



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee

Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair)
Councillor Becky Haggar OBE (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Kishan Bhatt
Councillor Peter Smallwood
Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)
Councillor Tony Gill
Councillor Rita Judge

Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan
Representative

Date: WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY
2024

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 6 -
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8
1UW

**Meeting
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Terms of Reference

Children, Families, & Education Select Committee

To undertake the overview and scrutiny role in relation to the following Cabinet Member portfolio(s) and service areas:

Cabinet Member Portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Relevant service areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children's Services (including corporate parenting)2. Children's Safeguarding3. Youth Justice4. Youth Services5. SEND6. Education7. Children and Families Development8. Skills & lifelong learning

This Select Committee will establish a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may appoint 3 Members to this Panel based on political balance. Membership may include non-Cabinet Members not on the Committee. The Committee may also appoint relevant Council officers and other external stakeholders to the Panel and agree its chairmanship and operation. In agreeing its operation, the Committee will provide for the Panel not to be able to establish any other sub-group or body to carry out its responsibilities.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting 1 - 18
- 4 To confirm that the items of business marked as Part I will be considered in Public and that the items marked as Part II will be considered in Private
- 5 Youth Justice Strategy 2024-2029 19 - 54
- 6 Persistent absenteeism review - Witness Session 5 55 - 66
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Agenda Item 3

Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

18 June 2024

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 – Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Becky Haggar OBE, Councillor Peter Smallwood, Councillor Kishan Bhatt, Councillor Tony Gill, Councillor Rita Judge, and Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)</p> <p>Co-Opted Member Present: Tony Little</p> <p>Officers Present: Ash Knight (Participation Manager) Ryan Dell (Democratic Services Officer)</p> <p>Also Present: Karen Quantrell (Attendance Officer from Haydon School) Surjeet Johra (Headteacher of Wood End Academy (Primary) School)</p>
3.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Rita Judge with Councillor Tony Burles substituting.</p>
4.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
5.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members noted that they had some questions relating to the review item, which they would come back during that item.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed.</p>
6.	<p>MINUTES OF THE AGM (09 MAY 2024) (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the AGM be agreed.</p>

7.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee</p>
8.	<p>MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Members highlighted the Local Offer; a follow-up on the Ofsted notice of need for improvement; and the tentative agreement regarding Council Tax for care experienced young people, and asked if updates could be received following the meeting. These would be looked into.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee</p>
9.	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2024-2025 (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the report and confirmed the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel for 2024-2025.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee</p>
10.	<p>‘PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM’ REVIEW – WTINESS SESSION 3 (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the witnesses and thanked them for giving up their time to contribute to the review. The Chair outlined that the Committee was undertaking a major review into the issue of persistent absenteeism, and the purpose of the witness session.</p> <p>Ms Surjeet Johra, Principal of Wood End Park Academy (primary school) addressed the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood End Park Academy was part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) • Colleagues in other schools in the trust had all seen a rise in persistent absenteeism (this included schools in other boroughs) • Discussions had taken place between schools to try to find solutions to persistent absenteeism • Headteachers had found that issues were evident even before young people started school. There were instances where parents were not ensuring that their children attended nursery regularly, for example • Partnership working with parents from an earlier time in their children’s education would be really helpful, so that parents can get a positive and well-rounded view of education and how useful it can be • Getting children registered to nursery was one thing, but ensuring regular attendance was another, as it was not statutory

- Once parents were in the pattern of children being at home during nursery years, this pattern continued into reception and further to Year 6
- Earlier intervention would be helpful
- In terms of the cohorts of children who may be more susceptible to persistent absenteeism, this was linked to parents who may be more vulnerable themselves
- The use of family support workers to create connections between parents and school may be useful

Ms Karen Quantrell, Attendance Officer at Haydon (secondary) School, addressed the Committee:

- Haydon School was a large school with a vast catchment area
- Haydon School also had an issue with persistent absenteeism, mainly due to a lack of parental engagement
- There were also students with potentially undiagnosed ASD (autism spectrum disorder) or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder)
- There were lots of absences due to mental health
- It was very difficult to get a quick turnaround of getting students into school

Members thanked the witnesses for attending.

Members asked for the current rate of absenteeism in the witnesses' schools, and how this compared to last year and pre-COVID.

Ms Johra advised that:

- In Wood End Park Academy, the rate was currently about 18%.
- There had been a significant rise last year
- Fellow Principals in the Trust had noticed the impact of COVID
- Lockdowns had appeared to make parents value education slightly less than previously
- Parents had not been in the position before when they were able to have their children at home and not be penalised for it, so due to COVID there was a sharp rise in persistent absenteeism
- Wood End Park Academy's rate of persistent absenteeism was slightly above the national average and most schools in the Trust were at about 25%
- The Trust had worked collectively on this and the CEO had commissioned their own research and so now all schools in the Trust were seeing a reduction in persistent absentees
- Wood End Park Academy's rate of persistent absenteeism had reduced from 25% to 18%
- This had relied on staff and a full-time Attendance Officer and ensuring that they were making phone calls home very quickly. It was also reliant on involving the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), which may not happen in every school as they may not have the capacity to do this
- Wood End Park Academy had a tracking sheet where they had categorised children into percentage bands:

- Students around 80% were working closely with the Family Support Worker and Attendance Officer; getting home visits; these were usually the vulnerable children
- Students in the 85-90% band were those where SLT were in charge. They would check every day that these children were in school, and phone home if they were not. As this was a primary school, incentives such as stickers and gifts could be utilised
- Those in the 90%+ band were tracked to ensure that they did not slip below this level
- These were all specific to the school and may not work universally

Ms Quantrell advised that:

- It was quite different in secondary schools
- Haydon School had 1,675 students currently on roll
- There was only one Attendance Officer working with all these children (there were formerly three)
- On a day-to-day basis, one officer picked up all the absence calls; undertook all home visits; responsible for Letter 1, Letter 2 and Letter 3s; encouraging parents to have parental meetings; meeting with Heads of Year and feeding back to SLT
- The school had just launched a new way for parents to report absences through their website
- No panel meetings had been undertaken
- Warning letters were sent out when attendance dropped below 95%, Letter 2s were sent at 90%
- Current rates of attendance were:
 - 92% in Year 7
 - 91% in Year 8
 - 89% in Year 9
 - 89% in Year 10
 - Year 11s had gone on study leave
- The school had tightened up on the time that registers were closed in the morning, where previously there had been some flexibility. This had had some impact on overall attendance levels
- Some young people were having to travel from near Heathrow Airport (Haydon School was located in the north of the Borough)

Members thanked the witnesses for attending and noted the importance of partnerships between the Council and schools.

Members asked what was currently working and not currently working.

Ms Johra noted that:

- The Council had rebranded the Participation Service to Attendance Support.
- It was helpful when these officers were making regular contact with schools, setting up regular meetings and ensuring that Panel meetings were happening.

- Having an effective Attendance Support Officer was important for schools. When there was a change in Attendance Support Officer, this cost a lot of time
- Wood End Park Academy currently had a very strong officer but did not at the start of the year. It was recognised that the Council wanted to help schools, but consistency of staff was a national issue
- One thing that could be better was trying to bond with families before they start school. This could be through early years centres or early years officers who could promote what the Council can offer in terms of quality education. Schools would be willing to support this. This could include using school venues for holiday camps or sports sessions – this was about getting children onto the school site before they start school and encouraging families to come along and familiarising themselves with the school setting. This would require the schools to have a partner within the Council to advise around, for example, catchment areas.
- Lots of schools had family support workers. It would be worthwhile finding out which schools have family support workers and having meetings with the relevant person from the Council such as Attendance Officers before issues with attendance arose. These meetings could take place at the start of the academic year to look at attendance levels of children of specific concern, and what could be done to prevent attendance dropping. This could also be used to signpost to, for example, mental health support or Sense if there were undiagnosed conditions. Sometimes these connections happen too late, when issues around attendance have already arisen. More prevention measures would be helpful. Good Attendance Officers were very important. Making sure that parents were getting warning letters as soon as their child's attendance dropped below a certain percentage and ensuring Panel meetings were happening were important. There were times where parents would respond negatively to Panel meetings but this meant that they were engaging, which was positive, because they did not want to have to have Panel meetings.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- Often Panel meetings lead to financial penalties to the parents. It was often felt that there was no point to Panel meetings because most of the parents had children with mental health concerns or undiagnosed special needs. In these cases, financial penalties would not be useful and it may only alienate the family more by going to a Panel meeting
- The school were trying to introduce a 'team around the child' meeting after the Letter 2s, to include the safeguarding team, pastoral team, and SEN team to discuss what can be done for the child that was not already being done
- Time lost was a big issue. A recent issue with a MASH referral was that the referral was returned due to there not being grounds for support. A message had been received from the parent that their child was very anxious and would not be coming into school. The school had contacted CAMHS and were awaiting a response. Time lost was not helpful. It was often understood by parents that the next step may be a

Panel meeting, but parents often felt they cannot force their child to go to school

- There had been occasions where a home visit had been undertaken where the parents had wanted the Attendance Officer to discipline their children in their own home. This would not aid in getting the child into school
- Medical evidence was required for online tuition to be implemented and with the waiting list for CAMHS this was extremely difficult to obtain
- There had been a large number of absence calls relating to mental health. An example of this would be that the parents would phone the school, saying that on a scale of 0-10 their child was at a 3 in terms of their mental health, and would try again tomorrow to get them into school. It was not possible to go a home visit on every occasion, however home visits did make a difference. There was only so much the school can do with the limited time that they have
- There were counsellors within the school, but these also had long waiting lists
- There were mental health first aiders, Ms Quantrell had done the training herself. Again, there was limited capacity for the sheer volume of children with mental health needs
- On the opposite side to this, parents sometimes called about absences such as blisters and nosebleeds
- Therefore, it was important to balance parents by being on-side but also not being too lenient

Members noted the importance of having received the practical experience of the witnesses.

Members asked for clarification on whether cases of SEND and mental health made up the majority of absence cases or whether they were the most time consuming.

Ms Johra noted:

- It was not necessarily cases of SEND/ mental health that were the majority of cases, it was more to do with parents
- From the primary school side, it may be where parents are presented with their child having SEND or anxiety, the child may not want to come to school and the parents may not know how to deal with this, which may lead to the parents keeping the child at home
- In summary it was not necessarily those with SEND that made up the majority, it was more to do with parents and how they manage their children
- The other category of children that fell into persistent absentees in primary schools was leave in term time. This may decrease because parents always knew that they could not take their children out of school in term time and that this may result in fines. After COVID, it was noticeable that parents were taking their children out of school in term time for longer periods, or on several occasions, which had not

happened prior to COVID. This may reduce in time as the post-COVID period progresses.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- Persistent absence was time consuming
- It usually presented as anxiety first, and so the parent would be called in and advised and there would be home visits
- There may then be undiagnosed SEND
- If there was a child who was self-harming, which often presented first as anxiety, the parent would not push the child to come into school because they were worried about what this may lead to
- There would be difficult conversations with parents
- The school would try reduced timetables and to be flexible
- The school would, when the child was in school, go through their timetable to see which lessons/ teachers were causing most anxiety
- People did not want to push the child for fear of making the situation worse
- The longer the child was at home, the more difficult it was to get them back into school
- Also, with the sheer number of children presenting with anxiety, it was difficult to manage
- Getting parents on board was often a challenge. There was a recent example where a home visit was conducted and the family had gone on holiday whilst being persistently absent
- The headteacher would give the Attendance Officer a report of students who were close to being persistently absent so that one-to-one meetings could take place

Members asked if there were any gender differences or if it were more evenly spread.

Ms Johra noted:

- Where a child was male and had SEND, they tended to have lower attendance than a girl with SEND
- Aside from this, it was quite evenly split on gender

Ms Quantrell noted:

- It was fairly evenly split
- Because Haydon had spaces, they had inherited a group of students who were persistently absent, who were also persistently absent at their previous secondary school

Members asked if there were particular groups of young people or parents that the Council could target.

Ms Johra noted:

- Early connections with parents would help
- Some young people who were persistently absent were new to the country

- Stronger partnerships with, for example, whoever was leading family support in a school would be good
- It could be possible for the Council to find out new families into the community and holding a form of welcome meeting. This may be difficult to implement due to the number of schools and the number of new families. A joint meeting held at one school on one evening could suffice with neighbouring schools coming together
- Also, having some literature from the Council including a contact number. It had been found that if a family did not see the value of school, having the Council involved lead to improvements, whether this was through fines or Panel meetings
- Being near Heathrow, there were a lot of families new to the country. There could be a practical way of networking with them
- For families who have been in the Borough long term and were not sending their children to school, an informal meeting could be held at the end of September with the parents to discuss their challenges. Having the parents know that someone is involved other than the school, may help them
- Networking with new families to make them feel part of Hillingdon was important

Ms Quantrell noted:

- There had been a few occasions where families had been moved out of the area
- Unstable housing caused issues
- There had been an occasion where a family had been placed in Milton Keynes
- There had been families moved from Ruislip to near Heathrow
- Some families were moved multiple times in a short time frame
- There were a few families from the Travelling community who were difficult to get into school all day every day
- Children who are disengaged tend to be the children of parents who were also disengaged and have a real dislike of school
- In these scenarios there would be attempts to break down barriers, but the children you want to reach are the ones whose parents you cannot reach

Members asked how schools balanced between being as accommodating as possible to encourage parents and young people to come into school whilst also abiding by their responsibilities.

Ms Johra noted:

- In primary school settings, children love stickers and small gifts
- Wood End Park Academy had implemented, whenever a whole class was in school, they would get a star and this would equate to a few extra minutes play time. These could be accumulated. Overall, this had improved attendance. However, the classes that were not getting stars had the children whose parents made it easier for them to stay at home

- Holding out a hand to the parents in partnership with the schools would be helpful

Ms Quantrell noted:

- The school followed up on absence calls to find out the specific reason for absence
- Home visits took place. On a recent home visit, the parent rang to say the young person would not get up, when visiting the house, the parent was on a Zoom call and directed the officer to the young person's bedroom
- The school had almost reached the point of considering using the school minibus to collect students
- The officer noted that they were firm but fair. For example, if a parent requested a full day of absence for a dentist appointment at 09:30, this would be challenged
- It was difficult to have conversations to explain that 90% attendance is persistently absent, whereas 90% on a test was quite good. It may be useful to discuss absence in terms of hours instead of percentages. If you tell someone that their attendance was 95% or 90%, they were generally quite happy with that

Members asked if students who were persistently absent truanted lessons regularly when they were in school.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- When persistent absentees returned, it was ensured that someone saw them and they would go through their timetable and try to pre-empt any problems arising
- The Attendance Officer had access to the school CCTV and there were a set of cameras linked to communal areas in the toilets. This was used to remove children who were loitering in the toilets. The school had changed its duty rotas so that someone would go into the toilets to move children on. It was noted that it could work the other way as well, where children who are truant become absent.

Members asked about whether the absences related to specific lessons

Ms Quantrell noted:

- Officers would go through timetables to find specific issues. If it were PE for example, arrangements could be made for the young person to get changed somewhere else. Discussions would be had with parents where patterns emerged, as parents may not always be aware of these specific details

Members noted logistics of having one Attendance Officer to go through all absences. It could take a very long time to go through them all, at which point half the day had passed.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- There were not as much truancing since she had started monitoring the CCTV.
- There had been a phase where students had attempted to leave the school site so the school had implemented duties on the school gates
- How the register was linked to which period it was would have an effect on attendance. A change had been made so that period 5 now linked to PM registration instead of form

Members noted the witness' comments about CAMHS and noted that the Health and Social Care Select Committee had recently conducted a review into CAMHS referral pathways. Members asked for any further information relating to CAMHS.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- A recent meeting with a persistently absent student, their parents and a GP had discussed waiting lists for CAMHS
- Sometimes parents wanted a quick fix to get their child into school
- Others just wanted some support
- The GP mentioned the Right to Choose
- This could be available as an alternative to CAMHS

Members asked about how to engage with hard-to-reach pupils.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- They tried to move away from Panel meetings
- Fining for holidays every time would be explored
- The 'team around the child' meetings were going to be useful
- There were occasions where families moved and did not inform the school so it took a while to know that they are not there and then do a site visit to confirm that they were not there
- Parenting support for teenagers in particular would be helpful
- There was the Triple P programme which the school promoted, but it was families that you would like to engage who do not

Members asked about outreach, and if the Council could deliver workshops or programmes that can be offered to families or local community on mental health issues, self-harming or child management. Members further asked the witnesses if they were liaising with other schools or external organisations on developing these types of projects.

Ms Johra noted:

- In terms of supporting young people with mental health issues, the Hillingdon Safeguarding Partnership team was excellent
- They ran regular meetings with safeguarding leads, always updating them and signposting resources and ensuring contact with external resources
- External organisations would present to the school, ensuring up to date information
- This work was preventative, not reactive

- There were workshops, which Hillingdon were going to lead on, around educating younger children in making sure that they were keeping themselves safe. If young people were enduring anything at home this could also be a reason for absence
- The earlier that any outreach work can start with families and school, the better this would be
- Instead of promoting 90%, as parents might then think that 89% is acceptable and persistent absenteeism is a phrase that parents may not understand, the Council could create some literature in parent-friendly language. This could include research about how lower attendance affects grades
- An idea that could work as an incentive could be for young people with attendance at a certain level to be included in a raffle which could be linked to sponsorships for local organisations. This may not work for all schools but would work for Wood End Park Academy. This may also help with advertising the first day of school
- A good starting point would be literature in language that would help parents to understand, in partnership with the school, which could include the school logo

Ms Quantrell noted:

- She was due to attend a cluster meeting tomorrow, where several schools meet and share concerns, ideas and good practise
- Mental health support/ training/ advice/ guidance for parents would be helpful as sometimes parents were not equipped to deal with these types of concerns, and did not want to push their children if there were mental health concerns
- The school worked with the Molly Rose Foundation and also recommended Kooth and Winston's Wish. These links had been developed over time. The Molly Rose Foundation ran mental health first aid training for schools in exchange for a small donation. These were useful
- In a previous role, Action for Children had run a resilience programme, which was funded by the Post Office. For example, a six-week programme with a group of core students would be very helpful
- The school had re-written the attendance section on the school website to be more focused around hours of missed learning and trying to veer away from percentages

Members referred to Triple P and asked how effective these courses were. Members noted that the parents who may need to engage were the ones who did not, and Members asked if there were reasons for this. Members further asked if these courses could be run online, noting the importance of building resilience and of prevention. Members noted differences in primary and secondary schools on this, citing more parental responsibility on primary aged children and getting them into school. Members further asked if there was anything that the Council could deliver on prevention.

Ms Johra noted:

- At lot of parents did not take up Triple P. Those that did tended to have good attendance and were using Triple P for other reasons
- All schools would have intake meetings when, for example, the child joins a nursery to welcome the parents and the child, and again for Reception
- These meetings tend to be well-attended
- Parents may not attend for many other things aside from intake days and sports days
- Signposting resources or even delivering resources (or a taster version) at intake days could be a good idea
- At Wood End Park Academy, there were a lot of parents who tended to believe their child over believing in themselves. Whereas parents can make their children feel more confident and more empowered and can help them to solve problems. It was often felt to be easier to, when a child was feeling upset, to keep them at home. Parents may not have, or not believe that they have, the strategies to deal with this. With this in mind, resources at intake days may be beneficial
- Parents may find this beneficial as they can be informed about resources and strategies for when their child does not want to come to school

Ms Quantrell noted:

- There was an issue around mid-year admissions. If there were problems at their previous school, students may have been home educated or educated abroad for a while which gave them a break in their education history. When they start at a new school, they may start with a blank slate and then previous issues start to arise again
- With this in mind, support for mid-year admissions would be helpful as schools often inherit young people who have had issues in their previous school
- It could be beneficial for schools to have a probationary period for mid-year admissions
- Leaflets would be a good idea. The school did send out information online
- The school gave out contact cards for mental health support, and a similar thing for parents may be useful
- Parents that you would want to take up these things often did not and this was difficult
- Children were very quick to get their phones out and call their parents, despite phone restrictions in school and some parents would tell their children to leave, overriding what teachers say
- This can lead to difficulties in engaging because you do not want to create more barriers

Members raised the possibility of a short survey being sent to all schools to obtain their feedback regarding persistent absenteeism, what was working well and not so well. This could include an overview of the Committee's review and suggestions for recommendations that the Committee can include.

Members also highlighted the scoping report which listed some actions the Council had already taken and were planning to take in the year ahead. These included publishing a revised borough-wide protocol on the use of penalty notices and developing attendance hubs across the borough.

Ms Johra noted:

- Primary headteachers would welcome a short survey, but would likely want a quick response around next steps
- Everyone was trying to tackle issues around attendance
- At all headteacher's meetings, two main topics of discussion were SEND and attendance
- On the actions that had already been implemented, the school (based in central Hayes) could not say they had seen these in action/ the impact of these. Maybe communication of these could be better
- Sometimes 'over-communication' was required
- These changes could be communicated in the London Borough briefing sheets at half-termly primary forum meetings
- There had been a change in the school's Attendance Support Officer and this had led to improvements

Ms Quantrell noted:

- She referred to the Education Act to parents quite regularly if needed
- There was a lot of admin around attendance when there needed to be conversations with parents to build relationships
- A forum would be good
- On the LEAP portal, it took a while to navigate the website to find a referral form as it appeared to be a one-size-fits-all form and a lot of the questions were not relevant to all cases. It may be worthwhile looking into this. It may also be worthwhile adding links to more resources into the LEAP portal

Members referred to the attendance cluster hub meetings and asked if anyone from the Local Authority attended these. Ms Quantrell noted that several people from the Local Authority attend. The first meeting took place at Haydon Secondary School a few months previously, the one tomorrow was at Lady Bankes Primary School. Ms Quantrell was attending this, but this led to the challenges of having to leave the afternoon registers open and having to rely on teacher to pick up absences. Therefore, there were often challenges in attending these meetings.

Members further highlighted the usefulness of the witnesses attending this session.

Members noted that persistent absenteeism was being reviewed by Central Government, and asked if they were providing any assistance.

Ms Johra noted:

- They were updating guidance and were trying to streamline the systems that schools use

- There was no particular extra pressure from them
- They had given guidance on the letters that parents should be getting and what should be happening at each point
- They expected data to be collected more centrally which was helpful as it could lead to picking up on attendance patterns quicker
- More funding would be helpful, especially where there were occasions of one Attendance Support Officer in a large school who was also having to make home visits

Ms Quantrell noted:

- Salaries for support staff in schools were not great. Hours were long and the nature of the work meant that there were instances of staff being signed off with stress. This massively affected the day-to-day running of schools
- Guidance had been good
- There was not any extra pressure
- Attendance was everyone's business in a school. Headteachers needed to discuss it; any newsletters needed to refer to it
- Staffing levels at the school were challenging

Members asked about the capacity for remote sessions and remote learning, and the ability to enforce this, for students absent with mental health issues for example.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- There were quite a few students who would fall into this category, but there were issues in getting timely up-to-date medical evidence of a mental health condition that justified remote learning
- There was a requirement to get clinician-level confirmation that a child was unfit to attend school
- Getting an appointment with someone of this level can take a long time
- There were a couple of students where alternative provision had been looked at and the school did make use of the Skills Hub
- There were a couple of students who had social workers and some tuition had been set up
- The school had received an email from a parent today which noted that her child was not in a good place and requested that they study at home for a week and wanted to know their options or to arrange a home learning agreement. So some parents were pushing for more home education/ remote learning. COVID had demonstrated that it was possible to learn from home
- While the school wanted to implement remote learning where suitable, there were time delays, and some children would be at home with undiagnosed conditions not accessing any education as the school were unable to send work home without medical evidence. Once remote tuition was started, it was difficult to get children back on site
- Where there was a medical confirmation of a child being unfit to attend school there was funding available, whereas schools were expected to fund different tuition

Members asked about support for young people when they returned from a long absence.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- They would meet with the young person
- Heads of Year/ Deputy Heads of Year would meet with the student
- They would have pastoral support
- They would coordinate about who would pick up the young person in the morning and have regular check-ins
- Young people often sought out teachers/ attendance officers anyway
- Counselling would be in place where necessary
- There was a mentor available
- Having a trusted adult for the young people was helpful
- Getting young people in in the first place was difficult
- There were few instances of long-term absence – the longest absences tended for be when parents took their children abroad
- If a young person was worried about returning to school through anxiety or mental health, there was a family support worker who would meeting with the parents and young person, agree a plan and ensure that the class teacher or learning support assistant was there to check in on them regularly

Members asked how many children were currently integrated, or not on a full timetable.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- Currently most students were either on-timetable or off-timetable
- Reduced timetables were difficult to manage, and the young people would find reasons as to why suggested reduced timetables did not work
- There had been difficulties in finding a safe space within the school where the young person can do some learning with a member of staff present. There were not sufficient resources available to do this
- There were cases where there were whole families of persistent absentees, and every new school year was like a reset where, if a child was heading towards a panel meeting, if this did not happen for any reason, September would come around and the school would have to send them the initial letter again. This caused frustrations. In some exceptional circumstances it would be beneficial to carry on the next year where you left off the previous year instead of having to start again

Ms Johra noted:

- Generally, across primary school children were not on part time timetables because they cannot cope with school. Children who did have part time timetables were those who had high level special needs, but this was not to do with them being persistently absent

Members asked about allowances for students who were also young carers, who may be responsible for getting their siblings to school.

Ms Quantrell noted:

- The school did have some young carers.
- Someone from the school's safeguarding team was responsible for young carers
- When it came to punctuality and detentions, considerations were made and support was in place for this

The Children's Participation Team Manager was in attendance and noted:

- While Hillingdon had re-branded its Participation Service to Attendance Support, their role was within social care, not education
- This did used to fall under Children's Participation
- Their role was around the voice of the child
- Rather than focusing on education, their service worked with children who were known to social services. This may be children who are looked after, care experienced young people, those who need child protection, and those known to the youth justice service more broadly
- They had been doing a lot of work with children and young people about being persistently absent from school and reasons for this
- Some of this had been explored through the Corporate Parenting Panel. For example, young people had delivered training to professionals and they were due to deliver training to Designated Safeguarding Leads on 03 July, and feedback could be obtained from young people on this

The Chair noted the Committee's appreciation to the three witnesses for attending the meeting.

In terms of the next witness session, a private session was planned with young people, to share their experiences and the challenges they face. It would be beneficial to hear from young people why they are unable to attend school or if they were struggling with their education. The voice of young people was very important for the review. It may also be possible to engage the Hillingdon Youth Council.

The review planning timetable noted that a second session with schools may be required. Officers clarified that there had been a number of contacts from schools who had noted their willingness to engage in the review but could not attend this session.

Members referred to the minutes of the previous meeting, which highlighted that Camden and Buckinghamshire Councils were conducting similar reviews; and that Buckinghamshire Council had asked for more funding from Central Government; and reference had been made of the attendance mentors programme which other Councils had taken part in. It was asked if Hillingdon was considering this. Furthermore, there was due to be an update concerning geographical and cultural data.

	<p>On the witness sessions, Members asked about different young groups who could maybe engage with the review. Officers noted that the Participation Team worked with young people from the ages of 6 to 25. Young people would be happy to share their voice.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee</p>
11.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the Forward Plan.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p>
12.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Officers provided an update on the Work Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On in-year admissions, there was a provisional date of September 2024 • On the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, there was a provisional date of September 2024. This would be added to the Forward Plan for a Cabinet Member Decision expected in October/ November 2024 • On a report into targeted services, this had been narrowed down into early help services and support for low-income families. There was a provisional date of July 2024 for this • On alternative provision, this was confirmed for November 2024 to tie in with the update on the SEND Strategy • On engagement with schools, this would require Members to narrow down specifically what they would like from this. There was an early provisional date of February 2025 for this • On higher education, this would require Members to narrow down specifically what they would like from this. There was an early provisional date of February 2025 for this <p>On higher education, Members highlighted the Council's new Civic Partnership with Brunel University London. There were elements of this relating to health and well-being, economy and skills. There was also the possibility of discussing what further education colleges were providing, and partnerships between further education colleges, higher education settings and schools. Further topics could include accessing higher education, and support given to access higher education. Brunel could act as a gateway into higher education.</p> <p>On engagement with schools, Members noted the difficulties in obtaining feedback from schools on the current and previous major review topics. A private item on engagement could focus on how the Council can improve or facilitate easier contact between itself and schools. It was noted that in the</p>

	<p>first instance the Committee could ask officers how they engage with schools via a briefing note which could help to develop an item on this. It was further noted that the potential audit of schools through the major review could also facilitate this.</p> <p>Members raised the possibility of an item on helping young people with additional needs to access extra-curricular activities (for example sports or Scouts/ Guides groups). This could include working with local organisations to help to promote and access activities. This could focus on young people from low-income families or those with disabilities. The Chair noted that it may be worthwhile waiting until after the upcoming update on the Youth Offer and Delivery Model (which was provisionally scheduled for November 2024).</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee considered the report and agrees any amendments.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8:35 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information of any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell at democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

The public part of this meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making, however these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.

YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGY 2024-2029

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Nuzhat Ilyas – Children’s Services Directorate
Papers with report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet Report Draft Youth Justice Strategy 2024-2029 - Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Draft Strategy 2024-2029
Ward	N/A

HEADLINES

This report presents the draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 which seeks to set out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee:

- 1. Notes the Draft Youth Justice Strategy; and**
- 2. Provides its comments as part of the consultation process.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Youth Justice Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 27.06.2024 where it was agreed that this strategy will go through public consultation for 6 weeks from 01.07.24 and will end on 11.08.24. This will include:

- Publication of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy alongside an online survey questionnaire (Written copies/large print will be available on request)
- Publication of a child friendly Youth Justice Service Strategy to maximise consultation from Hillingdon children.
- A variety of methods to promote completion of the survey will be used including: All staff email, Hillingdon People, and social media.
- Consultation with the Select Committee on 17th July 2024.
- We will be seeking consultation from the wider strategic partnership that contribute to the prevention of offending behaviour, as well as residents who access youth justice services in Hillingdon. This includes the use of focus groups with children and families.

The Youth Justice Strategy builds on the success of the Youth Justice Service and sets a clear vision of how services are delivered to our residents, and key priorities over the next five years to continue to be responsive and meet changing demands and requirements.

The vision for the youth justice service is:

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs,

and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”

Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council’s plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail within the draft strategy. The five priorities are:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention - Addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.
2. Over-representation and disproportionality – Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.
3. Child-centred practice - Recognising children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.
4. Reducing re-offending - Providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.
5. Victims and restorative justice - Giving victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced.

PERFORMANCE DATA

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is responsible for monitoring a number of key performance indicators and each local authority and youth justice partnership must submit quarterly data against each. It is a condition of the YJB Grant that it is used to achieve a positive reduction across all performance indicators with data being published by the Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis.

The following three performance indicators have been embedded within services and so data has been captured over the years.

1. Reduction in First Time Entrants (FTE): children entering the criminal justice system for the first time receiving a disposal at court or a caution.
2. Reduction in Re-offending: monitoring of children who receive a substantive outcome (not Triage) for a period of 12 months for any further offending and associated frequency.
3. Reduction in the use of custody: reduce the number of children who receive a custodial sentence.

Since April 2023 it has been a requirement of youth justice services to report on the following new key performance indicators, with the first nationally published data expected in Spring 2025.

1. Suitable Accommodation
2. Education, training, and employment

3. Special educational needs and disabilities
4. Mental health care and emotional wellbeing
5. Substance misuse
6. Out of court disposals
7. Links to wider services
8. Management board attendance
9. Serious violence
10. Victims

RESIDENT BENEFIT

In line with council priorities of 'safe and strong communities' our strategy is informed by the views of residents to ensure we are responsive to needs of our community. This strategy aims to improve positive outcomes by reducing the numbers of children coming into contact with CJS, and reduce the number of victims harmed, improving outcomes for residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This strategy will come at no additional cost to the Council. Please see finance comments on attached Cabinet report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for carrying out this function pursuant to section 38 and 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires each local authority to have youth justice services available in their area to the extent that is appropriate, and, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The guidance on Youth justice plans confirms that whilst the Act refers to an annual plan, it is recognised that planning over a longer period may be more effective. Therefore, Local partnerships may, if they choose, produce a plan over multiple years; in this case an annual update, covering progress against priorities, a summary of performance, any changes in demographics and legislation, and any additional reporting requirements. The report confirms that an annual update will be provided.

As set out in the cabinet report, the Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under the equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and comply with the Local Authority's public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Public consultation

[Have your say on Hillingdon Council's youth justice plans - Hillingdon Council](#)

APPENDICES

- Cabinet Report Draft Youth Justice Strategy 2024-2029
- Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Draft Strategy 2024-2029

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YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGY 2024-2029

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Susan O'Brien
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education
Officer Contact(s)	Nuzhat Ilyas – Youth Justice Service and AXIS
Papers with report	Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Draft Strategy 2024-2029

HEADLINES

Summary	<p>This report presents the draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 which seeks to set out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years.</p> <p>The report seeks approval to commence a 6-week formal public consultation process from 1st July 2024 to 11th August 2024, including feedback from the Select Committee.</p>
<p>Putting our Residents First</p> <p>Delivering on the Council Strategy 2022-2026</p>	<p>This report supports our ambition for residents / the Council of: Live active and healthy lives</p> <p>This report supports our commitments to residents of: Thriving, Healthy Households, Safe and Strong Communities</p>
Financial Cost	This strategy will come at no additional cost to the Council.
Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet agrees the Draft Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 for public consultation as a policy framework document.

Reasons for recommendation

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out a clear vision and priorities for how youth justice services are delivered in the next five years and forms a key element of the policy framework. Approval is sought from Cabinet to approve the draft strategy for consultation, to ensure that residents and partners have the opportunity to consider and comment on the priorities for service delivery.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Without a Strategy, the Council would not be able to make clear its priorities in relation to youth justice and assist in the development and performance management of work streams and provide a framework for our work with partner organisations.

Democratic compliance / previous authority

Along with the recent guidance from the Youth Justice Board, Democratic Services note that the Youth Justice Service Strategy [Youth Justice Plan] is one of the Council's policy framework documents as set out in Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution. Consideration of this is, therefore, being undertaken in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and these require the Cabinet to set out a timetable for the Strategy's adoption, to include a minimum 6-week consultation period, consideration by the relevant select committee and therefore also not subject to scrutiny call-in. The following timetable is being adhered to:

Draft strategy to Cabinet	27 June 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Consultation (six weeks)	Commence from 1 July 2024
Children, Families & Education Select Committee consultation	17 July 2024
Cabinet final draft	10 October 2024 (not subject to call-in)
Full Council adoption	28 November 2024

Select Committee comments

None at this stage, though the Committee have a statutory requirement to be consulted on this and influence the final Strategy before it is approved by the Full Council. It is currently scheduled to be considered by the Children, Families & Education Select Committee in July 2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services as per Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which stipulates that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The plan sets out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how they will operate, and what functions will be carried out.

2. Following updated guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in 2023, all youth justice plans must be signed off by the full Council in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. To align with other council strategies, officers propose the completion of a 5-year strategy with annual updates to the Select Committee and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, to comply with this guidance.
3. The proposed draft Youth Justice Service Strategy builds on the success of the Youth Justice Service and sets a clear vision of how services are delivered to our residents, and key priorities over the next five years to continue to be responsive and meet changing demands and requirements.
4. The vision for the Youth Justice Service is:

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs, and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”
5. Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council’s plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail within the draft strategy. The five priorities are:
 1. Prevention and Early Intervention - Addressing the root causes of offending behaviour and intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.
 2. Over-representation and disproportionality – Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.
 3. Child-centred practice - Recognising children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.
 4. Reducing re-offending - Providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.
 5. Victims and restorative justice - Giving victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced.
6. The draft strategy is attached at appendix A. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. A final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications resulting from the recommendations of this report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The draft Youth Justice Service Strategy sets out identifies key challenges and sets out priorities for the coming five years and has a direct bearing on the Council's vision of 'putting residents first.'

The Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and complying with the public sector equality duty.

Consultation carried out or required.

Informal consultation has already taken place within the Youth Justice Service Performance Board. Subject to Cabinet approval a 6-week formal consultation process will begin on Monday 1st July 2024 and end Sunday 11th August 2024. This will include:

- Publication of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy alongside an online survey questionnaire (Written copies/large print will be available on request)
- Publication of a child friendly Youth Justice Service Strategy to maximise consultation from Hillingdon children.
- A variety of methods to promote completion of the survey will be used including: All staff email, Hillingdon People, and social media.
- We will be consulting with the Select Committee on 17th July 2024.
- We will be seeking consultation from the wider strategic partnership that contribute to the prevention of offending behaviour, as well as residents who access youth justice services in Hillingdon. This includes the use of focus groups with children and families.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

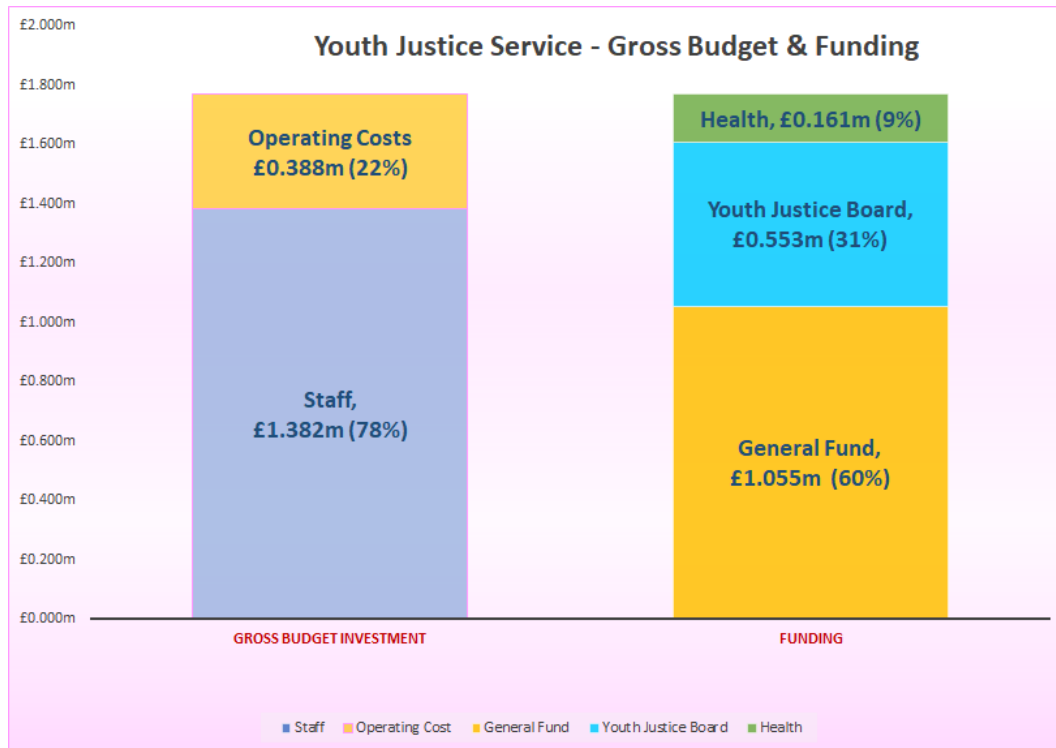
Corporate Finance

The Youth Justice Service currently employs 20 Staff (18.75 FTE) and spends £1.770m per annum which is funded by a combination of:

- General Fund – 1.055m (60%)
- YJ Board - £0.553m (31%)
- Health - £0.161m (9%)

The service had a small underspend of £0.181m in the Outturn for 2023/24 primarily on staff, accommodation and shortfall on grant which has been addressed in this financial year. The chart below highlights the breakdown of investment and funding. As highlighted in the Strategy paper

the service is very successfully managing demand despite the challenges post COVID and the current Cost of Living and financial instability.



As the legal commentary highlights, there is a duty to provide the service and it is clear in the current climate that the demands on the service will intensify over the next 5 years of the Strategy. While, at this stage there is no additional risk of financial pressure, there are a few potential risks going forward which the service will need to monitor including:

- Increase in Youth Offending particularly during the ongoing financial instability
- Potential pressure on remand accommodation costs
- Any reduction in funding, particularly grant funding which could critically undermine the effectiveness of the service and result in growth in offending and unintended rise in greater / more acute costs.

While these risks will closely monitored, the performance of the service over recent years including robust and effective management of its budget, provides a lot of assurance that the Strategy can be delivered effectively within the current budget.

Legal

Legal Services confirm that the Council is responsible for carrying out this function pursuant to section 38 and 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires each local authority to have youth justice services available in their area to the extent that is appropriate, and, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan. The guidance on Youth justice plans confirms that whilst the Act refers to an annual plan, it is recognised that planning over a longer period may be more effective. Therefore, Local partnerships may, if they choose, produce a plan over multiple years; in this case an annual

update, covering progress against priorities, a summary of performance, any changes in demographics and legislation, and any additional reporting requirements. The report confirms that an annual update will be provided.

As set out in the report, the Council will need to ensure that any policies or decisions in relation to youth justice take account of requirements under the equalities and human rights legislation, including ensuring that policies and decisions do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics, and comply with the Local Authority's public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010).

It is noted that a final draft with amendments following consultation will be presented to Cabinet on 10th October 2024 and subsequently Full Council on 28th November 2024. As such, Cabinet approval for consultation of the draft Youth Justice Service Strategy is recommended as set out in this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. [Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025](#)
2. [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27.odt \(live.com\)](#)
3. [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
4. [Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall](#)



Draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service 5-year Strategy

2024-2029

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Foreword

As we embark on this journey of shaping the future of youth justice services in Hillingdon over the next five years, it is with great enthusiasm and dedication that I present this strategy document. Our mission is clear: to create a safer, fairer, and more inclusive society for all children, where their rights, needs, and potential are recognised and respected. Over the years, our understanding of youth justice has evolved, driven by research, evidence, and the voices of children themselves. We have learned that effective youth justice services require a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach that addresses the underlying causes of offending behaviour and promotes positive development and rehabilitation through a Child First approach.

This strategy builds upon our achievements and experiences, while also charting a course for innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. It reflects our commitment to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, ensuring that every child has access to the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Central to our strategy is the principle of early intervention and prevention, recognising that addressing issues at the earliest possible stage can prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm. We will work closely with partners across sectors to identify and respond to the needs of children and their families and carers, providing tailored support and interventions that address the root causes of offending and children's safety and wellbeing.

Equally important is our commitment to restorative justice principles, which prioritise accountability, healing, and the repair of harm. We continue to involve children, victims, and communities in the resolution of conflicts and the restoration of relationships, promoting understanding, empathy, and reconciliation.

As we embark on this journey, we do so with humility and a recognition of the challenges that lie ahead as we continue to deliver services post the Covid-19 pandemic. We know that transforming youth justice services requires courage, perseverance, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. But we also know that the rewards are great – safer communities, brighter futures, and a more just society for all.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this strategy – our dedicated staff, partner agencies, children, families, and communities. Your insights, expertise, and commitment have been invaluable, and I am confident that together, we can achieve our shared vision of a youth justice system that works for everyone.

Together, let us build a future where every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential, where second chances are not just offered but embraced, and where justice is not just served but served with compassion, dignity, and fairness.

[signed]

Councillor Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education

Introduction

Hillingdon council has a duty under S.38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to provide youth justice services to children 10-18 years of age. The principle aim of the Youth Justice Service is to prevent offending by children, through early intervention, prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. The draft Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) strategy sets out its approach to work with children and families accessing youth justice services through early help and prevention and statutory intervention. This 5-year strategy will be developed in consultation with children, parents/carers and colleagues across the partnership and communities reflecting on and reviewing its performance over the last 5 years and considering a range of local and national drivers informing our youth justice work in Hillingdon.

“We are committed to taking a child first approach to understanding the challenges faced by children and families including social deprivation, discrimination, trauma, unmet health needs, and will actively empower children and families to improve outcomes by providing opportunities for every child to succeed. We take a “justice for all” approach by supporting victims, protecting the public and engaging our communities to divert children from entering the criminal justice system.”

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) Strategic Plan 2024-2027 states that “the YJB’s vision is for a youth justice system that treats children as children” and sets out its requirements for a Child First approach:

- Prioritising the best interests of children and recognising their needs and potential.
- Promoting children’s individual strengths and their capacities to develop pro-social identities.
- Encouraging children’s active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion.
- Promoting a childhood removed from the justice system.

Across the youth justice partnership in Hillingdon the use of the word “child” has been widely adopted when discussing children who encounter the criminal justice system. Previous language such as young people or adolescents diluted the focus that those who come into contact with the youth justice system are children and should be supported as such. The work of HYJS and the partnership seeks to support engagement with children in multiple spheres from diversion through the delivery of school-based programmes such as Your Life You Choose, early intervention through active use of Triage interventions and in statutory interventions. Taking a locality, placed based approach by delivering services and interventions to children within their context. Wider work across the local authority, with the development of locality-based family hubs and spoke buildings provides well-resourced and safe places to meet children within the community. Children told us that they are more likely to engage with interventions in familiar surroundings and co ordinating locality delivery supports engagement with wider services. The model works on supporting children to access the right services, at the right time in the right place.

Our plan continues to be set within the context of ongoing public service reform, associated organisational change, financial restraints and responding to the challenges which continue post the Covid 19 pandemic. These circumstances present additional challenges to

organisations as they seek to deliver their core business whilst also contributing to strategic partnerships. However, the partnership approach to developing and implementing this Youth Justice Plan has been informed by a commitment not only to maintain our investment in the youth justice agenda but to enhance it through continued effective collaboration.

Our Priorities

Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first and reflects this commitment across the council's plans and services. Our youth justice priorities are directly aligned with this commitment, which will be set out in further detail in this document. The five priorities are:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention
2. Over-representation and disproportionality
3. Child-centred practice
4. Reducing re-offending
5. Victims and restorative justice

Context

Hillingdon is the second largest London borough, covering an area of 42 square miles over half of which is a mosaic of countryside including canals, rivers, parks and woodland, interspersed with historic towns and villages. It shares borders with Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Hounslow, Ealing, and Harrow. Hillingdon is home to Heathrow airport, which is one of the main local employers, but also a significant entry point for children and young people being trafficked into the country.

- Hillingdon has a higher proportion of 0–19-year-olds than the London average with 26% and this proportion is expected to grow.
- There are approximately 120,700 children aged 0-17 residing in the borough which make up 39.69 % of population.
- 30,965 (25.65%) of these children are aged 10-17
- According to data from the End Child Poverty Coalition, which combines data from the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are approximately 25,347 children in Hillingdon living in poverty, which is approximately 21%.
- At the 31st March 2024 there were approximately 329 children looked after to Hillingdon.
- 35% of all residents that are from a black and global majority background. Hillingdon is an ethnically diverse borough with most black and global majority communities residing in the south of the borough.
- 62% of Hillingdon children aged 10-17 are from a black and global majority background (2021 Census)
- Our residents (aged 3+) speak at least 85 different languages - this is similar to most other London boroughs and other large cities in England & Wales.

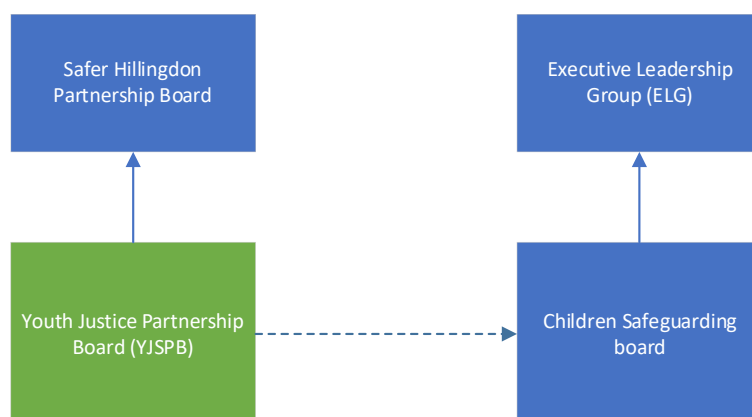
- The 2021 Census tells us that 77.9% of our residents (aged 3+) have English as their main language, followed by Punjabi (4.6%), Romanian (1.8%), Polish (1.7%) and Tamil (1.6%).
- In 2023-2024 3,503 children had an active Education Healthcare plan. This number has steadily increased at an average rate of approximately 11.6% over the last five years.

The YJS is located within the Children, Families and Education Directorate and as such the Assistant Director of Prevention and Youth Justice is part of the most senior management team in Children's Services. The effectiveness of the YJS collaborative work has been recognised in both our ILACS and SEND inspection outcomes. We have aligned the YJS with our Youth Offer and Early Help under one Assistant Director which supports our holistic planning for vulnerable adolescents. The full staffing structure and budget costs and contributions will be included within annual youth justice plans.

Governance, Leadership and partnerships

HYJS is funded centrally and through the grant contributions from the Youth Justice Board and statutory partner agencies, in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. All funds are used to deliver Youth Justice Services in Hillingdon.

The work of our HYJS is located within the broader context of our Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board (SCPB). Both boards have operational and strategic representation from all partner agencies. HYJS is represented at the SHP and SCPB by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education. In achieving our ambitions and vision for our children, we continue to receive full political and corporate support and a level of financial investment which ensures that each year's budget setting considers both the needs of the service and the contingencies based on demographic growth and increasing levels of complexity. Our elected member for Children, Families and Education and the Chief Executive have an active interest and understanding of the youth justice agenda. They scrutinise children's services performance and practice updates in quarterly meetings with the Senior Management Team. Complex and high-risk issues have oversight at this level to ensure political, financial and strategic investment to keep children safe.



The YJSPB is co-chaired by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education and the Detective Chief Inspector for the West Area Borough Command Unit which demonstrates committed leadership. The YJSPB includes representatives from all of the key partner agencies and operates in line with the YJB Governance and Leadership guidance. The Corporate Director for Children, Families and Education is a member of every senior governance board in the borough and can exert influence and leverage support and resources to further the work of the YJSPB. Similarly, there is a direct understanding of other policy and strategy landscapes to inform the YJSPB plan and to inform others' strategies and plans to be observant of YJS concerns. These include all Council Political meetings, health governance which covers the borough, new ICB, all London DSC Group, West London DCS steering groups, West London Commissioning Alliance whilst maintaining instantaneous direct access to the most senior leadership across the borough and region.

From His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection in 2021, it was noted by the inspectorate panel that we have a strong management board attendance, this has continued since with an average of 73% of senior partners attending. New Board members have an induction to understand the role of the service and explore the expectations and contributions they will be making to the service. Our governance and leadership arrangements are maturing and whilst we believe we have a clear local vision and strategy for the delivery of a high-quality, personalised, and responsive service for all children, we recognise the need to ensure that vision is promoted and understood by all stakeholders. Our partnership relationships are strong at both strategic and operational levels. Local resourcing levels have been retained despite significant financial challenges for all the partners and the partnership arrangements actively support effective service delivery. Our Board members are active, own the youth justice agenda and recognise the contributions their own agency makes to the it. For example, the ICB rep on the Board initiated a review of the health need of the YJS cohort which resulted in the commissioning of dedicated SALT provision; whilst the Community Safety rep has advocated YJS work and secured MOPAC funding to support early identification and intervention of young people at risk of exploitation.

HMIP inspect youth justice services across England and Wales and form part of HYJS' governance arrangements. This is completed through independent inspection, thematic inspections and reports, recommendations, research and effective practice guidance.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales is responsible for monitoring and measuring our performance through the submission of national KPIs. The YJB undertakes oversight activity to meet its statutory duty to monitor the operation of the youth justice system. This function is undertaken in line with its independence from national and local government and all named statutory partners.

The oversight process follows an ongoing cycle of:

- monitoring YJS performance against the oversight fields outlined and assigning services to performance quadrants.
- identifying the scale and nature of support needs and/or areas of effective performance and evidence-based practice
- co-ordinating improvement (and where necessary formal intervention).

Performance data 2019-2024

Together with its partners Hillingdon YJS continues to realign resources to meet service demand and the requirements of the wider public sector reform agenda, which supports transformation of essential services in an evidenced based way to promote best practice.

The YJS informs and supports the Childrens' "High Fives"; Contextual Safeguarding, Neglect, where our children live, Targeted Help, Our people. These 5 key strands of operational and strategic activity drive improved outcomes for children in Hillingdon.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is responsible for monitoring a number of key performance indicators and each local authority and youth justice partnership must submit quarterly data against each. It is a condition of the YJB Grant that it is used to achieve a positive reduction across all performance indicators with data being published by the Ministry of Justice on a quarterly basis.

The following three performance indicators have been embedded within services and so data has been captured over the years, so we have been able to measure our performance over a longer period.

1. **Reduction in First Time Entrants (FTE):** children entering the criminal justice system for the first time receiving a disposal at court or a caution.
2. **Reduction in Re-offending:** monitoring of children who receive a substantiated outcome (not Triage) for a period of 12 months for any further offending and associated frequency.
3. **Reduction in the use of custody:** reduce the number of children who receive a custodial sentence.

Our HYJS and the partner agencies and professionals, who work with them, have an impressive track record of contributing to the realisation of our vision through effective preventative work, as well as out-of-court and post-court case work. Our performance against the first-time entrants' national performance indicator is consistently strong with the rate below both national and London averages. A focus on early intervention and prevention services across the partnership has contributed to this, including an effective working relationship between the police and the HYJS with regards to decision making and the delivery of robust assessments and interventions. Our custody rates have shown a gradual reduction over recent years but with complex cohorts of children and a national rise in knife crime this remains an area of priority focus. Performance with respect to re-offending should be considered within the context of a much smaller cohort, due to our success at reducing FTEs, containing individuals that often have more complex needs, higher levels of vulnerability and pose a greater risk to others. These young people have a range of challenges and unmet needs, which take longer to address and effect permanent changes in lifestyles and outcomes. As with the national picture we have an over-representation of Black and mixed raced boys in custody which is a priority of activity in this Youth Justice Strategy.

Since April 2023 it has been a requirement of youth justice services to report on the following new key performance indicators, with the first nationally published data expected in Spring 2025.

1. Suitable Accommodation
2. Education, training, and employment
3. Special educational needs and disabilities
4. Mental health care and emotional wellbeing
5. Substance misuse
6. Out of court disposals
7. Links to wider services
8. Management board attendance
9. Serious violence
10. Victims

Youth justice services have access to the youth justice application framework (YJAF) to view data submitted and compare to national data. Data from quarters 1-3 for 2023-2024 on YJAF tells us that Hillingdon is performing above national indicators in the proportion of children in suitable accommodation (an average of 96% in Hillingdon compared to 86% nationally).

The proportion of children in suitable education, training, and employment at the end of their order. Q1-3 showed 87% of school age children were in full time education at the end of their intervention, like the 86% seen at the end of 2022/23. For the non-school age children, 67% were in full-time education up from the 56% seen at the end of 2022/23. We also have a higher than the national average number of children identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and additional learning needs (ALN) with a formal plan. This is reflective of the links we have built with our partners in Education and SEND and continue to ensure that we collaborate with partners to ensure that it is child focused. It is a real strength of HYJS to have a Speech and Language therapist embedded within the service to ensure all children open to the YJS, AXIS and other prevention services such as Turnaround are offered speech and language assessment at the earliest opportunity, to ensure there us an understanding of the needs, collaboration with partners and interventions are personalised to maximise positive outcomes for each child.

HYJS have reported an average of 39% of children open to the YJS with a screened or identified need for an intervention to improve mental health or emotional wellbeing compared to 25.6% of the national average for quarters 1-3 for 23-24. The well-resourced Health Hub within the YJS combines the skills of a Liaison and Diversion worker, full time dedicated Speech and Language Therapist and Child and Adolescent Mental Health practitioner to ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the health needs of children entering the youth justice system to promote positive outcomes.

The total number of outcomes have decreased over the five years, from 246 in 2019-2020 to 100 in 2023-2024. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54% over the 5 years. We have also seen a 65% decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5% decrease in Triage outcomes in the same period. The main cause of this is due to the increase

in Community Resolutions being given for low-level offences. It is positive that in the last year we have seen a 244% increase in the rate of engagement as compared to the previous year.

The most common offence in 2023-2024 was Violence against the person related, with 60 offences (29.13%). In 2021-22, Drugs had been the most common offence, but this has continued to decrease from 52 offences (28.42%) in 2021/22 to 12 offences (5.83%) in 2023/24. This is due to the continued decrease in triage offences, with drug possession offences being dealt with via Community Resolutions. Burglary, Robbery, and Theft and Handling offences accounted for 33.98% of all offences up from 25.23% in the previous year and 11.48% in 2021/22. For the second year in a row, “Burglary other than dwelling” was the single most common offence, representing 9.22% of all offences. It is important to note that all 19 of these offences were committed by 2 children. However, the next most common offence was “Possess knife blade / sharp pointed article in a public place” with 14 offences, committed by 14 different children.

Hillingdon monitors Serious Violence rates with the assistance of the YJB’s “Serious Youth Violence Tool”. The rate of serious violence increased in 2023 to 7.5, up from 5.3 in 2022 which has put us in line with our YJS Family. This is still lower than historic figures as outlined in the table below. The rate of serious violence offences has fallen in since its peak of 10.7 in 2021. Hillingdon’s rate of serious violence offences has remained below the London rate. Robbery continues to be the most common SYV offence, accounting for 79% of offences in Q1-3 2023/24.

Rate of Serious Violence offences - Year ending December					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Hillingdon	4.5	10.5	10.7	5.3	7.5
London	17.5	13.8	12.4	10.4	10.5

--- Hillingdon YJS Priorities ---

Priority 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

Link to Council Priorities: A thriving economy, Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

This priority seeks to address the root causes of offending behaviour and explore the wider determinates of social inequalities, intervene at the earliest possible stage to prevent escalation and reduce the risk of future harm, ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

HYJS is situated within the Children directorate and falls under the umbrella of Prevention and Youth Justice. HYJS, and its partners has an impressive track record of contributing to the realisation of our vision through effective preventative work. This continues to be an area of focus over the next 5 years to further develop our prevention offer. Over the last 5 years, we have seen our First-time entrants (FTE) figures decrease during the COVID pandemic and rise again, however we remain below pre-pandemic levels.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Number of first-time entrants	64	48	38	46	46

As mentioned previously and outlined in the table below, the total number of outcomes have decreased over the five years, from 246 in 2019-2020 to 100 in 2023-2024. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54% over the 5 years. We have also seen a 65% decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5% decrease in Triage outcomes in the same period. The main cause of this is due to the increase in Community Resolutions being given for low-level offences.

Outcomes	2019-2020	2020 - 2021	2021 - 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024
Court	124	76	47	57	57
Pre-Court	122	94	87	56	43
Of Which Triage	98	73	65	33	22
Total	246	170	134	113	100

In the year 2023-2024 we have seen a varied rate of engagement for children receiving a community resolution (CR) with an average rate of 31% of children consenting to receiving intervention with HYJS. This is an increase of 244% than the previous year where we had an average of 9% of children receiving an intervention.

Our AXIS service continues to offer understanding of the complexity, risk and safety and wellbeing concerns of local children in 'real time'. AXIS is instrumental in identifying children on the periphery of involvement in Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, children arrested for Possession with intent to supply, or those that are linked to suspected 'gang' involvement and serious youth violence. AXIS work with children referred on a

voluntary basis or will refer them to Children's Social Care where appropriate. AXIS also supports the wider partnership and local services' engagement with children and will provide headline data to inform how and where services are delivered in Hillingdon.

In December 2022, Hillingdon was provided funding (ending March 2025) from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to mobilise Project Turnaround, to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent children entering the criminal justice system under the Early Help framework. Turnaround has been a success in Hillingdon, and the data shows we have exceeded the MoJ quota of children who have voluntarily engaged with this project and have seen positive outcomes for this cohort for children.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
MoJ Quota	9	26	27
Number of children engaged with Turnaround	9	32	XXX

The Metropolitan Police's Pan-London Project Engage, funded by the VRU (Violence Reduction Unit) was set up in January 2024 to engage with children in police custody, capturing the teachable, reachable moment to build a positive relationship to understand the causes of their offending and identify bespoke interventions and services best placed to divert children from the criminal justice system. The Engage team fosters good relationships with partners, including community and voluntary groups to support children in their own communities and provide opportunities through social inclusion to divert them from criminality.

Our focus under this priority is to embed long term early help systems to enable multi-agency intervention at the earliest opportunity, to divert children from the criminal justice system, build resilience, and promote positive outcomes. This means effective intervention to be targeted towards children and families at risk of experiencing adversity through a myriad of issues including poverty, social exclusion, familial violence, mental health, disability, substance misuse and school exclusions. We believe residents should be able to access the right help at the right time. The Family hub strategy¹ will support this through having integrated services across the disciplines of Maternity, Health, Education, Social Care, and the Voluntary Sector under the principles of Early Help and Intervention, to provide accessible services to families, situated within their own communities, at their point of need. The offer will link support for the whole family where there are children and young people up to the age of 19 (25 for those with SEND), acknowledging the impact of the right support and care, in the right place, at the right time on the future lives of children.

Success measures:

- Ensure assessments support early identification of risks and vulnerabilities.

¹ [Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025](#)

- Continued prevention service to support children at risk of entering the criminal justice system after MoJ Turnaround funding ceases.
- Stronger partnerships with colleagues across the partnership to identify children most at risk at the earliest opportunity.
- Reduced FTE rates.
- A reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions in schools

Priority 2: Over-representation and Disproportionality

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society. Disproportionality refers to the overrepresentation of certain groups, particularly from Black, Asian, and other global majority backgrounds, within the youth justice system. It is imperative to recognise and rectify these disparities to create a system that treats all children equally, regardless of their background. By addressing disproportionality, we can reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing support, thereby promoting trust in the system.

The population of Hillingdon has changed significantly over the last decade as outlined in the 2021 census data:

- White British made up 50% of the 10-17yr old population in Hillingdon in 2011, this dropped to 31% in 2021.
- Asian children made up 24% of the pop. in 2011, this increased to 34% in 2021.
- Black African children made up 6% of the pop. in 2011, this is increased to 9% in 2021.
- Any other ethnic group saw the largest % increase of 174%.

In Hillingdon, black children accounted for 27% of stop and searches compared to 13% of the population in the year 2023-2024. However, 81% of these stop and searches had an outcome of NFA (no further action). There has been a large decrease in the number of children on Bail and those released under investigation in November 2023 (76) compared to February 2024 (19). Black children made up 42% of children bailed/released under investigation in November 2023 but now account for 21% due to an increased focus in this area to reduce the number of children subject to a release under investigation. Our data tells us that Black and Mixed children are less likely to plead guilty; in 2023-2024 8% of black and mixed heritage children were found guilty compared to 3% of White children.

In Hillingdon, black and mixed children are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences, such as poverty, neglect, and parental conflict, in the early years of their lives. Black and mixed heritage children account for 18% of children on a CP plan in Hillingdon.

Black children in Hillingdon are 1.4x more likely to be severely obese compared to other ethnicities. 33% of Hillingdon's current looked after children are of Black or Mixed ethnicity. Black looked after children were less likely to have their health assessment up to date, 72% compared to 95% for White children. They were less likely to have immunisations up to date, 66% compared to 83% for White children. White children had the lowest amount of tooth decay in 5-year-olds.

In terms of education outcomes, 29% of exclusions and 33% of suspensions were from Black & Mixed Ethnicities in the 22/23 Academic Year. Boys (52%) were significantly more likely to

not have achieved at least the expected standard in Early Learning Goals by age 5 compared to Girls (70%), with Other ethnic boys (48%) and Black Boys (50%) with the lowest %.

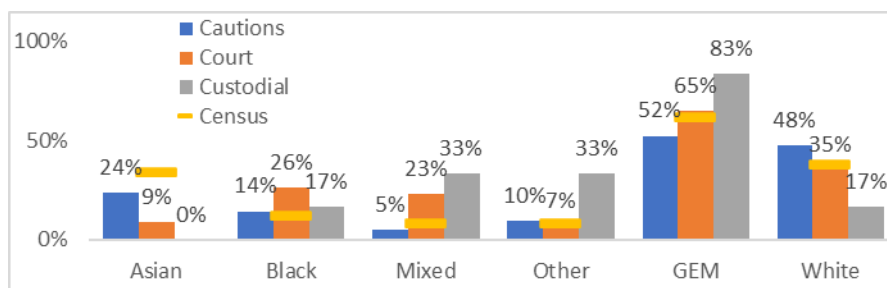
Illustrated below is the Hillingdon YJS data regarding outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Ethnicity	2019-2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023	2023 – 2024
White	44.83%	50.36%	55.56%	49.45%	45.05%
Black	24.71%	17.53%	14.81%	18.68%	19.78%
Asian	15.52%	16.06%	12.04%	6.59%	13.19%
Mixed	13.79%	10.95%	12.96%	16.48%	14.29%
Other	1.15%	5.11%	4.63%	8.79%	7.69%

Black and Asian ethnic children saw an increase in both the number and proportion of children compared to the previous year. White and Mixed Ethnicities decreased in both the number and proportion of clients compared to the previous year. The data pre and post pandemic tells us that fewer Black and Asian children received an outcome during the COVID period compared to their white counterparts that received a higher proportion of outcomes however we see an opposite trend for both sets of children coming out of the pandemic.

Outcomes

Black children have consistently been over-represented in Court and Custodial outcomes, although this has been decreasing in recent years. However, the disproportionality in court and custodial outcomes for mixed race children has been increasing in the last 5 years. Asian children are under-represented at every stage of the Youth Justice service.



*GEM, Global Ethnic Majority

The strategic partnership is actively working on developing a disproportionality plan and has asked “How do we, as a partnership address disproportionality experienced by children in Hillingdon within a Youth Justice context?”. This plan will focus on identifying the root causes of disproportionality and implementing targeted interventions to address them effectively. By working together to tackle this issue, we can create a youth justice system that is fair, equitable, and supportive for all children.

Success measures:

- The production of a disproportionality action plan by the strategic management board in consultation with children, families, community groups and other stakeholders.

- Increased training across partnerships to recognise and address bias and discrimination and develop an understanding of cultural humility.
- Increased provisions and interventions for children with protected characteristics.
- Reduction of overrepresentation of certain groups, particularly from Black, and mixed heritage children within the youth justice system.
- Increased trust in the justice system among children, families and communities affected by disproportionality.
- Collaborate with community organisations, stakeholders, and affected communities to address disproportionality effectively.
- Develop and implement targeted initiatives and approaches to address the root causes effectively.
- Monitor the progress and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions regularly.

Priority 3: Child-Centred Practice

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Child-centred practice focuses on the holistic needs of young people and their families, promoting their health, well-being, and positive development. By placing children at the centre, we aim to create thriving, healthy households where every young person can reach their full potential. It recognises children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, well-being, and development, creating nurturing environments where every child can thrive.

HYJS recognises the importance of listening to the voice of the child and using it to inform service delivery. Children actively participate in staff interviews and have had the opportunity to pose their own questions to candidates and have supported the successful recruitment of three YJS Officers in the past year.

In 2023-2024 HYJS board members received training from children open to the youth justice system called Walking in Our Shoes: YJS Edition whereby children shared their experiences of the criminal justice system, facilitated activities to provide an insight to board members on the service they receive from professionals in Hillingdon and wider partners, and presented the voices of other children open to HYJS. As a result, board members were able to consider the approaches used in HYJS, considering 'what works' in terms of the impact service delivery has on children. They also reflected on the importance of early intervention and prevention across the wider partnership, and considered how they would embed in their respective services. Following this it has been a commitment to have the voice of the child as a standing agenda item at all board meetings. This has allowed children's experiences to be brought to the board to develop understanding of the child's journey through the criminal justice system and where any challenges/barriers are addressed to ensure there is a child first approach across the partnership.

HYJS prides itself on the collaboration with partners and has recently been awarded the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Lead Quality Mark with Child First Commendation by Microlink PC. This quality mark highlights the strong partnership working across local authority and health services in Hillingdon. In 2023-2024 HYJS provided bespoke speech, language, and communication training to colleagues in the Metropolitan police working in our local police custody suite, Polar Park. As a result, we have found reduced numbers of children being detained in custody, and increased use of Caution plus 3 interviews. As a result of ongoing work with the custody suite, they have embedded a child-centred approach to custody. Children have access to distraction kits, custody video-books as well as access to child-friendly leaflets outlining the custody process, and possible outcomes. Custody staff have also received speech and language training which has supported custody staff to ensure that they are meeting the speech and language needs of children in police custody.

The well-resourced health hub within the YJS combines the skills of a Liaison and Diversion worker, Speech and Language therapist and Child and Adolescent Mental Health practitioner

to ensure a co-ordinated approach to meeting the health needs of children entering the youth justice system to promote positive outcomes.

The YJS Education and Employment Officer ensures all children open to HYJS have their education, training and employment (ETE) needs adequately assessed and the appropriate provision is provided both in the community and in custody with the support of partner agencies. This includes Under 16 education and post 16 provision. In the last five years we have experienced a reduction of ETE providers and face barriers in achieving ETE places for children. However, there are good partnerships with colleagues in with Education and SEND which supports a collaborative approach in keeping children in education, and re-engaging those children who are NEET or missing from education. HYJS is an accredited centre with AQA and provides children with the opportunity to acquire AQA qualifications as a stepping stone to further ETE pathways.

HYJS have developed the intervention 'My Support Plan' which is utilised to support practitioners get to know the children they are working with, understand their life experiences and how it forms part of their identity. The support plan focusses on diversity to understand the child beyond their offence. This is designed as the initial piece of work in the intervention to begin to build rapport, get to know the child and create SMART targets, which has been evidenced in case file audits and has received positive feedback from children and families.

HYJS believe children have the right to be heard and participate in decisions that affect them. Capturing feedback from children and families provides valuable insights into their experiences, perspectives and understanding of the criminal justice process. One of the ambitions of the YJB strategic plan 2024-2027² is to influence and develop policy and practice of child first across the youth justice system, which includes improving the court experience and outcomes of children. We capture children's experience of court proceedings to ensure that they are fair, transparent, and based on accurate information. It allows for a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the situation, reducing the risk of misinterpretation or bias.

Children and families are also involved in every step of their involvement with HYJS. Their participation in agreeing interventions and reviewing their progress leads to better outcomes in terms of their well-being, behaviour, and compliance with court orders. When children feel listened to and respected, they are more likely to engage positively with interventions and take responsibility for their actions. Co-production and participation from children and families also helps professionals identify risks or protective factors and inform decisions aimed at addressing their needs and preventing further harm.

Our focus under this priority is to further develop our child first approach and support active participation and engagement of children and families to encourage co-production of intervention plans and resources.

Success measures:

² [Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024-27.odt \(live.com\)](#)

- A commitment to continue to commission training/deliver tailored workshops to further develop practitioner's understanding of child centred practice.
- Speech and language training to be delivered to wider partnerships such as magistrates, and refresher training to be delivered to local police custody suite and YJS staff.
- Increased evidence of participation with children to inform service delivery.
- Achieving strengthened relationships with colleges and mainstream schools in Hillingdon.
- Improved pre-emptive action across the partnership to prevent suspensions and exclusions and widen opportunities for vulnerable learners.
- An increase in the availability of ETE providers for our children.
- Better collation of children's feedback regarding their experiences in police custody, court and HYJS.

Priority 4: Reducing Re-offending.

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Hillingdon Youth Justice Service prioritises the best interest of children and focuses on understanding children's identity, using trauma informed relationship-based practice when working with children to divert and prevent children from offending and re-offending. This includes addressing our re-offending rates and ensuring we have the right process in place to support children's desistance against further offending. Our commitment to reducing re-offending is key to creating safe and strong communities. By providing rehabilitation, support, and positive development opportunities, we can break the cycle of offending and promote the reintegration of children into society.

The **Proven rate of reoffending** data for the period 2021/22, published by the Ministry of Justice, demonstrated a decrease in reoffending (40.5% to 37.5%) when compared to the previous financial year. However, when we compared this to our local data, we saw a large discrepancy. Our local data showed a reoffending rate of 26.6%, however due to the limitations in both the local and published data sets, we estimate our true reoffending rate to be 32.8% which is slightly above the National (32.1%) and London average (33.4%). The published data indicates an increase in the **frequency of reoffending** with an average of 2.93 further offences compared to 2.13 for the previous year. This increase was also shown in our local data. It is important to note that the 2020/21 cohort was partly tracked through the COVID lockdown periods of 2020, and this is likely to affect the 2020/21 reoffending data.

The result of having a small cohort of children entering the youth justice system is that it only takes a small increase in offending to significantly impact the percentage change. The reduction of the cohorts demonstrates the positive impact of early intervention programmes, effective triage and diversion. Those children who do re-offend, although reduced in number, are often those with the most complex needs. The YJS continues to use the YJB re offending tracker tool, deep dive audits, quality assurance frameworks and a focus on the whole family approach to better understand this cohort and support improved outcomes.

In 2023/24, 22 children were triaged out of the criminal justice system in comparison to the 46 cases entering the system and receiving a formal disposal for the first time. In the previous year, of the 43 triages received, 6 (14%) went on to reoffend within the next 12 months. Additionally, 24 children received a community resolution in 2023/24, with 14 of these proceeding to an intervention. In the previous year, of the 37 clients who received a community resolution, 6 (16.2%) reoffended within 12 months. 0 of the 2 children who engaged with the community resolution reoffended.

HYJS acknowledge the following factors that have contributed to the reduction of re-offending in Hillingdon:

- Stable accommodation including care placements.
- Early resettlement planning
- Access to education, training, and employment
- Collaboration between the partnership

HYJS are committed to a strengths-based, constructive resettlement approach and ensure that our resettlement work is based on the "5 C's" – Constructive, Co-created, Customised, Consistent and Co-ordinated. HYJS has a dedicated experienced champion who leads on resettlement to ensure practice and delivery continues to evolve. Continuous partnerships with health and education services supports the transition from custody to the community. The review of all custody cases at the Hillingdon Access to Resource Panel ensures joint strategic oversight in planning and resource allocation.

The latest data on the Use of Custody shows that the number of children in Hillingdon receiving a custodial sentence in 2022/23 decreased to 7, compared to 8 for the previous year. The rate per 1,000 of the 10-17 population use of custody data for Hillingdon in this period was 0.22. Children sentenced to custody often represent the highest risk, and the imposition of a custodial sentence by the court are in response to the offences committed. Data analysis indicates that children in Hillingdon from the Global Ethnic Majority are 3 times more likely to receive a custodial sentence. However, please note due to their being such a small cohort of custodial outcomes, small changes in the data will have large impacts in these figures. The Hillingdon YJSPB are committed to understand and taking action to address overrepresentation with a robust Disproportionality action plan and associated partnership activity.

At the end of 2023/24 there was 1 child remanded into Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA), compared to 3 children at the end of 2022/23. There were 10 remands started in 2023/24, with an average time open of 36 days. This is both a decline in the number of remands and length open when compared to the previous year, which had 14 remands starting for an average length of 63 days. Like our custody data, Black and Mixed-Race children are disproportionately over-represented, accounting for 69% of the remands starting in 2023/24.

HYJS recognised a need for improved transitions work with Probation, which has been a priority for 2023-2024. We continue to deliver our transitions work without a seconded probation officer which could have significantly impacted on transitions; however, we have worked to ensure alternative interim arrangements have been established whilst a longer-term solution is secured. At HYJS we aim to ensure all transition plan are personalised and have had the added benefit of welcoming a pilot project in AXIS focusing on the transition ages (18-24) where other support services will drop, leaving young people at risk of gang affiliation and risk of further serious violence. We recognise that transitioning to adulthood is a journey not an event, and every young person will experience this journey differently. Having this focus requires practitioners to think beyond child/adult silos and consider the needs of each individual, and how they can be protected. We aim to build on the support and resources already available across the partnership to ensure all children are effectively supported into adulthood.

Success measures:

- A continued reduction of our re-offending rates.

- Increased resources to address critical transition periods e.g. leaving custody, transition to adulthood.
- HYJS to continue to strengthen relationships with the youth custody service and custodial establishments to ensure children are receiving the right services in custody.
- HYJS to continue to review the effectiveness of interventions.

Priority 5: Victims and Restorative Justice

Linked to Hillingdon Council Priority: Safe and strong communities, Thriving healthy households.

Victim and restorative justice focus on the needs of the victim, providing them with an opportunity to heal and recover from the harm they have experienced. It gives victims a voice and an active role in the justice process, empowering them and helping them to regain a sense of control over their lives. Restorative justice holds children accountable for their actions in a meaningful way, promoting a deeper understanding of the impact of their behaviour. Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) strives to provide high quality services to victims in line with The Victim's Code³. The Victim's Code sets out the 12 minimum standards that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations in England and Wales.

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023-2024
Number of victims reached/contacted	33	20	21
% of victims consenting to RJ	33%	50%	90%

In the year 2023-2024 HYJS successfully contacted 21 victims, a slight increase from 20 the previous year. Of the victims that wanted to engage with restorative justice, 71% (15) requested a letter of apology and 29% (4) agreed to a face-to-face restorative justice conference. Whilst the number of victims reached has reduced, we have increased our engagement rates with victims which is positive.

49 children completed a Restorative Justice screening in 2023-2024. A health screening and Speech and Language assessment is completed with all children prior to their Restorative Justice screening to ensure that the process is delivered in a bespoke and meaningful way (e.g., the delivery of RJ and victim awareness work with autistic children is carefully considered). As a result, 30 children agreed to engage in restorative justice and feedback from children and families regarding this process, and the victim empathy sessions has been positive.

All victims are offered home visits unless they are corporate victims or reside out of the Hillingdon borough. The home visits consist of victims speaking about the impact of the crime, discussing RJ and choosing the reparation project/s the child will complete to help repair the harm caused. HYJS have an extensive reparation leaflet which includes fifteen projects that cater to children's diversity and communication needs. All victims are asked if they require additional support and if so, a referral is made to Victim Support who provide practical, emotional and advocacy support.

³ [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales \(Victims' Code\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672223/victims-code-2021.pdf)

If a victim does not want to receive further support from Victim Support, the RJ team will complete a victim safety plan with them to address any risk posed. This plan can also be shared with police if the victim agrees.

The victim safety plan includes:

- Scenarios/places where the victim feels safe and unsafe.
- Safe Words.
- Trusted adults and services they can contact.
- Emergency contacts.
- External services that can provide support.

Victims are provided with an effective and inclusive approach to addressing harm and resolving conflicts within our communities. They promote healing, accountability, and reconciliation, leading to safer, more resilient, and more cohesive communities. Feedback received from victims illustrates how powerful restorative justice is, and the impact it has had on them:

“You’re very helpful. I was nervous and anxious before the conference, but the conference went well. I came out feeling better in myself because it had been spoken about.” Victim

“From a parent’s perspective, you included my daughter and gave her a voice. You could have just listened to what I said, because she’s a child and I’m the parent but you didn’t, you gave her a voice in the process. Going into that conference, I didn’t realise how much it affected me. By sitting in the conference, I could let it go; it felt done and dusted. It felt like there was justice within the conference. You are in a vulnerable situation and once you walk out of the conference, they are left with the thoughts and feelings that you have shared. You are no longer the only one walking around with those thoughts and feelings.” Victim’s parent.

In addition to the direct work with victims, our Victims and Restorative Justice offer extends to supporting our partners address conflict and harm in a more positive way. In the year 2023-2024 we have provided restorative justice training to all schools across Hillingdon and have received positive feedback for those that attended.

The London Reducing Criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers protocol⁴ was published in March 2021 and sets out the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved in the care of looked after children and care leavers, in reducing unnecessary criminalisation. The joint working with the Corporate Parenting team has led to increased restorative justice (RJ) support to social workers and residential care homes/semi-independent placements. In addition to delivering RJ training in schools, HYJS has also delivered RJ training to our care homes which is aimed to support front line staff in managing behaviours and incidents in a positive way and helps to reduce incidents in the home. Following the training HYJS has begun facilitating quarterly forums for staff to reflect and share their experiences of RJ approaches.

Success measures:

- HYJS to maintain a high engagement rate for victims.
- HYJS to streamline the collation of data, including qualitative data on the impact and effectiveness of restorative justice practices.
- HYJS to continue to provide restorative justice support to wider services in the partnership.
- Reparation activity to evidence a clear link to offences, where children are making amends to victims.
- HYJS to review existing victim awareness and victim empathy interventions to improve confidence amongst YJS Officers and utilise the support of the RJ Co-Ordinator if needed.
- HYJS to promote best practice to build on the knowledge of YJS Officers understanding of victim safety.

⁴ [Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall](#)

Conclusion

This youth justice strategy is firmly anchored in a "child-first" approach, placing the well-being and development of Hillingdon children and victims at the heart of all initiatives. Through a strategic focus on Prevention and Early Intervention, we aim to identify and mitigate the root causes of child involvement in the justice system, intervening proactively to divert them from offending. Central to our approach is the commitment to equity and fairness, striving to eliminate systemic biases that unfairly impact certain groups within our community, ensuring every child receives equitable treatment and opportunities.

By implementing child-centred practices, we ensure that the needs and rights of children are at the forefront of our approach, fostering the right environments conducive to their holistic development and empower children to make positive choices. Additionally, our focus on victims and restorative justice reflects our recognition of the importance of accountability, empathy, and healing for all parties affected by crime, promoting reconciliation and resolution within our communities.

This strategy seeks to foster long-term positive outcomes for our residents, cultivating safer, more inclusive environments where children can thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. By staying true to these principles and remaining adaptive to evolving needs, we are confident in our ability to effect positive change and build a brighter future for generations to come.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM - WITNESS SESSION FIVE

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Updated Scoping report
Ward	All

HEADLINES

As part of its review, Members were keen to hear from officers regarding child protection and safeguarding of young people who are persistently absent.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee meet with officers and ask questions pertaining to the review.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Officers attending are:

- Alex Coman – Director for Safeguarding, Partnership and Quality Assurance
- Donna Hugh – Safeguarding Manager

Please see the attached scoping report.

Lines of Enquiry

Lines of enquiry can be expanded as the review progresses or included in relevant witness session reports. However, lines of enquiry may include:

- Establishing the historical background of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon.
- Exploring what support functions are in place and whether these can be improved.
- The nature of partnership working and how it is combined in practice.
- The Council's responsibilities towards young people and ensuring their access to education.
- Officers' experiences of dealing with persistent absence.
- Challenges and barriers faced by young people in attending school.
- Improvements/ steps that the Council can implement to encourage improved attendance.

Implications on related Council policies

A statutory role of the Select Committees is to undertake reviews and make recommendations to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction. Reviews selected should be consistent with the Council's policy and budgetary framework.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

None at this stage, pending any findings and recommendations devised in the final report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any recommendations developed as a result of this review may have financial implications and these will be assessed at that stage.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The key pieces of legislation are as follows:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Review Scoping Report - 2024

Persistent Absenteeism: Statutory School Age Children in Hillingdon

1. OBJECTIVES

Aim of review

Following its meeting on 15 November 2023, the Select Committee agreed as its major review to consider the issue of attendance/ persistent absence of statutory school age children in Hillingdon, including how this has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This document serves as an introduction to the topic of persistent absenteeism and sets out in general terms the context within local government, the objectives, the challenges and offers a framework for any subsequent review.

It is intended that the review will support the work of the Attendance Support service in helping to shape its ways of working, identifying areas of weakness and how overall engagement with key stakeholders can be improved.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference are suggested for the review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. To identify the prevalence and patterns of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon, including a reference to primary planning areas
2. To explore the root causes and contributing factors of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon
3. To consider the impact of persistent absenteeism on academic outcomes on statutory school age children in Hillingdon
4. To understand and explore the nature of partnership working in relation to persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon, including parents/ carers, young people, teachers, officers and other stakeholders

5. To review the effectiveness of existing interventions and policies in place for children and families struggling with persistent absenteeism in Hillingdon
6. To explore the measures in place for child protection and safeguarding in relation to attendance
7. To review and identify the trends and patterns of persistent absenteeism when considering demographic factors such as age, race, religion, wealth and disability, as well as considering differences between the North and South of the borough.
8. To review how other Local Authorities, including statistical neighbours, are tackling persistent absenteeism
9. Subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet

2. BACKGROUND

Attendance Support team

The Attendance Support team currently consists of eight officers.

Context and key information

Government statistics have shown that COVID-19 and its aftermath has had a damaging effect on school attendance, which has lasted longer than originally anticipated.

The rate of absence in schools in England has increased significantly since the pandemic. The most recent full-year statistics (which cover the 2021/22 academic year) showed an overall absence rate of 7.6%, up from around 4–5% pre-pandemic. Within this, 5.5% of missed sessions were authorised absences and 2.1% were unauthorised. Authorised illness was the main driver, at 4.4%, (whilst unauthorised holiday absences sat at 0.4%). 22.5% of pupils were persistently absent, which is around double the pre-pandemic rate, and 1.7% of all pupils were severely absent compared to less than 1% pre-pandemic.

Prior to the impact of the pandemic, absence and persistent absence had been gradually declining since 2010, but there is no sign of a return to this trajectory. Being in school is important to every child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the pupils with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A-Level results. Research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well.

In 2019, primary school children in Key Stage 2 who didn't achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths missed on average four more days per school year than those whose performance exceeded the expected standard. Similarly, in the same year, secondary school pupils who didn't achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths missed on average 10 or more days over the key stage than those who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure their child gets a full time-education. Usually, that means going into school from the age of 5 to 16. There are only a small number of circumstances where missing a school day is permitted. A child must attend every day that their school is open, unless:

- They are too ill to attend.
- Permission has been given by the school in advance for the child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.

- A child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious event.

It is important to note that this review will also consider persistent attendance prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Relevant Legislation

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)

External issues and risks

Persistent absenteeism can be impacted by a range of factors and challenges, including:

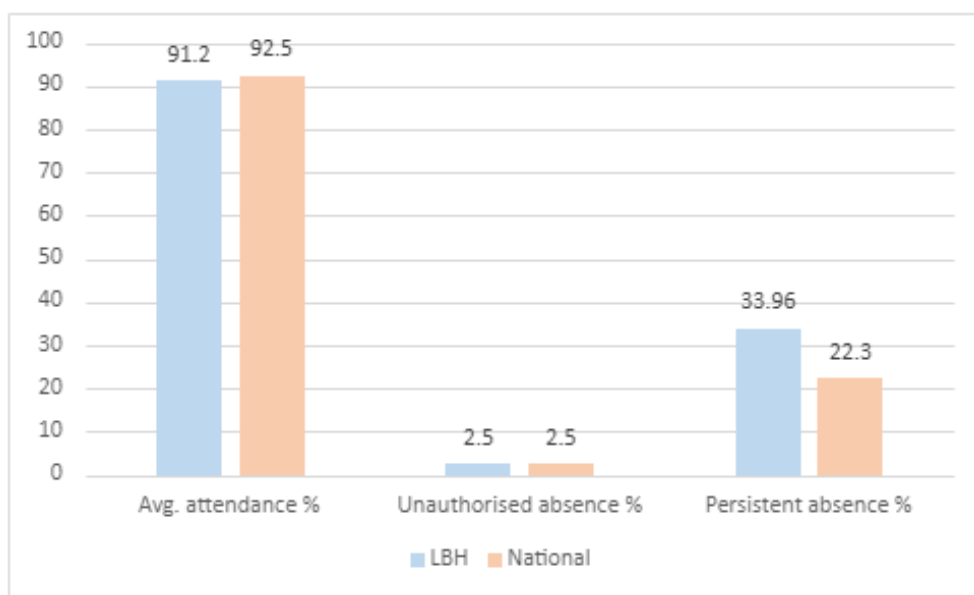
- **Health Issues:**
 - **Chronic Illness:** Children with long-term health conditions may face difficulties attending school regularly.
 - **Mental Health:** Mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, can contribute to school avoidance.
- **Socioeconomic Factors:**
 - **Poverty:** Families facing financial challenges may struggle to provide basic necessities, impacting a child's ability to attend school consistently.
 - **Housing Instability:** Frequent relocations and unstable housing situations can disrupt a child's education.
- **Family Dynamics:**
 - **Parental Involvement:** Lack of parental engagement or interest in a child's education can contribute to absenteeism.
 - **Family Issues:** Family conflicts, such as divorce or domestic violence, can impact a child's well-being and school attendance.
- **School Environment:**
 - **Bullying:** Instances of bullying or harassment at school may lead to a child avoiding attendance.
 - **School Culture:** Unsupportive or unwelcoming school environments can negatively affect student engagement.
- **Academic Challenges:**
 - **Learning Disabilities:** Undiagnosed or unaddressed learning difficulties can lead to frustration and avoidance of school.
 - **Lack of Relevance:** Students may disengage if they find the curriculum irrelevant or not challenging enough.
- **Transportation Issues:**
 - **Lack of Transportation:** Limited access to reliable transportation can hinder regular school attendance.

- **Peer Influence:**
 - **Peer Pressure:** Negative peer influence or the desire to fit in may contribute to absenteeism.
- **Communication Barriers:**
 - **Language:** Language barriers, particularly in families with limited English proficiency, can hinder communication between parents and schools.

Current data, best practice and research

Attendance in Hillingdon

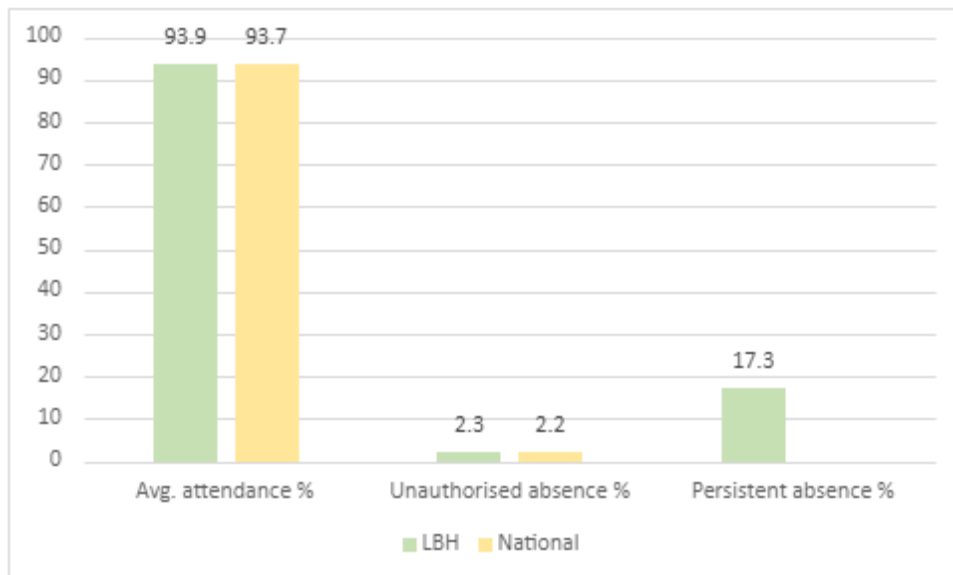
The graph below shows Hillingdon’s Statutory School Age attendance rates during the last academic year (22/23) compared to those nationally. Data for statistical neighbours was not available to at the time of writing (Nov 2023).



Data: Department for Education Aug 23

The data shows that whilst Hillingdon’s overall attendance and rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with figures recorded nationally, our rate of persistent absence is higher. A child who only attends school for 90% or less of the time is classed as a persistent absentee.

As we are at the start of the new academic year, there is limited data on attendance available. However, we are able to compare Hillingdon’s rates of attendance and unauthorised absence with national figures.



Data: Department for Education 9 Oct 23

The data shows Hillingdon's overall attendance and rate of unauthorised absence remains broadly in line with figures recorded nationally. Whilst we are unable yet to compare our rate of persistent absenteeism, the figure above demonstrates an improvement on that recorded last year which is positive.

Further data and research will be identified as the review progresses.

Plan moving forward

In May 2022, the DfE published new guidance for attendance in schools 'Working together to improve school attendance' which came into effect from September 2022. Broadly speaking, it highlighted:

- Improving attendance is everyone's business. Attendance is never 'solved' and is part of a continuous process.
- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent or carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

Moving forward, the expectations of schools and local authorities have changed considerably. Under the new guidance, all schools are now expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.

- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Local authorities are now expected to:

- Provide all schools with a named contact in the Attendance Support Team. This includes independent and specialist settings.
- Create networking opportunities to share effective practice
- Hold termly targeted support meetings with all schools
- Be part of multi-agency efforts to improve attendance borough-wide with schools and other partner agencies
- Provide formal support to schools, including parenting contracts and education supervision orders
- Initiate legal action including penalty notices, parenting orders and prosecution.

In Hillingdon, we have already begun much of this work, and we have extensive plans for the academic year ahead. To date, we have:

- Rebranded our Participation service to Attendance Support
- Developed a new practice model to meet the revised guidelines from the DfE for allocated officers to use when conducting their termly meetings with schools. These meetings will focus on overall attendance and persistent and severe absence, as well having a greater emphasis on the attendance of vulnerable cohorts and those children placed on part-time timetables or in alternative provisions
- Published revised guidance on attendance for all schools
- Published revised guidance on the use of part-time timetables
- Published revised guidance on alternative provision
- Successfully delivered a series of webinars and provided training and resources to all schools in the borough to support with the implementation of the Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance for this academic year
- Created a more robust system to track and process unauthorised exceptional leave
- Engaged with the parents/carers of pupils that had one day of absence in the first week of term in the last academic year or pupils where they have been previously recorded as persistent or severely absent to encourage parents to prepare them for the start of the new term
- Created and shared an attendance self-evaluation form for schools to utilise
- Taken part in refresher training with legal colleagues in the use of Education Supervision Orders.

Over the coming year we have plans to:

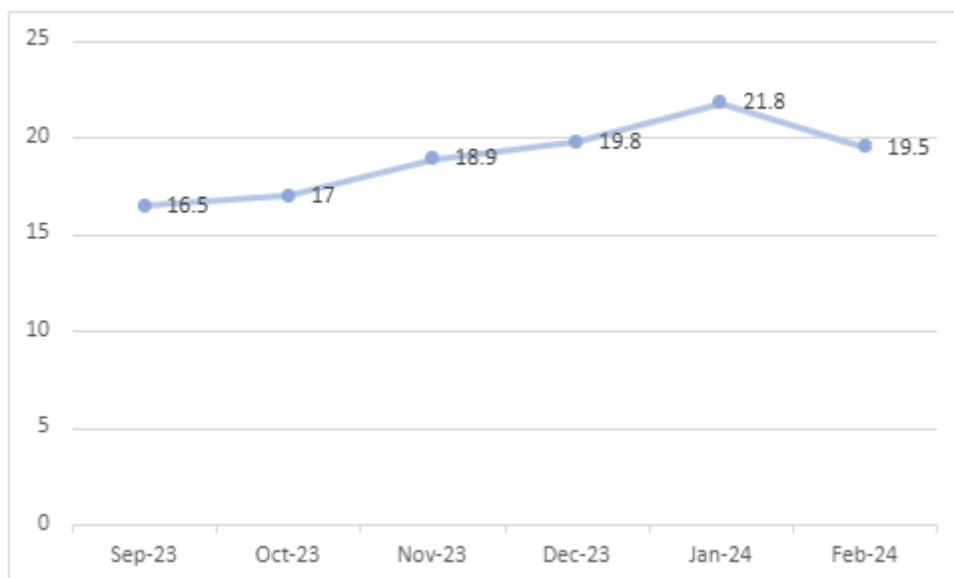
- Publish a revised borough-wide protocol for the use of penalty notices
- Devise a three-year strategy for improving school attendance which utilises the support of statutory partners
- Work more closely with colleagues in the Virtual School to promote the importance of attendance of all children with a social worker
- Improve communication and advice with schools via virtual drop-in clinics for schools to attend to discuss any concerns regarding attendance. These clinics will be held fortnightly
- Invest in our Attendance Support service by providing increased training opportunities in key issues affecting attendance, such as Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA), working with children who have suffered complex trauma and working with families who have had negative experiences of education

- Develop attendance hubs in parts of the borough or with clusters of schools which may be struggling with particular aspects of attendance and to promote the sharing of good practice.

Update: March 2024

On 1st March 2024 the rate of persistent absenteeism in Hillingdon was 19.5% for the academic year. This compares favourably to the national average of 20.6% for the same period.

The chart below shows the rate of persistent absenteeism in the borough across the year.



Data: Department for Education 1 Mar 2024

With the exception of February where there has been a slight decrease, the rate of persistent absenteeism was growing by 1% on average month on month. If this trend were to continue, Hillingdon's rate of persistent absenteeism could reach 26-28% by the end of the academic year. Although this is lower than last year's rate of 33.9%, it highlights there is more work to be done to bring this number down even further.

Further preliminary data analysis has revealed:

- There is little difference in the rate of persistent absenteeism between the genders; the average rate for girls is 19.4% and boys 19.5%.
- The rate of persistent absenteeism is highest in our special school settings (38%). The average rate in secondary schools is 22.5% and in primary schools is 16.2%.
- The rate of persistent absenteeism in our vulnerable cohorts was:
 - All children with SEND: 28.4%
 - Children on an EHCP: 33%
 - Children in receipt of Free School Meals: 31.3%
 - Looked After Children: 27.1%
 - Children in Need: 59.6%
 - Children on a Child Protection Plan: 40%

Progress to date

Since the last update was provided to the Committee, the Attendance Support team have made progress in the following areas:

- A revised borough-wide protocol has been published on the use of penalty notices.
- Training on Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) has been undertaken by all team members and has been offered to key colleagues in all Hillingdon schools.
- Four members of the Attendance Support team are undertaking training via the Virtual School in how to work with children who have suffered complex trauma.
- Three attendance hubs have so far been held involving schools in the West Drayton, Hillingdon and Ruislip areas, with a further hub planned for Hayes before the end of the Spring term.
- Commissioned a deep-dive analysis into attendance and absence for all children with a social worker being undertaken by the Virtual School Project Manager.
- Recruitment is underway for an Education Project Manager (12-month role) to support with accelerating progress in attendance.
- Planning for fortnightly virtual clinics is underway with a plan to launch in the summer term.

Executive Responsibilities

The Cabinet Member responsible is Councillor Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education.

3. EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

Lines of Enquiry

Lines of enquiry can be expanded as the review progresses or included in relevant witness session reports. However, lines of enquiry may include:

- Establishing the historical background of persistent absenteeism in statutory school age children in Hillingdon.
- A focus on children and young people and how they have found the service in practice.
- Exploring what support functions are in place and whether these can be improved.
- The nature of partnership working and how it is combined in practice.
- The Council's responsibilities towards young people and ensuring their access to education.
- Officers' experiences of dealing with persistent absence.
- Challenges and barriers faced by young people in attending school.
- Improvements/ steps that the Council can implement to encourage improved attendance.

Potential witnesses

Witnesses will be identified by the Committee in consultation with relevant officers.

Surveys, site-visits or other fact-finding events

Such opportunities will be identified as the review progresses. A possible survey of suppliers will be considered to provide useful feedback and evidence for the Committee.

Future information that may be required

Further information may be identified as the review progresses.

4. REVIEW PLANNING & TIMETABLE

Proposed timeframe and milestones for the review:

Meeting Date (Subject to change as required)	Meeting Status: Public/ Private	Action	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending	Notes
09 January 2024	Public	Confirm topic selection	To confirm the subject of the review	N/A	
01 February 2024	Public	Agree updated Scoping Report	Information and analysis	N/A	
14 March 2024	Public	Witness Session 1	Setting the scene/ The Council's role and responsibilities	Council Education Officers	
18 April 2024	Public	Witness Session 2	The Voice of Other Authorities	N/A	To ascertain suitable local authorities proactively tackling absenteeism
18 June 2024	Public	Witness Session 3	The Voice of Schools & partnership working with Council	Schools (e.g. teachers/ attendance officers)	A short survey has been sent to all schools to ascertain their views
17 July 2024	Public	Witness Session 5	Child Protection/ Safeguarding	Children's Services Officers	To explore child protection in relation to absenteeism
August-September 2024 - Date TBC	Private	Witness Session 4	The Voice of Young People	Young people who have been absent/ parents/ carers, Youth Council, youth workers etc...	To be arranged appropriately (Schools may be able to obtain indirect feedback)
13 November 2024	Public	Findings stage	To discuss key findings and identify potential recommendations	Democratic Services	
07 January 2025	Public	Report stage	Agree final recommendations and draft report to Cabinet	Democratic Services	
04 February 2025	Public	Target Cabinet reporting	Final report to Cabinet for formal consideration	Democratic Services	

Resource requirements

Internal only at this stage. Any recommendations developed may have financial implications and these will be assessed at that stage.

Equalities impact

None at this stage, pending any findings by the Committee.

Background Papers/ further reading

- Briefing Paper: Statutory School Age Attendance in Hillingdon
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- [Persistent absence for unauthorised other reasons: who is at risk? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Persistent absence and support for disadvantaged pupils - Education Committee \(parliament.uk\)](http://parliament.uk)
- [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Appendices

App A – TBC

App B – TBC

App C – TBC

CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Latest Forward Plan
Ward	As shown on the Forward Plan

HEADLINES

To monitor the Cabinet's latest Forward Plan which sets out key decisions and other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet collectively and Cabinet Members individually over the coming year. The report sets out the actions available to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee notes the Cabinet Forward Plan.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Cabinet Forward Plan is published monthly, usually around the first or second week of each month. It is a rolling document giving the required public notice of future key decisions to be taken. Should a later edition of the Forward Plan be published after this agenda has been circulated, Democratic Services will update the Committee on any new items or changes at the meeting.

As part of its Terms of Reference, each Select Committee should consider the Forward Plan and, if it deems necessary, comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on the items listed which relate to services within its remit. For reference, the Forward Plan helpfully details which Select Committee's remit covers the relevant future decision item listed.

The Select Committee's monitoring role of the Forward Plan can be undertaken in a variety of ways, including both pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny of the items listed. The provision of advance information on future items listed (potentially also draft reports) to the Committee in advance will often depend upon a variety of factors including timing or feasibility, and ultimately any such request would rest with the relevant Cabinet Member to decide. However, the 2019 Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations (part of the Hillingdon Constitution) does provide guidance to Cabinet Members to:

- Actively support the provision of relevant Council information and other requests from the Committee as part of their work programme;
- Where feasible, provide opportunities for committees to provide their input on forthcoming executive reports as set out in the Forward Plan to enable wider pre-decision scrutiny (in addition to those statutorily required to come before committees, *i.e. policy framework documents – see para. below*).

As mentioned above, there is both a constitutional and statutory requirement for Select Committees to provide comments on the Cabinet's draft budget and policy framework proposals after publication. These are automatically scheduled in advance to multi-year work programmes.

Therefore, in general, the Committee may consider the following actions on specific items listed on the Forward Plan:

	Committee action	When	How
1	To provide specific comments to be included in a future Cabinet or Cabinet Member report on matters within its remit.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide its influence and views on a particular matter within the formal report to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member before the decision is made.</p> <p>This would usually be where the Committee has previously considered a draft report or the topic in detail, or where it considers it has sufficient information already to provide relevant comments to the decision-maker.</p>	<p>These would go within the standard section in every Cabinet or Cabinet Member report called "Select Committee comments".</p> <p>The Cabinet or Cabinet Member would then consider these as part of any decision they make.</p>
2	To request further information on future reports listed under its remit.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to discover more about a matter within its remit that is listed on the Forward Plan.</p> <p>Whilst such advance information can be requested from officers, the Committee should note that information may or may not be available in advance due to various factors, including timescales or the status of the drafting of the report itself and the formulation of final recommendation(s). Ultimately, the provision of any information in advance would be a matter for the Cabinet Member to decide.</p>	<p>This would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting. Alternatively, information could be circulated outside the meeting if reporting timescales require this.</p> <p>Upon the provision of any information, the Select Committee may then decide to provide specific comments (as per 1 above).</p>
3	To request the Cabinet Member considers providing a draft of the report, if feasible, for the Select Committee to consider prior to it being considered formally for decision.	<p>As part of its pre-decision scrutiny role, this would be where the Committee wishes to provide an early steer or help shape a future report to Cabinet, e.g., on a policy matter.</p> <p>Whilst not the default position, Select Committees do occasionally receive draft versions of Cabinet reports prior to their formal consideration. The provision of such draft reports in advance may depend upon different factors, e.g., the timings required for that decision. Ultimately any request to see a draft report early would need the approval of the relevant Cabinet Member.</p>	<p>Democratic Services would contact the relevant Cabinet Member and Officer upon any such request.</p> <p>If agreed, the draft report would be considered at a subsequent Select Committee meeting to provide views and feedback to officers before they finalise it for the Cabinet or Cabinet Member. An opportunity to provide specific comments (as per 1 above) is also possible.</p>
4	To identify a forthcoming report that may merit a post-decision review at a later Select Committee meeting.	<p>As part of its post-decision scrutiny and broader reviewing role, this would be where the Select Committee may wish to monitor the implementation of a certain Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision listed/taken at a later stage, i.e., to review its effectiveness after a period of 6 months.</p> <p>The Committee should note that this is different to the use of the post-decision scrutiny 'call-in' power which seeks to ask the Cabinet or Cabinet Member to formally re-consider a decision up to 5 working days after the decision notice has been issued. This is undertaken via the new Scrutiny Call-in App members of the relevant Select Committee.</p>	<p>The Committee would add the matter to its multi-year work programme after a suitable time has elapsed upon the decision expected to be made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.</p> <p>Relevant service areas may be best to advise on the most appropriate time to review the matter once the decision is made.</p>

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet relations adopted by Council 12 September 2019](#)
- [Scrutiny Call-in App](#)

Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence

Cabinet meeting - Thursday 25 July 2024 (report deadline 8 July)

SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	All	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - July 2024

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All		C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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AUGUST 2024 - NO CABINET MEETING

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Cabinet meeting - Thursday 12 September 2024 (report deadline 23 August)

203	Hillingdon Adoption Services	Cabinet will consider a report regarding an extension of the services provided by the Regional Adoption Agency.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS / R - Poppy Reddy / Sally Offin			Private (3)
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

**Scheduled
Upcoming
Decisions**

Further details

Ref

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - September 2024

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Cabinet meeting - Thursday 10 October 2024 (report deadline 23 September)

210b	Youth Justice Plan 2024-2029	Following consultation and select committee input, Cabinet will consider recommending a 5 year strategic Youth Justice Plan to full Council for approval. Annual updates to this Plan will be submitted and monitored by the Cabinet Member and Hillingdon's Youth Justice Partnership Board. The proposed 5 year Plan will set out the overarching priorities and goals for the youth justice service linked to national key performance indicators and standards for children in the youth justice system and will align with the wider Council Strategy.	All	Full Council - 28 November 2024	Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Nuz Ilyas / Kathrine Wyatt	Select Committee and Public/Stakeholder Consultation		Public
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Page 70	The Annual Report Of Adult and Child Safeguarding Arrangements	This report provides the Cabinet with a summary of the activity undertaken by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and the Safeguarding Adults Board to address the identified local priorities. The Cabinet will consider this report and approve the activity and the local priorities for the two boards.	All		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education / Cllr Jane Palmer - Health & Social Care	Health & Social Care / Children, Families & Education	CS / AS - Alex Coman / Sandra Taylor	Select Committees		Public
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SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
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Cabinet Member Decisions expected - October 2024

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence

Cabinet meeting - Thursday 7 November 2024 (report deadline 21 October)

SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - November 2024

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Cabinet meeting - Thursday 12 December 2024 (report deadline 25 November)

SI	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2025/26 - 2029/30 (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2025/26 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration.	All	Proposed Full Council adoption - 20 February 2025	Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance	All	R - Andy Evans	Public consultation through the Select Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

Cabinet meeting - Thursday 9 January 2025 (report deadline 9 December 2024)

SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

Ref	Scheduled Upcoming Decisions	Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence										
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - January 2025										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 13 February 2025 (report deadline 27 January 2025)										
SI	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2025/26 - 2029/30 (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2025/26 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration.	All	Proposed Full Council adoption - 20 February 2025	Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance	All	R - Andy Evans	Public consultation through the Select Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	CS - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - February 2025										
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 13 March 2025 (report deadline 24 February)										
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	CS - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	TBC		Public

Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - March 2025

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of non-key decisions each month on standard items - details of these are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	CS - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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Cabinet meeting - Thursday 10 April 2025 (report deadline 24 March)

SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - April 2025

SI	School Organisation Plan annual update	The School Organisation Plan, originally approved by Cabinet in 2024, sets out how the London Borough of Hillingdon in accordance with its statutory duty, seeks to ensure there are sufficient primary, The Cabinet Member will consider the annual update to the Plan.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Nav Minas / Abi Preston	Children, Families and Education Select Committee		Public
SI	Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2023/24	The Cabinet Member will receive the Annual Report regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools, for publication.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Abi Preston / Michael Hawkins	Children, Families and Education Select Committee		Public
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public

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Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence

Cabinet meeting - Thursday 22 May 2025 (report deadline 2 May)

SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
SI	Public Preview of matters to be considered in private	A report to Cabinet to provide maximum transparency to residents on the private and confidential matters to be considered later in Part 2 of the Cabinet meeting and agenda.	TBC		All Cabinet Members	All	C - Democratic Services			Public

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - May 2025

SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services	Various		Public
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CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS: Standard Items (SI) that may be considered each month

SI	Urgent Cabinet-level decisions & interim decision-making (including emergency decisions)	The Leader of the Council has the necessary authority to make decisions that would otherwise be reserved to the Cabinet, in the absence of a Cabinet meeting or in urgent circumstances. Any such decisions will be published in the usual way and reported to a subsequent Cabinet meeting for ratification. The Leader may also take emergency decisions without notice, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be ratified at a later Cabinet meeting.	Various		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	C - Democratic Services	TBC		Public / Private
SI	School Governing Bodies, Instruments of Government and Governors / Authorising Academy Appointments	To approve appointments, nominate appointments and make reappointments of local authority governors and to approve any changes to school governing body constitutions. To also authorise any Member to be a Governor or Director of an Academy.	N/A		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Julie Kelly / CS - Democratic Services			Public

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Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

				Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence										
SI	Release of Capital Funds	The release of all capital monies requires formal Member approval, unless otherwise determined either by the Cabinet or the Leader. Batches of monthly reports (as well as occasional individual reports) to determine the release of capital for any schemes already agreed in the capital budget and previously approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members	TBC		Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance (in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member)	All - TBC by decision made	various	Corporate Finance		Public but some Private (1,2,3)
SI	Petitions about matters under the control of the Cabinet	Cabinet Members will consider a number of petitions received by local residents and organisations and decide on future action. These will be arranged as Petition Hearings.	TBC		All	TBC	C - Democratic Services			Public
SI	To approve compensation payments	To approve compensation payments in relation to any complaint to the Council in excess of £1000.	n/a		All	TBC	R - Iain Watters			Private (1,2,3)
SI	Acceptance of Tenders	To accept quotations, tenders, contract extensions and contract variations valued between £50k and £500k in their Portfolio Area where funding is previously included in Council budgets.	n/a		Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council OR Cllr Martin Goddard - Finance / in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member	TBC	various			Private (3)
SI	All Delegated Decisions by Cabinet to Cabinet Members, including tender and property decisions	Where previously delegated by Cabinet, to make any necessary decisions, accept tenders, bids and authorise property decisions / transactions in accordance with the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.	TBC		All	TBC	various			Public / Private (1,2,3)

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Scheduled Upcoming Decisions

Ref

Further details

Ward(s)

				Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Directorate / Lead Officer	Consultation related to the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month/regularly Council Directorate/Service Areas: AS = Adult Services & Health P = Place C = Central Services R = Resources CS= Children's Services D = Digital & Intelligence										
SI	School Redundancy Payments	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC		Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	CS - Julie Kelly / Abi Preston			Private (1,3,4)
SI	External funding bids	To authorise the making of bids for external funding where there is no requirement for a financial commitment from the Council.	n/a		All	TBC	various			Public
SI	Response to key consultations that may impact upon the Borough	A standard item to capture any emerging consultations from Government, the GLA or other public bodies and institutions that will impact upon the Borough. Where the deadline to respond cannot be met by the date of the Cabinet meeting, the Constitution allows the Cabinet Member to sign-off the response.	TBC		All	TBC	various			Public

The Cabinet's Forward Plan is an official document by the London Borough of Hillingdon, UK

WORK PROGRAMME

Committee name	Children, Families and Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Work Programme
Ward	All

HEADLINES

To enable the Committee to note future meeting dates and to forward plan its work for the current municipal year.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee considers the report and agrees any amendments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The Committee's meetings will start at 7pm and the witnesses attending each of the meetings may include representatives from external organisations, some of whom travel from outside of the Borough. Forthcoming meeting dates are as follows:

Meeting Date	Room
18 September 2024	CR6
13 November 2024	CR5
07 January 2025	CR6
04 February 2025	CR5
11 March 2025	CR5
15 April 2025	CR5

Implications on related Council policies

The role of the Select Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet, who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

Select Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations and the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME 2022 - 2026

Service Area	Children, Families & Education Select Committee	July 17	August No meeting	September 18	October No meeting	November 13	December No meeting	January 7	February 4
Education and Vulnerable Children	Review: Persistent Absenteeism								
	Policy Review Discussion & Guidance								
	Topic selection/ scoping stage								
	Witness/ evidence/ consultation stage	WS5: Child protection/ safeguarding							
	Findings, conclusions and recommendations			WS4: Private WS with YP					
	Final review report agreement					X			
	Target Cabinet reporting							X	X
	Regular service & performance monitoring								
-	Minutes of the AGM								
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Residential Care	Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report			X					
Education and SEND	School Organisation Plan inc. School Places Planning update								
	<i>School Capital Programme</i>								
Adult Education	Annual Education Standards report (prior to Cabinet/ Member)							23-24	
Education and Vulnerable Children	Learn Hillingdon Self-Assessment Review (annual)							X	
Hillingdon Music Hub	Reports/ minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel			X					
-	Hillingdon Music Hub Annual Report								
-	Quarterly Performance Monitoring					Provisional			
-	Mid-year budget/ budget planning report			X				X	
-	Cabinet Forward Plan Monthly Monitoring	X		X		X		X	X
	One-off information items								
Education and SEND	SEND Strategy 2023-2028					X			
	Alternative Provision Strategy					X			
	SEND Sufficiency Strategy					X			
	School Admissions Arrangements - Whitehall Infant/ Junior								
	Consultation on changes to school admissions arrangement								
	Update on School Admissions								
	Move-ins to the Borough (in-year admissions) and ease of their accommodation in secondary schools			X					
	Ofsted report - PART II								
	Ukrainian Children - how funding from Central Govt. has been delivered to schools/ "Ukraine Education support update"								
	Early help/ support available to young people Services available to low-income families - TBC								
	DPS for Alternative Provision – Education and SEND								
	Engagement with schools (Part II) - TBC								Provisional
	Witness session on Higher Education - TBC								Provisional
Outcomes of consultations regarding: (i) Proposed closures of the Physical Disability (PD) Special Resourced Provision (SRP) at Coteford Infant School (ii) Proposed increasing of the age range for the Assessment Base at Ruislip Gardens Primary School						X			
Education and Vulnerable Children	Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities								
	Corporate Parenting Panel Membership to agree + subs								
	Corporate Parenting Panel - update to Terms of Reference								
Children's Social Care	Children's Centres delivery model and Early Years Nurseries - review of implementation of Cabinet's decisions Sept. 2023					TBC			
	Hillingdon's Youth Offer & Delivery Model - review of implementation of Cabinet decisions from Sept. 2023					TBC			
Prevention and Youth Justice	Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029	X							
-	Council Strategy 2022-2026 consultation								
-	Scrutiny Introduction (Democratic Services)								
	Past review delivery								
Adult Education	Adult & Community Learning Review 2021/22								
Children's Social Care	Stronger Families Hub 2022/23 - 2023/24					X			
Education and Vulnerable Children	Persistent Absenteeism								

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