil.

7.6 Only one maintained primary school responded to the consultation and agreed with the proposal.

8 High Needs Block

8.1 Nationally the Government have increased High Needs funding by a further £440m (4.3%) between 20223-24 to 2024-25. The DfE has advised that each local authority should see an increase in their High Needs Block funding of 3% per head of population, using the 2022-23 high needs allocations⁸ as a baseline. The DfE has also set a gains cap of 5%.

⁶ Previously covered by the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant.

⁷ [School improvement grant de-delegation.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/school-improvement-grant-de-delegation.pdf)

⁸ December 2022 allocation including the Additional Grant and excluding basic entitlement, import/export adjustment and hospital education.



- 8.2 Indicative funding published by the DfE in July 2023 provides Portsmouth with an increase in funding of 4.01%⁹ when compared to 2023-24 (see Table 1).
- 8.3 The basic structure of the High Needs NFF for 2024-25 is not changing, however, there are some technical changes to the data for two individual proxy factors which are set out below:
- **Census data, on children on bad health**, the data set has been updated using the 2021 census, (previously the 2011 census).
 - **The historic spend factor**, this remains as the same cash value in 2024-25 as in 2023-24 and 2022-23. When combined with the increase in overall funding the proportion of total funding through this factor has reduced from 31% (2022-23) to 21% (2024-25). Even with this adjustment Portsmouth's indicative allocation exceeds the funding cap of 5% and therefore there is not a negative impact in 2024-25. The DfE have stated they will continue to look at reducing the significance of this factor in future years and replacing it with alternative proxies following consultation.
 - **Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 low attainment factors**, as with the mainstream formula, due to Covid-19 there is no appropriate attainment data for the low attainment factors, therefore for 2024-25 the DfE are using the 2019 and 2022 attainment data to calculate funding to local authorities.
- 8.4 The actual funding allocation for 2024-25 will not be known until December 2023 and will be adjusted for the latest pupil census information.

High Needs Funding for Schools

- 8.5 The DfE issued the High Needs Funding:2024 to 2025 operational guidance in July 2023, it was updated in October 2023. The operational guidance confirms that:
- Local authorities must allocate the historic teachers' pay and pension grants to Special Schools, Alternative Provision academies on a per place basis according to the agreed number of funded places in the financial year 2023-24. This funding will be excluded from the Special School MFG calculation.
 - That the MFG for Special schools must be set at a rate of at least 0% but must consider a range of between 0% to plus 0.5% of the combined place and pupil funding against the 2023-24 baseline.
 - The additional funding allocated to local authorities in 2023-24 (Additional Grant) must be allocated to schools in 2024-25 on the same amount per place paid in 2023-24 but reflect the number of agreed places for 2024-25 financial year. This funding will be excluded from the Special School MFG calculation.

⁹ The funding floor and cap on gains calculation excludes funding for basic entitlement, import/export adjustment, hospital education and the AP settings TPG and TPECG funding. Portsmouth City Council receives the full 5% on the other formula factors.



8.6 Discussions regarding the number of High Needs places required in the academic year 2024-25 are in progress with Special Schools, Inclusion Centres, Colleges and Alternative Provision settings. The High Needs Place proposals and Element 3 Top-up values for Special Schools, Alternative Provision settings, Inclusion Centres and mainstream pupils with Education Health and Care plans (EHCP) will be brought to future meetings as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant budget approval process.

9 Central Schools Services Block

9.1 The Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) supports the following budgets:

- Admissions
- Central licences provided by the DfE
- Schools Forum
- Education support grant retained duties for all schools
- Teachers pay and pensions grant centrally employed teachers.

9.2 The authority is expected to receive an increase of £33,000 due to an increase in the per pupil funding rate to £41.06, an increase of 3.15%. The authority will utilise the increase to fund an inflationary increase in central licences, to support the Admissions Service and the retained duties for all schools.

10 Early Years Block Funding

10.1 In March 2023 the Government announced the extension of early years entitlements starting in April 2024 and the roll out completing in September 2025. The Table below sets out the planned implementation.

Table 4 Extension of funded childcare hours		
Implementation date	Age group	No. of hours per week
April 2024	Working parents of 2 year olds	15
September 2024	Working parents of 9 months to 3 year olds	15
September 2025	Working parents of 9 months to 3 year olds	30

10.2 In July 2023, the DfE consulted on proposed changes to the way local authorities are funded, in particular:

- to the two year old (and below) funding formula to bring it in line with the three and four years old funding formula
- the addition of an hourly rate for 9 month olds up to but not including two year olds.

10.3 To date the DfE has not issued any guidance on the outcomes to the consultation or detailed guidance in relation to the Early Years Block for 2024-25. It is expected that the authority will receive this guidance in December 2023. Once



this has been published, an update will be brought to Schools Forum and the Cabinet Member for Children Families and Education.

11 Consultation with Schools

11.1 Schools were sent a briefing and Consultation on the 13 October 2023 providing an update on the funding arrangements for 2024-25 and proposed changes to the Growth Fund. The document also set out the review and proposals relating to the Notional SEND budget and Falling Rolls Funding.

11.2 The consultation closed on 7 November 2023. Of 59 mainstream schools, four (7%) schools responded, and it is therefore assumed that most schools are accepting of the proposals. The table below provides a breakdown of the responses.

Table 5 break down of consultation respondents		
	Maintained	Academy
Primary	1	2
Secondary	0	1

11.3 A copy of the consultation and the responses can be found in Appendix 3.

12 Teachers Pay Additional Grant 2024-25

12.1 In July 2023 the government announced £525m of funding to support schools with the September 2023 teachers pay award. The grant was issued in October 2023 for the 2023-24 financial year and will continue as a separate grant for mainstream schools, Special Schools and alternative provision settings for 2024-25 before being incorporated into the Schools Block and High Needs Block in 2025-26.

13 Reasons for recommendations

13.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the latest developments in respect of the future school revenue funding arrangements for 2024-25 onwards. The report also seeks endorsement to the proposals for implementing these arrangements locally, in order to ensure that they comply with the requirements of both the DfE's operational guidance and the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

14 Integrated impact assessment

14.1 An integrated impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a positive or negative impact on communities and safety, regeneration and culture, environment and public space or equality and diversity.

14.2 This report and the proposals within form part of, and are consistent with, the national implementation of the schools and high needs National Funding Formula as directed by the Department of Education and set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

14.3 The DfE has conducted a full Equality Impact Assessment which is attached to the Policy document and can be found on their website¹⁰. The funding system does not seek to target funding by reference to particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, but instead targets funding to those groups which the evidence demonstrates face barriers to their educational achievement.

15 Legal implications

15.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

16 Director of Finance's comments

16.1 Financial comments and implications are included in the body of this report.

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Signed by: Sarah Daly, Director Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Portsmouth Rates to National Funding Rates Comparison Table 2023-24 to 2024-25

Appendix 2: Growth Fund 2024-25

Appendix 3: Consultation responses mainstream funding.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023	The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023 (legislation.gov.uk)

¹⁰ [National funding formula for schools and high needs 2024 to 2025 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)



The National Funding Formulae for Schools and High Needs 2024-25 (published 6 October 2023) - Policy Document	National funding formula for schools and high needs 2024 to 2025 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
Schools revenue funding 2024 to 2025: Operational Guide (published October 2023)	Schools operational guide: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
High Needs Funding: 2024 to 2025 Operational Guidance (published July 2023)	High needs funding: 2024 to 2025 operational guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by:

Appendix 1 - Portsmouth Rates to National Funding Rates Comparison Table 2023-24 to 2024-25

Funding Factors	Payable for:	Unit rate 2023-24		Unit Rate 2024-25 ¹¹	
		Primary £	Secondary £	Primary £	Secondary £
Basic Entitlement					
Number on Roll (NOR)	Primary including reception	3,443		3,562	
NOR Key Stage 3	Key stage 3 pupils		4,853		5,022
NOR Key Stage 4	Key stage 4 pupils		5,470		5,661
Deprivation					
Free School Meals	Free School Meals (FSM)	487	487	490	490
Free School Meals Ever 6	Free School Meals Ever 6	716	1,045	820	1,200
IDACI A	Pupils ranked between 1 and 821	680	944	680	945
IDACI B	Pupils ranked between 822 and 2,463	518	741	515	740
IDACI C	Pupils ranked between 2,464 and 4,105	487	690	485	690
IDACI D	Pupils ranked between 4,106 and 5,747	447	629	445	630
IDACI E	Pupils ranked between 5,748 and 9,032	284	452	285	450
IDACI F	Pupils ranked between 9,033 and 12,316	234	340	235	340
Prior attainment					
Primary	Primary pupils identified as not achieving the expected level of development in the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP)	1,172		1,170	
Secondary	Pupils not achieving the expected standard in Key Stage 2 at either reading, writing or maths		1,775		1,775
English as an additional Language	EAL eligible pupils who started school within the last 3 years	589	1,588	590	1,585
Mobility		959	1,380	960	1,380
Sparsity		57,101	83,064	57,100	83,000
Lump Sum	Flat rate per school	129,819	129,819	134,400	134,400

*Note: the 2023-24 rates represent the values for Portsmouth schools based on the national NFF rates plus the area cost adjustment of 1.01421.

¹¹ Excludes the Area Cost Adjustment

Appendix 1 - continued

Minimum per pupil funding level comparison table 2023-24 to 2024-25			
Phase	Per pupil funding level 2023-24	Per pupil funding level 2024-25*	Change
	£	£	£
Primary	4,405	4,612	207
Secondary	5,715	5,993	278
All Through	4,950	5,186	236
KS3 only schools	5,503	5,769	266
KS4 only schools	6,033	6,328	295

*Includes Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG) and inflation @1.4%.

Appendix 2 - 2024-25 Growth Fund.

See separate file.

Appendix 3 - Consultation responses mainstream funding

Consultation responses				
1. Growth Fund criteria changes 2024-25				
Do you agree with the proposed changes to Growth Fund eligibility criteria as set out in Appendix 3?	Yes	4	No	0
Please add any further comments				
No comments				
2. Increase in the Growth fund lump sum allocation from 1 April				
Do you agree with the proposed to retain the Growth fund allocations for Primary and Secondary Schools at current levels as set out in Table 1 in Section 4?	Yes	4	No	0
Please add any further comments				
No Comments				
3. Falling Rolls Fund 2024-25				
Do you agree that as the authority is unlikely to receive funding for Falling Rolls in 2024-25, that a Falling Rolls Fund is not established for 2024-25?	Yes	4	No	0
Please add any further comments				
Primary 1 - Although the papers states that rolls will rise again in 2026-27				
4. Notional SEN Budget 2024-25				
Do you agree with the formula factors used to calculate the notional SEN budget within the mainstream formula as set out in Section 6 and Table 3?	Yes	3	No	0
Please add any further comments				
Primary 1 - As SEND causes financial pressures on schools could we wait to hear the outcome of the working group before agreeing or disagreeing.				



5. Schools funding adjustments for affordability 2024-25 if school funding formula exceeds the Schools Block allocation				
<p>Do you agree with the affordability action proposed in Section 7 if the school formula funding exceeds the Schools Block allocation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the area cost adjustment of 1.47% or not add it to the NFF factor values. • Reduce the level of the MFG to a lower level than plus 0.5% but not less than 0% • Use the part of the Growth Fund (as in 2023-24) and reduce the value of the carry forward in future years, whilst ensuring there is enough to meet future requirements. <p>Yes, I agree with the above. No, I do not agree with the above.</p> <p>If you do not agree with the above, please advise how you would prefer the funding to be adjusted if the school formula funding exceeds than the Schools Block allocation?</p>	Yes	4	No	0
Please add any further comments				
Primary 1 - Use the excess of the Growth fund.				
6. Schools funding adjustments for affordability 2023-24 if school funding formula is less than the Schools Block allocation				
<p>Do you agree with the affordability action proposed in Section 7 if the school formula funding is less than the Schools Block allocation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider increases to the Growth Fund Primary and Secondary School, allocations. • Add the remaining surplus to the Growth Fund. <p>Yes, I agree with the above. No, I do not agree with the above.</p> <p>If you do not agree with the above, please advise how you would prefer the funding to be adjusted if the school formula funding is less than the Schools Block allocation?</p>	Yes	3	No	0
Please add any further comments				
Primary 1 - As long as the Growth fund can be used for other needs as above in the future.				



7. Maintained Schools only - Education Functions De-delegation 2024-25		
Do you agree with the proposed value of the de-delegation per pupil for Education functions (to be updated for the October 2023 census) as set out below and in Section 8. Please only respond for your school.	Yes	No
Primary per pupil - £10.42	1	0
Secondary Per pupil - £10.42	0	0
Please add any further comments		
Primary 1 - An increase in amount would need to be reflected in the services provided.		

Schools Funding Formula

**Budget Share Guidance Notes
For
The Growth Fund
and Schools Specific Contingency**

For

**Primary and Secondary
Schools**

2024-25



**Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL**

Primary and Secondary Schools

Supplementary Budget Share Guidance Notes For The Growth Fund and Schools Specific Contingency

Contents

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1 Centrally held funds to support Primary and Secondary Schools in 2024-25

1.1 Exceptional Growth Fund

Applies to: Maintained schools and Academies

Increasing Published Admission Number

Funding additional to the budget share will be allocated to schools that experience a planned increase in the Published Admission Number (PAN). The criteria (see below) to determine whether a school is eligible for funding for growth was agreed at schools forum in January 2024 for implementation from April 2024. For 2024-25 funding for bulge classes that meet the criteria below and are below the agreed Pan will be applied from September 2024.

Criteria

Growth funding will be allocated to schools who meet the following criteria:

- *Funding will only be allocated when the growth (either permanently or as a bulge class) meets the basic need requirement of the local authority and its planned intake of pupils is in the current financial year (1 April to 31 March)¹.*
- *And - The Deputy Director of Education formally approves to increase the capacity of a school.*
- *²And - The planned growth in pupil numbers is a multiple of a complete half form entry, where a half form entry is equal to 15 pupils.*

1. Funding will be provided regardless of whether the additional class is within or outside of the PAN - New for 2024-25

2. It is acknowledged that some form entries may be below the full form number of 30 pupils e.g. 28 pupils. In these instances numbers will be rounded to the nearest eligible entry level.

What the growth fund covers

The additional pupils joining a school in September will be included in the October census. The census data is used to calculate the funding for the following financial year; which maintained schools receive from April. Therefore the growth fund finances the "gap" for maintained schools from September to March.

Academies are funded through the same local formula as maintained schools but receive their funding on an academic year basis, rather than the financial year basis of maintained schools.

Therefore academies will not receive their formula funding based on the October census until the following September. The growth fund for academies finances the "gap" from September up to the following August. The additional 5 months funding for academies is paid by the Local Authority and reimbursed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Methodology

The allocation from the growth fund to schools who meet the above criteria will be as follows:

The annual payment for approved growth for a full form entry of 30 pupils will be equal to a lump sum of £60,900 for Primary Schools and Academies and £144,000 for Secondary Schools and Academies.

Where a growth payment has been approved for a maintained or academy school the amount paid will be as follows:

Period September to March - maintained schools and academies

Payments for the period September to March will equate to 7/12ths of the annual amount as follows:

- £35,525 - Primary schools and academies
- £84,000 - Secondary schools and academies

Period April to August - academies only

Payments to academies for the period April to August will equate to 5/12ths of the annual amount as follows:

- £25,375 - Primary academies
- £60,000 - Secondary academies

Funding will be pro-rated for part form or multiples of full form entry, for example:

- The total sum above will be multiplied by 0.5 for a part form entry of 15 pupils
- For an increase of one and a half form entry (45 pupils) the total sum will be multiplied by 1.5
- Entry numbers falling under the half form or full form levels will be rounded to the nearest eligible entry level. Where form entries are less than 50% of the half form entry numbers these entries will not be eligible for growth funding.

A payment will be made for each year that the school is growing until the earliest of the following:

- The school reaches full capacity attributable to the increase in PAN approved by the Deputy Director of Education
- The Growth Fund criteria changes due to affordability
- There is a change in the funding formula as directed from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

No allocation will be made to a school or academy where the school or academy:

- *Admits over PAN at their own choice*
- *Admits extra pupils where those pupils have a reasonable alternative school place*
- *Increases the PAN of one year by reducing the PAN of another (e.g. increasing the PAN in year 7 by reducing the PAN in year 10)*
- *Is directed and/or requested to admit additional pupils as a result of errors, appeals, fair access protocol, SEN, LAC etc. as these numbers will be low on an individual school basis.*

Funding will not be allocated from this fund to a school which has received additional funding in the year, through its budget share as a result of an agreed variation in its pupil numbers.

***Example**

The maintained/academy primary school has been requested by the Local Authority to increase the PAN from a one and a half form entry (45 pupils) to a two-form entry (60 pupils) from September 2024; this was approved by the Deputy Director of Education in October 2023.

Whilst the increase was agreed in 2023-24, the payment will be made in financial year 2024-25 as this is the year that the changes will come into effect.

The Increase in PAN is for half a form entry of 15 pupils therefore the payment will be pro-rated by 0.5.

For example the calculation would be: 7/12ths of £60,900 lump sum ($£60,900/12*7$) = £35,525

£35,525 x 0.5 = £17,763 payment to the school.

For an academy school they will receive an additional payment to cover the period April 2025 to August 2025, which would be calculated.

5/12ths of £60,900 lump sum ($£60,900/12*5$) = £25,375

£25,375 x 0.5 = £12,687 payment to the school.

*Example calculated using primary school rate

Payment method

Where a maintained or academy school meets the criteria and the growth is known at the point of setting the budget for the financial year, payment will be made within 30 days of the beginning of the financial year which runs 1 April to 31 March

Where growth is identified during the financial year funding will be paid within 30 days of the receipt of the following notification:

- Maintained and Academy schools - PAN increases
Written approval to change the Published Admissions Number (PAN), by the Deputy Director of Education
- Maintained and Academy - Bulge classes:
The receipt by the Children's Finance team of the written confirmation from Deputy Director of Education that the Bulge class has materialised.

Applies to: Maintained schools and Academies

1.2 Increasing Age Range

Where a school is amending its age range, funding may be allocated from the 'Growth Fund' up to a maximum of £280,000, with the specific approval of schools forum, where the following criteria are met:

- The increased school places are required in order to meet basic need within the area and have been agreed with the Local Authority.
- The increased places relate to pre-16 pupils.
- The new school places are not within the schools current phase.
- A business case has been submitted by the school which sets out the expected set-up costs to be incurred.
- Any funding allocated would be to support the following areas of expenditure:
 - additional leadership team capacity
 - additional secretarial support
 - publicity, promotion and advertising of the new school
 - consultancy
 - curriculum costs
 - recruitment costs
 - other revenue costs related to set-up of the new school

If the above criteria are met, the funding would be allocated from the 'growth fund' in full to the school in a single funding period. The funding allocation would be calculated as £445 multiplied by the total number of additional places anticipated to be created in the school as a result of the change in the schools age range up to the maximum permitted.

Where a school is eligible for an allocation from the growth fund based on both the 'Increasing Published Admission Number' and the 'increased age range' criteria, then the school will only be eligible for an allocation from one of these mechanisms within the financial year.

2 School Specific Contingency

Applies to: Maintained Primary and Secondary Schools only

Purpose of the fund

The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations, permit the creation of a 'schools specific contingency' via the de-delegation of funding through the schools revenue funding formula. The contingency fund supports only Primary and Secondary maintained schools.

The purpose of the fund is to support maintained Primary and Secondary schools that have incurred expenditure, which it would be unreasonable to expect them to meet from the schools' budget share. This may include:

- schools in financial difficulty
- new, amalgamating or closing schools
- the writing-off of deficits of schools which are discontinued, excluding any associated costs or overheads
- other expenditure where the circumstances were unforeseen when initially determining the schools budget share.

Section 4 of the Scheme for Financing Schools continues to apply in respect of schools that are or are likely to be facing a deficit balance.

Criteria for accessing the fund

The fund is only available to maintained Primary and Secondary Schools in Portsmouth

Where as a result of exceptional expenditure or loss of income a school is experiencing financial difficulty, or has incurred other expenditure which it would be unreasonable to expect the school to meet from its budget share, then financial support will be considered for eligible schools where the following criteria are met:

- The costs or loss of income **must** have had a disproportionate effect on the schools budget.
- The costs or loss of income:
 - arose as a consequence of decisions by bodies outside of the control of the school or its governing body;
 - are exceptional in nature;
 - could not have been foreseen by the school or governing body.
 - The governing body has taken steps to mitigate the impact, where possible.
 - Additional costs for new, amalgamating or closing schools.

Criteria for new maintained schools:

Funding of costs in respect of the initial set-up of new maintained schools will be considered where a business case has been submitted by the school which sets out the expected costs to be incurred; and the following conditions are met:

- The increased school places are required in order to meet basic need within the area and have been agreed with the Local Authority.
- The increased places relate to pre-16 pupils.
- Any funding allocated would be to support the following areas of expenditure:
 - Initial leadership team capacity
 - Initial secretarial support
 - publicity, promotion and advertising of the new school
 - consultancy
 - curriculum costs
 - recruitment costs
 - other revenue costs related to set-up of the new school

One-off funding will be allocated based on the business case submitted, up to a maximum funding allocation of £445 multiplied by the total number of additional places anticipated to be created in the school.

Criteria for amalgamating schools:

Where two or more schools amalgamate, an amount equivalent to the closing balances of the previously maintained schools will be allocated to the new school.

Criteria for closing schools:

In the case of closing maintained schools, which are not amalgamating or converting to academy status under the Academies Act 2010, the contingency may fund additional costs where the school has insufficient balances and the costs are eligible to be funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Where a maintained school is discontinued, any remaining deficits balances may be charged against the contingency. Where it is necessary to use the contingency for this purpose it will be reported to the Schools Forum at the next scheduled meeting.

Decision Making Process

Where a school believes that their circumstances warrant support from the 'schools contingency fund', then the governing body should submit a request to the Finance Manager for Children, Families and Education.

The submission will be reviewed by the Deputy Director of Education and the Finance Manager for Children, Families and Education. The level of the schools revenue and capital balances will also be considered as part of the review of any submission.

Any application which the Deputy Director of Education and the Finance Manager for Children Families and Education assess as meeting the above criteria, will be presented to the Schools Forum at the October and February meetings to make the final decision as to whether to provide financial support from the fund.

Agenda Item 2



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

Subject: Dedicated Schools Grant 2023-24 Quarter 2 Budget
Monitoring and Revised Budget

Report by: Chris Ward Director of Finance

Cabinet Member: Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children,
Families and Education

Wards affected: All

Key decision: Yes/No

Full Council decision: Yes/No

1 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet Member of the projected revenue expenditure of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the current financial year 2023-24 as at the end of September 2023, along with proposed budget revisions.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

2.1.1 Notes the forecast year end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 September 2023, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.

2.1.2 Approve the revisions to the 2023-24 budget as set out in Appendix 1 and section 8.

3 Background

3.1 The DSG is a ring-fenced grant for Education and can only be used for the purposes of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations.

3.2 In February 2023, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education approved, and Schools Forum endorsed, the Original DSG budget for the 2023-

24 financial year. This report provides Schools Forum with the latest forecast of the year end outturn as at 30 September 2023, which is set out in the table below.

Table 1 - Dedicated Schools Grant				
	Original budget 2023-24 £000	Adjusted Budget 2023-24 £000	Projected outturn 2023-24 £000	Projected over / (under) spend £000
Income				
DSG Brought forward 2022-23	0	(9,912)	(9,912)	0
DSG and other specific grants	<u>(83,102)</u>	<u>(83,170)</u>	<u>(83,170)</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Income	(83,102)	(93,082)	(93,082)	0
Expenditure				
Schools block				
Primary ISB	24,791	24,791	24,791	0
Secondary ISB	15,511	15,511	15,482	(28)
De-delegated and growth fund	<u>1,499</u>	<u>1,499</u>	<u>1,499</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Schools block	41,800	41,800	41,772	(28)
Central School Service	1,055	1,055	1,055	0
Early Years block				
Nursery ISB	11,617	11,799	12,053	253
Other Early Years	3,181	3,066	2,862	(204)
High Needs block				
High Needs ISB	614	614	614	0
Other High Needs cost	26,550	26,550	26,561	11
Total Expenditure	84,817	84,885	84,917	32
DSG Carried forward	(1,715)	8,197	8,165	(32)

3.3 Overall, the budget is forecast to overspend by £32,000, the details of which are set out in the sections below.

4 Schools Block

4.1 The underspend relates to a revaluation of the rateable value following the completion of the new building. The subsequent increase in the national non-domestic rates (NNDR) charge was backdated to previous financial years. Due to the timing of the notification, it was not possible to include the change in the 2022-23 budget share. The school were funded for the rates adjustments in 2022-23 to enable the NNDR to be paid which resulted in the overspend. For 2023-24 the budget share included the backdated NNDR and the school, who

had already received this funding in 2022-23 paid the funding back into the DSG resulting in the underspend.

- 4.2 The process was complicated due to the centralisation of the funding and payment of NNDR for schools to the DfE, and this adjustment happening in the changeover year after the agreement of the budget shares. Now the new process is fully implemented it is not expected that this will happen again.
- 4.3 At the end of the second quarter, all notified Growth Fund allocations for 2023-24 have been paid. If no further payments are required, this will release £0.5m of funding to be carried forward to 2024-25 to support agreed commitments with schools.

5 Early Years Block

- 5.1 In July 2023 the authority received an adjustment to the Early Years DSG Block allocation to reflect the change in pupil numbers as at the January 2023 census. In line with the delegated responsibility, the Early Years budgets have been updated to reflect these changes and Section 8 and Appendix 1 set out those changes.
- 5.2 The forecast position reflects the payments made for the summer term and the initial payments to providers for the autumn term, future payments for the remainder of the autumn term and the 2024 spring term have been estimated based on previous years activity.
- 5.3 At the end of the second quarter, the Early Years Block is forecast to overspend by £49,000. There has been an increase in the number of three and four year old hours provided by early years settings, which has been partially offset using the contingencies and an underspend on both the Disability Access Fund and the two year old placements.

6 High Needs Block

- 6.1 The High Needs block is forecast to overspend by £11,000 due to the purchase of 5 AVI robots to support pupils to engage in classroom teaching whilst not physically able to attend school.
- 6.2 Due to delays in the receipt of the summer term class lists before the end of the second quarter, the forecast position remains on budget for Special Schools, Inclusion Centres and Alternative Provision settings. Class lists have now been received and the forecast will be updated for the third quarter monitoring.
- 6.3 The budgets for Element 3 Top-up for mainstream schools, independent and specialist providers, and Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund complex needs are all forecast on budget. With all these budget areas, autumn term changes to placements are notified after the end of September and will be reported in the third quarter monitoring report.

7 DSG Grant funding and carry forward balance

7.1 The authority has received adjustments to the 2023-24 DSG allocation in July 2023, which are included in Section 8 as part of the budget revision.

7.2 As at the end of September 2023, the carry forward balance is projected to be £8.2m. The table below provides a breakdown of the movement on the carry forward balance from 1 April and future commitments against the balance.

Table 2 - Forecast carry forward balance	
	£000
Brought forward balance as at 1 April 2023	(9,912)
Schools specific contingency	124
Growth fund	424
Relational Practice 2023-24 to 2025-26	169
Wymering Pre-opening grant	250
Wymering Places and Element 3 Top-up	747
Carry forward balance	(8,197)
Projected 2023/24 outturn	32
Forecast carry forward	(8,165)
Future commitments	
Early Years adjustment Sept 2023 to Mar 2024	(40)
Growth Fund budgeted carry forward to 2024-25	(503)
Revenue implications of High Needs places for future years	1,779
Contingency to manage in-year pressures	1,982
Uncommitted DSG carry forward	(4,947)

8 Budget Revision 2023-24

8.1 In July 2023, the authority received an adjustment to the DSG Allocation, which is summarised in the table below.

Table 3 DSG Funding Blocks	March 2023 allocation (excluding academies)	July 2023 allocation (excluding academies)	Revised DSG variation (excluding academies)
	£000	£000	£000
Schools Block	41,252	41,252	0
Central School Services Block	1,055	1,055	0
Early Years Block	14,797	14,865	68
High Needs Block	26,593	26,511	(82)
Total DSG	83,697	83,683	(14)

8.2 The movement in the Early Years Block reflects the increase in pupil numbers on the January 2023 census. This has allowed the corresponding Early Years expenditure budgets to be increased to reflect the increase in pupil numbers and are detailed in the table and in Appendix 1.

8.3 The High Needs Block decrease relates to the annual import/export adjustment partially off-set by a lagged adjustment relating to the recently opened Wymering School. The Authority has challenged the import/export pupil numbers but is still expecting the funding to decrease by a further £6,000. Whilst the funding adjustment will not be confirmed until November 2023, it is prudent to assume that the High Needs block will be reduced and plan accordingly.

8.4 The Table below sets out the DSG funding that the authority expects to receive for 2023-24.

Table 4 DSG Funding Blocks	July 2023 allocation (excluding academies)	November import export adjustment	Revised DSG allocation (excluding academies)
	£000	£000	£000
Schools Block	41,252	0	41,252
Central School Services Block	1,055	0	1,055
Early Years Block	14,865	0	14,865
High Needs Block	26,511	(6)	26,505
Total DSG	83,683	(6)	83,677

High Needs

8.5 The Element 3 Top-up budgets have been adjusted to reflect the net reduction in pupils being placed in other local authority and independent/specialist settings to reflect the import/export adjustment.

8.6 Since setting the budget in February 2023, there has been a budgeted reduction in 9 places in the Special School Individual School Budget (ISB).

8.7 The hourly rate paid for Early Years pupils with complex needs was increased by 6% from £9.60 per hour to £10.17 per hour, from September 2023 and the budget has been increased by £108,600 to reflect this change. The increase reflected the increases passed to mainstream schools, inclusion centres and special schools in April 2023 from the High Needs Block.

8.8 There have also been adjustments to the:

- Special Schools Teachers' pay and pension grant to reflect the grant due to The Wymering School from September 2023.
- Pre-opening grant, following a business case from Arundel Court Inclusion centre regarding pre-opening costs.

8.9 The proposed budget adjustments lead to a net overspend of £17,600. It is proposed that the overspend is covered using the DSG balances. The table below sets out the impact on the balances.

Table 5 - Forecast carry forward balance	
	£000
Uncommitted DSG carry forward (from Table 2)	(4,947)
Revised budget adjustments	18
Uncommitted DSG carry forward	(4,929)

9 Teachers Pay Additional Grant 2023-24

9.1 In July 2023 the government announced £525m of funding to support schools with the September 2023 teachers pay award. The grant was issued in October 2023 for the 2023-24 financial year and will continue as a separate grant for mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision settings for 2024-25 before being incorporated into the Schools Block and High Needs Block in 2025-26.

10 Reasons for recommendations

10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Member notes the contents of the report in respect of the financial forecast for 2023-24 as at the end of the second quarter, and approves the amendments to the budget for 2023-24 for the reasons set out in section 8 and Appendix 1.

11 Integrated impact assessment

11.1 An integrated impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a positive or negative impact on communities and safety, regeneration and culture, environment and public space or equality and diversity.

12 Legal implications

12.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

13 Director of Finance's comments

13.1 Financial comments and implications are included in the body of this report.

.....
Signed by: Chris Ward, Director of Finance and Resources

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Dedicated Schools Grant Revised Budget 2023-24



Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023	The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023 (legislation.gov.uk)
Budget monitoring working papers 2023-24	Children, Families and Education Finance Team.

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

.....
Signed by:

Appendix 1 Dedicated Schools Grant Revised Budget 2023-24

	Approved 2023-24 Budget (including Academies)	Proposed Budget Revisions	2023-24 Schools Budget Oct 2023 (Including Academies)	2023-24 Schools Budget Oct 2023 (Excluding Academies)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Schools Block				
Individual Schools Budgets (ISB)				
Primary	75,555	0	75,555	24,791
Secondary	70,347	0	70,347	15,511
Total ISB	145,902	0	145,902	40,302
De-Delegated and Central Budgets				
Growth Fund	1,294	0	1,294	1,294
De-delegated Budgets	204	0	204	204
Academy Conversions	0	0	0	0
Other Schools Block Sub Total	1,499	0	1,499	1,499
Total Schools Block	147,401	0	147,401	41,800
Central School Services Block				
Schools Forum	16	0	16	16
Admissions	346	0	346	346
Licences (negotiated by DfE)	146	0	146	146
ESG retained duties	498	0	498	498
Central Teachers Pay /pensions grant	49	0	49	49
Central School Services Block Total	1,055	0	1,055	1,055
Early Years Block				
3 & 4 Year Old Provision ¹	12,057	180	12,237	12,237
2 Year Old Provision	2,026	(116)	1,910	1,910
Central Expenditure on under 5's	714	4	718	718
Early Years Block Total	14,797	68	14,865	14,865
High Needs Block				
Individual Schools Budgets				
Special School Place Funding	7,080	(90)	6,990	140
Resource Unit Place Funding	897	0	897	373
Alternative Provision Place Funding	1,337	0	1,337	87
Total ISB	9,314	(90)	9,224	599
Element 3 Top-up funding	16,226	(84)	16,142	16,142
Out of City Placements	5,062	(42)	5,020	5,020
SEN Support Service	1,098	0	1,098	1,098

	Approved 2023-24 Budget (including Academies)	Proposed Budget Revisions	2023-24 Schools Budget Oct 2023 (Including Academies)	2023-24 Schools Budget Oct 2023 (Excluding Academies)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Medical Education	675	0	675	675
Outreach Services	196	0	196	196
Turnaround Project	100	0	100	100
Fair Access Protocol	60	0	60	60
Early Years Complex Needs Inclusion fund	1,115	109	1,224	1,224
Post-16 high needs places	1,072	0	1,072	0
Teachers Pay/Pension grants High Needs	578	25	603	603
Relational Practice	169	0	169	169
Special School Pre Opening Grant	250	10	260	260
Special Schools Additional Grant 2023/2024	672	0	672	672
High Needs supplementary funding	349	0	349	349
Other High Needs block sub total	27,622	18	27,640	26,568
Total High Needs block	36,936	(72)	36,864	27,167
Total Expenditure	200,189	(4)	200,185	84,888
Income				
Schools Block	(146,852)	0	(146,852)	(41,252)
Central Schools Services Block	(1,055)	0	(1,055)	(1,055)
Early Years Block	(14,797)	(68)	(14,865)	(14,865)
High Needs Block	(35,770)	90	(35,680)	(25,984)
DSG Income ^{2,3}	(198,474)	22	(198,453)	(83,156)
One-off use of Carry Forward	(1,715)	(18)	(1,732)	(1,732)
Total Income	(200,189)	4	(200,185)	(84,888)

¹Includes early years pupil premium

² 2023-24 per ESFA allocations July 2023

³ Includes reimbursement of Growth funding for Academy schools

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Agenda Item 3



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Date of meeting:	14 December 2023
Subject:	Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report
Report by:	Lucy Rylatt, PSCP Safeguarding Partnerships Manager
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Wards affected:	All
Key decision	No

1. Requested by:

Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.

2. Purpose:

To introduce the Annual Report 2022-23 of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) on the effectiveness of multi-agency early help and safeguarding arrangements for children in Portsmouth

3. Information Requested

The Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) is a statutory, multi-organisation partnership coordinated by a business unit, which oversees and leads upon children's safeguarding across Portsmouth. The main objective of the PSCP is to gain assurance that local safeguarding arrangements, comprised of partner organisations, are working effectively, both individually and together, to support and safeguard children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. The PSCP acts as a critical friend and a champion for best practice.

This year, there is evidence of continuing impact of the Covid pandemic upon children and their families in the city. We continue to see high levels of referrals to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), alongside increased pressures in our schools, our health system and across our partnership. In addition, families in Portsmouth are having to deal with a cost of living crisis that has resulted in higher food costs, huge increases in energy costs and wider inflation. In Portsmouth, 23.9% of children under 16 years (8,870 children) were living in relative low income families in 2021/22. This was a 10.6% increase (a further 355 children) compared to 2020/21. Across the partnership our workforce has worked hard to engage with and support these families to prevent the need for them to access statutory services.

In February 2023, the Partnership met to review the impact of the previous Safeguarding Strategy 2020-2023, that had been drawn up as part of the Portsmouth Children's Trust Plan. As a result it was agreed to renew the vision and principles for the Partnership; to amalgamate the priorities within the 2022-25 Business Plan into the [PSCP-Strategy-2023-26-FINAL.pdf](#)

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

portsmouthscp.org.uk; and to have one overarching document that set out the multi-agency priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Portsmouth. The eight priorities agreed are:

- Children and family's needs will be identified at the earliest point, and they will receive effective early support and help
- Families will receive effective and timely support when children are at risk of experiencing neglect
- Families will receive effective and timely support when children are at risk of experiencing sexual abuse
- Young people will be kept as safe as possible from all forms of extra-familial harm, and there will be effective transitional safeguarding arrangements in place to support vulnerable young adults
- Children and young people have access to appropriate support that recognises the impact of trauma resulting from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- There is an effective response to safeguarding children with additional needs and those from diverse communities
- Providing sufficient professional and organisational development to ensure there is effective response to safeguarding children within Portsmouth
- We will ensure there is a good understanding of safeguarding risks for children within education settings and an effective response to these

Signed by:

Scott MacKechnie,

Independent Chair and Scrutineer of Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

Appendices: Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2022-23

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018	Gov.uk

**Portsmouth
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023



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Foreword



It is my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report for Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) for 2022/23. I joined PSCP in the latter part of this reporting year as the Independent Chair and Scrutineer.

The scrutineer part of my role is about challenging and supporting our safeguarding partners in their leadership role. It is about providing scrutiny to audits, assurance work, case reviews and partnership decision making. Thereby ensuring ours is a multi-agency safeguarding system that continues to learn, develop, and remain effective in keeping our most vulnerable children safe from harm and abuse. A partnership based on the premise of mutual respect, high support, and high challenge, working collaboratively to resolve issues.

I am very aware the year continued to be shaped by the impact of COVID-19, other world events and the cost-of-living crisis being felt across our communities. Partner agencies continued to face additional challenges as a result. Senior leaders from the statutory safeguarding partners remained visible and engaged, working collectively to ensure we effectively safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children, their families, or carers. Our wide range of partners continued to maintain a clear focus on safeguarding children, continuing to deliver the partnership's priorities and active workstreams. Our priorities reflect the issues facing children and their families: neglect, sexual abuse, exploitation, and exclusion from education, with a focus on adolescents and the impact of our collective activity.

July of this year saw a significant change take place for one of the statutory safeguarding partners - the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups were restructured to form a single Integrated Care Board across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

The current landscape is challenging, and this is likely to remain, impacting the children and families we work with, alongside the practitioners who provide support and services.

2023/24 will bring change as we move through consultations in response to the government's Stable Homes, Built on Love publication and a new iteration of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which we remain hopeful will strengthen the role of our education partners. I will remain resolutely focused on ensuring local multi agency safeguarding practice remains effective for our children, their families or carers during any changes that may result.

This Annual Report contains information about the work of PSCP which is a partnership of us all, of everyone who works with children and families in Portsmouth. As you read through all the work undertaken this year, you will see our collective effort and the positive impact we have made together.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S MacKechnie', written in a cursive style.

Scott MacKechnie
Independent Chair & Scrutineer for Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

Introduction

We are pleased to present this report of the Portsmouth Children's Safeguarding Partnership which covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

As ever it has been a busy year, with the continuing repercussions of the Covid pandemic having a profound impact on children and their families. We continue to see high levels of referrals to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), alongside increased pressures in our schools, our health system and across our partnership. In addition, families in Portsmouth are having to deal with a cost of living crisis that has resulted in higher food costs, huge increases in energy costs and wider inflation. In Portsmouth, 23.9% of children under 16 years (8,870 children) were living in relative low income families in 2021/22. This was a 10.6% increase (a further 355 children) compared to 2020/21. Across the partnership our workforce has worked hard to engage with and support these families to prevent the need for them to access statutory services.

Our commitment to continuous learning is robust and supported by the work undertaken in our committees, all of which are chaired by partner members of the Executive Board. As a result of this our learning and development offer goes from strength to strength and engagement is strong across the partnership workforce.

We are all immensely proud of our workforce across the partnership and would take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work over the past year. Their commitment to the work of the PSCP and all that has been achieved is to be celebrated.



**Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families & Education
Portsmouth City Council**



**Superintendent Clare Jenkins, Eastern Area Commander
Hampshire Constabulary**



**Sarah Shore, Interim Director of Quality and Safeguarding
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board**

What we achieved against our priorities in 2022/23

In April 2022 five areas of concerns were set out as priority areas in the PSCP's Business Plan. Over the course of this year actions were progressed to meet the required outcomes or are still in progress. These include:

1. Early identification & support:

The PSCP Team continued to collaborate with partner agencies to complete a pilot of the re-designed Early Help Assessment. This is based on the 10 outcomes within Supporting Families and, following consultation with families in Portsmouth, has been called the [Family Support Plan](#) (FSP).

The FSP officially launched in January 2023, supported by a redesign of the multi-agency Early Help Training. It is used to support families with needs across Tiers 2 and 3 and is used by both universal settings and targeted early help services. A leaflet and a video have been designed in collaboration with the Portsmouth Parent/Carer Board to help families understand the process.

As well as training, guidance was produced for practitioners to help them explain to families how the process of creating and reviewing an FSP works, and to support them in asking questions around the 10 aspects of life. The Link Coordinators Team have supported the Partnership to put together a comprehensive guide as to the support available under each of these aspects.

The FSP, along with an intense focus on relational and restorative practice, has begun to equip the workforce with tools, processes and practice which are helpful and most importantly focus on the relationship with families, resulting in better outcomes for children.

In the first 3 months since it was launched, a total of 67 plans have been submitted and the feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive:

"We've been finding the FSP so positive for families. After an FSP conversation with one mum she said she felt she was leaving the school feeling so much lighter".

"We feel it worked incredibly well for the family. The questions worked effectively in terms of the family being able to talk openly and they are now very hopeful that the plan we have put together will be positive in moving things on".

"The form is so much better than before. It really helped being able to show mum the 0-10 scale and they were able to first cover all the positive areas and then focus on their areas of concern. Mum reported that she felt listened to".

A quality assurance framework is being developed in order to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of FSPs

2. Responding to neglect:

Since the PSCP concluded a deep dive into multi-agency practice in response to children experiencing neglect in 2021, the following work has been undertaken:

- A review of research of evidence-based tools and interventions for working with families where neglect is a concern;
- A review of the approach used by neighbouring LSCPs and those across England where the local authority has been graded as 'outstanding' by Ofsted;
- 2 workshops with practitioners to understand the opportunities and challenges they find in using the current practice guidance and Neglect Identification & Measurement Tool (NIMT);
- Liaison with the perinatal mental health steering group (that has since been established) to understand the work being taken forward to support maternal mental health more effectively; and
- Supporting the work being undertaken to develop a parenting pathway, as part of the Public Health Strategy, to ensure there is appropriate support for families at all tiers of need.

This work concluded that having separate strategies for specific forms of abuse or harm can be confusing for the workforce, and therefore responding to neglect will be embedded into the comprehensive Portsmouth Safeguarding Strategy when it is refreshed in April 2023.

It also found that the NIMT is not an evidence-based tool, was not widely used, and many practitioners found it unhelpful when they did attempt to use it. With the extensive work that has been undertaken to replace the Early Help Assessment with the FSP, indicators of neglectful parenting will be better identified through the Family Support Conversation. Through considering all aspects of family life practitioners will have a better understanding of the impact of neglect, as well as potential causal factors and be able to work with the family to develop an appropriate plan of support in place to address these.

In addition it was felt that a specific tool to help practitioners (especially those working in Children & Families Service) work with a family to capture a child's lived experience was needed. It was agreed to adopt The Day in the Life (DIL) Tools developed by Professor Jan Horwath.

Finally it was concluded that having a supporting Practice Guide for responding to children experiencing neglect was helpful to clarify the expected response and approach in Portsmouth across all tiers of need (especially for newer and/or less experienced practitioners). So the Practice Guide has been refreshed to be clear on how and when to use the FSP and DIL tools to effectively identify and support families where children are experiencing neglect. These have been published on the [PSCP website](#) and disseminated across the children's workforce

3. Exploitation:

During 2022-23 the PSCP supported the Head of Service for Adolescents and Young Adults in working with partner agencies to develop a [Multi-Agency Missing, Exploited and Trafficking \(MET\) Integrated Pathway](#). The Pathway is designed to support the understanding and response across emerging, complex, and acute need.

In response to learning by the Partnership about the need for collaborative and coherent plans to support children who go missing or are vulnerable to exploitation, we have adopted a 'Safer Plan' model. The aim of the plan is that is developed with the child and belongs to them and brings together key information about the child to share across police, health and social care to better enable them to and respond to their risks and vulnerabilities.



We recognise a child going missing is often a significant indicator of the presence of exploitation and that a missing episode may indicate a time-critical window to identify and intervene to reduce increasing vulnerability to exploitation. Op Endeavour has been introduced to ensure schools are notified by Police of children who have gone missing, so that any information the school has that may help locate them or prevent them from going missing in the future can be shared. The school can also offer appropriate support to the child when they return to education.

The Partnership understands that the risks of exploitation for some children are still ongoing when they reach their 18th birthday and can no longer be supported by Children's Services. The LSCPs across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton (HIPS) have worked with the respective Local Safeguarding Adults Boards on a transitional safeguarding framework - [Multi-agency framework for managing risk and safeguarding people moving into adulthood](#). In Portsmouth, a Transitional Safeguarding Forum meets regularly, chaired by the Head of Adolescents and Young Adults, to ensure the needs of these young people are understood and appropriate plans of support are developed with them.

Police have relaunched Hotel Watch with the hospitality industry to ensure they are aware of potential safeguarding risks and responding with appropriate actions. Within the monthly operational MET meetings areas of concern in the city are explored and a contextual approach is taken to consider how best to work with these premises.

The PSCP continues to offer a significant amount of training to the workforce on exploitation to improve the identification and response to children at risk of this form of harm. A particular focus this year has been on delivering a masterclass on supporting practitioners to consider their language and avoid victim blaming. Examples of the impact this training has had is:

"One thing I have been guilty of is maybe not saying but thinking "the parents could be doing more". But the training has shown me that actually maybe the parents are doing all the can, and that they are in fact at a loss and don't know what to do to help their children"

"This has started to shape language that is more restorative and really builds a culture where children are supported as victims and not just seen by their actions on the surface."

" When speaking to families I have always tried to choose my words carefully but perhaps hadn't been as considered when writing up documents. Following the input I try to ensure my reports do not have an underlying judgemental or blaming tone."

4. Family Safeguarding:

During 2022-23 the PSCP has worked with other LSCPs and Local Safeguarding Adults Boards across HIPS to refresh the [Family Approach Toolkit](#). This will be relaunched in 2023.

Within the tools used to complete Rapid Reviews and Deep Dives, we have included questions to consider whether decisions and/or actions are appropriately considering the impact on the child when one or more significant parental risk factors are present. This has highlighted that where parents/carers are supported by the Family Safeguarding & Support Services to address parental needs around mental health, substance misuse and/or domestic abuse, the support given by the adult workers embedded within these teams is effective.



Within the FSP and the redesigned Early Help Training, there is a renewed focus on supporting practitioners in having honest conversations with parents/carers. The aim being to identify existing strengths that can be built upon, as well as potential needs within a family, thus enabling the joint development of a plan of support that builds parental capacity to appropriately safeguard children.

5. Safeguarding in Education:

The PSCP training team continue to support schools across the city in a variety of ways of to further grow a safeguarding culture in an education setting, this includes through a diverse range of Masterclasses, bespoke and inset training, as well as coaching.

The training program offers a robust package of learning and reflective opportunities, which is continually being updated and added to in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and emerging safeguarding themes and learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. This year, sessions to cover topics such as Cyber Choices, Working Sexual Harmful Behaviour, Family Support Planning, Clare's and Sarah's Law were included. We continue to work in partnership with experts in these specific areas to ensure the content is of a high standard. 75.4% of schools across Portsmouth are engaged in PSCP Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Training, alongside The City of Portsmouth College.

Intensive bespoke training was developed to support two schools who were deemed inadequate in regard to safeguarding in their OFSTED inspection. For these a project plan was developed which incorporated specific

training, reflection and coaching to enhance staff's knowledge and skills, and focus on strengthening the school's safeguarding culture. Coaching has also been offered to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Leadership Teams within six schools which provides a supervision type service.

The local authority has a team of Education Link Coordinators who provide a supportive link between the Children, Families and Education Directorate and education settings, (including Early Years, Schools, and Colleges) to ensure they are aware of their vulnerable children. Children that are identified as vulnerable include those with attendance below 50%; children with 2 or more suspensions; children at risk of exploitation; children with an unmet special educational need; those open to the Youth Offending Team; and children open to the Early Help or Family Support and Safeguarding teams

The Link Coordinators have a fortnightly conversation with the education setting's designated safeguarding lead in regard to those vulnerable children who attend their setting. The aim being to provide regular advice, guidance, challenge, and support with a key focus on ensuring the right support is in place on a multi-agency basis to improve the outcomes for children and their families. The Family Support Plan is promoted for children who do not have a lead professional in place, and actions agreed where appropriate.



About Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Partnership (PSCP) is a statutory, multi-organisation partnership coordinated by a business unit, which oversees and leads upon children's safeguarding across Portsmouth. The main objective of the PSCP is to gain assurance that local safeguarding arrangements, comprised of partner organisations, are working effectively, both individually and together, to support and safeguard children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. The PSCP acts as a critical friend and a champion for best practice.

Quality assurance remains our key driver across all the committees, using frameworks that will measure the impact of activities and challenge those working in the safeguarding arena. We also continue to ensure that our policies and procedures are embedded in practice; that toolkits, guidance, and procedures draw on the knowledge of subject experts locally and nationally to inform them; and that we can demonstrate the impact of learning that has taken place.

The Partnership has an Independent Chair who provides leadership, vision, support & scrutiny and who is responsible for ensuring that all organisations contribute effectively to the work of the PSCP. Effective communication between the Business Manager and Chair ensures that there is a clear link between the committees and executive group, enabling risks, themes and opportunities to be highlighted at an executive level, which in turn provides direction to the work of the committees.

In February 2023, the Partnership met to review the impact of the previous Safeguarding Strategy 2020-2023, that had been drawn up as part of the Portsmouth Children's Trust Plan. To enable this, an analysis of the available data was provided that highlighted some of the key themes, trends and needs of families and children across Portsmouth. Agencies were also asked to review knowledge held within their own setting of the current risks, pressures and opportunities that related to the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Portsmouth. As a result it was agreed to renew the vision and principles for the Partnership; to amalgamate the priorities within the 2022-25 into the Strategy; and to have one overarching document that set out the multi-agency priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Portsmouth.

Our Vision

Our children and young people within Portsmouth will grow up being and feeling safe, protected, and cared for by their families and in their community. As a multi-agency partnership, we will achieve this by working with families to enable them to keep their children safe from all types of harm by providing the right advice, support, and intervention, from the right services, at the right time.

Our Priorities for 2023-25

1. Children and family's needs will be identified at the earliest point, and they will receive effective early support and help
2. Families will receive effective and timely support when children are at risk of experiencing neglect
3. Families will receive effective and timely support when children are at risk of experiencing sexual abuse
4. Young people will be kept as safe as possible from all forms of extra-familial harm, and there will be effective transitional safeguarding arrangements in place to support vulnerable young adults
5. Children and young people have access to appropriate support that recognises the impact of trauma resulting from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
6. There is an effective response to safeguarding children with additional needs and those from diverse communities
7. Providing sufficient professional and organisational development to ensure there is effective response to safeguarding children within Portsmouth
8. We will ensure there is a good understanding of safeguarding risks for children within education settings and an effective response to these

More details about these priorities, how we aim to achieve these, and our principles can be found in the [Portsmouth Multi-Agency Safeguarding Strategy 2023-26](#)

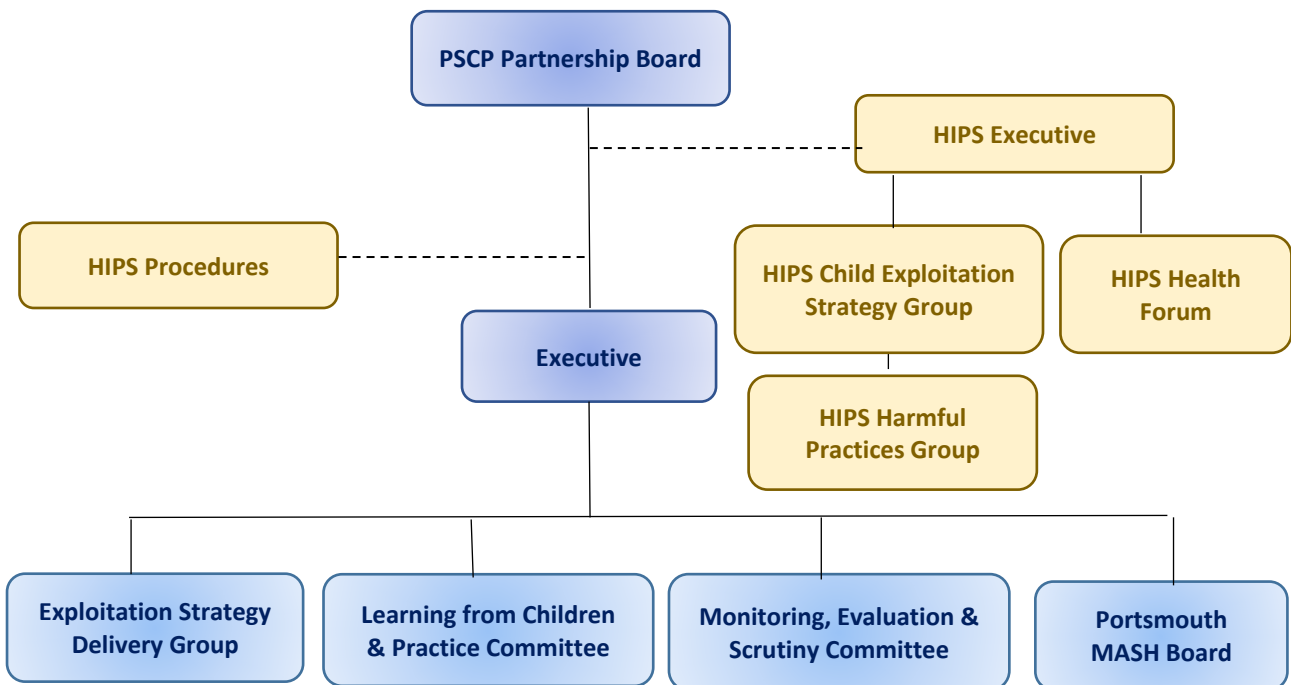
Our Partners

Working Together 2018 is statutory guidance that provides children’s safeguarding with a legal framework, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners. From a statutory perspective the three legally required bodies are:



The strength of local partnership working is built upon the safeguarding partners working collaboratively together with all other relevant agencies and services in Portsmouth who come into contact with children and families. A full list of these relevant agencies can be found [here](#) within our Partnership Arrangements.

Our Structure



In addition to the Board and Executive, Portsmouth has the following sub-groups and Committees.

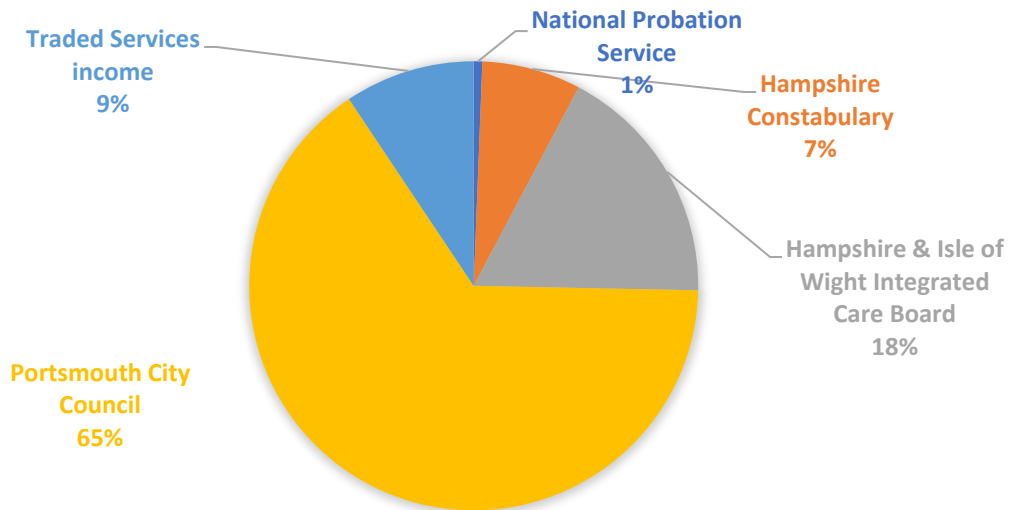
- **Learning From Children and Practice Committee** - which oversees safeguarding notifications and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, commissions external authors and reviews actions and learning
- **Monitoring Evaluation and Scrutiny Committee** - which oversees our comprehensive dataset and analysis, multi-agency audits of practice, recommendation tracking and compliance with safeguarding standards set out in the Portsmouth Safeguarding Compact which is completed every two years by over 200 agencies in the city.
- **Exploitation Strategy Delivery Group** - leading our strategy to tackle child exploitation
- **Portsmouth MASH Board** - ensuring effective resourcing, delivery, and quality of decision-making at the multi-agency front door

Our partnership is part of a wider HIPS safeguarding arrangement, which whilst not statutory, enables effective joint working across a wider geographical footprint - shared with the Constabulary and the Integrated Care System. The same Independent Chair covers all the local partnerships and the HIPS Executive.

The PSCP also works closely with the HIPS Child Death Overview Panel to ensure that any matters relating to the death, or deaths, which are relevant to the welfare of children in Portsmouth are considered and acted upon where appropriate.

Financial contributions to support the Partnership

The total budget for the Partnership in 2022-23 was £324,296.



The four biggest areas of Partnership spending for this year were:

- Staffing = £284,026 (including the Business Unit, Training Team, and the Independent Chair)
- Contribution to CDOP = £12,000
- Provision of websites and online learning = £11,398
- Safeguarding Practice Reviews = £2,500

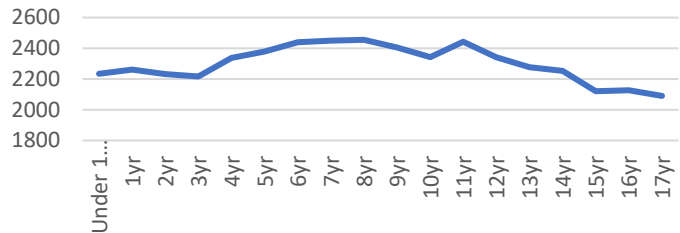


Context & Key Facts About Portsmouth¹



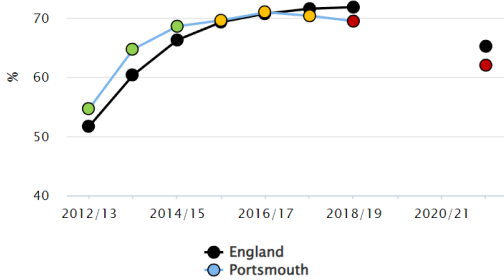
Portsmouth is a city on the south coast of England. It remains the local authority with the highest population density outside of London, with around 37 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land. According to the ONS Census completed in 2021, the population size in Portsmouth is 208,100.

Numbers of children aged 0-18yrs living in Portsmouth



Education

Within Portsmouth there is 1 all through school, 47 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, 5 special schools, 1 state-funded FE colleges and 5 independent schools.



The percentage of children in Portsmouth schools achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has fallen to 62% in 2021-22 compared to a national average of 65.2%. This decrease from 69.4% in the previous year may be an indicator of the impact of national lockdowns as a result of Covid.

In Portsmouth, the rate of persistent absentees is higher than the national average.

Persistent absence rate	Portsmouth	England
Primary	18.2%	17%
Secondary	32.1%	27.4%
Special	51.8%	38.7%

On census day in Spring 2023, in Portsmouth there were 40 children missing education who are not registered pupils at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise. At the same point in time there were approximately 200 children registered as receiving elective home education. Where a reason was given for choosing EHE, the top two were dissatisfaction with the school SEND provision and health concerns relating to COVID-19.

4.5% of pupils in Portsmouth have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) which is in line with the national average of 4.3%. The rate of pupils receiving Special Educational Needs (SEN) support without an EHCP is 14.9%, slightly higher than the national average of 13%

69% of pupils in Portsmouth are from a white British ethnicity, which is lower than the national average of 62.6%.

¹ [Public Health Data](#) & [Child Health Profile](#) & [Gov.UK Education Statistics](#)

Percent of pupils by ethnicity	Portsmouth	South East	England
Any other ethnic group	2.1	1.3	2.3
Asian - Any other Asian background	1.9	2.2	2.1
Asian - Bangladeshi	3.4	0.6	1.8
Asian - Chinese	0.7	0.7	0.7
Asian - Indian	1.7	3.6	3.7
Asian - Pakistani	0.4	2.7	4.5
Black - Any other Black background	0.4	0.4	0.8
Black - Black African	4.9	3.0	4.3
Black - Black Caribbean	0.3	0.3	0.9
Mixed - Any other Mixed background	1.7	2.7	2.7
Mixed - White and Asian	1.5	2.0	1.6
Mixed - White and Black African	1.5	1.0	0.9
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.8	1.3	1.6
Unclassified	1.9	1.6	1.7
White - Any other White background	7.5	7.2	7.2
White - Gypsy/Roma	0.1	0.4	0.3
White - Irish	0.1	0.3	0.2
White - Traveller of Irish heritage	0.0	0.1	0.1
White - White British	69.0	68.6	62.6

Young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes, including poor health, depression, or early parenthood. In 2021-22 the percentage NEET in Portsmouth is 5.1%, a reduction from 5.6% in the previous year and close to the national average of 4.7%.

Health

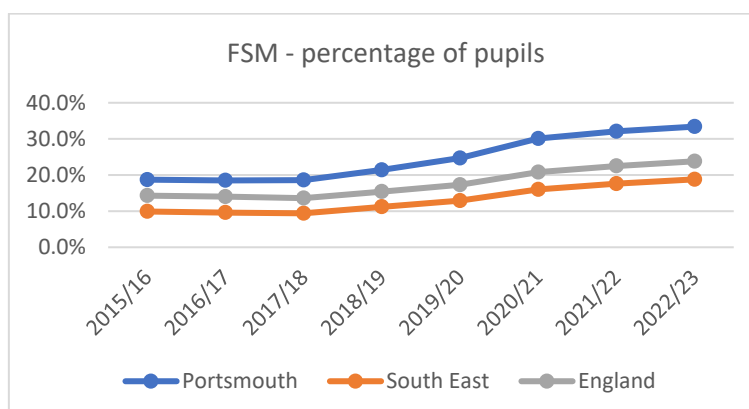
The infant mortality rate is 3 per 1,000 and the child mortality rate is 8.1 per 100,000. Both of these are below the national average of 3.9 per 1,000 and 10.3 per 100,000 respectively, and are the lowest rates amongst Portsmouth's statistical neighbours

Money

The [Marmot Review \(2010\)](#) suggests there is evidence that childhood poverty leads to premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults. There is also a wide variety of evidence to show that children who live in poverty are exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health

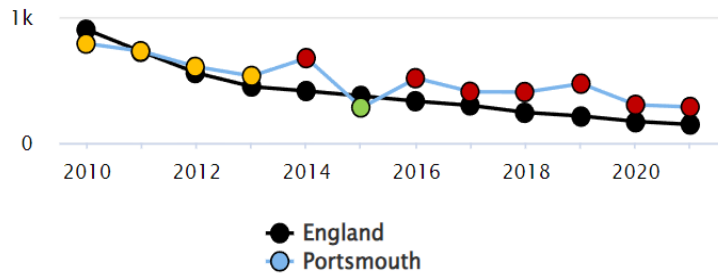
Portsmouth is ranked 59th of 326 local authorities for deprivation, where 1 is the most deprived. 8,870 children, which equates to 23.9% of all under 16's, are in relative low-income families. Of all the households owed a duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act, 21.4 per 1,000 include dependent children. This is the highest rate compared to Portsmouth's statistical neighbours and is higher than the national average of 14.4.

The percentage of pupils in Portsmouth that are eligible for free school meals (FSM) is 33.4%, which is higher than both the national and regional average and has increased significantly over the past 7 years.



Extra-familial contexts

The rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system is 286.7 per 100,000, which is almost double that of the national average of 146.9 and is the highest amongst Portsmouth's statistical neighbours. However this does continue the downward trend over the last 11 years.



Learning from Monitoring, Evaluation and Scrutiny

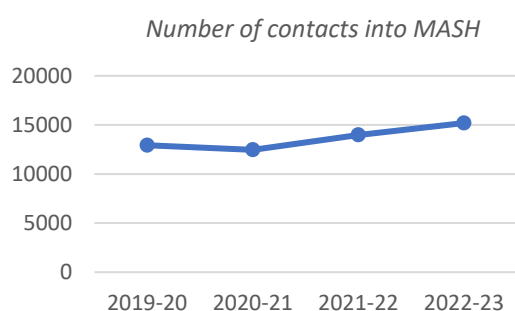
Learning from Data

The Partnership's dataset framework provides performance information to the PSCP to inform the assessment of the effectiveness of the support being provided to children and families. Data relating to key safeguarding and early help processes, and particularly vulnerable groups of children, is provided by partner agencies each quarter. This is reviewed by the Monitoring, Evaluation and Scrutiny Committee (MESC) who provides the Executive Committee with an analysis of any trends and areas for consideration.

Contacts into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

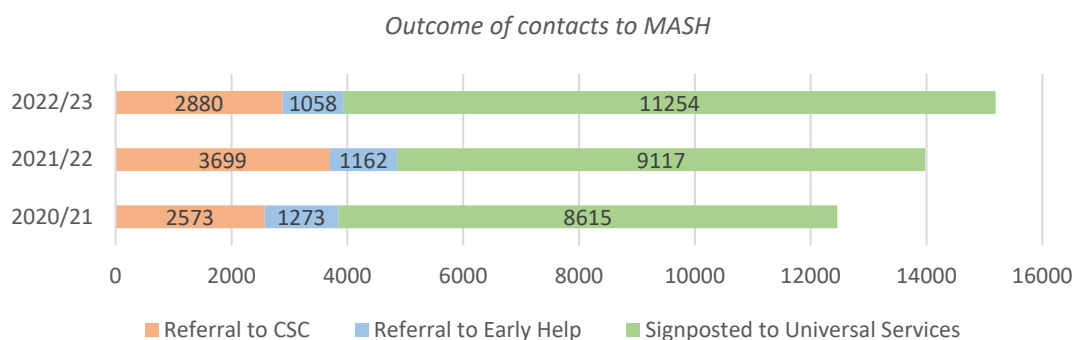
The Portsmouth MASH was established in November 2015. It is the multi-agency front door that manages child safeguarding concerns and determines an appropriate response. The services represented within MASH are Family Safeguarding and Support, Early Help and Prevention, Hampshire Constabulary, Solent NHS Trust, Youth Offending Team, Youth Service and Education.

The MASH process continues to allow for a manager to oversee the allocation of all work and to endorse the recommendations from the multi-agency team for response. When a contact is received by the MASH an initial decision is made by a manager in accordance with the information provided and the PSCP thresholds for services document.



Since 2019-20 there has been a 43% increase in the number of contacts made to MASH. It has risen from 12,924 contacts in 2019-20, to there being **15,192** contacts in 2022-23.

These contacts across the year related to 11,055 individual children, which represents a significant increase of 40.6% increase from 2021-21.



Of these contacts there was a 22% reduction in those that met the threshold for a referral to Childrens Social Care, and a 9% reduction in those that met the threshold for a referral to Early Help when compared to the numbers from the previous year.

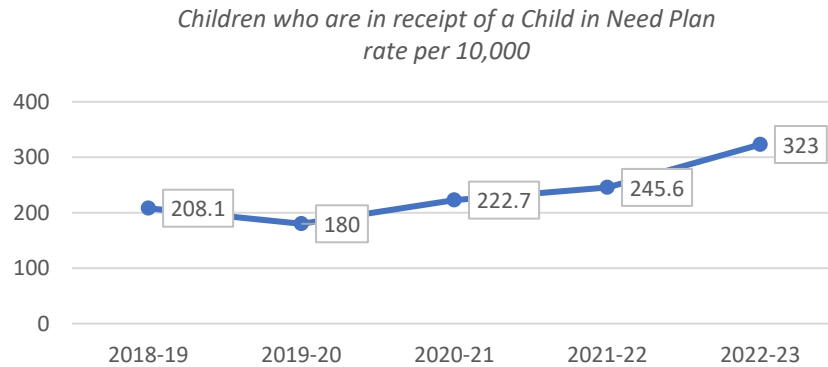
Agency	Number of Contacts	% of overall contacts	% that met Tier 4 threshold	% that met Tier 3 threshold
Police	4,171	27.5%	18.6%	1.3%
Schools	2,400	15.8%	25.1%	26.4%
Health ²	2442	16.1%	17.1%	6.5%

² This includes hospital, GPs, Health Visitors, School Nurses etc

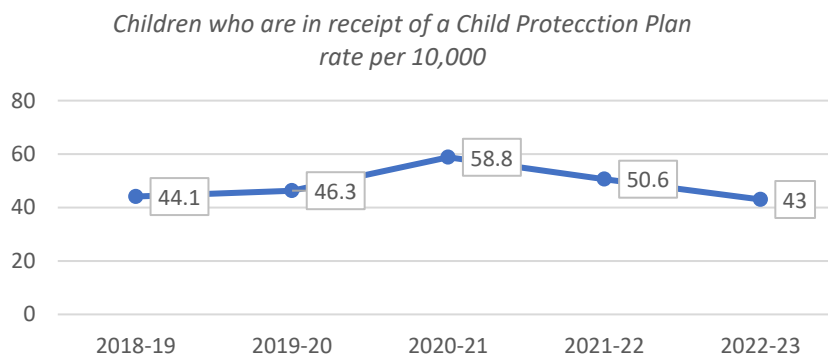
When considering the source of the contacts made to MASH, it is clear that the police make the largest number of contacts. However in terms of whether these contacts result in a referral to either the Family Support and Safeguarding Service or the Early Help Service, it is schools that make the greatest percentage of referrals that meet either the Tier 3 or Tier 4 threshold.

Child in Need, Child Protection and Looked After Children

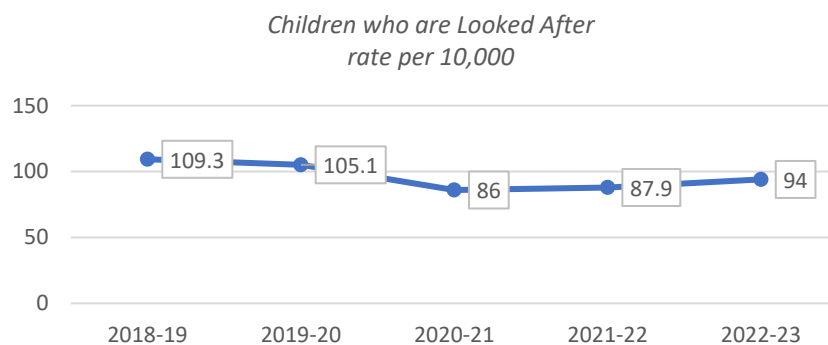
The rate of children in receipt of a Child in Need Plan in 2022-23 has increased by 31.5% from 2021-22.



Whereas the rate of children on a Child Protection Plan in 2022-23 has decreased for the second year by 15% from 2021-22.



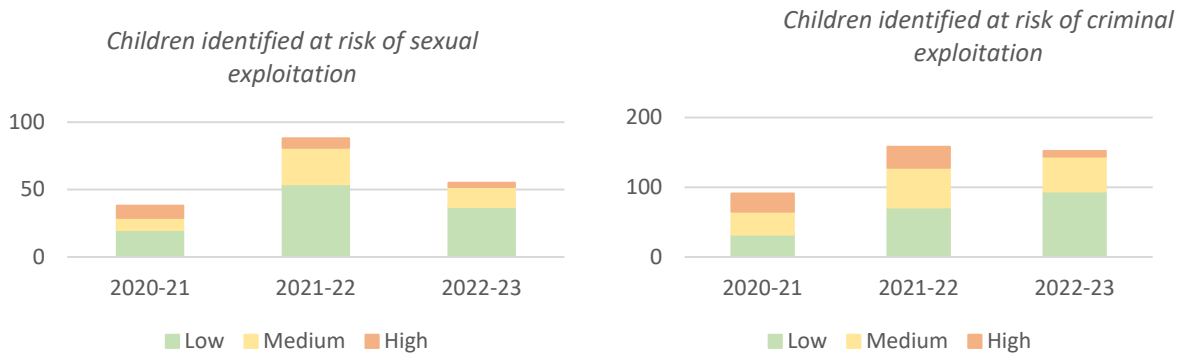
There has been a 6.5% reduction in the rate of children who are looked after in 2022-23.



This overall picture indicates that whilst there are more concerns about children's safety and wellbeing notified into MASH, proportionally their needs are being managed at a lower tier of support than in previous years.

Extra-familial Harm

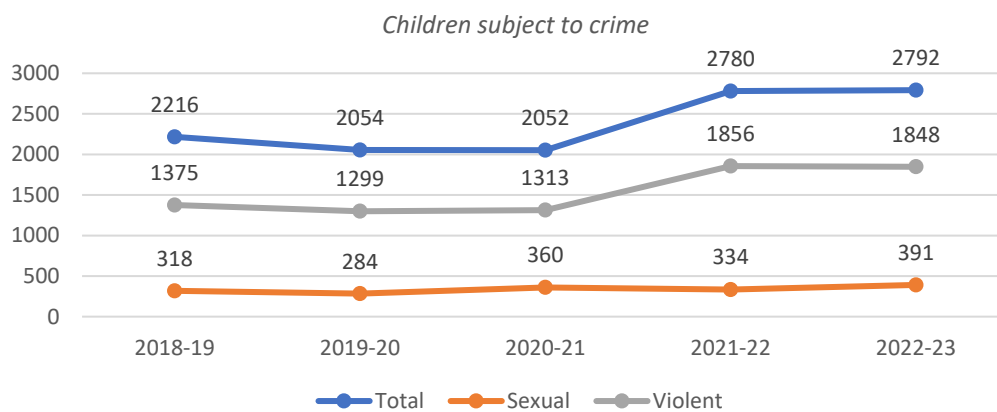
In 2022-23 there has been a 31.8% decrease in the number of children identified at risk of sexual exploitation from the previous year; and a 9.5% increase in those identified at risk of criminal exploitation.



Within the last three years the percentage of children identified at low risk of exploitation compared to high risk has increased. This is a positive indication that the workforce is now better equipped to identify an emerging risk, so that support can be provided to the child sooner before they experience more significant harm.

The youth offending police team have noted that between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 children referred have been identified as at risk of exploitation. This indicates that children at risk of exploitation are more likely to come to police attention for criminal behaviour than their peers. This is why in response to the strategic priority to keep young people as safe as possible from extra-familial harm in the revised Safeguarding Strategy, a Youth Forum is being developed. The aim is that by bringing together specialist knowledge and expertise from the Youth Offending Team, Violence Reduction Unit and child exploitation teams, we will develop a more effective response to the prevention and disruption of exploitation and be better able to divert young people from becoming involved in criminality.

There also continues to be a steady increase in the number of children subject to crime over the last 4 years. Since 2018-19 reported sexual crimes have increased by 18.7%, violent crimes have increased by 25.6% and the total number of crimes have increased by 20.6%



Neglect

Following last year's Annual Report, in response to the 305% increase in the number of crimes recorded for neglect noted from 2017 to 2022 Hampshire Constabulary completed an analysis of their cruelty and neglect profile. They concluded that the Force had seen an increase in these occurrences over the last 5 years and that there were multiple contributing factors identified for this.

There has been an upward trend seen nationally, with the NSPCC reporting a 25% increase in cruelty and neglect during 2021/2022. It is predicated that volumes will continue to increase over the next few years in line with all child abuse offences.

Although Hampshire Constabulary are recording significantly higher volumes than other forces within the region, they felt that this does not necessarily equate to increased risk being seen. Crime Data Integrity (CDI) accounts for approximately a third of all cruelty and neglect occurrences recorded within Hampshire over the last 5 years. The forces approach to crime recording as a whole has changed and progress has been made year on year. It is recognised that when neglect is reported and there are multiple children within a household, each child will be recorded as a victim on a separate occurrence. These recording improvements will likely account for some of the increase, particularly in areas where there are larger families with multiple children.

Despite the impact of CDI, in 2019 cruelty and neglect offences increased disproportionately compared to all crimes across the force and, more specifically, to all child abuse crimes. This coincides with a large amount of training and emphasis across Police to ensure that incidents of neglect are reported. This remains a strategic priority for all agencies and it is likely the improved identification and recording have contributed to the increases in recorded cruelty and neglect during this time.

MASH demand analysis has shown that the total number of all Public Protection Notice (PPN1) volumes have increased over the last few years. Safeguarding teams (predominantly MASH) are recording the greatest proportion of cruelty and neglect and this has increased by 94% (from 297 in 2017 to 577 in 2021). The rise in MASH volumes coupled with a confidence in the team's data recording accuracy suggests that there is an increased understanding of what constitutes cruelty and neglect within Hampshire.

Concerns were also raised that despite an increase seen in commission rates the arrest rate remained relatively stable for these offences. It is acknowledged that an arrest is not always the best course of action and analysis confirms that there were multiple occasions where a series of crimes were investigated under the one arrest record. Therefore an arrest may fall within that of a linked offence and will not be reflected in the arrest data for cruelty and neglect, but positive action was still taken.

Additionally, those neglect occurrences resulting in Formal Action Taken (FAT) have increased to higher levels than all other child abuse crimes, suggesting that there are more positive outcomes for children who are victims of cruelty and neglect. Community Resolutions (CR) account for the greatest proportion of FAT outcomes, and these have increased since 2019 whilst arrests and charges have remained relatively stable. Since 2018, all neglect offences recorded by MASH are automatically referred to CAIT who are specially trained in working with partners to support a positive safeguarding outcome for children. Analysis has confirmed that the Child Abuse Investigation Team's (CAIT) use of Out of Court Disposals (OOC) was positive and effective, particularly in cases of neglect where it is a positive early intervention tool.



Deep Dives and Audits

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Audits

Every quarter representatives from the PSCPs three statutory partners undertake an audit of contacts into the MASH, to consider:

- Quality of information provided,
- Use of parental consent, and
- Application of threshold

Each quarter the MASH Board agrees a focus or thematic aspect for the audit which is informed by either learning from performance data or agency requests. (Please note that where any contacts are considered to be inadequate, feedback is provided to the individuals to support their learning and any remedial action to ensure the child is appropriately safeguarded is taken.) In 2022/23 the audits undertaken were as follows:

Quarter 1: Application of threshold and consent

17 contacts were reviewed that had varying outcomes in order to assess the application of threshold and the appropriateness of the decision making. Within this we also considered whether consent had been appropriately sought and recorded.

In terms of the application of threshold we were confident that the decision making and outcomes were appropriate in all 17 cases. There was clear recording of the rationale for the outcome in all instances, noted within a 24-hour time period. There is clear strong management oversight at point of contact and throughout. It was felt that 4 of the contacts were unnecessary and this was fed back as learning to each of these agencies.

Quarter 2: Contacts into MASH that do not progress to contact and referral

In this audit 10 contacts that came into the MASH that then did not progress to being a formal contact, and so were not recorded on MOSAIC (Children Social Care - Computerised Record System), as it was deemed as not being proportionate to record them.

The question of management oversight on these was considered. However, whilst there is a process in place that each contact will be seen by either a Service or Team Leader and the decision not to record will be made by them, as these contacts are not recorded, we were unable to review whether this process had been followed.

Of the 10 children where contacts made into the MASH in August were not recorded on a contact and referral record on MOSAIC, these were made up of 5 from police, 4 from health and 1 from a nursery. Of these the decision made in 9 of the 10 instances was agreed to be appropriate and proportionate.

Quarter 3: Contacts into MASH where the Single Assessment Framework (SAF) is completed, but the child was not seen as part of the assessment

This audit considered 6 contacts that were assessed by MASH as meeting Threshold at Tier 4 and an assessment was completed, but the child was not seen as part of this process.

The initial assessments where the child was not seen as part of process were reviewed, with hypothesis that these would show assessments closed down by management agreement prior to completion. This was borne out in the sample considered and there were 3 themes that ran strongly through the sample:

- A lack of curiosity in the assessment
- Assumptions about consent and lack of engagement
- How robust and assertive are we in our engagement with families

On more than one occasion visits and work were undertaken with the family, but then deemed that a full assessment was not needed. So the start and finish of the assessment was completed with a rationale given for this. It was felt that this rationale lacked curiosity and challenge and often involved taking the families' word for something, regardless of the information contained in referral.

Quarter 4: Application of thresholds

14 contacts were selected from March that had varying outcomes in order to assess the application of threshold and the appropriateness of the decision making.

The audit found confidence with 13 of the 14 threshold decisions. 1 was challenged which involved a child who had disclosed historical sexual abuse. This was referred back to MASH who reviewed the findings and held a strategy discussion post audit.

Child Protection Plan Audit

In October 2020, the PSCP published a serious case review of [Child H](#). One of the recommendations was that *"The Safeguarding Partnership commission a multi-agency audit of Child Protection Plans to gain assurance that information taken in to Initial Child Protection Conferences via single agency reports accurately captures and analyses known and knowable risks to the child, that the record from the ICPC reflect such risks and these*

are translated into the *Child Protection Plan*". This was undertaken in 2021-22 and the findings reported to the Partnership in July 2022.

Areas of strength:

- Assessments were consistently comprehensive and detailed. They provided clear summaries of risks to children.
- Appropriate and broad multi-agency attendance at Strategy Meetings
- The Chairs were consistently restorative, empathetic, and caring.
- The use of motivational interviewing was strong. Discussions were strengths based and there was open ended questioning and positive affirmations.
- Families had always been well briefed in advance of the meeting by the Chair, and the purpose was well explained again within the meeting.
- Families were well supported throughout conferences and the process in general. Professionals demonstrated high levels of empathy and consideration.
- The Chairs made sure that each professional had multiple opportunities to provide updates, feed into the meeting and raise any comments/questions throughout.
- All professionals had provided a report in each of the conferences.
- Families were usually given frequent opportunities to share their views and feed into the creation of the plan.
- A Family Safeguarding Approach had been considered where appropriate, with Adult's workers involved in several cases.

Areas for development:

- Risks were not consistently followed through from referral and assessment to the plan. If the risk identified in an assessment is unsubstantiated, it should be recorded in the ICPC minutes/ on the plan that this is no longer a risk.
- There were examples where there seemed to be a focus on one parent, especially if they were more engaged.
- Due to the pandemic, conferences were being held virtually or as hybrid meetings. Unfortunately, many of the conferences were hindered by IT issues. This was always managed well by the Chair but not an ideal scenario for these types of meetings.
- Although professionals had consistently had sight of reports, the family often had not seen them in advance of the meeting.
- Inclusion of the child's views was not consistent. The voice of the child and family was not always strong in both conferences and plans, it was broadly felt that the lived experience could have been clearer.
- There were some examples of professional language being used that families may not understand e.g. 'Toxic Stress', 'Restorative Approach'
- Outcomes on plans and timescales for those were not always achievable e.g. school attendance going from 25% to 97% in a period of less than two months. Contingency plans were also not measurable and would benefit from clear timescales.
- There were some examples of partner agencies not feeling like their views had been incorporated into the assessment or resultant plan.
- There were a number of cases where there had been limited inclusion or attempts to include the father/ partner.

What has been done as a result:

- A dip sample of current child protection plans was undertaken in May 2022 that demonstrated an increased expectation within Childrens Social Care relating to the quality of child protection plans, and a significant shift in outcome focussed plans.
- Continued focus remains within the Rapid Improvement Group relating to Care Planning. There is specific focus on SMART planning, outcome focussed plans, and the voice of the child.
- Hybrid technology has now been installed in the Civic Centre, with all conferences now being offered with hybrid capacity.
- Information relating to the sharing of agency reports is now included in the Child Protection Advisor's audit form that is completed as part of the record of the meeting.
- A 'One Minute Guide' was published regarding Our Model of Conferencing in November 2021. This includes clear guidance for professionals about expectations for sharing reports in advance of meetings
- Improvements have been made to the electronic recording system to ensure that the most recent plan is reviewed as part of all Review Child Protection Conferences - informed by the progress of the Core Group.
- 'Mind of My Own' is promoted within the service. Information regarding MOMO, a digital tool enabling children to give their views, is included with all invitations to CPC's. All children age over 4 years subject to CPC's are also referred for Advocacy support.
- Child Protection Advisors have been offered development work around analytical recording. Specific workshops have been delivered and this is an ongoing element within the Service Quality Team business plan

Transition Deep Dive

This was done in response to the [Learning Review of Child G](#) and the [Safeguarding Adults Review of Mr D](#) both undertaken in 2019. These both concluded there should be a joint exploration with the Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board (PSAB) of the effectiveness of transition arrangements for young people with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and to consider the impact of the revised Transition Protocol that was revised a result of these reviews.

This was undertaken in 2021-22 and the findings reported to the Partnership in June 2022.

Areas of strength:

- Referrals to Adult Social Care (ASC) are made from Children's Social Care (CSC) when the child reaches 14yrs old in line with the Protocol and Care Act 2014 duties
- The staff within special schools and the child's social workers engage early with families to explain transition and the process that will be undertaken
- There were timely health transition and Continuing Health Care assessments. Child Paediatric Medical Services continue providing support until the young person reaches 19 years of age, and so (where they are open to CPMS) the Paediatrician is able to offer consistency in care during the young person's transition to ASC
- For children who are looked after, their Independent Reviewing Officer provided additional scrutiny by checking that a transition plan was in place and managed effectively by their 18th birthday.

Areas for development:

- Quality of practice was reliant on the workers supporting the child - there was inconsistent practice evident seen with some particularly good practice from individual workers, but we need to improve the consistency of practice to make sure all young people have a good transition
- ASC were not adding young people to their recording system before their 18th birthday. When CSC referred a child aged 14yrs, it was therefore unclear where this information was stored and how ASC were monitoring these to ensure effective planning for transition was occurring

- Some children were not referred to ASC as CSC believed their needs meant they would not meet the threshold for receiving services. However, all children whose needs will continue to make them vulnerable into adulthood should be referred, as even if they are not eligible for services ASC will be able to signpost them to other appropriate sources of support
- There was limited understanding of the Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards within the children's workforce and the impact these have upon including children and their families with transition planning, including consent for referrals and information sharing
- There needs to be an improvement in the information available to families regarding services and support available preparing for & during transition, and into adulthood. This information should also be supplied in accessible formats.

What has been done as a result:

- Adult Social Care has employed a Transition Lead who works closely with Children's Services and the Inclusion Service, to ensure that there is now strong oversight of the transition planning for young people
- A member of staff has been recruited with responsibility for maintaining the Local Offer website, to improve the information available to families and across the workforce regarding services and support available.
- Within the Preparing for Adulthood core group, transition champions across the partner agencies have been identified.

Obesity Deep Dive

Data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for the school year 2021/22 showed that:

- Portsmouth is the only upper tier local authority in the region that has a percentage of Reception children living with obesity that is statistically significantly worse than the England average.
- Portsmouth is one of 3 UTLAs in the region that are statistically significantly worse than the England average for Year 6 children living with obesity.

Childhood obesity can be associated with various diseases (often called co-morbidities) such as sleep apnoea, type 2 diabetes, liver disease and orthopaedic problems. However, being overweight as a child can affect more than their health. It can also impact self-esteem, ability to participate in activities, mental health, and quality of life. All of which can last into adulthood.

This was undertaken in 2022-23 and the findings reported to the Partnership in January 2023.

Areas of strength:

- In the majority of the children reviewed their GP had been proactive in identifying that the child's weight was rapidly increasing and that they were overweight or obese. This was even the case when it was the child's first appointment at that practice, or the child had attended for another reason other than related to measuring their weight. In all instances there was evidence of the GPs making appropriate referrals to other health services to help the family with their child's weight management.
- The Complications from Excess Weight (CEW) Clinic appears to be effective in helping children reduce their weight. For the children who had been receiving support from the CEW Clinic they had all managed to reduce their weight.
- There was evidence of health professionals recognising the child's reluctance/fear of attending the hospital to receive interventions from the CEW Clinic. Examples of how there were overcome were nurses going out to complete weight measurements or blood tests in the community; or supporting attendance by providing transport and accompanying them from home to the hospital.

Areas for development:

- Children not being brought to appointments meant that in many of these instances the child was either discharged from the service or opportunities to identify concerns earlier and offer support were missed.
- For many of the families additional needs were identified that included bereavement, parental ill-health, domestic abuse, social isolation and/or poor parental mental health. Where these were identified, there was limited evidence of exploration of how these potentially impacted on the family's ability to engage in the support and advice being offered. However, this consideration was consistently apparent once a family was supported by the CEW Clinic.
- There was reference in the records to parents' lack of awareness of the complications upon their child's physical and emotional health and wellbeing from them being obese.
- There was limited evidence of the use of the Obesity Pathway and the Thresholds Document in helping practitioners consider an appropriate response.
- Practitioners need to ensure that there are no assumptions made about other services knowledge of the impact the child's weight might be having upon them. As such references to weight or BMI may not be meaningful to practitioners not familiar with what a healthy weight range should be for that child.
- There were examples of schools not recognising concerns about the child's excess weight or not being confident as to how to appropriately respond.

What has been done as a result:

- The PSCP has engaged with Public Health to advise them of the findings of this audit. Until now they have utilised national resources in their public campaigns regarding childhood obesity. They now aim to review these and consider how these can be better targeted. They are also leading on a review of the Obesity Pathway.
- The PSCP Training Team has collaborated with the Consultant Paediatrician from the CEW Clinic to develop a multi-agency workshop 'Working Together to Effectively Safeguard Obese Children' that will become part of the core offer from September 2023.
- The learning from this audit has been shared with education and early years settings, and examples given of how they can use the FSP to support early intervention when a child's weight is increasing. These messages are being shared within the PSCP Early Help training.

Recommendation Tracking

The PSCP has evolved a method of tracking the recommendations made to the multi-agency safeguarding system in Portsmouth (from case reviews, data analysis, audits, and inspections) whereby once every 2 months relevant agencies are sent a request to update their progress against these. The returns are presented to the Monitoring, Evaluation & Scrutiny Committee whose role is to consider whether the action fully meets the ambition as set out in the recommendation; and whether there is sufficient evidence of the robustness of its implementation and/or impact on the effectiveness of improving safeguarding arrangements.

	Number at start of year	New, added in year	Completed in year	Outstanding at end of year
Children's Social Care	14	17	30	1
Adult Social Care	0	1	0	1
Education Service	1	0	0	1
General Practices	0	1	1	0
Hants & IoW ICB - Portsmouth place	0	1	0	1
Hampshire Constabulary	0	1	0	1
Portsmouth Hospital University Trust	4	0	3	1
PSCP	19	13	14	18

Solent NHS Trust	0	3	2	1
University Hospital Southampton Foundation Trust	4	0	4	0
Total	42	37	54	25

Safeguarding & Early Help Compact Audit

The Partnership is collectively responsible for the strategic oversight of local safeguarding arrangements, to ensure that organisations working with children and families in Portsmouth are compliant with their statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

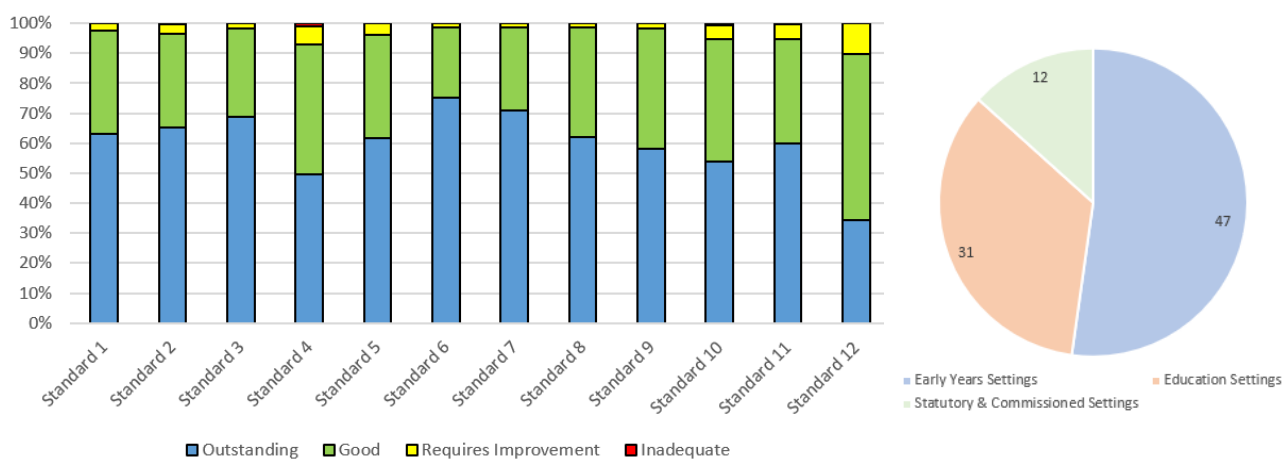
Part of the way in which the PSCP does this is to require all services that work with (or regularly come into contact with) children and families, to complete a self-assessment once every two years against 12 standards with varying indicators to reflect the varying statutory requirements. This is referred to as the Compact Audit and more details of this can be found [here](#) on the PSCP website³.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Senior management commitment | 5. Induction, training & appraisal | 9. Information sharing |
| 2. Staff responsibilities & competencies | 6. Recruitment | 10. Equality of opportunity |
| 3. A clear line of accountability | 7. Allegation management | 11. Disabled children |
| 4. Service development | 8. Effective inter-agency working | 12. Commissioning |

For each standard there are a set of indicators, which describes the behaviours, processes and policies that would be expected. Settings are then asked to assess themselves against these as to whether they feel their current practice is outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate and to provide the evidence which they believe demonstrates this. Where this is less than good, they are asked to develop an action plan describing what they will do to improve practice.

There is a quality assurance process in place overseen by the Monitoring, Evaluation & Scrutiny Committee to review the individual returns and progress against the action plans. By reviewing all the returns, it allows us to engage both at a setting and sector level to address any gaps in knowledge and/or practice. Briefings are produced summarising the learning at a sector level, and the learning is used to inform future PSCP training and support development.

This year a total of 89 returns were received:



The overall analysis of the returns submitted this year indicates that there are 4 areas of practice where there is a significant need for improvement, these are:

³ <https://www.portsmouthscp.org.uk/10-learning-from-practice/10-2-portsmouth-safeguarding-and-early-help-compact-audit/>

Standard 4. Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families = 6.12% RI and 1.05% inadequate

Standard 10. Equality of opportunity = 4.76% RI and 0.56% inadequate

Standard 11. Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) = 4.97% RI and 0.17% inadequate

Standard 12. Additional specific requirements for commissioning bodies = 10.29% RI and 0% inadequate

What is noticeable is that the areas requiring the most improvement are the same as last year, with the addition of the areas in relation to Standard 11. This demonstrates that more needs to be done to work with settings across Portsmouth to communicate effectively how they can improve their safeguarding arrangements in these areas.

The PSCP requests that settings who completed the Compact Audit last year and marked any indicators as requiring improvement or as inadequate submit an update on the progress and impact of these actions. Some of the examples given are:

- *Completion of the Compact Audit has helped to highlight the importance of what we do and how, if things are not done correctly, the consequences of this.*
- *The focus on safeguarding from point of induction and safer recruitment training for managers has promoted a positive safeguarding culture.*
- *All staff understand that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and a culture of it could happen here. Safeguarding procedures in school are secure and staff are more vigilant around the nuances of change for the children.*
- *The work completed alongside the children has been particularly beneficial and empowered the children in their knowledge also.*
- *Ensuring that any future changes are assessed, ensures that the impact upon all children and other stakeholders are considered and not unfairly discriminated against.*
- *Implementing Safeguarding Board Meetings where every term the DSL, Safeguarding Link Governor, and Senior Safeguarding Officers meet. These allow the team to review patterns and trends on a termly basis, including making comparisons to previous years.*
- *Contactors are challenged when coming onto school site if no DBS or accompanied by school staff at all times so that children are not exposed to adults without DBS.*



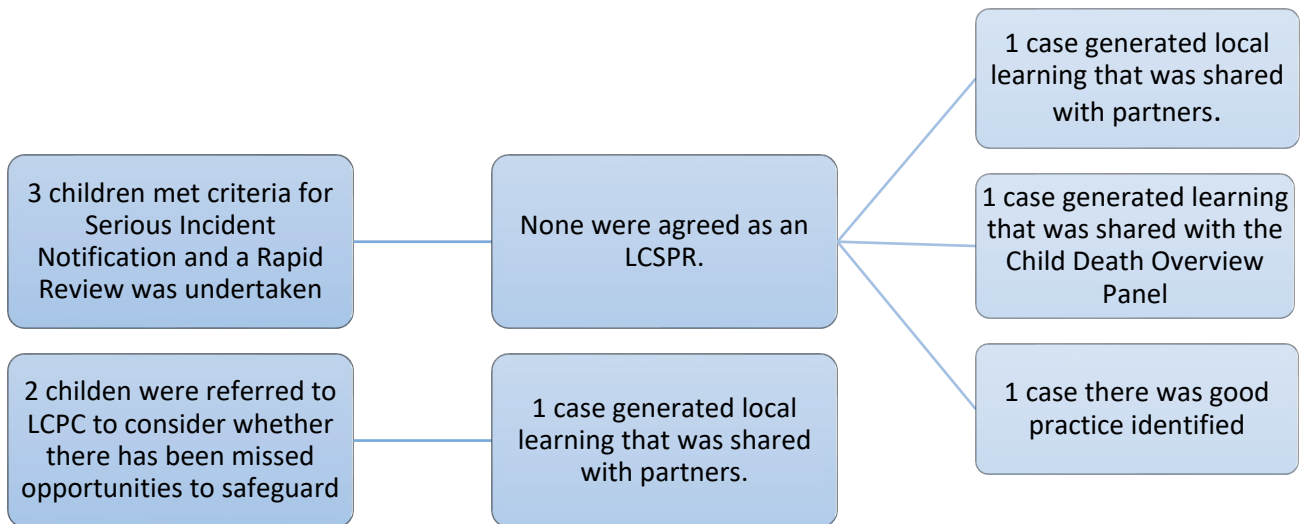
Learning from Children & Practice

In accordance with [Working Together 2018](#), a Local Safeguarding Partnership should consider undertaking a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR) when it is thought that the case:

- highlights or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified
- highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children
- highlights or may highlight concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- is one which the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has considered and concluded a local review may be more appropriate.

If a case meets the above criteria, it does not mean that a LCSPR must be agreed. It is for the local area to determine the relevance and opportunity for local learning and development.

Where a case meets criteria for a Serious Incident Notification as per Working Together 2018, the Local Authority is required to notify Ofsted. The Partnership then has 15 days to conduct a Rapid Review and make a formal decision regarding any further review. All decisions are agreed by the Learning from Children & Practice Committee (LCPC), the Safeguarding Partners, and the Independent Chair.



LCSPR Reports are published on our Safeguarding Children Partnership website in our [learning from practice](#) section. During the period April 2022 to March 2023 the PSCP has not published any Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. However it has completed the following:

Thematic Review into availability of Tier 4 beds - The instances of 3 young people were referred to the LCPC between Oct/Nov 2021 that had common concerns as they been placed on paediatric wards with significant mental health and/or 'behaviour' issues where the local hospital is deemed a 'place of safety' because no other option was available. Whilst there were no concerns that met the threshold for a LCSPR, it did highlight what is both a local and national challenge of placement bed availability. The Head of Integrated Commissioning for the local authority and Portsmouth Clinical Commissioning Group undertook a thematic review into this issue. This considered the journey of 13 young people to their admission to hospital. 6 actions were developed in response to this review, which were:

1. Investment was made into the Paediatric Psychiatric Liaison Service at the hospital and will be monitored through the quarterly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Performance Review.
2. The CAMHS Closer to Home Service started to take cases during March 2022 which should support more young people at home and avoid admission.

3. Portsmouth CCG have committed to investing in 3 new mental health roles to support the 'Team around the Worker', to be hosted in the Integrated Targeted Early Help Service as part of a new approach to chronic absence.
4. Portsmouth CCG have committed to investing in an additional role in the CAMHS LD team to provide greater capacity for crisis support.
5. A multi-agency bid to the DfE respite programme has been submitted, jointly with Southampton, for out of school activity.
6. Engaged with Hampshire Childrens Social Care to develop system-wide mechanisms to support young people in avoiding hospital admission or to speed up discharge.

'Henry' was a 2-month-old baby who was suspected of being physically harmed by his parent, resulting in substantial injuries. This incident was notified to Ofsted by the Local Authority and a Rapid Review was completed. Whilst the case met the criteria for a LCSRP, there were similarities in learning to those identified in [Child E](#), [Child I](#), [Freya](#) and [Skylar](#). Instead, the learning identified in the Rapid Review will be shared with relevant agencies, appropriate recommendations developed and consideration of the appropriateness of the response built into the Deep-Dive on the Unborn Baby Protocol being undertaken in 2023. This will include consideration of what the barriers may have been in effectively implementing the recommendations from the previous reviews. The National Panel has agreed with our decision.



Workforce Development

The PSCP training programme has grown in strength and depth over the past year. Following the significant changes made to adapt to the consequences of Covid19, the team have reformed the offer again to meet the growing need for connection. Through extensive feedback gained from across the workforce, it was clear that learning 'in person' is of far greater benefit and the networking gained in being together improves relationships resulting in more effective safeguarding practices. However shorter courses remain on-line as this supports easier access to them, and has the benefit that delegates are off-site from their place of work for a shorter period of time

The PSCP training offer has strengthened its focus the importance of growing a safeguarding culture in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and other statutory guidance, research and evidence. Underpinning much of this work is the focus on language and how it reflects our values. Building on the relational and restorative work, language forms an essential part of how we develop practice which is inclusive, accessible and kind. An essential element of all of the taught sessions on the PSCP training programme, is that delegates are given time and support to consider application of their learning in practice. The feedback from attendees is overwhelmingly positive, that in particular this has enabled their practice to improve and strengthened how they work together across the multi-agency network and how they connect with children and families.

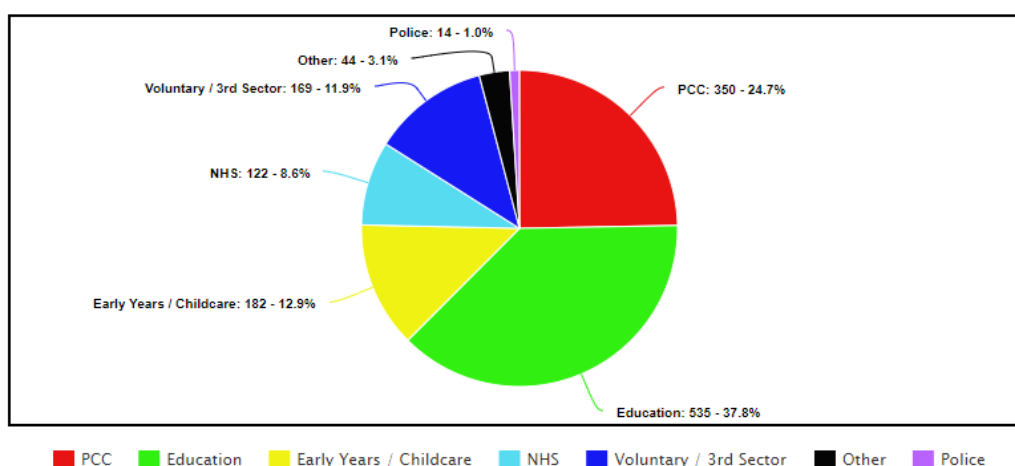
Another key focus this year has been to strengthen how we embed learning from both our audit and scrutiny activity and from learning from children and practice into training. In combination with the feedback from delegates through evaluation of the courses they have attended, this allows for adaptations to be made to the programme throughout the year to ensure the training remains meaningful and current.

Going forward the priority is to continue to strengthen the PSCP training in line with local and national learning. The training team will respond to bespoke work in line with the growing momentum around language development and relational practice. Re-think will be a central strategy in supporting the workforce to improve outcomes for children and their families. And finally the team will work together with the PSCP Business Manager to ensure effective improvement activity is designed in line with learning gained from the Partnership's activity.

Attendance on PSCP Training

Despite there being a 5.2% decrease in the number of multi-agency training courses available in 2022-23 compared to the previous year, there was a 7% increase in bookings and a 5.6% increase in attendance.

Multi-agency training data	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Number of courses run	129	134	127
Number of bookings	1,972	1,636	1,766
Number of attendances	1,556	1,337	1,416
Booking attendance %	79%	81.72%	80%



As can be seen in the chart above, the majority of attendees on these courses come from education settings and Portsmouth City Council

However, caution needs to be applied when making a comparison to the preceding years for both single and multi-agency training, due to many of these courses being impacted by restrictions applied following the Covid19 pandemic.

The requests for single agency (bespoke) training grew significantly in 2022-23 with a 133% increase in the number of courses ran. Throughout the year, as well as the inset training delivered to education settings, there has been considerable work carried out on a single agency basis with Hampshire Constabulary, and teams within Solent NHS and Portsmouth City Council.

Single Agency Data	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Number of courses run	17	27	63
Booking Attendances	408	1,220	1,506

A contributing factor for this high growth in single agency training is how practitioners and managers experience the multi-agency training programme. Following reports of positive learning experiences, managers often contact the team for further input, wanting to have a more specific and targeted training input delivered to their team. Equally those who have had bespoke training previously have come back again for further input.

Re-think

In the PSCP 2021-22 Annual Report, the development of the Re-think approach was described in relation to the learning from the Skylar LCSPR. Over the past year Re-think has grown in strength and momentum, and a growing number of sessions have been facilitated in order to support the workforce in relation to their safeguarding work with children and families to:

- Address and repair professional disagreement and / conflict
- Find creative solutions to 'stuckness'
- Define roles and responsibilities to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration

Giving and receiving honest challenge about our work with families can be difficult and taking time to 'slow down' and consider how to go about hearing challenge is vital to ensure children and their families are kept at the centre of our work. Resolving concerns is beginning to be seen as an integral part of how we advocate for children and their families in Portsmouth. Re-think is beginning to support the workforce to address such challenges.

Further work in evaluating the impact of Re-think is being prioritised over the coming year and will build on the existing evidence showing impact on practice.



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Agenda Item 4



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

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Title of Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Title of report:	Annual Fostering Service Report, April 2022 to March 2023
Date of meeting:	14 December 2023
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Author:	Jackie Clark - Service Leader, Fostering Service
Wards:	All

1. **Requested by**

1.1 Requested by: Lead Member for Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council in line with The Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011, Review of Quality of Care Regulation 35 and in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Service 2011.

2. **Purpose**

2.1 The report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Fostering Service for the period 01/04/22-31/03/23.

3. **Information requested**

3.1 Activity of the Fostering Service contribution to the overall aims of the Corporate Parenting Strategy for the Children We Care For.

4. **Introduction - Portsmouth Fostering Service**

4.1 The Fostering Service's primary function is to provide excellent care to the children we care for in Portsmouth, by recruiting, assessing, training, and supporting approved foster carers who can offer sensitive and empathetic alternative family homes to children in care.

4.2 This report will describe the work of the service and how it achieves the outcomes that are set, from the moment someone contacts Portsmouth to show interest in fostering. It describes the assessment process, to approval as foster and connected

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foster carers, the training carers receive and to looking after children. It will describe the route for those children who will leave care through a Special Guardianship Order. It will outline what can be offered to children who reach 18 in a foster family through Staying Put arrangements or who need further support in a supported lodgings arrangement. The report will highlight the work of the Mockingbird model of care since it was introduced 2021. The report will also consider Private Fostering arrangements. Finally, it will provide data about various elements of the work and in conclusion the work for the year ahead.

5. Recruitment and Assessment Team

5.1 This team is the front door to the Fostering Service: 'Foster Portsmouth', through the recruitment of potential foster carers. The team participates in the recruitment campaigns, responds to all potential carer enquiries, undertakes initial home visits and initial statutory training and the assessment of potential carers. This team works closely with the fostering marketing officers who support with development and delivery of an annual foster carer recruitment strategy for 'Foster Portsmouth' to increase the numbers of people interested in fostering.

5.2 Foster carers are assessed and approved for the number of children for which they have the skills, qualities, experience, and physical space to care. This could be between 1 and 3 unrelated children. They are generically approved for the age range 0-18 but the assessment enables the assessing social worker and prospective carers to understand and decide their suitability and preferred age range of children. Foster carers can be approved for different types of care: respite, short term, long term and parent and baby care. They may be approved for one or more types of care according to their preference, skills, and experience. Foster carers offering long term care are encouraged to care for the child beyond the age of 18 in a Staying Put arrangement to support the child's transition into adulthood. The team also assesses households offering to support a young adult through Supported Lodgings care to those age 18-24yrs, supporting them with preparation for independent living.

5.3 The Foster carers' skills and experience are evaluated during their assessment, as such when they are approved as foster carers with their skill levels determined at level one, two or three carers for which they are paid the relevant skill fee. The higher level represents those carers with substantial skills and experience of caring for children with particularly complex needs who require a high level of specific care and support. Those children are more likely to be children aged ten and over, having experienced significant trauma through neglect, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and are vulnerable to exploitation. There are also specialist parent and child carers offering homes to parents and babies with complex issues. These carers will

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contribute to the assessment and support of the parent to determine the parents' capacity to care for the child in the longer term.

6. Access to Resources and Fostering Support Team

6.1 Access to Resources (A2R) are responsible for identifying external care providers for children needing specialist care. A2R work very closely with the Fostering Support Team that has the statutory responsibility for supervising approved foster carers and supporting them to meet the needs of children. This includes accessing a comprehensive training programme and a range of provision from our partners that meet the needs of children, for example the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), and the trauma informed model of care (TIMOC) and the Virtual School specialising in helping children with their education. The Fostering Support Team also facilitate a number of support groups for carers, for example, those caring for children seeking safety & asylum, and those caring for teenagers.

6.2 All foster carers are required to have an annual review of their approval and this process is undertaken by one Reviewing Officer who sits within the Fostering Support Team. The Fostering Support Team also provides an out of hours on call service offering advice and guidance to the carers.

7. The Connected Persons Team (including Special Guardianship Support, Private Fostering and Step-Parent Adoption)

7.1 This team works very closely with the children's social work teams to identify and assess potential family members as carers for children unable to live with parents. These family members are assessed as formally approved connected persons' carers and receive supervision and support as foster carers, or they are helped to obtain legal responsibility to care for the child via a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) whereby the child can then leave the care of the local authority.

7.2 Those family members with an SGO continue to be supported after the order is made, by the special guardianship support worker through monthly support meetings, individual support, and access to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF), a government grant for funding for specialist therapeutic support to adopted children and those living with special guardians. Special guardian support is offered by the local authority to special guardian families from the making of the order until the child reaches 18. The support is provided by the local authority in which the child lived at the making of the SGO for the first three years after the order and thereafter support becomes the responsibility of the local authority in which the child lives. However, when financial support is provided as part of the support plan for a child leaving care for special guardianship financial support remains the responsibility of the local authority in which the child was in care.

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7.3 Some families may make private arrangements for their child to live with a friend or a distant family member and therefore enter a Private Fostering arrangement. As required by legislation, private foster carers are assessed by a member of the Connected Persons team as are those families seeking Stepparent Adoption. Children who are living in these arrangements are not cared for by the local authority.

8. The Fostering Panel

8.1 To meet legal requirements and quality assure all new carers assessments, prospective and approved carers are scrutinised in terms of their suitability to care by the independent Fostering Panel which meets a minimum of twice per month. The panel consider the assessments of prospective foster carers, the first year annual review of foster carers, the panel also reviews any carers subject to a safeguarding issues and allegations regarding their care.

8.2 Although not a statutory requirement, because it is considered good practice the panel also considers the plans for a child/ren to remain living with their carer on a long-term fostering basis until they can return to their family or move onto independent living as an adult.

8.3 The panel considers applications of Staying Put arrangements for those children turning 18 and continuing to live with their foster carers and those offering supported lodgings carers, providing semi-independent homes to young adults in preparation for independent living. (Please see appendix 1: The Annual Fostering Panel Chair Report June 2023).

The Fostering Service Activity

9. Foster Carer Recruitment (national context)

9.1 Nationally, fostering recruitment has been a challenge and data collated by government shows mainstream fostering capacity has decreased slightly since 2018. Foster carers generally comprise two categories - mainstream foster carers, who care for non-related children, and connected carers who care for children within their own family/friends network.

9.1 At 31st March 2022, nationally there were 43,905 fostering households in England, and 36,050 were mainstream fostering households. Since 2018, the number of approved mainstream fostering households has decreased by 4%.

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- 9.2 There has been a downward trend in the number of applications for mainstream fostering over the last five years, for both local authority and independent fostering agencies (IFAs). A relatively large number of enquiries are not converting into applications.
- 9.3 The number of mainstream fostering applications fell from 10,520 in 2018 to 8,280 in 2022. Local authorities reported a ratio of eight initial enquiries per application and IFAs reported a ratio of 23 initial enquiries per application. The Government data collated from local authorities and IFA's indicates that a relatively large volume of enquiries are not translating into applications.
- 9.4 However there has been an increase in connected carers by 29% since 2018 (6,100). The proportion of total approved fostering households that are family and friends' households has increased from 14% in 2018 to 18% in 2022.

Foster Portsmouth Recruitment Activity

- 9.3 Portsmouth has seen an increase in the number of foster carer approvals for this year, a total of 22 compared with 11 the previous year with an increase in the number of those enquiring going on to be assessed and approved.
- 9.4 A fulltime marketing officer leads on the development and delivery of an annual carer recruitment strategy and focuses on foster carer recruitment.
- 9.5 The achieved strategy for the 2022/23 included:
- Local radio campaigns with Express Radio, Heart and Hits Radio throughout the year including advertising recruitment events and interviews with carers.
 - TV Interview BBC South Today with foster carers at the recruitment event during Foster Care Fortnight in May 2023.
 - Radio campaign to promote Foster Care Fortnight in May with foster carer interviews.
 - Digital marketing enhanced - ongoing social media -Portsmouth's Facebook, Twitter pages promoting fostering.
 - Mockingbird Model of Care promotion - local radio interviews, social media.
 - Video interviews of carers uploaded to Foster Portsmouth website.

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- Carer interviews featured in Portsmouth News and Portsmouth Flagship and other local publications -Education Term Times, the national Fostering Network Magazine- Mockingbird.
- Live recruitment events arranged throughout the year, including: The Spinnaker Tower; Hilton Hotel Portsmouth; Love Southsea Market; Victorious Festival; The Great South Run; Pop Up events at various supermarkets in Portsmouth and surrounding areas.
- New 'Foster Portsmouth' posters displayed across the city and leaflet delivery to households.
- Carers recommend a friend financial award incentive promoted to all existing carers.

9.6 There were a total number of 237 enquiries received in 2022/23. Those enquiries were followed up by direct contact by a member of the recruitment team and a home visit for those wishing to proceed. The home visit (if appropriate), leads to the formal application assessment. Marketing research shows it can take two to three years for a prospective foster carer to make the decision to apply to foster after gathering information from various sources.

9.7 Local authority and independent fostering agencies (IFA's) effectively compete for prospective carers. For example, Portsmouth will seek to recruit carers from within the city but also within a twenty-mile radius of Portsmouth to enable children in care to remain in touch with family, their community and attend school or local education provision.

Table 1

Year	Enquiries	Initial Home Visits	Enquiry to IHV	Approved	Home visit to approval	Enquiry to Approved Conversion Rate
2022/2023	237	36	15%	22	61%	9%
2021/2022	216	37	17%	11	30%	5%
2020/2021	274	40	14.6%	29	72.5%	10.6%
2019/2020	269	60	22.3%	31	52%	11.5%
2018/2019	336	71	21.1%	11	15.5%	3.3%

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- 9.8 Table 1 shows that the conversion rate for Portsmouth in 2022/23 was 15% for enquiry to home visit and 61% for home visit to approval - 9% for enquiry to foster carer approval. The lower conversion rates from enquiry to approval are due to the number of enquiries being made by people not in a position to foster at the time, for example, making tentative enquiries in considering a lifestyle change, not having bedroom space, health issues or not in a financial position to balance employment and fostering. However there has been a significant improvement in terms of the increase from 2020/21 in the number of those prospective carers going forward to be assessed and approved. Some of those coming forward were carers transferring from independent fostering agencies and some were encouraged by existing carers feedback regarding the support offered to Portsmouth carers. Recruitment of foster carers is very much influenced through successful retention of carers therefore it is critical that existing foster carers feel valued by the local authority and are well supported in their role.
- 9.9 Fostering assessments are completed in a two-stage process over a total of eight months. The National Minimum Care Standards guide the timescale for foster carer assessment. Stage one is for the safeguarding statutory checks to be completed- DBS, medical report and references and stage two the initial training and home/family assessment. In 2020 Portsmouth implemented a practice standard of a total of six months for an assessment to be completed (up to four months for a carer transferring from another agency). For 2022/2023, the average timescale for assessments completed 2022/23 was 5.1 months.
- 9.10 There were 22 newly approved mainstream foster carers and 14 connected carers which is a total increase of 36 fostering households. During the same period there was a total of 23 mainstream and connected carer fostering households deregistered.
- Two of the households were deregistered as they became special guardians to the children they cared for, which is a positive outcome.
 - Five were connected carers who were deregistered as the children moved home to their parents.
 - Thirteen carers resigned due to retirement, health issues or a change in their personal circumstances.
 - One carer resigned due to feeling not adequately supported.

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- Two fostering families were deregistered due to a review of their approval and the decision made that they were unsuitable to continue to be carers.
- 9.11 In Portsmouth there were 237 enquiries during 2022/23 resulting in 27 applications being made during that period. Those considering fostering tend to make enquiries at a very early point when they may not be able to make an application and at that point are often gathering information. For example, they need to have a bedroom available for a child, consider their family circumstances including their availability to care for a child, and any financial implications. Of the 27 applications to become foster carers made that year:
- 22 went on to be approved.
 - 7 were still in assessment (applications having been made in the latter part of the year).
 - 6 applications were closed. The reasons for those applications (assessments) being closed were due to applicants': significant health issues, decision to move abroad, not suitable to proceed; change of personal circumstances.
- 9.12 Those 22 fostering households approved comprised of five applications from fostering families wishing to transfer from independent fostering agencies. This is an increase from four transferred from IFA's the previous year.
- 9.13 Feedback from those choosing to become foster carers for Portsmouth refer to Portsmouth Fostering Service being local with close contact with the team and the support available, particularly the Mockingbird model.
10. **Numbers of Approved Carers and Placements**
- 10.1 As of 31/03/23 Portsmouth had **225 fostering households (Table 3)**.
- 10.2 Each carer household will be approved for a specific number of children according to bedroom availability, the carer's preferred age range of child, and the skills and experience of carers in meeting children's needs. Those fostering households will also offer variation in terms of short term, long-term and/or respite care. Those households have the potential to provide homes for a total of 468 children at any

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one time according to the number of children and type of care for which they are approved. 31 of the 225 fostering households were connected carers.

- 10.3 This means 14% fostering households were approved specifically to care for the child/ren to which they are related and are therefore not "mainstream" foster carers. Three foster carers were approved adoptive families and were temporarily approved as foster carers specifically for the children they were seeking to adopt therefore were also not mainstream foster carers. There has been an increase in connected carers for Portsmouth from 10% 2021/22 to 14% 2023. The increase reflects the national trend for increasing number of connected carers by 29% since 2018. The proportion of total approved fostering households that are family and friends' households has increased from 14% in 2018 to 18% in 2022.
- 10.4 The mainstream foster carers can be approved for a maximum of three children, four if siblings. Not all carers will be approved for the maximum number of children according to their wishes, skills, experience. Carers may not have the maximum number of children in their care at any one time. For example, a child with very complex issues and high support needs may need be the sole focus of the carer. Some carers may choose to limit the number of children they look after for a period due to their own personal circumstances.
- 10.5 Some carers may be on hold for personal reasons or a formal complaint about their care being investigated and not available to look after any children. If a carer is on hold for 12 months, or they have a change in their household circumstances they would have a review of their approval. The carers approval status will also impact on their capacity. They will be approved for respite, short-term and long-term care. Some may also be approved for parent and baby care. For example, if they are providing parent and baby care, the carers would not be able to care for another child in any of the other categories.

11. Children We Care For

- 11.1 At 31/03/23 there were 389 children in our care (Table 3). 263 were living with Portsmouth foster carers which is the equivalent of 67.6% within our own fostering family households.
- 11.2 Of the remainder of those children:

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- 30 children were PCC or external residential children's home.
- 42 children were with independent fostering agency carers (IFAs).
- 27 children with a care order were placed with their parents.
- 2 were in parent and baby residential homes.
- 10 were with fostering for adoption placements or with their adoptive families.
- 15 in residential education, health, secure placement, or unregulated placements.

12. Number of Children Needing Care

- 12.1 Access to Resources received a total of 512 referrals for children 2022/23, an increase from the total 429 the previous year. Some of those children were already being cared for and needed a change of placement/carer, however there were a total of 201 for children needing to come into care. Not all those children became cared for with some remaining with the parent or staying with family members.
- 12.2 Children needing a change of carer reflects a relatively low number of vulnerable children who have experienced significant trauma in their backgrounds and have complex issues which can be a challenge and not sustainable longer term for some carers. Matching children with suitable carers, those with the skills, experience, and resilience, does not necessarily equate with those carers available and offering to care at the time.
- 12.3 The highest proportion of children needing foster families, either being referred from living at home or needing a change of carer is the older cohort 11-16 years. The second cohort are young sibling groups, including twins. Portsmouth has been successful in being able to match most children with inhouse foster carers, and the majority of Portsmouth children remain living in stable fostering family homes.

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The table below illustrates the age bands of children referred needing care over the course of the year- the type of placement needed and outcome of referral.

Table 2

Age Band	2021/ 2022	2022/23
0 - 4 yrs.	86	150
5 - 10 yrs.	113	77
11 - 16 yrs.	155	227
17+ yrs.	75	58
Types of placements		
Parent and child	22	44
Siblings	63	62
New referral	161	201
Placement Change	134	130
Respite referral	137	181
Outcome		
IFA	26	42
In House	271	287
Other*	141	181

*External residential, PCC children's home, parent/, referral withdrawn were age 11-19

The table below illustrate below the number of fostering households has remained consistently above 200 and most children in the care are placed with Portsmouth foster carers.

Table 3

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No of foster carers households	218	211	214	237	220	225
No of children in care	417	493	468	381	387	389
No of children with PCC Carers	258	288	246	242	272	263
No of children with IFA Carers	67	60	58	31	40	42
No of children with Residential Carers	21	23	30	24	26	30
Remainder*	71	122	134	84	49	54

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*Placed at home with parents, placed with prospective adoptive families, education/health/secure placements, alternative arrangements

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Table 4

Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Children leaving care	187	151	198	209	128	162
No of children leaving care to SGO	22	12	10	12	8	11
No of children leaving care to adoption	30	15	26	17	18	13
No of children leaving care to return to parents	35	21	26	22	29	25
No of children leaving care - transferring to staying put arrangement with foster carers (data not collected prior to 2022/23)	-	-	-	-	-	25
Remainder*	100	103	136	158	73	74

13. Staying Put and Supported Lodgings

13.1 Fostering families with children living with them long term may stay beyond the age of 18 years. There were 25 Staying Put arrangements agreed during 2022/23 (Table 4), an increase from 10 the previous year bringing the total to 30 over the course of the year. Such arrangements enable children in care to remain with their foster family up to the age of 25 years (if in full time education) as they prepare for independence. The increase in staying put arrangements reflects fostering families developing enduring relationships with the children they care for and continue to support them through to independence. The increased number of those carers offering Staying Put arrangements means a reduction in the number of care experienced young people leaving their foster family and moving to a supported lodgings carer. However, some care experienced young people may move on from foster family to alternative semi-independent accommodation in the community.

13.2 Supported lodgings carers offer semi-independent living to young adults between age 18 and 24 years old. There were three households approved for supported lodgings, the equivalent number were approved the previous year 2022/2023.

13.3 Therefore, in terms of mainstream carers, including supported lodgings carers and connected carers there were a total of 39 new carer households for 2022/2023.

14. Connected Carers

14.1 When children come into care, we explore the potential for those children to live within their wider family first in the event of them not being able to return to live with parents.

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14.2 For the period 2022/2023 a total of 52 assessments of connected persons were initiated. Within that cohort of family friends being assessed there may be more than one family member considering caring for the child/ren and not all will go on to be approved either as connected carer or special guardian. Some family members withdrew, and some assessed as not suitable. Of the assessments completed this year there were 13 connected carer families formally approved as foster carers for related child/children and seven connected persons assessed and granted special guardianship orders for children.

14.3 In terms of other types of connected care there were eleven private fostering arrangements approved for the children staying with family friend or distant relative culminating in a total of fourteen children living private fostering arrangements over the course of the year. These children are not cared for by the local authority, however the private fostering assessment ensures there is a safeguarding oversight of the child living away from parents for more than 28 days. There were no step-parent adoption applications made. It may be that step-parent adoption is not the preferred legal option for those families as there are now a greater range of legal orders they can choose.

15. Concerns/Complaints/Allegations against carers

15.1 Complaints against carers can range from care standards not being met to allegations of abuse of a child.

15.2 There were 18 complaints made against carers regarding their care of children, with seven resulting in a review of their approval. Of those:

- The number of complaints/allegations increased from 10 to 18 for the year 2022/2023. The increase in allegations referred for a fostering household review reflects an increase in complaints and allegations nationally as identified by the Fostering Network and Foster Talk.
- The number of concerns and complaints regarding carers has increased over the course of this year and it may be reflective of the uncertainty, stress, and pressures of the significant changes in living arrangements, relationships, employment and health and aftermath of the Covid pandemic and the impact and challenges caring for children with complex issues.
- Two fostering families were deregistered due concerns regarding their standards of care.
- One fostering family submitted an appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM), however the IRM upheld the recommendation to deregister them as foster carers. The IRM is a review process which

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prospective or existing foster carers can use when they do not agree with a decision made in respect of their approval as foster carers.

16. Foster carer support and retention

- 16.1 The fostering support team is responsible for the supervision and support of all foster carers with a full-time social worker supervising an average of 20 fostering households. Carers have their own allocated supervising social worker visiting at least monthly to support the carer (Government timescales six weekly), and ensure they are meeting the child's needs. They will also undertake a minimum of one unannounced visit per year. In partnership with the carer, their social worker supports them to complete their statutory Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS), and identify appropriate enhanced training and additional support they may need to enable them to meet children's needs. Working closely with children's social workers supervising social workers will identify any issues relating to the carer that may impact on placement stability and increase their support and arrange regular placement support meetings.
- 16.2 There are a range of support groups for foster carers throughout the year , for example a support group for carers of teenagers, carers of children seeking safety & asylum, and a parent and baby carer support group.
- 16.3 Foster carers can also be supported by our Foster Carer Mentors, highly skilled and experienced foster carers who will work alongside foster carers needing specific support offering guidance and support through a challenging period.
- 16.4 Our CAMHS team offers the carers therapeutic support group on a six weekly basis and will complement that through CAMHS consultations for individual carers and their supervising social workers when there is a specific need relating to the child they care for.
- 16.5 In addition, the Fostering Service provides an out of hours support line for carers, which means carers are able to speak directly with a member of fostering team often preventing a crisis situation and the need for the carer to contact the overarching Hampshire Out of Hours Service.
- 16.6 There are also opportunities for carers to meet socially with each other and members of the team through foster carer lunches held termly.
- 16.7 Foster carers can contribute to service development through the Foster Carer Liaison Group which meets bi-monthly. The Liaison Group comprises a core membership of foster carers who set the agenda, liaising with other carers to raise any issues or comments for service development. The meeting is chaired by the

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Head of Service for Children We Care For with other staff representative members including the Service Lead Fostering, Service Lead for Building Your Futures, Service Lead for Service Quality Team, Participation Officer and Virtual School Head Teacher.

17. Foster Carer Training

- 17.1 Portsmouth Fostering Service offers a wide range of learning opportunities to all carers from the start of their journey in assessment starting with Skills to Foster training. The training pathway provides courses face to face, virtual and webinars daytime, evenings, and weekends.
- 17.2 All carers receive a copy of the training pathway and the annual training calendar. Additional learning opportunities are offered throughout the year as they become available such as webinars and workshops offered by Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board and when appropriate, foster carers can join training with social workers. We also work closely with other specialist departments in Portsmouth to offer specialist medical training to carers such as tracheotomy etc. Carers also can join the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting which offers support in several ways: online learning, workshops and group sessions.
- 17.3 Carers training needs are identified through carer supervision and through wider service development. For example, the Trauma Informed Model of Care (TIMOC) implemented across children, families and education is provided to all carers. In 2022 to promote children we care for returning home, Supporting Positive Family Time and Strengthening Relationships was promoted and introduced to all carers.
- 17.4 There was a decline in carer attendance in training for 2022 however the highest engagement was with the TIMOC training (114 sessions attended by a total of 19 carers), Safer Care (30), Introduction to Safeguarding (42), Digital Parenting -online safeguarding (38) Emergency Paediatric First Aid (48) for this year which reflects carers awareness and commitment to mandatory training. However, there was an increase in carer cancelling/non-attendance at training over the course of this year which suggests a correlation with carers experiencing significant challenges this year. For example, increasing numbers of children needing carers has meant some carers looking after more children they would ordinarily do so or may be caring for a child outside their preferred age range. This means the commitment to caring for those children may impact on their availability to attend training.
- 17.5 However, there was an improved engagement with Supporting Positive Family Time and Strengthening Relationships which supports the family safeguarding model and working with parents/family members to ensure a return home for the child remains

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a consideration for all children we care for and promotes continuing bonds for those children who may need to remain with carers longer term.

- 17.6 The table below is an illustration of some of the training available to all foster carers and numbers attended.

Table 5

Row Labels	Count of Course
Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)	31
Allegations Complaints and Standards of Care Concerns	10
Basic Awareness of Children who Display (HSB) Harmful Sexual Behaviours	5
Caring for the Traumatized Child	19
Cultural Competencies in Looked After Children	7
De-Escalation Training for Foster Carers	28
Digital Parenting (Online Safeguarding)	38
Emergency Paediatric First Aid (Foster Care)	48
Exploitation Masterclass - Consider Your Language - Victim Blaming	16
Information Governance & GDPR	8
Introduction to Nonviolent Resistance (NVR)	6
Introduction to Safeguarding	42
Loss and Bereavement of Looked after Children	6
Non-Violent Restraint (NVR) advanced - Helping with anxiety	4
Preparation for Permanence	7
PREVENT	2
Promoting Attachment and Resilience in Looked After Children	20
Promoting Resilience and Happiness for Carers	15
Relationships and Sex Education	20
Reporting and Recording	28
Safer Care	30
Substance Use for Foster Carers	2
Supporting Positive Family Time and Strengthening Relationships	24
Team Around Your Portsmouth Child (TAPC)	10
Training, Support and Development Standards (TSDS)	12
Trauma Informed Model of Care (TIMOC)	114
Understanding Behaviour	6
Skills to Foster Training for Mainstream Carers	28
Grand Total	586

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18. Mockingbird Model of Foster Care

- 18.1 The Mockingbird Model of Care initially launched in January 2021 has boosted retention and received excellent feedback from carers and children involved. Portsmouth continues to be the pioneer in the south coast embedding the Mockingbird model as part of the fostering service. Based on the principle of an extended family caring for children, one hub home fostering household leads and supports a network of up to 10 fostering families-a constellation, caring for up to a total of 18 children. Three of the constellations' new carers motivation to join Portsmouth was due to the feedback from Mockingbird. Portsmouth now has five constellations. Two very experienced and longstanding carers who were considering leaving fostering decided due to the introduction of Mockingbird.
- 18.2 The constellations thrive on the relationships formed between the hub home carers and their diverse network of carers and children. The strong relationships promote mutual support, social and learning activities for the carers and most significantly, fosters positive outcomes for children we care for. Children can have sleepovers with the hub home carer when the carer might need a break, a teenager wants a break, or the child wants to spend time with another child who is living with the carer-promoting children's relationships.
- 18.3 As the strong relationships develop between the carers network there is a natural evolvment of the children forming friendships and engagement in social activities. Mockingbird also welcomes children's own family members enabling them to retain relationships with parents, siblings and those important to them. The strength of the diverse relationships and the mutual support led by the hub home carer within the constellation boosts resilience amongst the families, alleviating carers sense of isolation -practically and emotionally - and reduces the risk of placement breakdown. The research by the National Fostering Network in the recent National Independent Care Review identifies the extended family model of care as a key factor and opportunity to boost and sustain placement stability.
- 18.4 The feedback from carers and children in care within Mockingbird has been consistently positive. The carers value the mutual support, the close relationships, and opportunities to have natural breaks without impacting negatively on the children. The feedback from children has been clear in that the enjoy the opportunity to have friends and be part of social group. Children within Mockingbird have been instrumental in feeding back their experience through participation in Children in Care Council that has helped influence the growth of Mockingbird in Portsmouth.
- 18.5 Portsmouth now has five constellations : north Portsmouth, central Portsmouth and Gosport/Fareham and having launched a further two this year Havant/Waterlooville and south Portsmouth.

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18.6 This model is a great example of co-production in terms of planning and service delivery. Our foster carer contribution to the development of children and family service is highly valued and there is carer representation on the Corporate Parenting Operational Board, the Children We Care For Virtual Education Service and Children We Care For Health Service.

19. Conclusion

19.1 Most of Portsmouth's children in care continue to be cared for by Portsmouth foster carers. It is important that the rate of foster carer recruitment is in line with the increase in number of children being cared for and that carers are able to meet the complex needs of children affording children we care for safe, stable and nurturing fostering family home for as long as the child needs.

19.2 Whilst foster carer retention for Portsmouth is good there is a clear need to increase the number of foster carers able to be suitably matched with the increasing diverse number of children needing care. Portsmouth had a clear marketing strategy and recruitment indications for 2022/23 with a target to increase the number of fostering households being recruited to Portsmouth. Recruitment particularly focuses on carers for teenagers, siblings and unaccompanied children seeking safety & asylum.

19.3 The focus of foster carers support focus is to enable them to care for children who have experienced trauma and trauma informed training will continue to be part of the mandatory training for carers and the fostering team. Building on the TIMOC training, Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) training is being rolled out to the fostering service over the course of 2023.

19.4 The comprehensive training offered to foster carers needs to be reviewed regularly and learning and development department will be developing a system to record and report on carer training records and feedback to inform carer and service learning needs.

19.5 Mockingbird offers a network of support that promotes a close fostering family for the carers and child that boosts placement stability. Learning from Mockingbird shows the Hub Home Carer needs to be available to their carers to support and sustain placement stability. Portsmouth has successfully launched five constellations over two years and the next 12 months will be focused on consolidating the model before further development in 2024.

19.6 The number of connected carers is increasing and those wishing to offer permanence to the child via special guardianship or adoption will be encouraged with the support they need in place. Adopt South offers a broad range of support for adoptive families

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and Portsmouth's special guardian families need to have an equitable support service.

- 19.7 The service will support and enable children to leave care in a timely way and those families continue to be receive the support they need in line with our work in place with Children returning home.

Signed by:

Sarah Daly, Director Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Annual Fostering Report 2022-23

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

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Portsmouth City Council Fostering Panel

Chair's Report April 2022 – March 2023

What is the fostering panel?

- The fostering panel is an integral part of Portsmouth City Council's service to children looked after by the authority.
- All fostering services, whether local authority or independent fostering agencies are required by statute to establish a fostering panel to provide independent recommendations and guidance to the authority regarding the approval and review of foster carers.
- The panel contributes towards the safeguarding responsibilities of the authority in evaluating the capacity of foster carers to provide safe and nurturing care to the children and young people for whom the local authority has responsibility as corporate parent.

What does the fostering panel do?

- The Portsmouth panel meets approximately twice each month and in 2022/23 the panel met on 21 occasions.
- Although prior to the pandemic all panel meetings were held in person, since March 2020 all meetings have been held remotely.
- The panel considers a number of interrelated aspects of the work of the fostering service:
 - applications for the approval of individuals or couples as foster carers and to recommend any terms on which the approval is to be given
 - the review of the approval of foster carers following their first year's approval
 - following a complaint or serious allegation, to consider whether the carer's continued approval is appropriate and if so on what terms
 - advising as to the suitability of connected carers' temporary approval under section 25 of the Care Planning Regulations 2010
 - The panel also considers a number of other applications that form part of its promotion of good practise or monitoring of the functioning of the fostering service. This includes the consideration of the long term match between a child and their foster carers, the consideration of the approval of supported lodgings carers, the monitoring of activity through considering 'Staying Put' arrangements for young adults who wish to remain with their foster carers after the age of 18years, noting the resignations of foster carers and recommending carers' de-registration when they have ceased to foster but have not formally resigned.

What decisions does the panel make?

- The fostering panel is in essence an advisory body which makes recommendations to the authority regarding the matters listed above.
- The actual decisions are made by the head of Looked After Children's Services who is designated as the Agency Decision Maker (the ADM) as it is the local authority's legal duty to provide services to children for whom it has a corporate parenting responsibility.

Who sits on the fostering panel?

- Although it is the responsibility of all fostering agencies to establish a fostering panel, the panel is functionally independent of the local authority.
- The panel is required by the Fostering Services Regulations (England) 2011 to be configured in such a way to ensure its independence. The Central List of panel members must comprise:
 - an independent chair
 - additional independent members, one of whom must be present at every panel
 - social work members who may be a members of the local authority's staff but equally could be independent of the local authority, one of whom must be present at every panel
 - other members who are able to contribute to the work of panel having relevant knowledge or skills such as in health care, education, are care experienced, are foster carers or local councillors.
 - the authority may also appoint up to two members from the Central List to act as vice chairs who can chair in the absence of the panel chair.
- The panel is supported by two professional advisors (fostering service team leaders) and a minute taker.
- Each panel meeting must include the independent chair or vice chair, an independent member, a social work member and at least two other panel members from the Central List to be quorate.

How are standards ensured?

- The duties and responsibilities of the fostering panel are spelled out in the Fostering Services Regulations and National Minimum Standards.
- The contribution of each panel member is annually appraised by the panel chair and professional advisor to the panel.
- The panel chair's contribution is appraised annually by the ADM and service lead for the fostering service.

- The fostering service is inspected as part of Children’s Services by OFSTED and was inspected in May 2023.
- The work of the panel was included in that inspection and in addition to the inspection panel minutes and related ADM decisions the panel chair was interviewed by a member of the Ofsted team.
- The official outcome of that inspection is awaited at the time of writing this report although the informal feedback was positive.
- In addition to the external oversight, the panel itself collects and provides feedback on the quality of the applications presented to panel and each professional or carer is invited to provide feedback through the submission of evaluation forms.

Who can be a foster carer?

- Foster carers considered by panel can be ‘mainstream’ foster carers who are recruited by the authority to care for children looked after and to whom they are not related.
- Foster carers may also be specifically approved as a ‘connected person’ to care for a child with whom they have a family connection or with whom they have an established relationship.
- Although not registered foster carers, the authority also assesses and approves a number of individuals and families who are able to provide a supportive and safe home to a care leaver who is not yet ready for independent living. These placements are known as supported lodgings and are supervised and financially supported by the local authority.

Activity of the panel

- During the period April 2022 to March 2023 panel considered 132 cases in total which is 6 fewer than 2021/22. Of the matters brought to panel:
 - Mainstream applicants: 20 new foster carers recommended approval as unrelated carers for short or long term, respite and family link. (2021/2 the number was 11)
 - Connected carers: 16 applicants recommended for approval. (2021/2 the number was 17)
 - Supported Lodgings: 3 applicants recommended for approval, of which 2 were additional to existing foster carer approval. (2021/2 the number was 3)
 - Staying Put: 20 arrangements noted (2021/2 the number was 17)
 - Regulation 25: 8 considered and recommendations made. (2021/22 the number was 7)
 - Long term linking: 9 recommended approval all but one with PCC carers. (2021/2 the number was 12)

- Household reviews: 17 recommended approval and continued fostering and supported lodgings following the first year of fostering or lodgings provision. (2021/22 the number was 24)
- Allegations/concerns: 7 reviews following a complaint/allegation. Of these, two carers were recommended for de-registration one of whom applied for a review under the IRM mechanism. (2021/22 the number was 10), those recommendations being upheld by the ADM.
- Other: 32 including considering changes in approval, noting resignations, deregistration of carers who have ceased to offer care but who haven't formally resigned. (2021/22 the number was 35)

How did social workers and foster carers experience panel?

- Since April 2020 all panels have been held remotely and possibly as a possible consequence the number of feedback forms returned has diminished considerably. In an attempt to increase the returns the feedback forms and scoring have been simplified with the number of questions asked reduced and scoring range changed to 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent).
- **Social workers** were asked four questions regarding their attendance at panel. Over recent years feedback from social workers and carers has been consistently positive and the year 2022/23 is no exception. The number of feedback forms returned was around 27% (9 of 33 forms sent out) of those sent out and the aggregated scores were as follows:

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Panel points & questions appropriate to matters raised</i>	<i>Sufficient time for discussion</i>	<i>Felt listened to</i>	<i>Panel professionally & fairly conducted</i>
Score out of 4	4	3.98	3.86	3.86

- **Foster carers'** feedback was similarly positive and although some carers reported feeling anxious about on-line meetings the percentage of evaluation forms returned was around 33% (16 of 49 forms sent out) and the feedback received was consistently positive:

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Welcome and comfort</i>	<i>Reasonable time frame for the assessment</i>	<i>Adequately prepared</i>	<i>Sufficient panel time allowed</i>	<i>Appropriate points raised by panel members</i>	<i>Panel fair and professionally conducted</i>
Score out of 4	4	3.91	3.98	4	4	4

- Although of relevance to panel in terms of monitoring, two of the questions relate to the assessment and preparation of carers for panel and this feedback is also positive.
- Given the sample size, it has to be acknowledged that the above data has limitations but equally, the feedback is consistent with the past five years.

Discussion

- Despite the numerous challenges faced by the service over the past year, panel meetings have been maintained at a consistent level of almost twice each month.
- The pandemic and its associated sickness and recruitment implications have inevitably had an impact on the assessment and support of foster carers. However, whilst there has been some variation in the number and type of cases presented this year, this has been with a relatively small variations on previous years.
- One exception to this is that during 2022/3 twenty new mainstream carers were approved which indicated a degree of recovery from a low of eleven in 2021/2.
- The number of allegations and standards of care concerns presented to panel was slightly reduced over the 2021/2 figure (7 as opposed to 10) although the numbers of such cases has shown a small but sustained increase over the past five years. These are all individual circumstances and with such small numbers it is difficult to detect a particular pattern. It seems likely that the pandemic had an impact as face to face support was much reduced and stresses on family life were amplified thus the return to face to face supervision may have resulted in a higher rate of detection of concerns. Nevertheless, there may be important learning to be acquired in relation to matching, support, placement choice and sufficiency.
- Panel's recommendations are routinely made on a unanimous basis and these recommendations have all been accepted by the ADM. On a small number of occasions there has been a divergence of opinion within panel resulting in a majority recommendation. Of note, on one occasion when panel's majority recommendation was that a carer should be de-registered following an allegation but the ADM concluded that the carer's approval should be maintained and reviewed in three months. On one other occasion panel's majority recommendation was that a carer's approval should be maintained subject to certain conditions the ADM decided that the approval should be terminated. The ADM's decision on this occasion was validated through the IRM process.

Strengths

- Recruitment levels in 2022/3 increased significantly over the previous year. Although the recruitment and retention of foster carers is a nationwide issue, Portsmouth has recovered somewhat from the previous year's low in numbers of foster carers recruited.

- Although an imprecise measure, each year the service records the number of 'beds' gained and lost during the year. In the year 2022/3 there was a net gain of 10 'beds' through new recruitment against resignations and de-registrations.
- Of the 20 new mainstream applicants 5 transferred from other fostering agencies during this period. The consistently stated reason for the wish to transfer was the motivation to care for Portsmouth children and believing that the support they would receive from Portsmouth would be of a more consistent quality than they had been receiving from their agency.
- First year reviews are consistently being presented to panel in a timely way and with very few exceptions, foster carers report a positive experience of being foster carers and speak highly of the training they have received and the support and guidance provided by their supervising social workers.
- It is particularly of note how positive foster carers are of their involvement in and the support they have received from being part of a Mockingbird constellation. It is also of note that the possibility of joining a Mockingbird constellation is cited by carers wishing to transfer from other agencies.
- Panel has a stable membership and recruitment undertaken over the past year has enabled additional expertise and diversity to be introduced.
- The panel takes its safeguarding responsibilities seriously, focusing on the welfare of the children without compromise and in considering the suitability of carers and maintaining standards, panel members consistently retain their independent focus on the needs and safety of looked after children.
- There have been three ADMs in the past eighteen months and they have consistently shown confidence in the recommendations of panel in accepting all but two recommendations over the 2020/23 period. On the two occasions the ADM did not accept the recommendation of panel these were circumstances in which panel was itself divided in its opinion. Not all decisions are straightforward and these two cases suggest a considered approach made by both panel and the ADM.
- The long term linking of a child with foster carers is not a statutory duty of fostering panels although is viewed as good practise and forms part of Portsmouth panel's work. Long term linking plays a significant role in the authority's permanence planning and provides a degree of security for young people who can see their foster home as permanent and a home from which they can enter adult life in a supported and timely way.
- The panel continues to be well supported by the two panel advisors, the fostering service in general and its administrative team.
- Panel papers are prepared and presented to panel members in a timely way and panel business is processed smoothly.
- Social workers from the local authority present their work professionally and with integrity. The panel has confidence in the assessment work, the review process and

the linking of children with their foster carers and a productive working relationship continues to be maintained between the service and panel.

- The feedback to panel from both professionals and carers continues to be positive with no repeated suggestions as to improvement.

Areas for development`

- Although there has been a significant improvement in new foster carers joining Portsmouth Fostering Service over the past twelve months it is clear that the authority struggles to fully meet the needs of Portsmouth children in placing them with Portsmouth foster carers. This is far from a unique problem and sufficiency is an issue nationwide. However, there have been years in which more carers have been recruited and further in-house review of recruitment activities and past successes could further inform this going forward.
- Through considering the first year reviews and review of allegations and complaints, the panel has heard some concerns raised by carers regarding children's social workers. Carers frequently cite positively the support and guidance they receive from their supervising social worker, but at times have raised concern about issues such as lack of action or clarity in care planning, managing contact, feelings of not being fully supported when a young person's behaviour is extremely challenging. The panel has heard that this can be impacted by changes in allocated social workers. . It is unlikely there are to be quick and easy remedies given the pressures on social workers' time and staff recruitment difficulties, however the panel has noted this. Any issues that the panel do hear are always raised in panel with the social worker(s) for onward transmission or action, and / or the panel adviser takes the matter up with the fostering service leader or other relevant colleague for further action. Issues that relate to the service are highlighted in the minutes of that agenda item in which the issue has been a feature in the section 'issues for the service' which therefore brings the matter directly to the attention of the ADM. When raised, concerns have always been heard and responded to in an open and considered way.
- On occasion the head of looked after children has attended panel as an observer and participated in training events when any issues can be aired. In terms of improving professional practice and for children's social workers to be better informed of the pressures foster carers are on occasion under it may be helpful that training be arranged to bring together children's social workers, foster carers, supervising social workers and other relevant professionals to explore how various pressure points could be eased.
- Supporting and supervising connected carers can be a challenge for the service. This is particularly the case when the carers are dealing with complex problems of which they have little previous experience or supportive training. Most connected carers see themselves as a relation – aunt, uncle, grandparent and so on and struggle with seeing their role as a foster carer and all the responsibilities and support that

accompanies it such as meeting the TDS, training, recording and on occasion, decision making. Further bespoke training or generic foster carer training also being attuned to connected carers may pay dividends in increasing placement stability.

- For nearly twelve years the fostering panel has had the services of one chair and for the most of that period no vice chair. No panels have been cancelled because of the availability of the chair and despite the vagaries of internet connections no significant disruptions have been caused by internet connection issues.
- Nevertheless, relying on the health and availability of one person does present a risk to the authority that should be addressed through the appointment of a vice chair(s).

Peter Crawhurst

Panel Chair

01.06.23

Agenda Item 5



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY. (Please note that 'Information Only' reports do not require Equality Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance comments as no decision is being taken.)

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Children and Families Services
Subject: Annual Adoption Agency Activity Report April 2022 - March 2023
Date of meeting: 14 December 2023
Cabinet Member: Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children Families and Education
Report by: Renee Eddy Service Lead Building Your Futures and Adoption.
Wards affected: None

1. Requested by:

1.1. It is required by Standard 25.6 of the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 for Local Authority Adoption Services that the executive receives a six-monthly written report outlining the management and performance of the adoption agency which have been provided. This report provides the summary information for April 2022-March 2023 updating the previous six-monthly report for the period of 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This report will update the Lead Member on the activity of the Portsmouth Adoption Service for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31st March 2023, as required by the Adoption regulations.
- 2.2. The Portsmouth Adoption Service is provided directly by the Adoption Team within the Council. The team is responsible for the work with children who have a plan of adoption and works with Adopt South our Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) who find, assess, and support adopters.
- 2.3. This report will describe the work of the in-house adoption team and Adopt South and provide data to support the outcomes achieved in the previous year 2022/23.
- 2.4. Lastly it will provide an update on the progress on the priorities set out in the previous report and the priorities for the year ahead.

3. Background

3.1. In 2016 Authorised Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies joined together to form Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs). As a result, Hampshire County Council (HCC), Isle of Wight Council (IOW), Portsmouth City Council (PCC) and Southampton City Council (SCC) Adoption Services came together, along with the voluntary adoption agencies Barnardo's and Parents and Children Together (PACT) to establish the Adopt South Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). Adopt South went live on 1 April 2019.

4. Portsmouth Adoption Team

4.1 The Portsmouth Adoption Team take responsibility for children who have a plan for adoption until the point of the Adoption Order being made. The team undertakes the work that achieves that plan, prepares children for permanence, and concludes the legal requirements that changes a child's legal status to allow adoption to take place. The team comprises of three full time social workers, two part time social workers, a social work assistant and a team leader.

4.2 The social workers in the Adoption Team begin working with children who are identified as needing a parallel plan of adoption as one of the possible permanent outcomes.

4.3 A parallel plan ensures that a child who is unable to return to their birth parent(s) or wider family have an alternative permanence plan by means of adoption. This parallel plan avoids any delay in decision making and ensures we are considering both options alongside each other.

4.4 The Adoption Team, work with the allocated child's social worker to gather information about the child and their family. They are responsible for compiling all the relevant documentation which is used to complete a child's permanence report (CPR). This report forms part of the documentation provided to the Agency Decision Maker who is responsible for the consideration and potential agreement of an adoption plan. It must stand the test that nothing else, other than adoption, will reasonably do for a child.

4.5 The working relationship between the adoption social worker and child's social worker enables a smooth transition for the child, should they be made subject to a Care and Placement Order at a final court hearing. It is at this point that the adoption social worker becomes the allocated social worker. Family finding completed during the care proceedings enables a match to be made at the earliest opportunity. A linking meeting is held when a potential family has been identified for the child. The adoption social worker will then meet with the prospective adopters, and the adopter's social worker from Adopt South, and will begin the process of progressing to a linking panel. Following a successful linking panel recommendation, the team begins the work of moving the child to live with their forever family. There is careful and considered work undertaken as to when and how introductions are made. The team work to support the child, their prospective adoptive family, and their birth family to the point of an Adoption Order being made. Life story work and memory boxes are prepared by the team during this period to support them in moving to their forever family and to support their identify in moving forwards.

4.6 Involvement of adopters in the recruitment, assessment, and approval of prospective adopters will continue to be expanded. It is evident that adopters telling their stories and their experiences provides prospective adopters with real life messages as to how they can embrace the adoption experience and support their child(ren)s identity. Feedback is regularly sought from prospective adopters and adopters during the assessment and matching stages.

5. Adopt South

5.1 The key functions for Adopt South are the recruitment, assessment and support of prospective adoptive families, and the post adoption support services for adopted children and their families. The Adopt South Children's Family Finding team is directly linked to each local authority Children's Adoption Team to ensure suitable potential adoptive families are identified as soon as possible, promoting timely matching and placement for those children. Those children adopted, and their families have access to Adopt South's comprehensive post adoption support service.

5.2 Adopt South compares very well to the other 34 Regional Adoption Agencies. The timeliness of the work remains well within government expectations, enabling children to secure permanent families more quickly and all children during this reporting period being placed with in house adopters.

5.3 The close working relationship between Adopt South and the Children's Adoption Team allows for the early identification of additional support if required. It also allows for children to be placed locally to their area of birth if safe to do so.

5.4 Since the launch of Adopt South, 746 children have had families identified. 347 of these children have been children that have been assessed as harder to place. 438 children have been formally linked and 433 families approved.

5.5 During this reporting period families have been identified for 228 children, including matching for 124 children assessed as harder to place. Of these 228 children 127 were Hampshire children; 13 Isle of Wight; 53 Southampton children and 35 children from Portsmouth.

6. Adoption Activity

6.1. The adoption activity for the period of 2019- March 2023 is detailed in appendix 1. The most recent data tells us;

- There were 13 children adopted in the year 2022/2023. There were no children adopted during the first half of this reporting period which in part was as a result of the Somerset ruling.
- Within this reporting period there were 18 children linked with prospective adopters.
- 19 children had placement orders granted.
- 25 children had plans of adoption agreed.
- 6 placements were made under fostering for adoption.

6.2 For some young children unable to live with their birth family it is possible for them to be placed in Fostering for Adoption Placements (FfA). These are adoptive families who are also approved temporarily as foster carers for a specific child. Fostering for Adoption can offer the best opportunity for the child if the court decides they need to

be adopted as the child can be placed with an approved adoptive family whilst parents and wider family members are being considered. The child remains in one placement whilst decisions are being made rather than being placed with a foster family and then moved to an adoptive family should the court decide the child needs adoption. Appendix A tells us that there is a steady number of FfA with an average yearly number of 6 over the past three years. This compares well within the region having 26 foster for adopt placements in total last year, with a significantly larger number of children being adopted in this period. Our ratio of FfA compared well within the region.

6.3 In the year April 2021 to March 2022 there were 23 plans of adoption agreed. The first half of this year showed 3 children, which was a significant reduction in numbers. There has been a significant increase in activity during the second part of this reporting year with a total of 25 children having a decision made by the agency decision maker for adoption.

6.4 During this period, all Portsmouth children have been placed with Adopt South adoptive families which means those children remain placed within the geographical region and those families will already have knowledge of and access to the Adopt South support service. Therefore, adoptive parents are more likely to access early support to avoid any risk of adoption breakdown. There were 2 children regionally placed outside of the region from the IoW. The continued placement of children within the region has enabled Adopt South to remain well within budget for any interagency spend. In addition, there has been an income generated on other regional agencies using approved adopters from Adopt South with 4 in total providing an income of £124,000.

7 Adopters' Journey

7.1 94 new households have been approved during this year. Stage 1 of the process has a dedicated team and are the only RAA that has so. This early stage in the process of assessment has provided potential adopters with time to understand the needs of children being considered for adoption and the requirement of providing therapeutic parenting. The average length of this assessment stage in this reporting period is 1.6 months, remaining well in the government expectation of 2 months. The team continue to focus on applicants considering placements of siblings and older children and those with additional needs, giving greater scope for placements.

7.2 The overall timescales of the stage 2 assessment process were achieved in 3.7 months within this reporting period, which is well within the government expectation of 4 months.

7.3 The ASGLB data shows that Adopt South were the only adoption agency achieving both stages of the adopter journey within timescales. In addition, Adopt South is one of only two regional adoption agencies where the average time between a child entering care and being placed for adoption is within government timescales.

7.4 Regarding the timescales of the overall adoption journey this is averagely 5 months which is 7% less time that in year 3 and is well within the government expectation of 6 months.

7.5 The ASGLB continues to show that Adopt South has the shortest adoption journey of all the 34 regional adoption agencies.

8 Childs Journey

8.1 This reporting year has seen an increase in the number of children's plans across the region being considered by the agency decision maker. Across the region this has been 151 an increase of 12%. Portsmouth numbers increased from 23 to 25 in total.

8.2 There have been 135 placement orders agreed across the region in this reporting period. Portsmouth had 19 children made subject of a placement order which is the same number as the previous reporting year.

9 Adoption Support

9.1 Many children placed for adoption come from families with complex backgrounds where they have experienced trauma due to ongoing neglect, families experiencing domestic abuse and drug and alcohol abuse. The adoption support provided includes interventions such as family therapy, play therapy and birth parent counselling. Research tells us of the significant impact on a child's development of early childhood trauma and it is imperative that families can access support in a timely manner. This provides support as they progress through their minority and onto adulthood. Support can ensure an increased resilience for both the child and their adoptive parent(s) to enable children to adjust and repair from their early experiences. The adoption support service has recently been redesigned to create teams to focus on a specific part of the service and shows it is being continually reviewed and developed. The four teams are now:

- The Adopt South Family Hub.
- The Adopt South family support and assessment team.
- The Adopt South family connections team.
- Adoption support for adults.

9.2 Information from the Adopt South Progress Summary Report attached highlights some examples of the support taken up:

- 279 new enquiries.
- Positive take up of the consultation service with 12 out of the 18 being used in the first half year.
- 48 families attended a family activity event to provide space to come together and build on their adoption support network.
- 22 educational psychology consultations have taken place.
- 260 children and parents attended the family fun day.
- £613, 800 approved for families from the adoption support fund.
- 5,914 active exchanges with additional support to birth families and adoptive parents with 257 virtual appointment and 69 face to face.

9.3 Portsmouth adoption support for families includes Family Hub events and services, of which offer the most current needs to families in Portsmouth, which include:

- Support groups.
- Life story workshop.
- Feelings workshop.
- Talking about adoption.
- Sensory workshop.
- Social events for adoptive families.

10 Somerset Ruling

- 10.1 In November 2021, Somerset County Council asked for legal advice about the Placement Orders for ten children (who had not yet been matched with adopters), where Adoption Agency Regulations had not been fully complied with. This was particularly in relation to the way children's health information was presented to the Court. There was subsequently a delay for children who were awaiting final orders of adoption, whilst clarity was sought by Local Authorities in relation to the expectations of the Courts regarding Medical Advisors reports for Adoption. The President of the Family Division handed down the final judgement of the Somerset case in April 2022.
- 10.2 Portsmouth City Council, alongside Adopt South, have planned to ensure compliance with the medical advice in line with this ruling. This requires an assurance of a comprehensive medical summary being included by the Medical Advisor in the paperwork presented to the Agency Decision Maker. During the first half of this year Adoption Orders and Placement Orders could not be granted whilst this legal issue regarding medical information was being resolved. However, they could be placed with prospective adopters under a Foster for Adopt arrangement. This prevented delay for some children in forming relationships with their adopters, which is a critical element of promoting early attachment. Whilst compliance with the medical advice has been progressed, this impacted on the first half of this reporting period with no children having an adoption order granted. Adoption Orders started to be granted in October 2022, with medical summaries in place, and we have had 13 children adopted between the second half of 2022/23. This is showing progress since this ruling was been made and children are progressing through the court process.

11 Regional picture

- 11.1 There has been a 12% increase in the number of plans being approved for adoption by the agency decision maker across the region and a similar increase (10%) in the number of placement orders being granted. Portsmouth has not seen an increase in the number of placement orders being granted with 19 children for each year whilst the numbers are nominal.
- 11.2 There have only been 4 disruptions pre-adoption order during this reporting period for the whole region, none-pertaining to children from Portsmouth. There have been 13 since the launch of the RAA. Portsmouth has had one disruption since the launch of the RAA in 2019.
- 11.3 Learning events continue to take place with the RAA to ensure practitioners are aware of any changes needed in practice in moving forwards.

12 For local consideration

- 12.1 For the last reporting period it was highlighted the number of children needing adoption had reduced and Portsmouth had seen a reduction in the number of children with a court agreed adoption plan (Placement Order). Appendix 1 shows that there are now 19 children with a placement order having been granted which

has remained stable during the past two years. Portsmouth Children's Social Care continues to maintain a parallel planning process which is tracked and monitored through the care proceedings tracker and Children we care for reviews. This is telling us that work is completed in a timely manner for those children identified as needing to be considered for adoption and have a parallel plan in place. We also know permanence has many possible outcomes and can include placement with birth parents, special guardians, relatives, long-term fostering, in addition to adoption. What requires a review is the confidence that all children unable to return to their birth families have adoption considered as part of their permanence planning. Of the current 18 children who have families identified, 17 are under 2 years of age and one child is aged 2-5. There are no sibling groups identified with families. We need to assure ourselves that we are aspirational for all our children including those harder to place children. Adopt South have demonstrated in their regional data that these children can be afforded with a forever family, and it is imperative that these children have the opportunity of a focused period of time where this is explored for them as a parallel plan. Ongoing work is enabling the identification of prospective adopters and subsequent matching and there is one child currently in the city waiting for matching. Investment in Regional Adoption Agencies will boost adoptive family recruitment, particularly for those children with complex needs and deemed harder to place i.e., older children, sibling groups and children of black, Asian and global majority backgrounds.

13 Review of previous priorities 2022/23

13.1 The priorities for the previous reporting period were;

- Any potential delays within the court process need to be mitigated to ensure children are placed in a timely manner with their adoptive families. As a result of the pandemic, applications to the court are now heard on a "bulk" listed day rather than individually. We will ensure compliance with timely applications for the bulk listings, including compliance with the Somerset ruling.
This has been fully addressed and there is consistent compliance with medical summaries for the court. This is evidenced in the data with the significant rise of 0 children adopted in the first half of this reporting year to 13 children.
- We will continue to identify children through the permanence process so that where the parallel plan is adoption, they can be placed with a family at the earliest point should this be the outcome of the court, alongside all necessary support that may be required. This includes reducing the time between placement order and matching.
Early permanence planning has been evidenced through the maintained number of agency decisions for children to be adopted (25). The timeliness of the child's journey to adoption remains strong.
- We will review our permanence planning process to ensure we are aspirational in our planning for all children unable to return to their birth families which will include children that are considered harder to place such as older children and those within sibling groups.
There is work underway to introduce permanence planning meetings and final care planning meetings prior to final court hearings to provide an additional level of reflection and scrutiny to permanence planning including for adoption. A permanence tracker is being developed that will allow scrutiny at a senior management level to ensure this is progressing
- Portsmouth will be actively involved in a new early permanence work stream being progressed by Adopt South.

This early permanence role and workshop will be in place for the Autumn of 2023 and in the interim the work detailed above will progress early permanence planning.

- Ongoing training will be provided in conjunction with Adopt South to ensure practitioners are updated about recent research and practice, including developing the skills to assess siblings staying together or apart as they move onto permanence.

Training will be scoped at the task and finish group that is being led by the head of service for safeguarding. This will be delivered from September 2023.

14 Conclusion and plans for 2023/24

14.1 Adopt South continuously updates the recruitment strategy including developing prospective adoptive parents' knowledge, understanding and support to promote matching with the children with complex needs. This work is enabling the identification of prospective adopters and subsequent matching particularly for those children with complex needs and deemed harder to place.

In summary the strengths of Adopt South for Portsmouth:

- The recruitment pool is shared across all the four regions and there are less out of area adoptions having to be considered and purchased.
- As a RAA they have the lowest number of children waiting for adoptive families, having approved the 2nd highest number of adopters across all 34 RAAs.
- There is immediate access to a wider pool of adoptive families for Portsmouth children across the region.
- Adoptive placements are more localised within the regional area, promoting efficiency in adoption support, particularly specialist local service providers for adoption support.
- We are building on local authority good practice, knowledge, and expertise to enable prospective adopters to be fully prepared and suitably matched and supported with those children placed - securing that child's future throughout their childhood and beyond.
- Regionalising adoption support enables adoptive families being able to access robust comprehensive support packages to mitigate risk of disruption for children with complex needs.

14.2 The Local authority and Adopt South have a strong relationship and have continued to ensure that children identified as needing an adoptive family have been prioritised. There have been some challenging areas. The data in October 2022 showed a reduction in the number of children being adopted which has significantly increased during the latter part of this reporting year. The impact of the Somerset ruling is now an historical one.

14.3 The continued funding will support adoptive families to provide the care for children who have experienced trauma in their early childhood so that they can settle and benefit from adoption. This is evidenced through the minimal disruptions that occur and when they do key learning is taken forward.

14.4 Additional funding will support the need for more adoptive families for children that are harder to place.

15 Priorities for 2023/24

- To implement and embed a robust permanence tracking process.
- Permanence planning meetings and final care planning meetings to be embedded.
- Training to focus on sibling assessments and early permanence planning.
- Portsmouth to be working closely with the new early permanence workstream and appointed officer in Adopt South in the Autumn 2023.
- To report on the impact of the work for children considered harder to place of adoption to the monthly performance operation board to ensure oversight of impact.


Signed by:

Sarah Daly, Director Children, Families and Education

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Adoption Activity 2019 - March 2023	End of document
Adoption Scorecard	End of document
Adopt South Progress Summary Report 2022/23	 Year 4 - 2022-2023 - Portsmouth City Cou

Appendix 1 Adoption activity April 2019 – Sept 2022

Year 1 April - 31 March	Adoption orders No. of children adopted	Children's plans for adoption agreed	Placement Orders granted	Children linked with adoptive family	Prospective adoptive families approved	FfA placements	Placements disrupted
2019/20	25	27	20	21	34 (Portsmouth number)	2	2
2020/21	18	16	16	19	117 (Adopt South)	5	0
2021/22	18	23	19	10	101	7	0
2022 / 23	13	25	19	18	94	6	0

Appendix 2 - Adoption Scorecards

1) Page 9 shows data extracted from the DfE Adoption; Special Guardianship Leadership Board Adoption Scorecards published 24/08/20. For full information please see link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-scorecards

2) Government thresholds for children needing adoption timeliness.

A1: 426 days - from date child enters care to moving in with adoptive family.

A2: 121 days -from date the court agrees to local authority placing a child for adoption to the date the local authority agrees the match for the child with an adoptive family.

Government Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board (ASGLB), figures for rolling year 2016-19 (published August 2020).

A1: National England average 433 days.

A2: National England average 173 days.

Portsmouth timescales for 2020 / 21.

Scorecard 10 - 356 days.

Scorecard 2 - 200 days.

Scorecard 20 - 205 days.

Timescales for April 2021 - March 2022.

Scorecard figures for 2021 - 22.

	Quarter 1 (April - June)	Quarter 2 (July - September)
Scorecard 10 A10 (average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family, adjusted for foster career adoptions, for children who have been adopted.)	198	249
Scorecard 2 A2 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.)	112	170
Scorecard 20 A20 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.) - 204	126	71

	Quarter 3 (October - December)	Quarter 4 (January - March)
Scorecard 10 A10 (average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family, adjusted for foster career adoptions, for children who have been adopted.)	374	804
Scorecard 2 A2 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.)	273	146
Scorecard 20 A20 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.) - 204	177	620

Scorecard figures for April 2022 - September 22.

These scorecards have not been triggered as there have been no adoption orders made in this period.

Scorecard figures for 2022 - 23

	Quarter 1 (April - June)	Quarter 2 (July - September)	Quarter 3 (October - December)	Quarter 4 (January - March)
Scorecard 10 A10 (average time (in days) between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family, adjusted for foster career adoptions, for children who have been adopted.)	0	0	348	551
Scorecard 2 A2 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.)	0	0	239	163
Scorecard 20 A20 (Average time (in days) between Local Authority receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family.) - 204	0	0	178	367

Agenda Item 6



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education Briefing Meeting
Subject:	SACRE Annual Report 2022-23
Date of meeting:	23 November 2023
Report by:	Justine Ball, Portsmouth SACRE Advisor
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Wards affected:	ALL

1. Requested by

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.

2. Purpose

This report provides the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education with the opportunity to note the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report for the academic year 2022-23.

3. Background

SACREs have responsibility for advising a Local Authority (LA) on its schools. For Religious Education (RE), SACRE advises community, voluntary controlled and Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation. For Collective Worship SACRE advises the LA on community, Trust and Foundation schools without a religious designation.

SACREs have a duty to publish an annual report, ideally by the 31 December each calendar year but, if necessary, in the following calendar year. This report must be sent to the Secretary of State for Education as well as to key partners, including schools, teacher training institutions, libraries, and councillors. The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how that was responded to; this includes advice on RE and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

NASACRE, the national association of SACREs introduced a new template for annual reports in 2022 so that it can provide a snapshot of the work of the local bodies to the

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Department for Education. The Portsmouth SACRE Annual Report 2022-23 is based on the new template and:

- i) Specifies any matter on which it has advised and/ or supported the Local Authority.
- ii) Broadly describes the nature of that advice and / or supported the Local Authority.
- iii) Sets out its reasons for offering advice on any matters which were not referred to in the first place by the Authority.

At its meeting on 1 November 2023 the SACRE:

- a) Adopted the SACRE Annual Report 2022-23.
- b) Recommended the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education to note the Annual Report 2022-23 by 31 December 2023.
- c) Agreed to make a copy available for public inspection (on the Portsmouth City Council website) and sends a copy to the Secretary of State for Education and relevant organisations including NASACRE.

Appendix A - SACRE Annual Report 2022-23

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

SACRE ANNUAL REPORT

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
Annual Report 2022/2023

CONTENTS

1. Chair's Introduction and overview
2. Standards and quality of provision for Religious Education
3. Complaints about Religious Education
4. Standards and quality of provision for Collective Worship
5. Complaints about Collective Worship
6. Determinations
7. SACRE links with other bodies
8. SACRE contribution to supporting schools through events and training
9. SACRE's own arrangements

Appendices

1. SACRE membership
2. List of organisations receiving Annual Report

SECTION 1: CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report as the Chair of the Portsmouth SACRE and to offer my thanks to all members of Portsmouth SACRE and the teachers and community members who have worked so hard to support RE in Portsmouth in the year covered by this report.

The 2022-23 academic year was another atypical year for our SACRE following a slow return to normal following the pandemic. We did however return to the practice of in person meetings during the year and I know that our members welcomed the opportunity to get together at Portsmouth College, St Jude's CE Primary School and at the Al Mahdi Centre.

SACRE has continued with its work to ensure that all pupils in our schools develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as academically. During the year, the SACRE has conducted its own surveys to monitor Collective Worship and withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship and we also monitored school websites for how they teach RE and refer to Living Difference IV, our locally agreed syllabus. From these initiatives we know that our schools are working hard to deliver RE, though local worries about the number of specialist RE teachers, the amount of curriculum time devoted to RE and lower than desirable entries into public examinations reflect national concerns on these issues. However, we know that when our pupils do study RE at GCSE and A Level they do well. In addition, the SACRE is continuing its exciting collaboration with the Council for Portsmouth Students (CoPS) and aims to develop these links to ensure that the student voice on RE and collective worship in primary and secondary schools is heard across the city.

We continue to follow with interest developments in RE nationally and locally including the recently launched RE Hubs. Our Directory of Places of Worship continues to develop and has garnered the attention of others who seek to do something similar. Our SACRE actively seeks to ensure all children in Portsmouth have access to high quality and challenging RE and we provide support to primary RE subject leaders through teachers' network meetings which take place online and we urge school leaders to recognise the importance of allocating school time for staff to attend. We also contribute to the Portsmouth Education Partnership newsletter which signposts resources, draws attention to issues of interest in the RE world and highlights forthcoming festivals among other features. Pupils' learning in RE has been enhanced by visits including through our 'visit a mosque' initiative and such visits have allowed our children to experience exciting learning opportunities while promoting an ethos of respect for others. They have built on their understanding of their own and other cultures and beliefs while also celebrating the religious and cultural diversity found in the city.

A highlight of the year was the opportunity for me to present Taki Jaffer (Group D) with a certificate from NASACRE on its 30th Anniversary recognising the significant impact he has made in the Portsmouth area. In July, Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education also noted the tireless effort, support and dedication Taki Jaffer and Elizabeth Jenkerson (Group A) have made to the Portsmouth SACRE over many years.

I remain indebted to Justine Ball who, in her role as Professional Advisor, gives invaluable support to both the SACRE and to me as well as working hard to provide as much support as possible to schools. We are pleased that our locally Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference IV, continues to be well received and the golden threads it espouses are helping ensure progression in RE. I continue to be grateful also to Debbie Anderson, Portsmouth Head of School Improvement, who assists SACRE in delivering a high level of support to Portsmouth schools, and to Karen Martin, our Clerk.

Revd. Sam Duddles
Chair, Portsmouth SACRE

INFORMATION ABOUT SACRE

1.1 Duty to establish a SACRE

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, all Local Education Authorities (LAs) have been required by law to constitute a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) within their local area.¹

1.2 What does a SACRE do?

SACRE is a unique body; it is set up by the LA but is independent of it, with the role to give advice to that LA. The law states that Religious Education must be taught in all maintained schools² and a SACRE's role is to advise what needs to be done to improve religious education (RE) and collective worship for schools in its area.

The main purpose of the annual report is to hold the LA to account, by informing the Secretary of State and key partners what advice SACRE gave the LA during the year and how the LA responded to that advice. This includes advice on Religious Education and Collective Worship in those schools for which the LA has responsibility.

1.3 Composition of SACRE

There are four groups or committees, as below:

- A: The Christian denominations and other religious denominations, reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area.
- B: The Church of England
- C: Teacher and head teacher associations
- D: The Local Authority

¹ Education Act 1996 Section 390:1

² School and Standards Framework Act 1998 Section 69

The Local Authority has determined that the SACRE should comprise of:

- Representatives of Christian denominations and other religious groups reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area
- Four representatives of the Church of England.
- Six representatives of teachers' associations.
- Four representatives of the local authority, at least two of whom should be elected members.

Other members may be co-opted from time to time as appropriate for all or part meetings.

1.4 Membership of SACRE

The names of the SACRE members and the religious denominations for Group A can be found at Appendix A.

1.5 SACRE Functions

- To advise the LA on collective worship and the Religious Education to be given in accordance with the agreed syllabus including methods of teaching, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers
- To consider whether to recommend to the LA that its current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- To consider whether the requirement that religious worship in a county school should be 'broadly Christian in nature' should be varied (determinations).
- To report to the LA and the Department for Education (DfE) on its activities on an annual basis.

1.6 Census data on Portsmouth 2021 shows that:

47.1% have no religion
39.4% are Christian
4.9% are Muslim
0.8% are Hindu
0.5% are Buddhist
0.2% are Sikh
0.1% are Jewish
0.6% are Other Religion

SECTION 2: STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN 2022/23

Within Portsmouth, advice is available to schools about RE in four ways:

- The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Agreed Syllabus, Living Difference IV
- The Hampshire RE Moodle which contains the syllabus, advice and both long term and medium term planning for teachers

- The SACRE RE Advisor and the Hampshire Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Adviser
- Regular CPD opportunities for RE

The standards and quality of provision for Religious Education is regularly reviewed and agreed by the SACRE monitoring group, which meets before the full SACRE each term and feeds back to the main SACRE.

The SACRE has made available to schools a Portsmouth Places of Worship Directory to help the teaching of Religious Education, which is now freely available on the Portsmouth Education Partnership website and is also available on the national RE Hubs website [Explore RE in your Region \(re-hubs.uk\)](https://re-hubs.uk).

The monitoring group conducted a review of school websites to see what information was made available on the teaching of Religious Education and a summary of the information was provided to the full SACRE. A large majority of LA schools published a statement about how RE was taught on their websites. Over three quarters referred to Living Difference IV (LDIV) and provided a link. Generally, schools showed some progression in RE, though in some places it would have benefited from more information. Only one third of schools referred to the right to withdraw, though it was acknowledged in the SACRE meeting that it is not required to publish an RE policy on a school website. These findings were reported to the Local Authority's Head of School Improvement.

A survey on withdrawals from RE and Collective Worship was sent to Headteachers of all Portsmouth schools in this reporting period and 19 schools responded. Of these schools, the SACRE noted that very low numbers of children were partially withdrawn from RE and Collective Worship and that there were no children withdrawn from the whole of RE. The schools all knew the reasons for withdrawal and the reasons were varied but often due to the religious belief of the family and where particular events were held in places of worship. Schools were very positive in the survey about the support they received for RE and Collective Worship.

Meeting Training Needs

- The duties on schools regarding Religious Education is raised regularly at head teachers' meetings and in other ways through SACRE's strong links with the authority's school improvement service and Director of Education. Academies are not obliged to follow the Agreed Syllabus; however, SACRE is keen for all schools in the Authority to use the syllabus to ensure consistency of educational experience for children across the Authority, regardless of where they go to school. Training for Religious Education is offered to all schools, whether part of a Multi Academy Trust or LA Maintained. SACRE is keen to impress on Academies however, that it is vital schools use Living Difference IV with integrity.

Resourcing Living Difference IV

- Primary RE News on-line publication, produced by Hampshire Inspectors, continues to be available for Portsmouth schools to subscribe to. Teachers

are also aware of the other published resources available to support the teaching of Living Difference IV through the Hampshire RE Centre in Winchester.

- SACRE's artefact loan collection continues to be available to schools and is maintained by the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) and the Authority's despatch team deliver/collect boxes for schools.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus

A monitoring group has met virtually each term in advance of the full SACRE meeting during the period of this report in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus. The group seeks to be comprised of at least one representative of each of the 4 SACRE groups, including the Chair. The group reviews Ofsted reports from Portsmouth schools, together with other data such as KS4 GCSE results.

GCSE Religious Studies examination results 2020 and 2021: overall findings

- Only one school in the city entered students for GCSE RE. The SACRE discussed why this was and considered that schools faced pressure to deliver good results in core subjects. It was felt that this may be a contributing factor in dropping numbers studying GCSE RS in this area (although it was noted that there was a small increase of 1.7% nationally). It was also noted that nationally and in this area, there is a lack of trainee RE teachers and that RE has arguably a higher proportion of non-specialists teaching RE than other subjects. This was and is a concern for high quality Religious Education for the SACRE.
- SACRE remains concerned about the low numbers of young people in Portsmouth who are entered for the full course RS GCSE and therefore concerned to ensure through all means possible that in other ways young people are able to access their entitlement for religious education at Key Stage 4.

SECTION 3: COMPLAINTS ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRE has received no formal complaints about religious education in the past year.

SECTION 4: STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Within Portsmouth advice is available to schools around CW through three forms:

- Hampshire's published advice on CW in schools (available from the Hampshire RE centre)
- The SACRE RE consultant and
- An annual collective worship course run by Hampshire County Council.

Monitoring Collective Worship

Ofsted reports sometime mention collective worship in relation to evidencing that a school is promoting children's SMSC development and personal wellbeing. The comments viewed have been positive.

SECTION 5: COMPLAINTS

There have been no complaints about Collective Worship in schools.

SECTION 6: DETERMINATIONS

No requests for determination have been submitted to SACRE and there are no current determinations for review.

SECTION 7: LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

The LA consultant is a member of the AREIAC executive. SACRE members have also attended the NASACRE virtual monthly training programme which has helped maintain links with NASACRE.

SACRE members have made contributions to teacher CPD by coming to sessions run by Justine Ball, the SACRE RE consultant, to talk to teachers about their religious practices and beliefs. Some of the SACRE members have hosted school visits to their places of worship throughout the year. SACRE members have also gone into schools to lead collective worship times as well as being a school faith visitor.

Locally, the SACRE has been asked to nominate a representative for the PSCP Main Board. The aim is to appoint a suitable representative from faith communities (other than Anglican diocese which is already represented) to attend the PSCP. It maintains close links to the Portsmouth LA by the consistent attendance of the Head of School Improvement at the monitoring group and full SACRE meetings.

7.1 Links with other Authorities and SACREs

Portsmouth retains strong links with the Hampshire SACRE through members who are on both bodies and through the SACRE adviser and the Secondary RE Teaching and Learning Adviser. Portsmouth SACRE is also represented at the South Central SACRE Hub meetings in Winchester.

7.2 NASACRE

Portsmouth SACRE is a member of NASACRE and NASACRE bulletins are regularly circulated to all SACRE members by the Clerk. SACRE members have also attended the following NASACRE training during the year:

NASACRE 7-8pm, 17 November 2022 SACREs – a way forward...? (White Paper) Chaired by Linda Rudge and Paul Smalley, attended by Christine McMillan (Group A) Jane Kelly (Group B) Councillor Asghar Shah (Group D)

NASACRE 7-8pm, 6 December 2022 How to effectively use pupil and teacher voice in your SACRE? Hosted by Sukaina Manji and Claire Clinton, attended by Sam Duddles (Group B)

NASACRE 7-8.30pm, 19 January 2023 Being an effective Chair part 2 Chaired by Linda Rudge, attended by Sam Duddles (Group B)

NASACRE 4-5.30pm, 21 February 2023 Being an effective SACRE Clerk Hosted by Exec members, attended by Karen Martin (Clerk)

NASACRE 7-8pm, 14 March 2023 What's happening to Collective Worship beyond determinations? Hosted by Lesley Prior, attended by Christine McMillan (Group A)

NASACRE 7-8.30pm, 26 June 2023 So, you've joined your local SACRE, attended by Christine McMillan (Group A)

7.3 South Central RE/SACRE Hub

Portsmouth SACRE members are invited to the South-Central Hub meetings during the period of this report. During the period of this report the SACRE hub meeting was held virtually and this has enabled SACRE members to attend more frequently.

SECTION 8: SACRE's CONTRIBUTION TO SUPPORTING SCHOOLS THROUGH EVENTS AND TRAINING

The SACRE consultant has provided training this year on the content of the RE syllabus for members of the SACRE and 3 members attended this. She has also made members aware of the RE Hubs free training on hosting school visits to their places of worship and speaking to schools on RE and so far, 1 member of the SACRE has enrolled on this training.

- Primary network meetings have been held virtually each term in this reporting year. Secondary RE Subject leaders been encouraged to attend the virtual Secondary RE Networks that are enabled through the Hampshire Learning Zone platform. It is extremely useful for Portsmouth teachers to meet with colleagues in Hampshire, since Living Difference IV is shared across the authorities.
- Portsmouth SACRE was awarded a Culham St Gabriels' Trust grant for Christianity in October 2022. This provided free of charge CPD training for Portsmouth Primary schools at Portsmouth Anglican Cathedral on the diversity within Christian traditions. Three of the SACRE were present at this and two spoke at it as well as the Inspector/Adviser.

SECTION 9: SACRE's OWN ARRANGEMENTS

Meetings and attendance:

- SACRE has met three times during this period.
- SACRE seeks to ensure that all four groups are well represented at all meetings.
- Teacher representatives from primary schools, secondary schools as well as post-16 providers have attended SACRE during this period.
- Reports have been regularly presented to SACRE to ensure that SACRE is well informed about local and national matters in relation to religious education.
- Where members have been able to attend local, regional or national events held virtually during this period, this has been facilitated, for example the termly South Central SACRE Hub meetings.
- A pre SACRE meeting with the Chair or Vice Chair and SACRE Professional Adviser has taken place prior to SACRE meetings during this period.

The three occasions SACRE met during the academic year 2022-23 were:

2 November 2022
28 March 2023
14 June 2023

All the meetings were in person and two took place in schools and one at a place of worship in the region.

Minutes of all SACRE meetings and the current membership are available from the Portsmouth City Council website: [Committee details - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education \(SACRE\) Portsmouth City Council](#)

SACRE during this reporting period has been seeking representatives from the following:

- Group A** Portsmouth Catholic Diocesan Office, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Salvation Army, Muslim and other Christian denominations (1 each)
- Group B** CofE representative (1)
- Group C** Early Years representative (1)
- Group D** None (0) current appointments run to May 2026

The percentages attendance 2022/23 per group is as follows:

Autumn - 2 November 2022

Group A = 50%	5/10
Group B = 66%	2/3
Group C = 60%	3/5
Group D = 75%	3/4

Spring - 28 March 2023

Group A = 50%	5/10
Group B = 66%	2/3
Group C = 40%	2/5
Group D = 50%	2/4

Summer - 14 June 2023

Group A = 50%	5/10
Group B = 100%	3/3
Group C = 0%	0/4
Group D = 25%	1/4

APPENDIX 1 - PORTSMOUTH SACRE MEMBERS 2022-23

Group A Representatives - One representative of each of the religions and other bodies listed in the constitution

Baha'i - Elizabeth Jenkerson (reappointed June 2022)
Baptist - Geoff Wheeler
Buddhism - vacant position
Evangelical Church - Pastor Chris Thomas
Hinduism – vacant position
Humanist UK - Barbara Spiegelhalter
Humanist UK Geoff Wade (nominated reserve Humanist representative)
Muslim - vacant position
Methodist Church – Revd Ray Goddess (appointed March 2022)
Muslim - Sheikh Fazle Abbas Dato (reappointed June 2022)
Judaism – Samuel Hilsenrath (appointed March 2022)
Quakers - sarah coote
Roman Catholic – vacant position
Sikh - Jaswant Singh-Digpal
The Assemblies of God - vacant position
United Reformed Church - Christine McMillan (reappointed June 2022)

Group B Representatives - Church of England

Sue Bowen (reappointed March 2022)
Revd Sam Duddles (reappointed March 2022)
Jane Kelly (reappointed March 2022)

Group C Representatives - Six teachers representing the various key stages and an association recognised by the Authority for the purposes of consultation and negotiation.

Kari Laing - Post-16 Representative (reappointed March 2022, appointed Vice Chair March 2022)
Rachael Osborne - Primary Headteacher Representative (appointed June 2022)

Helen Reeder - Teacher Liaison Panel (reappointed June 2022)
Debbie Lucas - Secondary School Representative

Group D Representatives - Four representatives of the Authority, at least two of whom shall be elected members of the Authority

Maria Cole (to November 2021)
Taki Jaffer (reappointed June 2022)
Councillor Tom Coles - (to May 2022)
Councillor Ryan Brent (to May 2022)
Councillor Benedict Swann (appointed June 2022)
Councillor Asghar Shah (appointed June 2022)
Councillor Abdul Kadir (appointed June 2022)

Co-opted members

Jessie Wilson - Council of Portsmouth Students representative

Officers in Attendance:

Justine Ball (HIAS), Professional Adviser
Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement
Karen Martin, PCC Democratic Services

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS RECEIVING THIS REPORT

Copies will be sent electronically to the relevant bodies. This report will be available on the Local Authority and NASACRE websites for interested parties to download.

Director of Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council

Deputy Director of Deputy Director of Children, Families and Education - Portsmouth City Council

Cllr Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, Portsmouth City Council

The Department for Education (Central Government)

NASACRE (National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education)

Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all Portsmouth Schools

All members of SACRE

The Anglican Diocese of Portsmouth

The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

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