



Children, Families and Education Select Committee

Councillors on the Committee

Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair)
Councillor Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Kishan Bhatt
Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE
Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)
Councillor Tony Gill
Councillor Narinder Garg

Co-Opted Member

Tony Little, Roman Catholic Diocesan
Representative

Date: THURSDAY, 05 FEBRUARY
2026

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:

Portfolio(s)	Directorate	Service Areas
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)
	Adult Services & Health	Children and Families Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)

Corporate Parenting

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 - 14
- 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 Learn Hillingdon Annual Self-Assessment 15 - 32
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Minutes

CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE

07 January 2026



Meeting held at Committee Room 6 – Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillor Heena Makwana (Chair), Councillor Ekta Gohil (Vice-Chair), Councillor Peter Smallwood OBE, Councillor Kishan Bhatt, Councillor Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead), Councillor Raju Sansarpuri, and Councillor Narinder Garg</p> <p>Co-Opted Member Present: Mr Tony Little</p> <p>Officers Present: Julie Kelly (Corporate Director of Children’s Services) (virtual), Luisa Hansen (Head of Finance, Children’s & SEND) (virtual), Helen Smith (Head of Service, Social Care Delivery Transformation), Donna Hugh (Assistant Director of Care Provision Services) (virtual), Abi Preston (Director of Education & SEND) (virtual), Kathryn Angelini (Assistant Director for Education) (virtual), Tehseen Kauser (Director of Children's Social Care) (virtual), Alex Coman (Director of Children’s Safeguarding & Care), Laura Baldry (School Placement & Admissions Manager), Steve Muldoon (Corporate Director of Finance), Matt Davis (Director, Strategic & Operational Finance), James Rogers (School Place Planning Officer), Ryan Dell (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
45.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Councillor Tony Gill, with Councillor Raju Sansarpuri substituting.</p>
46.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Jan Sweeting declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 9 as she was a governor at St Martins School.</p> <p>Councillor Peter Smallwood declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 10 as he was a governor at Whiteheath School.</p> <p>Both Councillors stayed in the room for the discussion on those items.</p>

47.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed</p>
48.	<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 4</i>)</p>
49.	<p>BUDGET & SPENDING REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report.</p> <p>Month 7 performance showed little movement from Month 6, which was considered a positive sign. General Fund pressure remained unchanged at just under £6 million. A £1.9 million positive movement had been achieved from Month 6 in the in-year DSG position.</p> <p>Savings of £273,000 rated Amber related to children's homes and increasing residential provision. These savings were now more secure following registration of the six new children's homes.</p> <p>Members referenced the £6 million pressures and asked if this would be addressed through Exceptional Financial Support (EFS), or new government fair funding. This related to pressures around placement costs and Section 17. The current year overspend would require EFS, and next year's budget would not be balanced without EFS.</p> <p>Members commended officers for the progress on the DSG position but noted the remaining deficit. Members asked whether further EFS may be required depending on government treatment of DSG deficits. Officers noted that national guidance was expected and awaited. Government had not yet clarified how deficits up to March 2028 will be treated, though many councils faced even larger DSG deficits and this remained a national issue.</p> <p>Members asked if rising placement costs were driven more by complexity of need or by market conditions. Officers advised both. There were higher overall numbers of children in care with complex needs, and while specialist residential placements had not increased in number, they had risen in cost. In-house provision aimed to improve quality and reduce costs.</p> <p>Members referenced the £1.9m saving and asked if it could be broken down into savings from returning children to Hillingdon from out-of-borough placements, and reductions in funding to in-borough schools. This was difficult to establish currently as some savings will be from new in-year activity and some would be cumulative savings.</p> <p>Members asked and officers confirmed that MVF referred to Managed Vacancy Factor.</p> <p>Members asked whether 2026 savings relied on capital transformation funding. Only a small amount of capital funding had been previously used to support two project lead posts. No additional capital funding was being requested this year.</p> <p>On the topics of temporary accommodation and children's homes, Members referenced six new builds. Officers advised that these were two separate issues that must be distinguished:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary Accommodation Costs – relate to families with no recourse to public funds; this was about intervention and support, not building new units. • Children’s Homes – the six new-build children’s homes were new constructions for residential care. These homes were now registered, developed with DfE input. <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the 2025/26 Month 7 budget monitoring position.</p>
50.	<p>CABINET BUDGET PROPOSALS 26/27 (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had been published just before Christmas, reflecting a challenging financial climate for local authorities, including Hillingdon. Primary cost drivers included rising demand for services; market pressure in social care and placements; and inflation that exceeded CPI inflation.</p> <p>Central Government’s revised funding methodology had acknowledged that Hillingdon has been historically underfunded. Additional funding was forthcoming but would be phased over three years and will not be received until 2026/27.</p> <p>It was noted that financial reserves had been significantly depleted in recent years to sustain services. Hillingdon cannot balance the budget without EFS. It was noted that EFS was not free money – it required Government approval and had to be repaid.</p> <p>Savings identified within the report were owned by senior officers and services leads, and had been challenged through a series of ‘challenge sessions’ which included Corporate Directors, Cabinet Members and Finance colleagues. Savings were intended to be realistic, not aspirational. Some Directorates would be required to prepare detailed delivery plans, particularly for higher risk or high value savings.</p> <p>A six-week public consultation was ongoing until early February before the budget is considered by Cabinet on 19 February and Council on 26 February.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the reported £12.13 growth and sought clarification on whether this came predominantly from the new fair funding allocation from Government (spread over three years) or relied on possible EFS. No specific growth item was attributed solely to either Government funding or EFS. The Council did not segregate sources of funding in that manner.</p> <p>Members highlighted a saving proposed through “ceasing SEND key working” and asked for clarity on what would replace it, and how escalation to tribunals or complaints will be avoided. Officers clarified that the SEND key working service had already been discontinued this year. It was non-statutory. It was a ‘nice to have’ but not financially sustainable. An impact review had showed some impact but not sufficient to justify continuing. It was emphasised that families will not lose support as early help and SEND support was now embedded within the family help model; social care pathways; and a more integrated early-intervention structure. A small part-year saving had already been realised this year while the full year effect will materialise next year.</p> <p>Members asked how confident officers were that the new proposals were realistic rather than aspirational. Officers noted that this year’s process was more rigorous than previous years. Service managers had been involved in the process. Growth was</p>

based on data, known pressures, and existing savings trajectories. Officers expressed high confidence but acknowledged some uncertainty inherent in social care demand. Monitoring will be continuous and monthly.

Members asked what impact growth in the Education, Health & Care Team will have. Officers advised that posts had been funded already through the capital transformation programme. This would enable establishment of an in-house tribunals team which was more cost-effective; more efficient management of increased caseloads; and improved ability to meet statutory EHC deadlines.

Members asked about the nature of the SEND brokerage role included in the growth proposals. Previously an agency role, the new growth funds a permanent brokerage officer to support negotiating placement costs; identifying appropriate and cost-effective settings for young people; strengthening commissioning intelligence; and monitoring placement quality and financial compliance. This role had recently been recruited.

Members asked about strengthening local provision and reducing out-of-borough placements, including how this will improve outcomes; how dependency on expensive out-of-borough placements will be reduced; and how this will be monitored. Officers highlighted several points in clarification: decisions were driven by ensuring value for money, quality of provision, improved outcomes through expanding in-house provision. On the fostering offer, new placements were reviewed regularly. There were continuous checks on suitability, outcomes achieved and financial efficiency. Governance structures included a Family Help Transformation Programme; strong partnership executive oversight; monthly outcome tracking; and external scrutiny from Ofsted and others.

Members asked about relationships between Directorates, and how leadership culture and staff capability were being aligned with these goals. The Corporate Directors of Children's Services and Finance described a relationship based on high challenge and high support, transparency, and joint accountability. Directors described a clear vision, widely understood across services and partners; staff who are passionate, motivated and committed to positive outcomes; weekly internal leadership meetings (e.g., SMT); and strong communication across a 600-person workforce, all while ensuring that there was no compromise on what was delivered for young people. There was a strong vision across Children's Services along with strong governance, high challenge and high trust. Officers asserted that better outcomes often correlated with lower costs. Evidence based decision making was being embedded throughout teams. Teams worked well together, find solutions together and celebrate achievements together.

It was noted that comments would be made to Cabinet, and that this budget was unlike others that had been considered previously. There were some unanswered questions about EFS and the deficit position at the end of the financial year. Officers were commended on their achievements but the comments should reflect being mindful of the unanswered questions.

Members thanked officers for their work.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the draft revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy proposals for 2026/27 to 2030/31 relating to services within the Committee's remit;**

	<p>2. Delegated comments to Council to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead</p>
51.	<p>BI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the bi-annual performance report, noting no major changes compared with previously presented annual report.</p> <p>Members asked for clarification on a quote that read: “Often children commit a subsequent offence before being directed to youth justice services”. Officers advised that reoffending was measured only after a child had been found guilty of an offence. Hillingdon had very low numbers of first-time entrants into the youth justice system, a positive indicator reflecting effective early intervention. Because the cohort was small, percentages can appear disproportionately large. A review through the Youth Justice Partnership Board showed that where a young person had been referred to the Youth Justice Service, the number of subsequent offences significantly decreased. Additional initiatives included placing youth workers in custody suites to reach young people before they were charged. These early engagement outcomes would not appear in performance data for 12–18 months due to national reporting lags.</p> <p>Members commended strong performance and low expenditure, but queried two yellow indicators of ‘Referrals’ and ‘Re-registrations for CPP’ (child protection plans), asking if performance was close to turning green. Officers noted that rising referral numbers often correlated with increased complexity and risk. The Council was introducing new multi-agency child protection teams to strengthen oversight and early support. Some families needed further support, and the priority was ensuring safety. It was clarified that Hillingdon maintained low numbers of Child Protection Plans overall. Therefore, even a small number of new registrations produced a large percentage shift.</p> <p>Members noted the low expenditure and asked if there had been negative implications of this. Officers noted that better outcomes often costed less, though there were financial challenges. Decisions must be made about what was essential versus ‘nice to have’. Officers were not seeing a negative impact on the outcomes for children.</p> <p>Members asked why Hillingdon’s Early Years net expenditure was lower than the London average. This was due to significant Early Years expansion projects in progress as well as Lifelong Learning projects experiencing delays relative to other boroughs. As these programmes accelerated, particularly since Early Years had moved into the Education portfolio, expenditure will likely increase.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the six-month performance report for 2025/26, as attached in Appendix 1; and 2. Delegated comments to Council to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead
52.	<p>FAMILY FIRST PARTNERSHIP (FFP) REFORMS – UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented the report.</p> <p>The Family First reforms were described as the most significant changes in a number</p>

of years. The programme involved close collaboration with the DfE and strategic partners including health, education, police, and voluntary sector agencies. Oversight was provided by an Executive Transformation Group, comprising senior leaders from multiple agencies, ensuring accountability across all workstreams.

A detailed delivery plan had been completed and submitted to the DfE, who the Council met with quarterly for feedback. Hillingdon also worked with other local authorities and was supported by the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance.

Quarter 1 involved extensive consultation with practitioners and staff. This phase was complete and the programme was now in delivery and transformation.

DfE grant funding had supported the recruitment of two part-time Participation Officers with lived experience to lead co-production with families, as well as the creation of a Data Analyst Apprenticeship, ring-fenced for a care experienced young person to reinforce the commitment and responsibilities as corporate parents.

The Family Help Service had gone live on 27 August, creating 11 locality-based teams aligned to family hubs and children's centres. Key workers and social workers had been integrated to create locality focused multi-disciplinary teams. Workforce capacity had increased, particularly among alternative qualified key workers, supported by additional service managers providing local leadership and quality assurance.

A New Beginnings team had been launched at the end of November, supporting families during pregnancy and early infancy. This was now supporting 11 families, and demonstrated good working relationships, particularly with midwifery colleagues. Demonstrating early success, one family had already been supported and safely stepped down from further intervention. A care experienced young person volunteered with the team. This model also had potential for preventing children entering care, reducing trauma and generating financial savings. The DfE had expressed significant interest in this work at the December quarterly meeting.

The Stronger Families Hub, co-located at the Civic Centre since 01 December, provided representation from Probation, Housing, Health, Education, Police, Youth services, Domestic Abuse specialists, and SEND services. This arrangement enabled multi-agency triage at first contact, improving signposting and support for children and families.

Eight Lead Child Protection Practitioners had been recruited, mostly internal promotions, to oversee the child protection journey in line with the family first reforms.

One of the key elements within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was around Family Group Decision Making and making that mandatory at pre-proceeding stage. However, Hillingdon had long practised this model, commissioning external providers for family group conferencing. Family Group Decision Making aligned well with the Family Help model and will be strengthened and integrated further.

The reforms introduced new data requirements. Officers were working with Digital & Intelligence teams to develop live Power BI dashboards for managers. These will improve real time monitoring of caseloads, outcomes and performance.

Hillingdon worked effectively with schools, particularly in early intervention. School leaders contributed at both strategic and operational levels within the safeguarding

partnership and the Executive Transformation Group.

Officers explained that a Kinship Steering Group had been established, involving housing, education, psychology services, SEND, early help, the Virtual School and MAPS. A new local kinship offer was under co-production with families and professionals, with launch planned for March 2026. This offer will include financial support, housing support, education advice, clear minimum standards; and alignment with national expectations of kinship carer support. Officers acknowledged that without kinship carers, pressure on fostering and residential services would increase. National organisations were supporting the alignment of Hillingdon's kinship approach.

Members commended the initiative and asked if partnership working was functioning effectively. Officers highlighted strong strategic buy-in from police, health and schools. Challenges remained, partly because the Met Police covered 32 boroughs with diverse approaches. Operational relationships remained positive and consistent; partners were engaged in training and shared practice development. There was particular interest in the New Beginnings model, and health colleagues had been supportive of that.

Members asked how substantial the culture change would be, and what impact families would experience. The cultural shift was substantial. For example five teams of social workers previously did short term work, then handed cases on. Now they maintained involvement throughout the family journey, improving relationship building and consistency so that families had fewer points of change. Front door child protection decision-making will increasingly be shared across agencies, not LA-led. Families should experience fewer changes in worker, clearer, earlier access to support, better coordination through locality teams, and more relational, trauma-informed practice. Staff were highly supportive of the model and were seeing benefits in practice.

Members asked how schools were engaged, especially academies. Schools were highly engaged, with strong representation on the Executive Transformation Group and the Safeguarding Partnership Board. Participation was supported through designated safeguarding leads and school leadership networks. Education has had equal status in safeguarding governance for more than a year and the reforms built on this foundation.

Partner willingness was strong, especially from police, but some challenges arise due to system differences. The hub model was reducing stigma associated with statutory intervention and improving community-based support. Ongoing review would address any practical gaps.

Members asked how young people were engaged in decision-making, and how staff training was being managed. Family Group Decision Making ensured children and their families were engaged involved in decision-making and was embedded in day-to-day practice and will continue as a core component from first contact. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill made this mandatory at pre-proceeding stage. Hillingdon emphasised engaging fathers and wider networks, underpinned by trauma-informed practice. Staff had received trauma informed training, with further work underway through skills audits; team supervision; and reflective practice sessions. A strong foundation of relational practice already existed, while reforms aimed to deepen and standardise it.

Members noted that the report stated no financial implications, and asked how realistic this was given the scale of change. Members also asked if the DfE grant was sufficient. Given historic underfunding and high pressure, no grant was ever likely to be sufficient.

	<p>However, the grant allowed increased capacity and supported transformation. It had also allowed officers to look at different ways of working. It was clarified that the grant was additional, not replacement funding; it enabled innovation and pilot testing. The Council would continue reviewing transformation to address any gaps as the model embedded.</p> <p>Members asked if teams were located equitably across hubs. While the Civic Centre was the main base, teams were aligned within localities. Teams were expected to be out in the community working with families in homes, schools and libraries. Four teams covered the south east, four in the south west and three in the north of the borough, reflecting differing population and demand. This would be reviewed continuously.</p> <p>Members commended the enthusiasm and hard work of the team.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the key developments and findings outlined in this report</p>
53.	<p>PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER (PAN) OF FIELD END INFANT SCHOOL (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Chair opened the item, noting that Field End Infant School was within their ward.</p> <p>The proposal concerned reducing Field End Infant School's PAN from a three-form entry to a two-form entry, effective from September 2027. This change was intended to support the school's financial viability in the context of falling pupil numbers.</p> <p>Members asked if the need to reduce PAN was driven specifically by Hillingdon's circumstances, or part of a broader London-wide or national trend. Falling pupil numbers were a national issue, with London experiencing a decline. Many London boroughs were already closing schools; Hillingdon was not at that stage. The Council was monitoring roll numbers and working closely with all schools, including through regular dialogue with headteachers.</p> <p>Officers had been in discussion with Field End over the last year and monitoring their numbers in order to support them to continue being financially viable.</p> <p>Several other Hillingdon schools were also expected to propose PAN reductions, with early conversations already underway.</p> <p>Members highlighted that the consultation had received few responses, with only one respondent being a parent of a child at Field End Infant School. Members asked if this was typical, and if officers had gathered parental views beyond formal consultation. Schools shared consultation information before the summer holiday, including letters to both Infant and Junior School parents. Parents could also respond via links circulated by the school. Some informal feedback was likely provided directly to schools, but the Council had only received the formal responses noted in the report.</p> <p>Members asked, if the Infant School reduced its PAN, what consideration had been given to impacts on the linked Junior School? Officers had been working closely with both schools and advised that the Junior School had initially approached the Council regarding a reduction in its own PAN. Since both schools were closely aligned, discussions and consultations had taken place jointly. Parents from both schools had been consulted and made aware of the potential changes. The system was designed to</p>

	<p>remain flexible – if pupil numbers increase in future, both schools had capacity to open additional classes on request from the Council.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Children, Families & Education Select Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewed the proposal to reduce the Published Admission Number for Field End Infant School from 90 to 60; 2. Noted the 4 responses from the consultation on a PAN change to community primary phase: 3. Noted the proposals submitted to the Local Authority following formal consultations from non-community schools: Field End Junior School to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 90 to 60; St Martin’s Church of England Primary School to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 60 to 30, and Park Academy West London to reduce its Planned Admissions Number from 180 to 150, all taking effect from September 2027; and 4. Delegated comments to Cabinet to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead
54.	<p>LOWERING THE AGE RANGE OF WHITEHEATH INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report, which outlined the proposal to lower the school’s age range to include two-year-olds. This related to the expansion of early years provision and would particularly benefit children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children from working families.</p> <p>Members asked if there were other schools in the borough offering places for two-years olds, and if so, what was their experience, and could this be of reassurance to parents of Whiteheath pupils. Officers advised that Minet Infant School was an example of another setting who had lowered their age range and that this change had only received positive feedback such as that this had helped to facilitate school drop-offs.</p> <p>Members noted that there had been a difference in the opinions of parents to that of providers and asked how these were weighted. Officers clarified that all respondents were weighted equally. While parents were more likely to see the wider family perspective, providers would likely look more to the business perspective.</p> <p>Members asked about navigating more difficult disparities in views. This was about helping everyone to understand the benefits of the proposal. This proposal would benefit lots of families. It was noted that some of the concerns from other providers may be around increased competition to them, where families may choose to send their child to Whiteheath instead of, for example, a private childminder or different nursey setting. This proposal was about providing a varied offer for families to consider, and specific to the Ward.</p> <p>Members asked why the age range was stated as 3-11 and 2-11 when it was an Infant School. Officers clarified that this reflected Whiteheath as a whole.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the proposal and consultation taken</p>

	place; and delegated comments to Cabinet to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead
55.	<p>FOSTERING REVIEW – DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS <i>(Item 11)</i></p> <p>The Chair introduced the item on the fostering review, summarising that several witness sessions had taken place with officers, foster carers and young people with lived experience of foster care. The Chair thanked all participants, especially the young people, for their candour, openness and valuable insights.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Members to consider that two of the sessions had taken place in private.</p> <p>Members suggested a number of emerging themes, including:</p> <p><u>Communication and Information-Sharing</u> Young people had reported occasions of being left ‘in the dark’ regarding decisions made about them, including decisions around entering care. There was also a desire for more age-appropriate, honest and timely information.</p> <p>There appeared to be a need for better communication between social workers, officers, foster carers and young people, as well as more inclusivity in decision-related information sharing where safe and appropriate.</p> <p>Members noted a perception that there was some sugar-coating to encourage people to become foster carers, and that young people were unaware of who they would be placed with.</p> <p><u>Matching</u> Various witnesses raised concerns around matching, including the importance of cultural compatibility. Consideration should also be given to the existing household composition, including and other children or care-experienced young people already living there.</p> <p><u>Mentoring/ Buddy System for Foster Carers</u> Witnesses had noted that there had previously been a buddy scheme but were not aware if this was currently happening. Foster carers would benefit from peer support for advice and guidance, emotional support, and learning from more experienced carers.</p> <p><u>Recruiting Specialist Foster Carers</u> Multiple witnesses noted that foster carers may come with valuable professional skills or subject experience. This may help with the need for recruitment for specialist placements for young people with complex needs and adolescents.</p> <p><u>Family Contact</u> There was a need to ensure that family contact was always in the best interest of the young person. There was a suggestion to review how family contact was planned, supervised and assessed.</p> <p><u>Training and foster carers skills</u> Members highlighted that training was repeatedly requested by foster carers and young people and should include trauma-informed practice; behaviour</p>

management; cultural knowledge; LGBTQ+ awareness; and managing complex needs. Training should be expanded and standardised.

Starter packs

Members proposed a starter pack for young people entering a care placement, to include information such as their care plan, their rights, key contacts and advocacy services. This would help ensure continuity when placements change.

Officers noted this related to life story work and ensuring young people understand their care plan in accessible language. Officers also clarified that it was intended that young people will be aware of their plan. Young people also had access to advocacy services which were independent from the Local Authority. Young people also had an Independent Reviewing Officer. It was meaningful to hear this feedback from young people.

Sibling separation

Young people reported occasions of being split up from their siblings. Members suggested that sibling placement and sibling contact be strengthened, and that officers review how sibling groups can be better supported to remain connected.

Behaviour management and stability

Witnesses had indicated variations in foster carer's preparedness for challenging behaviours. Members noted the need for more consistent support for behaviour management; clearer guidance for new carers; and better placement stability monitoring.

Frequent social worker changes

Young people had noted high turnover of their allocated social worker and that this affected trust and relationships, and having to 'retell their story'. Members suggested improving workforce stability and communication.

Recruitment improvements

Concerns had been raised during witness sessions that recruitment materials such as the website were too static and did not reflect the real complexity or the reality of fostering. Suggested improvements included more stories, testimonials and videos; roadshows, workshops and community outreach; use of social media; honest messaging describing the intense but rewarding nature of fostering; avoiding 'sugar coating', and ensuring transparency about challenges and expectations.

Diversity of foster carers

Members suggested increasing recruitment efforts among religious and cultural communities (i.e. through places of worship); ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ communities and single carers.

Placement data

Members requested additional information on the number of children in foster placements and turnover of foster carers. Members also noted a need to distinguish between young people in respite placements, and those who move placements due to placement breakdown – this will help assess systemic issues and improve placement planning.

Informal networking

	<p>Members highlighted that foster carers may benefit from informal networking; peer groups or drop-in sessions. These were suggested as low-cost but high-impact improvements to wellbeing which may also aid in respite.</p> <p><u>Enrichment activities for young people</u></p> <p>Members noted that young people valued enrichment activities such as KICA (Kids in Care Awards) and suggested more such opportunities. This could include formal civic experiences such as a Mayor's parlour visit, and broadening activities to foster belonging and positive memories.</p> <p>Officers highlighted that the website included videos and testimonials of foster carers. It was emphasised that there was never an intention to deceive potential foster carers. There was a significant number of expressions of interest. The number who moved from expressions of interest to the assessment phased was reduced as it had to be the right person in the right condition in the right provision.</p> <p>The assessment can be a difficult and intrusive process that looks at every aspect of a person's life, their circumstances, their motivation and their ability to be a foster carer. Once the assessment was completed, applicants would move on to the Fostering & Permanence Panel, which included representation from Elected Members. The Panel would make a recommendation to the agency decision maker who would sign-off on the final outcome. Officers reiterated the commitment to finding the right people for each young person.</p> <p>Officers would share a template of the 'All About Me' profile, and further information on trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>Officers recapped that the new fostering offer had been launched last year and early signs showed increased enquiries and recruitment. Officers acknowledged the need for specialist recruitment; diversity in recruitment; and strengthened carer networks. Some work on this was already ongoing. The Mockingbird scheme had been piloted with central Government funding and was planned to be re-launched in an updated form once fully reviewed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Select Committee considered findings, conclusions and draft recommendations in relation to the review</p>
56.	<p>MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (<i>Item 12</i>)</p> <p>Officers highlighted two inaccuracies within the minutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minutes noted statistics for take-up of initial health assessments (IHAs) and review health assessments (RHAs). It was clarified that these statistics reflected the ICB timescales and not the statutory timescales that the Local Authority is required to meet. The LA statistics are noted within the IRO report of the CPP agenda. • The minutes stated that <i>"79.7% of care experienced young people were in education, employment or training, up from 76% in the previous year"</i>. It was clarified that this figure is for 17–18-year-old cared for and care-experienced individuals, and not just care-experienced individuals. <p>These would be rectified before the minutes are presented for approval to the next Corporate Parenting Panel.</p>

	RESOLVED: That the select Committee noted the minutes
57.	FORWARD PLAN <i>(Item 13)</i> Members considered the Forward Plan. RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan
58.	WORK PROGRAMME <i>(Item 14)</i> Members considered the Work Programme. RESOLVED: That the Committee considered the report
	The meeting, which commenced at 7:00 pm, closed at 9:20 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer on democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.

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LEARN HILLINGDON SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT, 2024-25

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Debbie Scarborough, Service Manager, Learn Hillingdon Adult Community Education
Papers with report	Learn Hillingdon Self-Assessment Report 2024-25
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The Self-Assessment Report from Learn Hillingdon is produced by the service annually and evaluates the effectiveness of the education delivered to learners and its impact on them.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This report is submitted to the Local Authority for scrutiny and to Ofsted and the GLA for their information. It is used by Ofsted to support initial decisions about inspections planned for the service and by the GLA for funding and quality purposes.

PERFORMANCE DATA

Please see the attached report.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

The support and challenge provided to the Service Manager by Committee Members enables service developments and helps the service to improve where necessary.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications for this matter.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications for this matter.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Ofsted report February 2025](#)

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Learn Hillingdon Matrix Report 2025



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Learn Hillingdon Self-Assessment Report 2024-25

Grade 2: Good.

"My mental health has improved. I still have my moments of course, but I'm back to work and have more confidence in myself."

KC, Learner on Emotional Health and Wellbeing course.

Debbie Scarborough
December 2025

**Please note, a number of acronyms are used throughout this document. A glossary of these terms can be found on page 9.*

Context of the provision

Hillingdon is the second largest and most westerly borough of London with a population of 319,000 (ONS mid-year estimate, 2023) and is divided into 21 wards. There is an older population in wards in the north and a younger, more diverse population in the southern wards.

Although there are large employers in the borough, such as Heathrow Airport, RAF Northolt, Hillingdon Hospital and Brunel University, approximately 91% are micro-businesses (UK Business Counts, 2023). Whilst unemployment levels are showing a small rise from 2023, overall rates remain lower than neighbouring boroughs.

Skills levels vary between wards, with wards in the south-east of the borough having lower qualification levels, greater levels of deprivation and higher claim rates of most benefits than wards in the north. The south also has the highest rates of people not in education, employment or training.

Hillingdon's Strategy for 2022-26 focuses on five priorities including a thriving economy and thriving, healthy households. Hillingdon has high prevalence levels of obesity and Type 1 diabetes, and whilst prevalence varies by ward, wards in the south typically have higher rates of obesity and diabetes, with wards in the north seeing higher rates of cancer and dementia.

Total number of grant-funded learners/enrolments	1517 learners	5521 enrolments
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Learners' Residency (by enrolment)	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Hillingdon resident	3275 90%	3117 91%	4065 91%	5007 91%
London resident, (outside LB Hillingdon)	291 8%	230 7%	337 8%	373 7%
Out of London resident	73 2%	70 2%	49 1%	141 2%
Total enrolments	3639	3417	4451	5521

Our learners are adults. 90% live in Hillingdon, 98% are Londoners and 2% live outside London.

- 20% of learners are male (24% of enrolments).
- the largest group of learners are of white heritage
- most are 35-49 years of age

70% of learners who are Hillingdon residents live in the most deprived areas in the south of the borough compared with 20% from the north.

Learners from the south are most likely to study English for speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), childcare and digital skills. Many enrol on programmes of learning with more than one qualification taken at a time.

The service was inspected by Ofsted in February 2025. The inspectors graded the service 'Good' and the report can be found [here](#).

The service also had a full Matrix inspection to judge the quality of the information, advice and guidance provided and the report which is attached as Appendix A.

Breakdown of enrolments	No of learners	No of enrolments	Retention rate	Achievement rate
Female	1220 80%	4192 76%	95%	92%
Male	297 20%	1328 24%	95%	92%
North of the borough	313 20.6%	1075 20%	95.8%	94.0%
South of the borough	1050 69.2%	3882 70%	94.8%	91.9%
Other London Boroughs	119 7.8%	423 8%	93.6%	90.2%
Outside of London	37 2.4%	140 3%	95.7%	95.0%

Improvements in year

The Quality Improvement Framework monitoring tool was devised, introduced and embedded this year across the service. This visual tool has been highly successful in enabling managers to quickly identify inconsistencies in practice and take swift action to address them in a structured, regular way.

Course documentation was reviewed and updated to reduce inconsistencies in course planning, assessment and implementation across the service. Pilot use in-year was successful and will support the full roll-out of this initiative in the next academic year.

Quality assurance processes have been simplified to increase efficiency and impact. For example, skills assessment changes have spread the workload across the team and ensured that targeted curriculum support is best used to help learners make informed enrolment decisions.

Refined internal verification processes were highlighted as good practice by external verifiers because they directly impacted on teaching and assessment in-year.

Learner Forums were established following a pilot last year, providing the Service Manager with direct feedback from sessional tutors and a wide range of learners each term throughout the year. These have led to improvements for learners and staff that may not have been identified without them.

Support for learners was improved through greater access to financial and practical help which, when combined with consistent data monitoring and focused staff development, contributed to higher pass rates.

Learners studying vocational qualifications benefitted from refined initial digital skills assessments, supported by dedicated lessons in virtual learning. This additional study enabled them to build the confidence and skills they needed to succeed in their vocational course.

The Tailored Learning curriculum was redesigned in-year to better meet local need and changing funding criteria. This has contributed to the high proportion of learners who live in the most deprived areas of the borough.

"I started with ESOL E2 and progressed to Functional English L2. The courses transformed my life. Before this training, I felt hopeless, but afterwards, I felt confident, optimistic about my future and motivated to change careers."

AH, Functional Skills English L2

Service Strengths

The service successfully reaches its target group of the most disadvantaged adults, resulting in 98% of learners on qualification courses being fully funded. 68% of all learners live in the most deprived areas in the borough. *'Leaders and managers make sure that the curriculum offer meets local needs effectively'*. (Ofsted, 2025)

Adults who learn with the service have very good participation and success rates: attendance, retention, pass and achievement rates are 92%, 95%, 97% and 92% respectively. This is remarkable given that 72% of all learners join with entry level skills.

Learner numbers have remained stable, but enrolments have increased significantly because the service is better identifying and meeting the needs of learners and those learners are passing the additional underpinning qualifications.

Strong learning support identifies and targets learners facing additional barriers, helping them to achieve their aims. Financial support with bus fares enables learners to attend and one-to-one support in and beyond classroom delivery helps adults learn how to study effectively and pass their courses. 97% of learners in receipt of learning support found it 'very helpful' (31/32). One learner found it neither helpful nor unhelpful and reported that 'the course is too much talking' (ESOL Speaking and Listening course). These things combined helped to reduce or close achievement gaps across the board (see 'Impact' below).

'Courses that promote good mental health and wellbeing have a strong social impact, such as reducing feelings of isolation; ESOL courses help learners in their day-to-day lives, for example, to communicate with teachers' at their child's school or their doctor.' (Ofsted, 2025).

The team ethos is strong in the service. Staff work together very well to overcome challenges, staff shortages have little or no impact on learners, and over 90% of those surveyed by Ofsted reported that they felt proud to work for the service.

Areas for Improvement

The points below were identified by Ofsted as key areas for improvement.

- Consistently use information on what learners know and can do to teach learners a curriculum that meets their individual needs.
- Provide learners with specific feedback on how to improve their work.
- Promote more widely the good range of activities on offer that support learners' personal development.

Managers have held team meetings this year to address these areas for improvement and more steps are planned for 2025-26 as we link them into our next strategic plan and the new Ofsted Inspection Framework.

Quality of Education

The service prioritises the lowest skilled, lowest paid or unemployed in the borough: those who need to develop English, maths and digital skills; those who need to develop their skills and/or qualifications to function more effectively and to find or improve their work prospects; and those who need to overcome emotional and/or physical barriers such as mental health and disability. This reflects local, regional and national priorities, and local need.

Teaching and learning is good. *'Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise'* (Ofsted 2025), and utilize it well to construct sequenced, active learning that helps learners build and deepen their knowledge of the subject.

Discussion is actively encouraged in the classroom, allowing learners to explore topics in depth, share experiences, and develop their communication skills. For example, vocational classes, tutors use group tasks and scenario-based learning to promote dialogue and reinforce understanding. This approach not only deepens learning but also builds learners' confidence in applying their knowledge in real-world contexts.

Teachers also use questioning, peer feedback, and self-assessment to encourage learners to think critically and make connections between topics. In ESOL, for instance, learners revisit vocabulary and grammar through themed projects and discussions, which helps them internalise language structures and use them more naturally. This approach ensures that learners are not just memorising content but are developing transferable skills and a deeper understanding of subject matter. As a result, learners are better prepared for life in the UK and living independently, as well as progression into further learning or employment.

"I learned how to express my ideas more confidently in English and how to listen carefully to different perspectives."

HO, Functional English, Level 2.

Assessment is effective in identifying each learner's needs, and most tutors provide constructive feedback, helping learners understand what to do to improve. However, some improvement is needed where this is not the case and managers are working with tutors to help them improve their feedback.

Support for learning is targeted well at learners' needs with a range of support available that includes homework clubs, one-to-one support, adaptive equipment and the Loan and Learn laptop scheme, as well as financial support that ranges from bus fares and books to childcare costs. Volunteers support learners with a range of tasks, including enrolment and interview skills, and Learning Support Assistants are matched well with learners to help them achieve their best results. *'Learners attend workshops where they learn strategies to help them prepare for examinations'* (Ofsted, 2025).

Impact

Learners' results are strong, with a retention rate of 94.9%, a pass rate of 97.2% and an achievement rate of 92.3%. Each of these represents an increase on last year and an upward trend over the past three years and reflects the high-quality provision offered to learners.

"This course was incredibly valuable and well-structured, providing both practical skills and theoretical knowledge that directly apply to the classroom. It boosted my confidence, deepened my understanding of student support strategies, and prepared me to work effectively alongside teachers to create a positive learning environment. The course content was engaging, and the support from instructors made the learning experience even more enriching."

ST, Teaching Assistant qualification at L2

The impact of learning on participating learners is very good. Although learner numbers remain largely stable, enrolment numbers significantly increased this year (up by over 1000) due to underpinning, focused English, maths and/or digital skills interventions introduced for learners undertaking qualification courses.

Service overall	Learners	Enrolments	Retention	Pass *	Achievement**
2024-25	1518	5521	94.9%	97.2%	92.3%
2023-24	1526	4451	93.7%	97.1%	91.0%
2022-23	1505	3417	94.7%	96.0%	91.0%

*Pass rate: results of those who stayed until the end of the course, excluding those who left.

**Achievement rate: results for all enrolled learners, including those who left before the end of the course.

Learners achieve their aims very successfully across curriculum areas. Some groups achieved significantly above the overall service level, i.e. learners studying for floristry qualifications and targeted groups of learners on outreach courses. However, some maths and digital skills results showed a small achievement gap which will be addressed in 2025-26.

Results by curriculum area, excluding the Multiply project ¹ .					
Curriculum Area	Learners	Enrolments	Retention	Pass	Achievement
Emotional Health and Wellbeing	96	437	97.9%	97.0%	95.0%
Childcare	194	545	92.3%	97.9%	90.4%
Floristry	82	122	98.4%	100.0%	98.4%
Arts, Media, Leisure (AML)					
Arts	68	159	96.9%	99.4%	96.2%
Languages	37	63	93.7%	94.8%	88.8%
Leisure	18	40	97.5%	100.0%	97.5%
AML Total	119	262	96.2%	98.4%	94.7%
IT and Digital Skills	209	509	92.7%	93.4%	86.6%
English, Maths, ESOL (EME)					
English	112	369	92.7%	97.3%	90.2%
ESOL	423	1248	91.5%	96.9%	88.7%
Maths	39	72	91.7%	93.9%	86.1%
EME Total	551	1689	91.8%	96.9%	88.9%
Independent Living (adults with LDD)	168	1280	97.8%	97.3%	95.2%
Tailored Learning (TL)					
ART	91	143	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
CHC	19	19	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ESO	17	74	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
FLO	35	58	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
ITS	38	45	100.0%	97.8%	97.8%
LEI	66	117	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
TO Total	239	456	100.0%	99.8%	99.8%
Health and Social Care	57	220	93.2%	99.4%	92.6%

Achievement gaps are defined as results 5% or greater below the overall service achievement results, (92% this year).

Most achievement gaps have closed this year. There are no significant achievement gaps this year by gender, age or those living in the north or south of the borough. Achievement gaps by ethnicity were closed this year, with results showing marked improvements in results for Bangladeshi, White Irish, White/Asian

¹ The Multiply Project was not included in this year's data as the project came to an end at the end of March 2025. The final data for 2024-25 of 292 enrolments with retention, pass and achievement at 98.3%, 100%, 98.3% respectively, shows very strong results and high-quality provision for learners who wanted to improve their maths for everyday life.

residents and those aged 19-24 years. However, the 43 enrolments by 15 learners in the mixed – any other ethnic group remain and will be addressed in 2025-26.

Achievement Gap	Enrolments and % of enrolments	Retention	Pass	Achievement	Achievement rate 23-24
Bangladeshi	155 – 2.8%	97.40%	99.30%	96.70%	82.9%
Mixed – any other	43 - 0.8%	86.00%	97.30%	83.70%	83.1%
White Irish	42 – 0.8%	97.60%	97.60%	95.20%	80.4%
White/Asian	56 – 1.0%	91.10%	97.90%	89.20%	82.6%
19-24 years	222 – 4.0%	90.50%	98.40%	89.00%	84.4%

Behaviours and Attitudes

A mature, respectful atmosphere is seen in centres and classes. Learners are encouraged to listen to each other as well as contribute in class. Attendance and punctuality are prioritised by tutors (the service attendance rate is 92%) and learners are expected to make up any missed work.

Learners are encouraged to think about ‘wider learning’. Support is available and encouraged should learners struggle with their learning, whether through accessing mental health support or considering how best to support their own and their family’s physical health. *‘Courses for adults who have SEND help them to maintain and develop their independent living skills very well, such as managing money and cooking’.* (Ofsted, 2025).

Learners benefit from embedded and extra-curricular information, advice and guidance. Tutors are well-versed in the progression options awaiting learners following their course and vocational tutors contextualise this well to ensure that learners know what to expect when they enter the workplace. *‘Learners are well-prepared for their next steps once they complete their course’* (Ofsted, 2025).

Learners feel safe, and report that they know how to keep themselves and others safe. *‘Learners reported that they found staff to be very welcoming, friendly and supportive, which made them feel safe, able to build their confidence and progress towards their aims. Comments from learners include:*

“I suffer from depression, and I would not be here without them.”

“They are incredible and offer no end of support.”

“They are all very kind and help me build my confidence.”

These quotes are from learners given directly to the Matrix Inspector and are included in the Matrix Assessment Report, Jan 2025

Personal Development

Learners benefit from a wide range of personal development opportunities that enhance their learning and widen their experiences for everyday living. For example, higher level ESOL learners join in Parliament Week debates, practising the formal communication skills they learn in class and giving them the opportunity to articulate and argue considered positions whilst listening and responding to the positions of others. Similarly, childcare, ESOL and LDD learners have benefited from collaboration with NHS dental health partners, supporting local health priorities. Parents attending an English Conversation course were supported in applying for Hillingdon First Cards.

Likewise, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities join regular online Learner Forum meetings where they present their views and ask questions of management, whilst vocational learners discuss the most

important wider employability skills as part of their course and consider their own strengths and characteristics in light of these conversations. One learner commented, *"I feel confident to face any interviews and also feel ready to learn more"*.

However, not every learner can engage in these activities, which is an area for improvement in 2025-26. *'Promote more widely the good range of activities on offer that support learners' development'* (Ofsted, 2025).

"Since I joined this course, I have felt better mentally and physically. I made so many new friends."

RK, Improve Your Digital Skills for the Modern World

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management is good. Leaders set a culture of ambition and high expectations for learners and staff. *'Staff say they are proud to work at Learn Hillingdon'* (Ofsted, 2025).

A strong focus on quality improvement and professional development has underpinned a range of actions designed to increase professional autonomy and minimise inconsistencies across the service. For example, the Quality Improvement Framework introduced two years ago has been adapted as a tool for managers to monitor every stage of the learner journey and intervene quickly and effectively where necessary. It has also enabled senior managers to quickly identify issues as they arise and provide support where necessary, minimising the impact of any issues on learners. *'Leaders and managers take effective action to assure themselves of and improve the quality of the provision. They intervene effectively when the quality of provision is below the standards expected. Through well-considered action they make the improvements needed.'* (Ofsted, 2025).

Effective partnership work provides opportunities for residents and learners to access the skills they need to gain work or better engage in the community. Vocational provision focuses well on local skills needs, particularly the childcare and health and social care sectors, whilst non-accredited learning focuses on reaching residents who are furthest away from learning and who face multiple barriers to engagement in society. *'Leaders and managers collaborate very well with partners to make sure courses reach learners who face significant barriers in their lives [and as a result] they successfully engage learners from Traveller communities and those living in temporary accommodation.'* (Ofsted, 2025).

Safeguarding is effective. Robust processes and innovative approaches such as 'Voice of the Person' surveys of the subjects of safeguarding disclosures directly contribute to improved practices that support learners and drive good practice.

Governance is effective. In addition to the council's quality assurance structures, the service's Advisory Board provides challenge to senior leaders and drives improvement. *'Senior leaders and the advisory board provide good oversight and scrutiny of the provision.'* (Ofsted, 2025).

DS/December 2025.

Glossary

ART = Art

CHC = Childcare

EME = English, maths and ESOL

ESO or ESOL= English for Speakers of Other Languages

FLO = Floristry

ITS = IT and Digital Skills

LDD = Learning difficulties and disabilities

LEI = Leisure

ONS = Office of National Statistics

SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

TL = Tailored Learning

TO = Targeted Outreach

Assessment Report

Learn Hillingdon Adult and Community Education

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION	
Assessment Type	Review Assessment
Assessor's Decision	Standard Met
Assessor's Name	Graham Pickup
Evidence Gathering/Assessment Date/s	21/01/2025 to 23/01/2025
Client ID and Assessment Reference	C18985 – PN202779
Accreditation Review to be conducted by	11/02/2028

METHODOLOGY	
Evidence gathering	3 days evidence gathering remotely by Teams and phone
Staff interviews	24
Recipient interviews	23
Partner interviews	3
Document review	Strategic Plan 2023-25, management meeting minutes, KPIs, SAR/QIP, Policies including the IAG Policy, ILP, other learner support documentation, learner survey insights, IAG Statement.

About the organisation

The Learn Hillingdon Adult and Community Education (hereafter referred to as the Service or HACLE) is a local authority service that provides training courses for adults over 19 years of age, particularly for residents of the Borough. The Service operates from three Centres across the Borough and from other outreach sites, such as Children's Centres and Libraries. The courses provided aim to help people to get work or move closer to getting work, and personal development including developing skills for independent living and wellbeing. The courses offered are part time day and evening classes, including accredited qualifications and non-accredited courses, and it aims to reach people in the most disadvantaged areas. The Service has increased its enrolments from 3417 in 2022-23 to 4451 in 2023-24.

The Service is led by the Service Manager, who reports to the council's Head of Education and Lifelong Learning, and is supported by two Quality Managers, the Curriculum Development Manager, the ILT Development Manager and the Learner Engagement Officer. The Quality Managers manage the Programme Area Leads (PALs), who manage the Tutor Co-ordinators, who supervise the teams of sessional Tutors and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The ILT Development Manager manages the Student Services Manager, who manages the Student Services Officers (SSOs), who work in the daytime, and the Student Services Administrators (SSAs), who work in the evenings.

The Service's Mission is,

'Every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports clearly identified and ambitious goals that drive their economic, social and emotional prosperity.'

And its Vision is,

'Enhance and transform the lives of adults through tailored lifelong learning.'

And they are supported by the Service's values, which are,

'Aspiration, Commitment, Integrity, Passion, Pride'

It has strategic objectives identified in its Strategic Plan 2023-25, which include,

- 'Every learner receives an outstanding learning experience that supports clearly identified and ambitious goals that drive their economic, social and emotional prosperity.'
- Strive to provide consistently outstanding learning opportunities for all adult residents
- Increase the engagement of disadvantaged groups and residents from deprived communities in learning
- Improve the English, Maths and digital literacy skills of residents
- Provide robust and successful vocational and second chance learning opportunities for residents, offering a clear line of sight to work
- Promote residents health, wellbeing and independent living through bespoke learning opportunities
- Provide free, high quality information, advice and guidance for every adult resident who requests it, whether or not they are enrolled with us.'

The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is provided through the website and Social Media, the Careers and Education Hub, various documentation, by staff at events the Service attends, and at several points in the learner journey with the Service. The SSOs and SSAs provide initial IAG when people first enquire, the PALs, Tutor

Coordinators, and Tutors give IAG at pre-course meetings with potential learners, including assessments and Digital Screeners, and Tutors provide IAG throughout the time of the course.

Learners come to the Service through word of mouth, the website, partner organisations, events and social media. The SSO or SSA will take the initial enquiry, by phone or face to face. They will answer any queries about courses the Service offers, provide information documentation and, where appropriate, book a learner onto an initial assessment and digital screener. The SSO/SSA will refer a learner to their manager or a PAL if they need more detailed IAG regarding a course they are interested in, and to the National Careers Service if they are looking for more detailed careers advice. They will also signpost enquirers to other providers for courses the Service does not offer. For learners who enquire about how they could progress after the course they are doing, the SSO/SSA will refer them to a PAL or Tutor Coordinator for further IAG.

As at the previous assessment, learners who are looking to take a qualification are required to take an initial assessment to ensure they get onto the right level of course for them. The PAL, Tutor Coordinator or Tutor will have a pre course interview with the potential learner, for courses requiring an initial assessment, to discuss with the learner what options are available to them, to help them choose the right course for them and ensure they are right for the course. Learners also take a digital screener to identify the level of digital skills they have and any support or training they may need to develop those skills required for the course. The SSO/SSA will check the eligibility of the learner for funding and financial support and will enrol the learner.

The Learner is then taken through an induction, when they are informed about how the course will work, what is involved and provided with more detailed information about the course. Learners are also informed about the commitment required, with a minimum attendance requirement of 85% with the aim to be at or above 95%. Additional support available to the learners is described, and learners are referred to videos which explain potential progression options to them. Learners are informed about information they can access through the Moodle, including the Education and careers hub, which describes the careers advice provided by the Service. Any additional support required by the learner will be identified and notified to the Tutor to ensure appropriate support is in place, and a LSA is available if required.

Once a learner has started a course, the Tutor will develop the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which includes the learner's goals, including personal goals such as Health and Wellbeing and Work and Volunteering Goals. It also includes various outcomes for the learner such as increased confidence, skills for work and skills for independent living, amongst others. The ILP is reviewed in Tutorials when the Tutor will discuss their progress with the learner with respect to their goals and outcomes, what next steps the learner may be considering, and what options and pathways the learner could consider. The Tutor will signpost the learner to other providers for courses not offered by the Service, and the Tutor will refer the learner to the National

Careers Service for more in-depth careers advice, and to the online Jobs Board for job opportunities. The Tutor and the LSA will have informal conversations with the learner, when they discuss progression options with the learner, the learner's wellbeing, help the learner with their research and refer the learner to websites for job opportunities, and to other providers for courses not offered by the Service. For more detailed IAG support the LSA will refer the learner to the Tutor or PAL.

The difference the IAG makes to recipients and the overall impact

Staff described how they aim to ensure that the right person goes on the right course for them, that they are effectively supported throughout their time on the course to overcome any barriers they may be facing, help them identify the options available to them following on from their course and support them with any decisions they make.

The impact made by the IAG provided is demonstrated through learner success and progression, such as the examples given below, as well as from learner feedback.

The Service monitors its performance at management and staff meetings. It monitors attendance, retention, success rates and achievement rates. Its targets for 2023/24 were to achieve 96% attendance, 95% overall retention, and between 90% overall achievement, it achieved 95% attendance, 94% overall retention and 91% overall achievement. It also analyses the data by ethnicity, age, gender and geography, across the different areas of delivery.

Changes the Service has made include the development of CPD for sessional staff, the introduction of free bus tickets for learners, which has had a significant impact on attendance, the introduction of visual timetables for LLDD learners to help remind them of when their course is, enabling them to be more independent, and the use of RAG ratings to help identify learners with low attendance and at risk of leaving their course, enabling staff to provide timely support to help them continue and complete their course.

What is working particularly well

Two strengths/areas that are working particularly well were identified during the assessment, which are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The Service continues to have many strong partnerships in the region, including libraries, children's centres, and schools as well as other service providers such as GPs. This has enabled the Service to maintain delivery across the region, and to further develop its services in response to changes in funding requirements and learner needs. (2.7)
- Learners reported that they found staff to be very welcoming, friendly, and supportive, which made them feel safe, able to build their confidence and progress towards their aims. Comments from learners include, "I suffer from depression, and I would not be here without them." "They are incredible and offer no end of support."

“They are all very kind and help me build my confidence.” (1.3, 1.4)

Development suggestions

Development suggestions are offered in the spirit of continuous improvement and a way for an Assessor to add value e.g. where the service is of a high quality, development areas are offered to help the service be even better than it already is, or to give insight into practices seen elsewhere. There is no correlation between the number of strengths and development suggestions. Where development areas are greater in number this is not intended to indicate that the information, advice and guidance service is in any way lacking. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

- The Service has a comprehensive IAG policy and describes the support available to learners at their induction. The Service may wish to consider developing the ‘IAG Statement’ to include the purpose of the IAG provision, and what outcomes it would help learners achieve. It could make this available to potential learners before they enroll, to help them decide if the Service is the right place for them to come to. It may also help to ensure learners are clear about the IAG they can expect to receive and help to ensure they access the IAG as they require. (3.1)
- Some staff have taken IAG courses, and others reported they had attended IAG training sessions in staff meetings, but some have not. The Service may wish to consider developing regular IAG CPD sessions/workshops for all staff to ensure that those providing IAG continue to develop their skills and knowledge of IAG, which may help them to further develop the way they provide IAG to learners. (2.5)
- The Service may wish to consider developing an IAG Champion team, with a member from each area, to be a focus for all things IAG related. They could oversee the quality assurance of the IAG provision in all areas to help ensure consistency and be a focal point for IAG training needs to help staff with their development of IAG skills, and through this drive the development of the IAG provision across the Service. (2.6, 2.8)
- Staff refer and signpost learners to organisations for support or courses that the Service does not provide. Some do this based on their personal knowledge of organisations to which they refer/signpost. The Service may wish to consider developing a central list of organisations for all staff to use for referrals/signposting, to be contributed to by all staff. The Service can quality assure the organisations on the list to ensure that the services they provide are appropriate to help ensure the learner receive the support they are looking for. (2.7)

Conditions of Accreditation

Holders of the **matrix** Standard Accreditation must:

1. Maintain and continually improve upon their services.
2. During the period of accreditation satisfy The Growth Company that the organisation continues to meet the requirements of the **matrix** Standard via the annual continuous improvement checks and the three-year accreditation review.
3. Complete annual continuous improvement checks in a timely way, it is expected these will be carried out annually by the accreditation anniversary date.
4. Inform The Growth Company or their Assessor if the key contact name/contact details change.
5. Submit their Booking Form for re-accreditation to the **matrix** Standard at least 3 months prior to the accreditation anniversary date ensuring all pre on-site activity is completed in a timely way including planning, payment and interview scheduling. Accreditation Reviews are due 3 years from the anniversary accreditation date; it is expected that organisations will be assessed by this date or will risk being de-accredited.
6. Inform The Growth Company of any significant changes made to the organisational structure, senior management or systems that may impact on their accreditation; email: matrixStandard@growthco.uk.
7. Inform The Growth Company immediately if they wish to extend or reduce the scope of their accreditation.
8. Inform The Growth Company of any serious complaint or rise in numbers of complaints received (within the scope of the accreditation).
9. Not undertake or omit to undertake any activity that may be misleading and/or may cause The Growth Company and/or the **matrix** Standard to be brought into disrepute.
10. Only use the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark for the areas within the scope of the accreditation and in accordance with the guidelines. For example, if a certain department is successfully **matrix** accredited, the Quality Mark can only be used on that department's letterhead or on that department's page on their internet homepage.
11. Ensure in cases where accreditation is withdrawn or where they do not come forward for accreditation review, remove from display any certificates or plaques issued by The Growth Company and do not display the **matrix** Standard Quality Mark nor refer to be a former holder of the **matrix** Standard.
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YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGY 2024-2029 UPDATE

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Kudakwashe Kurashwa, Head of Service, Youth and Adolescent Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Hillingdon Youth Justice Five-Year Strategy 2024 – 2029
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This report provides an update on the Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) Five Year Strategy (2024-2029), outlining strategic priorities, performance data and key initiatives aimed at preventing youth offending, reducing reoffending and promoting restorative justice. The strategy is anchored in a child first ethos that emphasises early intervention, equity and holistic support for both children and victims.

The ongoing development and delivery of the Youth Justice Strategy directly align with the Council's overarching vision of *putting residents first* and its ambition for Hillingdon to be a safe, inclusive, more digital borough with a strong economy. The work of HYJS contributes meaningfully to these ambitions by safeguarding vulnerable young people, promoting safer communities and ensuring children and families are supported to thrive.

More specifically, the strategy underpins two of the Council's five core commitments to residents:

- **Safe and strong communities:** The Youth Justice Strategy supports this commitment by reducing the risks associated with youth crime, improving community safety and working collaboratively with partners to build resilience and strength within local neighbourhoods.
- **Thriving, healthy households:** By championing a child centred model and focusing on early help, prevention and rehabilitation, HYJS enables children, young people and their families to live healthy, active and independent lives, while ensuring vulnerable cohorts receive timely, targeted support.

In this context, the Youth Justice Strategy plays a vital role not only in addressing offending behaviours but also in contributing to the wider social, educational and wellbeing outcomes that help young people reach their potential. The service works closely with statutory and voluntary sector partners to create positive pathways, reduce systemic barriers and ensure that young people remain engaged in prosocial, future focused activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. **Notes the progress and strategic direction outlined in the Hillingdon Youth Justice Five-Year Strategy; and**
2. **Notes the continued focus on prevention, early intervention and restorative justice as key priorities for youth justice in Hillingdon.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Hillingdon Council, under S.38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, is committed to providing youth justice services for children aged 10 -18. The principal aim is to prevent offending through early intervention, prevention and rehabilitation. The strategy was developed in consultation with children, families and partners, reflecting on performance and considering local and national drivers. The Hillingdon Youth Justice operates in line with a clear and ambitious vision: *to be a fair, inclusive, child-first youth justice service that empowers every child to thrive, supports victims of crime, and repairs harm within safer, stronger communities*. The mission is equally focused i.e. diverting children from the criminal justice system, preventing offending and reoffending and reducing reliance on custody through restorative, welfare-led approaches. At the heart of this work lies a strong safeguarding mandate, delivered through multi-agency collaboration and embedded within the Hillingdon Family Help model.

Strategic Priorities

The strategy sets out five priorities:



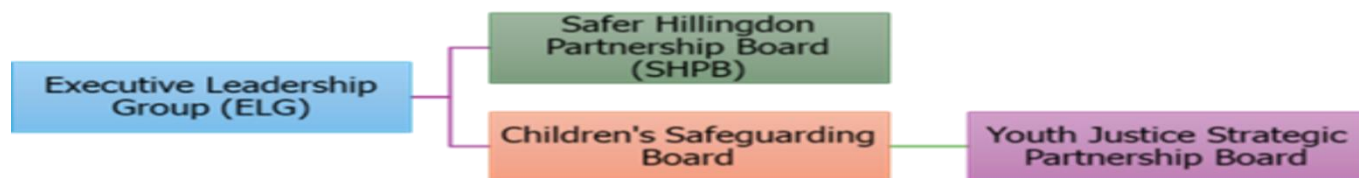
Context

Hillingdon is a diverse borough with a growing child population and significant challenges, including poverty, social deprivation, and over-representation of certain groups in the youth justice system. HYJS is located within the Children, Families and Education Directorate and benefits from strong governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements.

Governance and Partnerships

HYJS is funded centrally and through statutory partners. Operating in line with Youth Justice

Board guidance, the Youth Justice Strategic Partnership Board (YJSPB) convenes senior representatives from statutory partners to ensure strategic coherence and accountability. The Corporate Director's membership across key governance forums including the Safer Hillingdon Partnership Board, Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board, Integrated Care Board and well as the Executive Leadership Group, enables the YJSPB to influence wider agendas and mobilise cross-sector resources.



PERFORMANCE DATA

The performance evidence underpinning the Hillingdon Youth Justice Five Year Strategy (2024-2029) demonstrates a youth justice system that has strengthened year on year, driven by early intervention, strong partnerships and a child first ethos.

Over the past five years, the borough has sustained strong performance in reducing First Time Entrants (FTEs). Although numbers fluctuated during and after the pandemic, FTEs remain significantly below prepandemic levels, with 64 children entering the system in 2019/20, falling to 38 in 2021/22, and stabilising at 46 in 2023/24. This trend reflects the effectiveness of prevention pathways including triage, community resolutions and Hillingdon's AXIS intelligence led approach. *Turnaround* has exceeded Ministry of Justice targets each year, engaging 9 children in 2022/23 and 32 in 2023/24, surpassing set quotas.

Across the same period, the total number of youth justice outcomes reduced from 246 in 2019/20 to 100 in 2023/24, with court outcomes falling by **54%**, out of court disposals by **65%**, and triage outcomes by **77.5%**. This represents a significant system wide shift towards proportionate, early intervention responses and reduced criminalisation, particularly for low level offences where community resolutions now dominate.

Performance in custody also shows sustained improvement. Custodial sentences decreased from eight to seven in 2022/23, and the custody rate remains comparatively low at 0.22 per 1,000 children aged 10–17. Remands have both reduced in number and shortened in duration, from an average of 63 days to 36 days. Despite this, disproportionality persists children from Black and Mixed ethnic backgrounds are three times more likely to receive a custodial sentence and accounted for 69% of new remands.

The borough's reoffending rate, while fluctuating due to small cohort sizes, compares favourably with national data. Published Ministry of Justice figures show a reduction from **40.5%** to **37.5%**, while local analysis suggests a more accurate estimate of **32.8%**, slightly above the national average but below the London average. The cohort who reoffend typically present with complex trauma, unmet health needs and high levels of vulnerability which helps to illustrate and explain the rates detailed above.

The service has also delivered strong performance against new Youth Justice Board indicators introduced in 2023. Hillingdon reports 96% of children in suitable accommodation, compared with 86% nationally and 87% of school aged children in fulltime education at the end of their intervention. For non school aged children, ETE engagement improved from 56% to **67%** year on

year. These outcomes are supported by integrated work across Early Help, SEND and the dedicated YJS Health Hub, with **39%** of children identified as requiring mental health or emotional wellbeing support which is significantly above national averages.

A defining strength of HYJS is its embedded speech and language therapy offer, with 480 children assessed since 2018 and between **58%** and **72%** identified with communication needs annually. This early identification supports fairer justice processes and more effective intervention planning.

Finally, the restorative justice offer has been strengthened, with victim engagement rising to **90% in 2023/24** and the majority of participating victims opting for letters of apology or direct conferences. Feedback evidences improved victim confidence and emotional resolution.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

The strategy benefits residents by creating safer communities, reducing youth offending and supporting vulnerable children and victims. Early intervention and holistic support promote positive outcomes, resilience and opportunities for children to thrive.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

HYJS is funded through central and partner contributions, with annual budget setting reflecting service needs and demographic growth. Continued investment supports effective service delivery and strategic priorities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The strategy is delivered in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and relevant youth justice legislation. Legal comments are not obligatory for this information report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- London Reducing Criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers Protocol ([link](#))
- Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales ([link](#))

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Hillingdon Youth Justice Five-Year Strategy 2024-2029
- Appendix B – Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Strategic Plan 2024–2027

Hillingdon Youth Justice Service Five-Year Strategy



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Foreword

As we embark on this journey of shaping the future of youth justice services in Hillingdon during the next five years, it is with great enthusiasm and dedication that I present this strategy. 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 improve 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.

**Cllr Susan O'Brien,
Cabinet Member for
Children, Families and
Education**



Introduction

Hillingdon Council has a duty under S.38 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to provide youth justice services to children aged 10 to 18. The principal aim of Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) is to prevent offending by children through early intervention, prevention, and rehabilitation. This strategy sets out the service's approach to working with children and families accessing youth justice services through early help and prevention and statutory intervention. This five-year strategy was developed in consultation with children, parents/carers and colleagues across the partnership and communities reflecting on and reviewing HYJS's performance during the past five years and considering a range of local and national drivers informing our youth justice work.

"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. The service takes a locality, place-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.



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 to 19-year-olds than the London average with 26 per cent and this proportion is expected to grow.
- There are approximately 120,700 children aged 0 to 17 years residing in the borough which make up 39.69 per cent of the population.
- 30,965 (25.65 per cent) of these children are aged 10 to 17 years.
- 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 per cent.
- At 31 March 2024, there were approximately 329 children looked after by Hillingdon.
- 35 per cent of all residents are from a Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic background. Hillingdon is an ethnically diverse borough with most Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic communities residing in the south of the borough.
- 62 per cent of Hillingdon children aged 10 to 17 are from a Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic background (2021 Census).
- Our residents (aged three years and above) speak at least 85 different languages – this is similar to most other London boroughs and other large cities in England and Wales.
- The 2021 Census tells us that 77.9 per cent of our residents (aged three years and above) have English as their main language, followed by Punjabi (4.6 per cent), Romanian (1.8 per cent), Polish (1.7 per cent) and Tamil (1.6 per cent).
- In 2023/24, 3,503 children had an active Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This number has steadily increased at an average rate of approximately 11.6 per cent during the past five years.



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

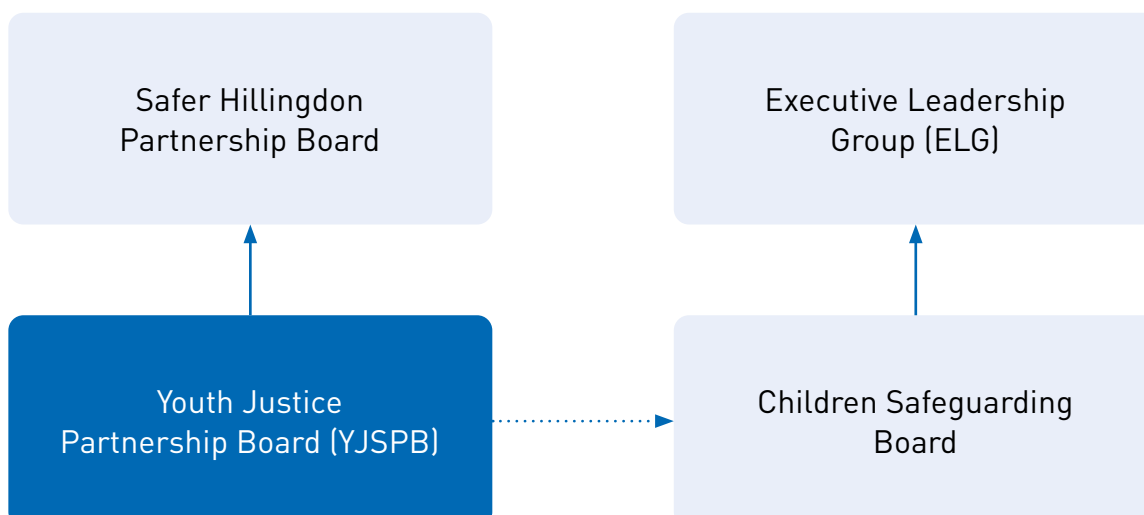
Governance, leadership and partnerships

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 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 Youth Justice Partnership Board (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 Youth Justice Board (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, and 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 per cent of senior partners attending. New board members have an induction to help them 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 it. For example, the ICB representative on the board initiated a review of the health need of the YJS cohort which resulted in the commissioning of dedicated speech and language therapy provision; whilst the Community Safety representative has advocated YJS work and secured funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to support early identification and intervention of young people at risk of exploitation.

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

The YJB for England and Wales is responsible for monitoring and measuring our performance through the submission of national key performance indicators (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, HYJS 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 evidence-based way to promote best practice.

The YJS informs and supports the Children's "High Fives":

- contextual safeguarding
- neglect
- where our children live
- targeted help
- our people.

These five key strands of operational and strategic activity drive improved outcomes for children in Hillingdon.

The 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 (MoJ) on a quarterly basis.

The following three performance indicators have been embedded within services, so we have been able to capture data and measure our performance over a longer period:

1 Reduction in First Time Entrants

(FTEs): Children entering the criminal justice system for the first time receiving a disposal at court or a caution.

2 Reduction in reoffending:

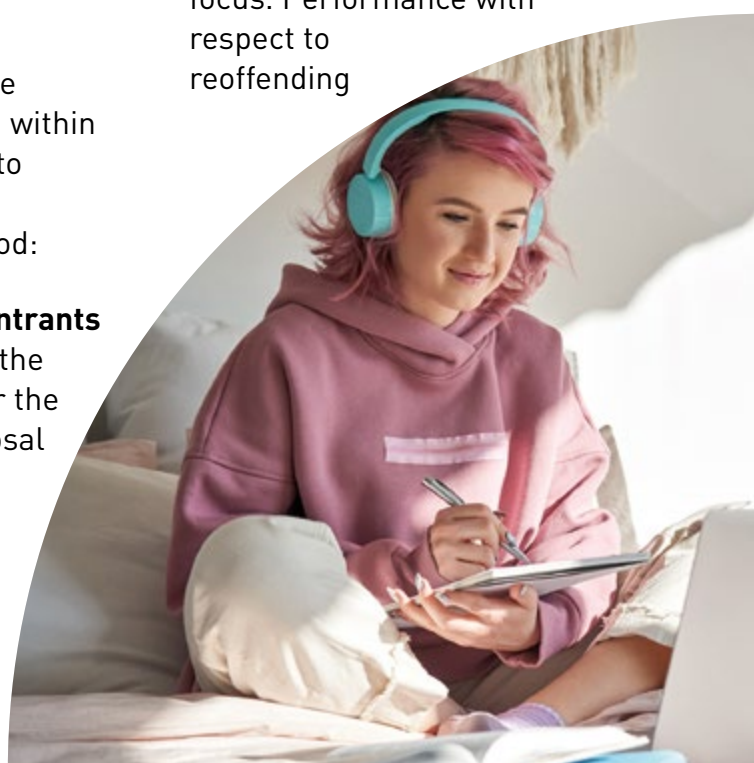
Monitoring of children who receive a substantive outcome (not triage) for a period of 12 months for any

further offending and associated frequency.

3 Reduction in the use of custody:

Reduce the number of children who receive a custodial sentence.

The 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 in 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 reoffending



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 boys from a Black and Mixed ethnic background in custody which is a priority of activity in this strategy.

Since April 2023, it has been a requirement of youth justice services to report on the following new KPIs, 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 (Q) 1-3 for 2023/24 on YJAF tells us that Hillingdon is performing above national indicators in the proportion of

children in suitable accommodation (an average of 96 per cent in Hillingdon compared to 86 per cent nationally).

Looking at the proportion of children in suitable education, training, and employment at the end of their order, Q1-3 showed 87 per cent of school age children were in full time education at the end of their intervention, like the 86 per cent seen at the end of 2022/23. For the non-school age children, 67 per cent were in full-time education, up from the 56 per cent seen at the end of 2022/23. We also have a higher than the national average number of children identified with 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 we remain 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. This ensures there is an understanding of their needs, and collaboration with partners and interventions are personalised to maximise positive outcomes for each child.



HYJS have reported an average of 39 per cent 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 per cent of the national average for Q1-3 for 2023/24. The well-resourced Health Hub within the YJS combines the skills of a liaison and diversion worker, a full-time dedicated speech and language therapist and a 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 total number of outcomes have decreased during the past five years, from 246 in 2019/20 to 100 in 2023/24. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54 per cent during the period. We have also seen a 65 per cent decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5 per cent 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 an increase in the rate of engagement as compared to the previous year.

The most common offence in 2023/24 was violence against the person related, with 60 offences (29.13 per cent). In 2021/22, drugs had been the most common offence, but this has continued to decrease from 52 offences (28.42 per cent) in 2021/22 to 12 offences (5.83 per cent) 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 per cent of all offences, up from 25.23 per cent in the previous year and 11.48 per cent in 2021/22. For the second year in a row, "Burglary other than dwelling" was the single most common offence, representing 9.22 per cent of all offences. It is important to note that all 19 of these offences were committed by two 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. HYJS continues to work with its partners to reduce these offences, and this remains a priority for the Safer Hillingdon Partnership.

Hillingdon monitors serious violence rates with the assistance of the YJB's 'Serious Youth Violence Tool'. The rate of serious violence per 100,000 population 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 Table 1 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 serious youth violence offence, accounting for 79 per cent of offences in Q1-3 2023/24.

Table 1

Rate of Serious Violence offences (per 100,000 population) – 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

Priority 1: Prevention and early intervention

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's Services directorate and falls under the umbrella of Prevention and Youth Justice. HYJS and its partners have 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 five years to further develop our prevention offer. During the past five years, we have seen our first-time entrants (FTE) figures decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic and rise again (see Table 1), however the figure remains below pre-pandemic levels.

As mentioned previously and outlined in Table 2 below, the total number of outcomes have decreased during the past five years, from 246 in 2019/20 to 100 in 2023/24. It is positive that the number of court outcomes have decreased by 54 per cent over the five years. We have also seen a 65 per cent decrease of out of court disposals and a 77.5 per cent 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.

In the year 2023/24, we have seen a varied rate of engagement for children receiving a community resolution (CR) with an average rate of 31 per cent of children consenting to receiving intervention with HYJS. This is an increase from the previous year where we had an average of nine per cent of children receiving an intervention.

Our AXIS service, unique to Hillingdon, 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 works 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.

Table 1

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

Table 2

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



Table 3

	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
MoJ quota	9	26	27
Number of children engaged with Turnaround	9	32	34

In December 2022, Hillingdon was provided funding (ending March 2025) from the 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 (see Table 3).

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 strategy 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.
- 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.

¹ Hillingdon Family Hub Strategy 2023-2025

Priority 2: Over-representation and disproportionality

Addressing disproportionality in youth justice is crucial for ensuring fairness, equity, and justice within our society. Disproportionality refers to the over-representation of certain groups, particularly from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic 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 Youth Justice Board states: "The Youth Justice Board is committed to recognising and addressing inequality and the children who are involved with the youth justice system reflect a range of social inequalities. There is over-representation of children in care, children living in poverty, those with neurodivergent conditions or speech and language difficulties, and those who have experienced trauma. However, the most persistent and significant over-representation is children from minoritised racial communities."²

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

- White British children made up 50 per cent of the 10-17 year-old population in Hillingdon in 2011, this dropped to 31 per cent in 2021.
- Asian children made up 24 per cent of the population in 2011, this increased to 34 per cent in 2021.

- Black African children made up six per cent of the population in 2011, this increased to nine per cent in 2021.
- Any Other ethnic group saw the largest percentage increase of 174 per cent.

In Hillingdon, Black children accounted for 27 per cent of stop and searches compared to 13 per cent of the population in the year 2023/24. However, 81 per cent 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 per cent of children bailed/released under investigation in November 2023 but now account for 21 per cent 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 ethnicity children are less likely to plead guilty; in 2023/24 eight per cent of Black and Mixed ethnicity

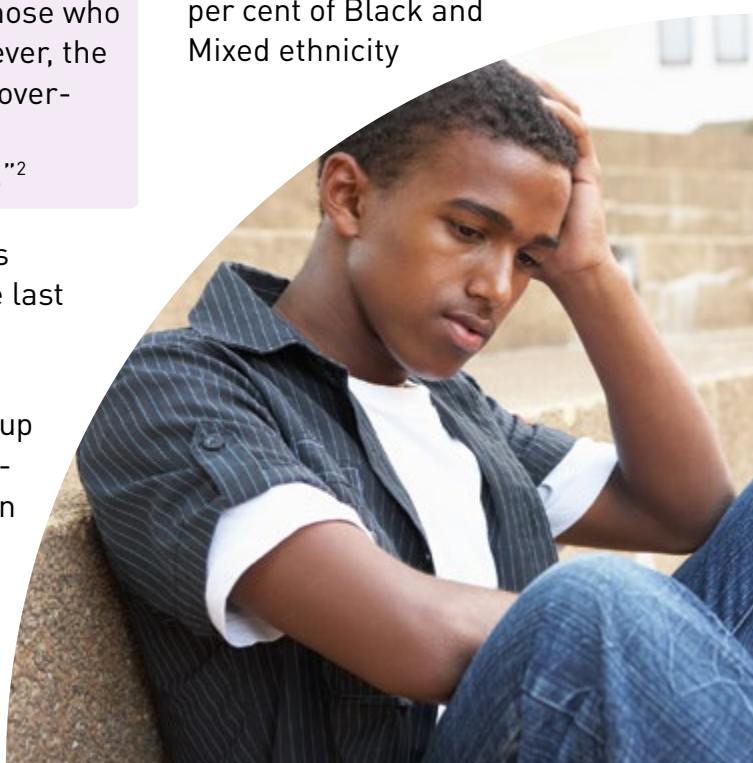


Table 1

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%	12.19%
Mixed	13.79%	10.95%	12.96%	16.48%	14.29%
Other	1.15%	5.11%	4.63%	8.79%	7.69%

children were found guilty compared to three per cent of White children.

In Hillingdon, children from Black and Mixed backgrounds 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 ethnicity children account for 18 per cent of children on a Child Protection (CP) plan in Hillingdon, whilst making up six per cent of the population of children in Hillingdon.

Black children in Hillingdon are 1.4 times more likely to be severely obese compared to other ethnicities. Thirty-three per cent 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 per cent compared to 95 per cent for White children. They were less likely to have immunisations up to date, 66 per cent compared to 83 per cent for White children. White children had the lowest amount of tooth decay in 5-year-olds.

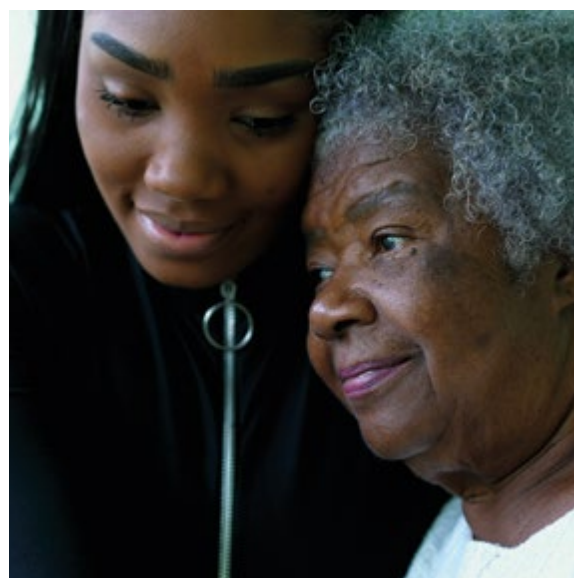
In terms of education outcomes, 29 per cent of exclusions and 33 per cent of suspensions were from Black and Mixed ethnicities in the 2022/23 academic year. Boys (52 per cent) were significantly more likely to not have achieved at least the expected standard in Early Learning Goals by age 5 compared to girls (70 per cent), with boys from Other ethnic backgrounds (48 per cent) and Black boys (50 per cent) with the lowest percentage.

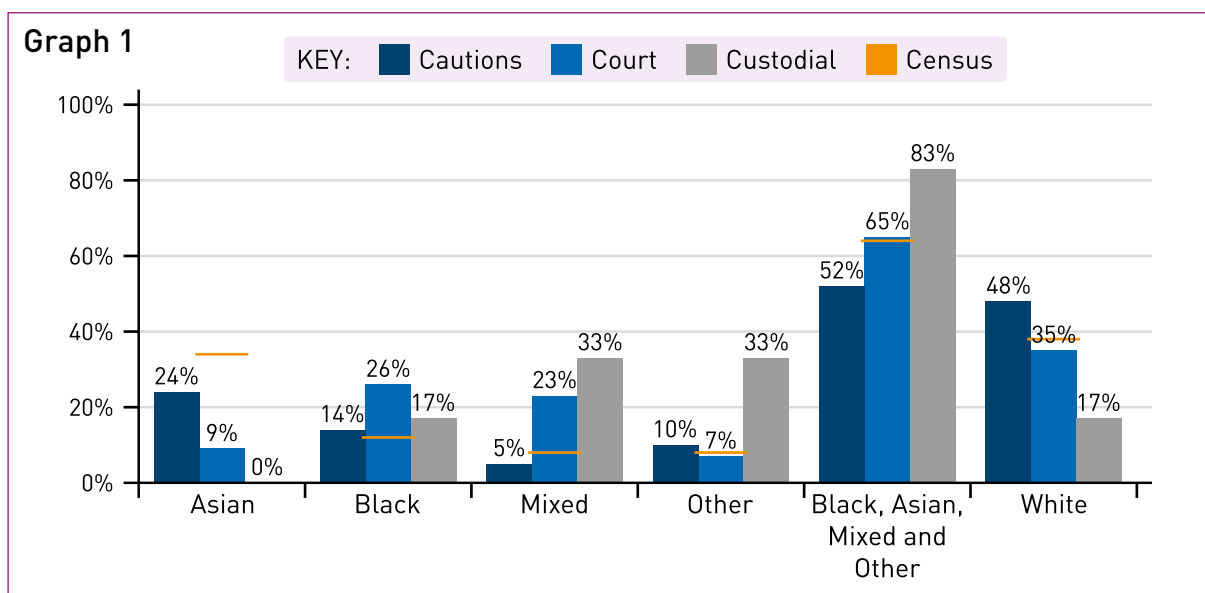
Table 1 shows the HYJS data regarding outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Black and Asian 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-19 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 ethnicity children





has been increasing in the last five years. Asian children are under-represented at every stage of the Youth Justice Service.

Looked after children

Looked after children are over-represented in the criminal justice system in England and Wales. Looked after children and those with care experience are particularly vulnerable and often the victims of trauma and exploitation.

Table 2 shows the numbers of children open to HYJS that are on a Child in Need (CIN) plan, Child Protection (CP) plan and Children Looked After (CLA). In 2023/24, 20.9 per cent of children open to HYJS were looked after, compared with 0.88 per cent of Hillingdon's 10-17 population.

The London Reducing Criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers Protocol 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. HYJS continue to develop its response to this, supporting care homes in managing conflict and behaviour using trauma informed approaches, and advocating for children looked after to reduce the risk of them being criminalised.

Speech and language

Children in the youth justice system are significantly more likely to have underlying speech and language needs compared to their peers. Research shows that a large proportion of these children have unmet and undiagnosed speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN), which often remain unrecognised throughout their lives. These challenges can manifest in various ways, including difficulties in understanding and using language, which in turn affects their ability to communicate effectively, understand legal proceedings, and engage with services.

Table 2

		2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024
CIN/CP	#	49	38	31	31
	%	35.8	35.2	34.1	34.1
CLA	#	19	9	18	19
	%	13.9	8.3	19.8	20.9

Table 3

	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024
Number of children assessed	108	64	79	84	79
Percentage of children presented with SLCN	66%	72%	71%	58%	71%
Percentage of children presented with MS-SLCN	69%	61%	61%	67%	55%

Many of these children come from backgrounds where early intervention for speech and language issues may have been limited or non-existent. Factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, lack of access to specialist services, and environments that do not support language development contribute to the under-diagnosis of these needs. Additionally, behavioural issues and academic struggles often associated with language difficulties may be misinterpreted as intentional defiance, rather than being recognised as symptoms of underlying SLCN.

As a result, these children may struggle to articulate their thoughts, understand instructions, or engage in verbal problem-solving, making them more vulnerable to misunderstandings and conflicts with people in authority. In the context of the youth justice system, this can lead to a cycle where communication breakdowns exacerbate behavioural issues, leading to an increased vulnerability to being exploited by others, or engaging in offending behaviour.

Addressing these unmet needs is crucial for breaking this cycle. Early identification and intervention can improve outcomes for these children and reduce the likelihood of them entering the criminal justice system.

Since March 2018, HYJS have commissioned speech and language therapy input. This input was initially commissioned to investigate the level of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of children known to

HYJS. The service has now evolved so that all children known to HYJS, AXIS and Turnaround are offered an assessment of their speech, language and communication skills. Between March 2018 and March 2024, 480 children received a speech and language assessment whilst allocated to HYJS or the AXIS service.

Table 3 shows the percentage of children that have presented with an underlying speech, language or communication need (SLCN), and those with moderate-severe speech language or communication needs (MS-SLCN) over the past five years.

The data shows there is an over-representation of children with speech and language needs as compared to the general population; 15 per cent of the general population present with SLCN and 6 per cent of the general population present with moderate-severe SLCN.

Speech and language training has been delivered to police colleagues at Polar





Park custody suite, which has resulted in an increase of children being refused detention and being invited to attend a Caution Plus 3 interview at a later date. Children in custody are provided with distraction kits which are also used in interviews with children. A session has been held with magistrates where guidance was offered to consider how they communicate with children in the court room and are guided by HYJS staff attending court to ensure that children understand the process and are supported in the right way. Refresher training has also been provided to HYJS volunteer community panel members who have reported back to state that they have found it extremely useful when chairing panel meetings and communicating with children.

HYJS staff are provided with communication packs that support them in their work with children. The packs contain resources for professionals to use during sessions to support children's attention and listening, social communication and language. For example, fidget toys/objects, pens and whiteboards.

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 over-representation of certain groups, particularly from children from Black and Mixed backgrounds 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.

² Youth_Justice_Board_for_England_and_Wales_Strategic_Plan_2024-27.odt (live.com)

³ Reducing criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers | London City Hall



Priority 3: Child-centred practice

Child-centred practice focuses on the holistic needs of children and their families, promoting their health, wellbeing, and positive development. By placing children at the centre, we aim to create thriving, healthy households where every child can reach their full potential. It recognises children as active participants in their own lives and advocates for their rights, wellbeing, 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 2023/24, 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 its 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 2023/24, 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 past 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 Education and SEND which supports a collaborative approach in keeping children in education, and re-engaging those children who are not in education, employment or training 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 in getting to know the children they are working with, understand their life experiences and how that forms part of their identity. The support plan focuses 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 believes that 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 2024-2027⁴ is to influence and develop policy and practice of child first across the youth justice system, which includes improving the court experience and outcomes for children. We capture children's experiences of court proceedings to ensure that they are fair, transparent, and based on accurate information. This 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 wellbeing, 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 the children's 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.

⁴ Youth_Justice_Board_for_England_and_Wales_Strategic_Plan_2024-27.odt (live.com)

Success measures:

- A commitment to continue to commission training/deliver tailored workshops to further develop practitioners' 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 reoffending

HYJS prioritises the best interests of children and focuses on understanding children's identities, using trauma informed relationship-based practice when working with children to divert and prevent children from offending and reoffending. This includes addressing our reoffending rates and ensuring we have the right process in place to support children's desistance against further offending. Our commitment to reducing reoffending 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 MoJ, demonstrated a decrease in reoffending (40.5 per cent to 37.5 per cent) 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 per cent. However, due to the limitations in both the local and published data sets, we estimate our true reoffending rate to be 32.8 per cent which is slightly above the national (32.1 per cent) and below the London average (33.4 per cent). 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-19 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 reoffend, although reduced in number, are often those with the most complex needs. The YJS continues to use the YJB reoffending 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, six (14 per cent) 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, six (16.2 per cent) reoffended within 12 months.

Neither of the two children



who engaged with the community resolution reoffended.

HYJS acknowledge the following factors that have contributed to the reduction of reoffending 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
- 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 support 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 seven, compared to eight 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 is in response to the offences committed. Data analysis indicates that children in Hillingdon from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic backgrounds are three 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 is committed to understanding and taking action to address over-representation with a robust disproportionality action plan and associated partnership activity.

At the end of 2023/24 there was one child remanded into Youth Detention Accommodation (YDA), compared to three 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. As in our custody data, children from Black and Mixed ethnic backgrounds are disproportionately over-represented, accounting for 69 per cent of the remands starting in 2023/24.

HYJS recognised a need for improved transitions work with Probation, which has been a priority for 2023/24. 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. HYJS aims to ensure all transition plans are personalised and we 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 reoffending rates.
- Increased resources to address critical transition periods, such as 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



Victim and restorative justice (RJ) focuses 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. RJ holds children accountable for their actions in a meaningful way, promoting a deeper understanding of the impact of their behaviour. HYJS strives to provide high quality services to victims in line with The Victims' Code.⁵ The code sets out the 12 minimum standards that must be provided to victims of crime by organisations in England and Wales.

In the year 2023/24, HYJS successfully contacted 21 victims, a slight increase from 20 the previous year (see Table 1). Of the victims that wanted to engage with restorative justice, 71 per cent (15) requested a letter of apology and 29 per cent (4) agreed to a face-to-face RJ conference. Whilst the number of victims reached has reduced, we have increased our engagement rates with victims which is positive.

49 children completed an RJ screening in 2023/24. A health screening and speech and language assessment is completed with all children prior to their RJ screening to ensure that the process is delivered in a bespoke and meaningful way (such as the delivery of RJ and victim awareness work with autistic children is carefully considered). As a result, 30 children agreed to engage in RJ 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 outside the borough of Hillingdon. 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 15 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.

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

Table 1

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

more cohesive communities. Feedback received from victims illustrates how powerful RJ 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

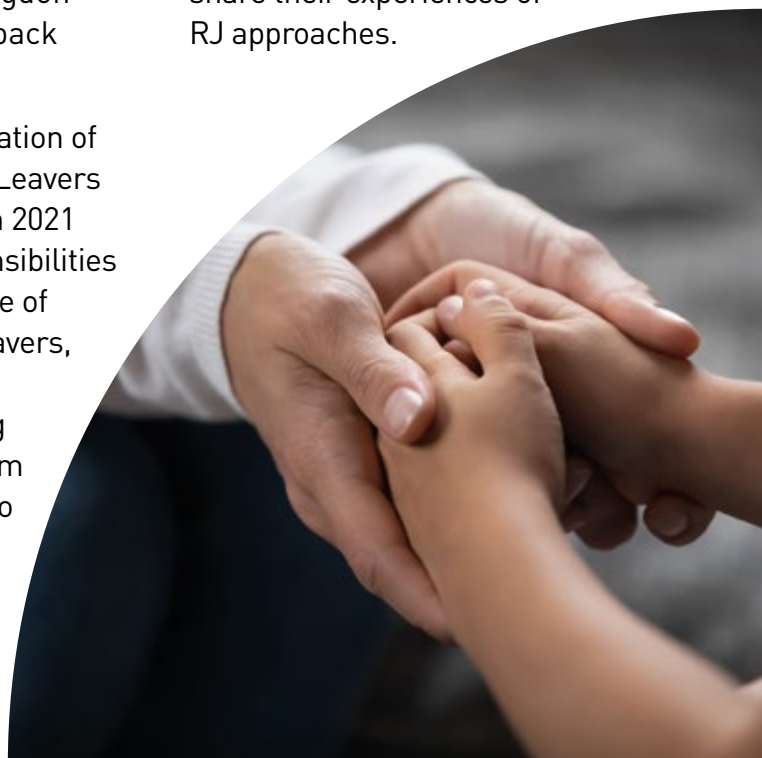
From a parent's perspective, you included my daughter and gave her a voice. You could have just listened to what I said, because she's a child and I'm the parent but you didn't, you gave her a voice in the process. Going into that conference, I didn't realise how much it affected me. By sitting in the 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 2023/24, we have provided RJ training to all secondary schools across Hillingdon and have received positive feedback from those that attended.

The London Reducing Criminalisation of Looked-After Children and Care Leavers Protocol⁶ 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 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 aims 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 coordinator if needed.
- HYJS to promote best practice to build on the knowledge of YJS officers' understanding of victim safety.

⁵ Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales (Victims' Code) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

⁶ 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 wellbeing 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.

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.

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



The Youth Justice Board strategy for delivering positive outcomes for children by reducing offending and creating safer communities

2024 to 2027



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Foreword

I am privileged to introduce our second strategic plan during my time as Chair of the Youth Justice Board. We have a crucial role in ensuring that the Government's central investment of just over £100 million a year in youth justice is used effectively.

This strategy sets out our approach for how we will continue to work with others to realise our vision and deliver services that promote positive child outcomes, reduce crime, support victims and make communities safer.

The first plan of my tenure was launched in 2021 while we were still very much in the throes of a global pandemic., and I opened that plan with the following statement:

"We live in challenging times. Yet, with every challenge there is an opportunity."

This is just as true today as it was then. There will always be challenges, but I firmly believe the greater the challenges, the greater the opportunities.

Performance in the youth justice sector is strong. The number of children entering the youth justice system has dramatically reduced over the last decade, as has the number of children in custody. Independent assessments conducted by the Inspectorate of Probation shows that local youth justice service and partnerships are generally delivering a good service to children and their communities. There is a solid foundation to build upon and to face the future.

The challenges we face today are considerable and I must acknowledge that it is an uncertain time to be presenting our strategic vision for the next three years. The world is continuing to adapt to the social changes brought by the pandemic, including an acceleration in the use of technology, intensification of inequalities and increased pressure on local public services to meet the needs of local communities. A range of global factors have contributed to economic uncertainty, with people and public services experiencing the stresses caused by increased costs of living. We are also operating in an environment of political uncertainty, with a general election due to be held within the next nine months and a planned review of the Youth Justice Board, where the Cabinet Office will look at whether we are delivering the best possible outcomes for taxpayers.

The Youth Justice Board is not unique in having to navigate an uncertain world, and our role is to continue to adapt to the circumstances which we are operating in and the resources which are available to us.

A key aspect of our strategy for the next three years will be to ensure that this investment from central government is used effectively by local services. Our assessment is that local youth justice services are broadly performing well. They benefit from expert and committed staff from multiple agencies including health, probation, education, police and youth justice teams who work in partnership to meet the needs of children and their local communities. There is, however, always room for improvement. For example, we need to strengthen our support for the victims of crime, redouble our efforts to reduce racial disparity, and develop our services to meet the unmet needs of children, including their speech, language and communication difficulties. Our overarching priority will be to continue to evaluate the

effectiveness of these services and to steer improvement through promoting good practice and providing targeted support.

In our last strategic plan three years ago, we set out our commitment to a Child First approach, which is rooted in national and international research and a contemporary analysis of the evidence. It provides the foundation for this strategy and the way in which we will monitor and promote practice across the entire youth justice system.

Although this evidence provides a strong base for maintaining the direction of our strategy, we must ensure that the Youth Justice Board is an efficient, effective and responsive organisation which understands interdependencies within the youth justice system and that services are delivered within the resources which are available. This will enable us to focus on where we can have the most impact by supporting improvements to front-line youth justice services. Ultimately, we offer value to the public by supporting the delivery of positive child outcomes, less crime, and safer communities.

Strategic context

The past decade has seen extremely positive long-term trends across the youth justice system in England and Wales.

- The number of proven offences committed by children has fallen by approximately 65%, from 98,937 in 2012/13 to around 34,300 in 2022/23;^{1, 2}
- There have been substantial falls in the number of children entering the justice system in the first place, with a reduction of around 77% between the years ending March 2012 and March 2023.^{1, 2}
- There were approximately 11,900 occasions where children were sentenced at court in the year ending March 2023, which is 73% lower than in the year ending March 2012.^{1, 2}
- The number of children being sentenced to custody has also shrunk: in the year ending March 2023, the average monthly population of the youth secure estate was the lowest it has ever been at around 440 children.²

We believe that a greater focus by practitioners and policy makers, both within the youth justice system and in related fields, on preventing and diverting children away from the youth justice system are partly responsible for these trends. However, we recognise that these gains cannot be taken for granted and the most recent statistics for 2022/23 bear this out with slight increases in some measures from the previous year. These achievements could all be put at risk by changes in children's behaviour, including: their use (and misuse) of new technologies; the way in which adults draw them into criminal activity; national and local economic circumstances; and potential changes in policy and practice, especially by criminal justice agencies. The Youth Justice Board has a critical role in supporting youth justice services to mitigate and, if possible, avoid these factors turning into negative outcomes for children and communities.

There remain profound and entrenched challenges in the youth justice system. While we are encouraged that the latest set of published statistics are the third year where we have seen improvements in disproportionality for the third year, focus and effort must not let up as there continues to be significant racial disproportionality across every stage of the system. This particularly affects Black boys, although children from other minority ethnic groups have also been identified as experiencing poorer outcomes.³

¹ [Youth justice statistics 2012/13: England and Wales - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics). Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics

² [Youth justice statistics: 2022 to 2023 \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023-accessible-version). Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023/youth-justice-statistics-2022-to-2023-accessible-version

³ [Annual statistics: a youth justice system failing Black children - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/annual-statistics-a-system-failing-black-children). Available at: www.gov.uk/government/news/annual-statistics-a-system-failing-black-children

The overwhelming majority of the children who came through the youth justice system over the past three years have complex backgrounds and needs.⁴ This is especially so for those sentenced to custody - and while the reduction in the number of children being held in custody is welcome - the patterns of violence, self-harm and trauma that are seen among children in these settings are unacceptable.

It must also be recognised that the youth justice system does not exist in a vacuum and that socio-economic circumstances profoundly influence the lives and opportunities of children across the country. We know that many of the children who come into contact with the justice system are from our most deprived communities, where the experience of a cost of living crisis has created conditions where children are more likely to engage in violence.⁵

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also continues to cause significant disruption in the lives of children as their access to education and other services was disrupted for a protracted period. The latest data shows that 22.3% of children were persistently absent during the 2022/23 academic year, which is double the equivalent figure for 2018/19⁶, and will have considerable impact on their social development and commitment to learning.

Lastly, for the public services charged with delivering youth justice, significant budgetary pressures remain and there will be difficult decisions about what, and how, services can or cannot be delivered. This is compounded by changes in the job market in the youth justice sector and increased mobility of employees and competition for skilled workers, which makes it a challenge to recruit and retain the best staff.

Against this backdrop of change, there are considerable challenges throughout the youth justice system. However, longer-term trends are positive, and we believe that the most trustworthy guide in uncertain times is to follow an evidence-based approach.

Youth justice in Wales

⁴ Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice (2021): 'Assessing the needs of sentenced children in the Youth Justice System 2019/20'. This report found that of all sentenced children in 2019/20, 90% of sentenced children were assessed to have safety and wellbeing needs, 72% were assessed to have mental health concerns, 71% were assessed to have speech, language and communication concerns, and 57% were assessed to be a current or previous child in need.

⁵ Lesley McAra and Susan McVie (2016): 'Understanding youth violence: The mediating effects of gender, poverty and vulnerability', 45 Journal of Criminal Justice pages 71-77.

⁶ Pupil attendance in schools, Week 29 2023 - GOV.UK. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools/2023-week-29>

Although justice remains a reserved matter with decisions taken by the UK government, the Senedd Cymru has delegated responsibility for policy areas that directly shape the lives of children, including education and health, with Welsh Government providing funding to prevent offending by children in Wales.

We have a long-standing strategic partnership with the Welsh Government. Our Operations Directorate for Wales enables us to influence strategic and operational direction to ensure the partnership approach in Wales is reflected in the business of the Youth Justice Board.

Our vision

Despite the complex challenges facing the Youth Justice Board in 2024, we remain committed to the vision we introduced in 2021:

A youth justice system that sees children as children first, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

As we seek to achieve this vision, the Youth Justice Board is committed to following an evidence-based approach, and we can draw on decades of national and international evidence of what works in creating positive outcomes for children.

We have summarised this evidence as the Child First approach.⁷ It provides the guiding principles for everything we do at the Youth Justice Board, including our oversight of local youth justice services, the data and analysis that we publish, and advice that we offer to Ministers and partners throughout the justice system.

The Child First approach has four tenets which are:

As children

Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.

Building a pro-social identity

Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

Collaborating with children

Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

⁷ For further detail, see: Youth Justice Board (2022): 'A guide to Child First'. Available at: https://yresourceshub.uk/images/YJB/Child_First_Overview_and_Guide_April_2022_YJB.pdf

Diverting from stigma

Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

Our mission

In working to achieve this vision, our mission statement provides more detail about our core purpose and the approach the Youth Justice Board will take:

The Youth Justice Board is the only statutory body to have oversight of the entire youth justice system. We provide independent, evidence-based advice and leadership to drive improvements that increase children's positive outcomes and prevent offending.

The legislation which established the Youth Justice Board in 1998 also defined a set of functions for the Board⁸ which include: monitoring the operation of the youth justice system and provision of youth justice services; identifying and promoting good practice; and providing advice to the Secretary of State on a range of specified matters.

The way in which we deliver these statutory duties has evolved since they were originally established. Over the lifespan of this strategy, we will seek to meet the core purpose set out in our mission through the following:

Support improvement throughout the youth justice system and in the provision of local youth justice services

We will use our oversight of youth justice system to:

- contribute to effective resourcing of youth justice services
- set clear standards for justice⁹
- support improved performance of youth justice services
- use our data and evidence to identify opportunities to innovate and improve
- promote and strengthen engagement with communities and victims
- monitor services to constructively challenge statutory partners and agencies

⁸ Section 41 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/41

⁹ Standards for children in the youth justice system - GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-youth-justice-services>

Inform the public, practitioners and policy makers about the operation of the youth justice system

We will provide understanding and insight about the operation of the youth justice system and local youth justice services by publishing independent research, statistics, analysis and advice. We will operate IT systems to support the exchange of information relating to children in the system and the operation of youth justice services.

Influence practitioners and policy makers to apply the Child First approach in delivering positive outcomes for children

We will use our insight, expertise and advice to engage and influence organisations within the youth justice system and other areas of critical social policy, to embrace, apply and invest in the Child First evidence.

Our strategic objectives: 2024 to 2027

1. Supporting improvement of youth justice services in local communities

We must provide leadership for the continuous improvement of local youth justice services by working with them and the partnerships they operate within. We are responsible for administering their core grant funding on behalf of the Secretary of State, and for ensuring that they use this funding in the right way by monitoring data and guiding practice.

Responsibility for delivery of local youth justice services in England and Wales lies with 157 multi-agency partnerships that sit within local authorities. Delivering youth justice services in this way reflects evidence that working with children is most effective when the response is based on their individual needs, starts as early as possible, and draws together perspectives and skills from a range of different professionals and disciplines. This approach is supported by the Chief Inspector of Probation who inspects local youth justice services and in their 2022 annual report, they said that:¹⁰

“The multi-agency model embodied in each YJS, and their management boards has remained a great source of strength through some difficult times. Additionally, the range and depth of specialist services that YJS’ can provide the children on their caseloads, from speech and language therapy to educational welfare and psychological support, continue to impress.”

Over the next three years, we seek to improve the overall performance of youth justice services by:

Monitoring youth justice services and partnerships against clear, evidence-based expectations and standards

We will support youth justice services to reduce variations in performance by:

- providing clear grant terms and conditions for youth justice services

¹⁰ See: [2022 annual report: inspections of youth offending services - HM Inspectorate of Probation](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/yar-2022). Available at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/yar-2022

- measuring performance of youth justice services and their wider partnership through Key Performance Indicators¹¹
- scrutinising youth justice plans
- ensuring that standards for justice¹² reflect the current evidence and work with HMIP to align this with inspection frameworks.

Supporting youth justice services to improve delivery

Inspection outcomes, key performance indicators and our operational judgements are an important measure of youth justice services and the system. We will build on the steady improvement in the provision of community services over the life of the strategic plan.

Providing youth justice services with stable and fairer funding

We will continue to administer core grant funding to local youth justice services and advise Ministers on options for revisions to the grant funding formula to enable fairer distribution of funds, including consideration of awarding multi-year grants.

Moreover, we seek to support improved performance of youth justice services in the following areas of activity.

Provision of diversion across the country

There is evidence that diverting children away from criminal justice proceedings and court and into alternative programmes can prevent reoffending. We will collaborate with the police, HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Youth Endowment Fund, youth justice services and others to promote the framework of support and supervision and enable increased diversion of children linked to offending. This will include ensuring improved national data collection on diversion is in place.

Working with partners to prevent and reduce serious violence

The Serious Violence Duty requires youth justice services to collaborate and plan with other local services to prevent and reduce serious violence.¹³ We will support

¹¹ See: [Key performance indicators for youth justice services](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-performance-indicators-for-youth-justice-services) - GOV.UK. Available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/key-performance-indicators-for-youth-justice-services

¹² See: [Standards for children in the youth justice system](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-youth-justice-services) - GOV.UK. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-youth-justice-services

¹³ See: [Serious Violence Duty](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty/serious-violence-duty-accessible#chapter-2-planning-and-collaboration) - GOV.UK. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty/serious-violence-duty-accessible#chapter-2-planning-and-collaboration

improvements to the response for children involved in violent crime by ensuring that: intelligence is shared appropriately; those involved are safeguarded; data about incidents is collected and published; and learning from research into incidents involving children is analysed and shared.

Improving youth justice services' support to victims of crime

We will work with victim support organisations to identify and share positive practice; monitor annual youth justice plans to ensure all youth justice services provide for young victims, including the use of restorative justice where it is an appropriate response; and promote engagement with local communities and victims on development of local youth justice services.

Providing for children during the time that they are in custody and when they leave

We will seek to ensure that constructive resettlement is the basis for planning transition of children from youth custody, whether they are on remand or sentenced; and options for accommodation placements are available if they are returning to the community.

Supporting workforce development

Adoption of Child First is most effective when people understand how it applies to their role. We will offer support to organisations working in the youth justice system so that any new training for their staff reflects the principles of Child First.

2. Focussing on addressing persistent racial disparities across the youth justice system

The Youth Justice Board is committed to recognising and addressing inequality and the children who are involved with the youth justice system reflect a range of social inequalities. There is over-representation of children in care, children living in poverty, those with neurodivergent conditions or speech and language difficulties, and those who have experienced trauma. However, the most persistent and significant overrepresentation is children from minoritised racial communities.

In his 2017 report, David Lammy¹⁴ identified that successes in the evolution of the youth justice system over the previous 20 years as seen in falls in the numbers of children and young people offending, reoffending and going to custody, had not been experienced

¹⁴ See: [The Lammy Review - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report). Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report

equally by children and young people from minority ethnic groups, and that this was one of his biggest concerns.

Despite the increased commitment and action to address this in subsequent years, racial disparities continue to damage the lives of children and young people and the communities where they live. This is unacceptable and we are determined to take action.

Over the next three years, we will seek to reduce racial disparities in the youth justice system by:

Identifying and informing stakeholders about racial disparities in youth justice processes and outcomes

This will include identifying and publishing regular statistics and analysis to enable identification of disparities, so that targeted action can be taken to reduce incidence of inequality.

Ensuring equitable outcomes and access to services for all children, irrespective of their protected characteristics

We will work with organisations throughout the youth justice system to ensure that all outcomes, including referrals to diversion and prevention programmes and use of remand and custody, are applied fairly and without prejudice to children from minority ethnic groups.

Enabling effective action to reduce disparities

We will work with local services, experts and people with relevant lived experience to identify action that works in reducing disparities. Subject to ministerial agreement, we will make targeted investments to develop effective approaches.

Championing inclusion and becoming an anti-racist organisation

This will include implementing the action plan developed by our internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion group.

3. Influencing development of policy and practice to advance adoption of Child First throughout the youth justice system

Our unique, independent position enables us to support and influence change to improve the lives of children who are involved (or at risk of being involved) in the youth justice system.

The Youth Justice Board will use our understanding of evidence and insight gathered from our oversight of local youth justice services to provide expert advice to ministers and partners across government and advise, influence and engage organisations which work with children.

By promoting the evidence which underpins the Child First approach, we will work with others to help them apply effective practice across the youth justice system, from policing through to our courts and to custody and beyond.

In support of this ambition, we will:

Review our standards for children in the youth justice system

This will ensure that the standards which apply to organisations operating across the youth justice system reflect the most up-to-date evidence.

Understand and develop measures of positive child outcomes

We will undertake a review into how children's needs, progress and measures of success are assessed, to develop a consistent model for organisations operating throughout the youth justice system.

In addition, there are parts of the youth justice system where the Youth Justice Board does not lead on implementing change, but where our role is to provide advice and support to those who do.

Over the lifespan of this strategic plan, we believe there will be benefits for children if lead agencies and departments focus on the following:

Improving the court experience and outcomes for children

Whether children are appearing as a defendant, witness or victim, they will have a much-improved experience at court if they understand what is happening and are given a voice. We will support the Ministry of Justice, HM Courts and Tribunals Service, the legal profession, judiciary and others in developing youth courts which have a more constructive and inclusive approach, with a focus on resolving problems.

Creating models of child custody which are care-focused and promote a pro-social identity

We look forward to the opening of the new Secure School in 2024 as an important next step in the transition to more care-focussed secure accommodation for children, but levels of violence and self-harm in parts of the current youth secure estate are too high. We will continue to advise the Ministry of Justice and Youth Custody Service in making the changes needed to implement a Child First model in youth custody.

Recognising the vital role of education settings to identify and support children who are at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system

Education which meets the needs of children can equip them with the skills they need to develop a pro-social identity, participate in society and access opportunities for a positive future. We support the development of education practice and services which reflect the needs of children who are at risk of contact with youth justice services.

Success measures

Over the next three years, we are committed to use our role to support improvements that increase children's positive outcomes, prevent offending and build safer communities. We will draw on a range of different data, evidence and independent judgements to help us understand whether we are achieving our mission.

Support improvement throughout the youth justice system and in the provision of local youth justice services

1. **Inspections:** improvement in the outcomes of independent assessments conducted by HM Inspectorate of Probation.
2. **Key Performance Indicators:** the data will show continuous improvement across key performance indicators.
3. **Outcome measures:** there will be reductions in youth justice outcome measures including first time entrants, custody rates and reoffending.
4. **Disproportionality:** data will show reduced disproportionality and inequality across youth justice processes and outcomes.
5. **Targeted funding:** independent audit will assess that targeted funding to support pilot activity offers value for money.

Inform the public, practitioners and policy makers about the operation of the youth justice system

6. **Oversight:** Government Internal Audit Agency analysis of outcomes from oversight assessments, recommendations from HM Inspectorate of Probation inspection outcomes and self-assessments show that oversight is effective.
7. **Data and research:** commissioning formal survey and focus group feedback will ensure that our data, research and insight materials meet the needs of users.

Influence practitioners and policy makers to apply the Child First approach in delivering positive outcomes for children

8. **Value for money:** ongoing evidence from the Government Internal Audit Agency and the National Audit Office identifies that we are effective in managing resources allocated by the core department, and that we are continuing to meet the outcomes set out in this strategy.
9. **Risk:** our goal is for the Youth Justice Board to be assessed as 'low risk' to the work of the Ministry of Justice by the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise and to maintain that assessment.
10. **Quality of advice:** independent audit of the provision of advice shows that this is effective, and case studies illustrate how advice translates into impact on the youth justice system.

A more impactful Youth Justice Board

Realising our vision and delivering the objectives in this strategy will require the Youth Justice Board to adapt and change.

We recognise that we need to deliver in an environment in which public money will be scarce throughout the three-year period of this strategy. To enable us to continue to deliver our vision, we will seek to become more efficient, inclusive and effective, as well as continuing to be transparent and accountable.

An efficient Youth Justice Board

In the challenging economic climate, all public services and public bodies including the Youth Justice Board must ensure that they reduce costs and deliver value for money.

An inclusive Youth Justice Board

We will continue to strive to be an inclusive organisation, making sure that our policies and decisions are fair and impartial and do not adversely impact anyone, including those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act.

An effective Youth Justice Board

If we are to be effective, we will need to utilise the combined skills and expertise of our Board members and executive team to provide leadership, strategic direction, advocacy and independent scrutiny of the youth justice system.

In delivering this strategy, we will promote excellence and strive to continue to be an exemplary public sector organisation and employer. We will review the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by our staff to deliver the objectives in this strategic plan and focus our learning and development offer to support our people excel in these areas.

We need to ensure we can attract and retain the talent we need, while we continue to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Civil Service recruitment protocols. We will review and embed a new set of core values to ensure that we describe the standards of behaviour needed from our staff to achieve the very best for each other and the communities we serve.

A transparent and accountable Youth Justice Board

As an organisation committed to evidence and one that plays a role in oversight, we welcome outside scrutiny of our own operations and seek to be as transparent as possible.

The Secretary of State for Justice is accountable to Parliament for the performance of the Youth Justice Board, and for appointing board members.

The Youth Justice Board publishes two planning documents: an annual Business Plan and a three-year Strategic Plan – as well as an Annual Report and Account which sets out our audited accounts and details of progress and delivery against our Business Plan objectives.

Our ongoing performance is formally reviewed by the Ministry of Justice via quarterly business assurance meetings, chaired by the Head of the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise in the Ministry of Justice and attended by the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board. These meetings focus on our performance, risk, and finance to provide assurance that the Youth Justice Board is functioning efficiently and effectively.

The Ministry of Justice also monitors our performance through day-to-day partnership with the Youth Justice Policy Unit and attendance at our quarterly Finance, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meetings. The Government Internal Audit Agency provides further external oversight and their reviews give us assurance that our processes are doing what they should be doing.

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FOSTERING REVIEW: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Updated scoping report Appendix B – Guidance on undertaking policy reviews
Ward	All

HEADLINES

Background

As part of the review into fostering, Members are advised to consider finalising findings, conclusions and recommendations. These will be with the intention of improving the fostering offer for young people and foster carers.

The Committee has held a number of witness sessions, outlined below

Witness session	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending
Witness session 1 – 13 November 2025	Understanding fostering in Hillingdon	Director of Children's Safeguarding & Care Assistant Director of Care Provision Services Service Manager – Care Delivery Virtual School Headteacher Assistant Director for Education Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
Witness Session 2a – 16 December 2025	Young peoples' experiences/ best practices	6x Children in care/ care experienced young people Children's Participation Team Manager Children's Participation Officer Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
Witness Session 2b – 04 December 2025	Foster carer experiences/ best practices	3x Foster carers

RECOMMENDATION

That the Select Committee:

- 1. Agree findings, conclusions and draft recommendations in relation to the review; and**
- 2. Delegate final wording of the recommendations to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair and in consultation with the Opposition Lead**

Note: To assist Members, Democratic Services will share a draft set of recommendations for consideration. These will be circulated separately to the Committee when ready in advance of the meeting.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Scoping report – looking at the original parameters of the review

The updated review scoping report is attached so Members can be reminded of the original Terms of Reference as set out below, and whether the Committee has met these:

1. To understand the needs and experiences of children in foster care through examining demographics, underrepresented groups, placement types, placement stability, educational attainment, wellbeing and emerging trends.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention strategies, and support available to foster carers, including the impact of the new fostering offer.
3. To identify barriers to fostering for potential carers and children in care, and to identify opportunities for improvement.
4. To formulate recommendations to Cabinet aimed at strengthening Hillingdon's fostering provision, thereby improving outcomes for children in care.

2) Policy review guidance

Members are asked to consider whether draft findings and recommendations:

- Meet the initial aims / objectives of the review (as above)
- Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Not be a short-term fix, but a lasting outcome
- Consider the financial aspect, e.g. cost neutral, provide savings or if at a cost, then affordable – and if possible aligned with the MTFF (budget planning process)
- Are based on a broad evidence base as possible and 'user or resident' insight
- Not create additional bureaucracy, e.g. if it relates to a policy, then to seek to review or amend existing policies (unless there is an absolute imperative for a new policy)
- If publicity or wider engagement or education is recommended, to target such communications as best as possible rather than generally
- Consider 'conclusions' as well as any specific recommendations.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

This review aims to help improve the fostering offer, to improve outcomes for young people and foster carers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage, pending any committee recommendations.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage, pending any committee recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Updated scoping report

Appendix B – Guidance on undertaking policy reviews

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Major Review Working Title	Caring for Our Children: Enhancing Fostering Provision and Support
Committee	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Review Year	2025/26 MY

1. OBJECTIVES

Aim of review

This review aims to assess the effectiveness of the new fostering offer in Hillingdon and will explore opportunities for improvement through a focus on recruitment and retention; support for foster carers; and outcomes and experiences for children in care.

The review will also assist in recruiting more foster carers; raising awareness of the benefits of fostering; and highlighting the positive outcomes it can have for young people.

The review also aims to ensure that the service is responsive, inclusive and aligned with Corporate Parenting responsibilities so that all children in care can live in stable, loving homes.

Terms of Reference

1. To understand the needs and experiences of children in foster care through examining demographics, underrepresented groups, placement types, placement stability, educational attainment, wellbeing and emerging trends.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment and retention strategies, and support available to foster carers, including the impact of the new fostering offer.
3. To identify barriers to fostering for potential carers and children in care, and to identify opportunities for improvement.
4. To formulate recommendations to Cabinet aimed at strengthening Hillingdon's fostering provision, thereby improving outcomes for children in care.

2. BACKGROUND

Context

Foster care plays a vital role in providing a safe, stable and nurturing environment for children who cannot live with their birth families. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure high-quality care and support for both foster carers and children. Nationally, there is a shortage of foster carers, and local authorities are facing increasing pressure to meet the diverse needs of children in care.

Scope

The review will focus on:

- Council-run fostering services and commissioned providers
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers
- Placement stability
- Outcomes for children in foster care (including their transition to independence/ Staying Close/ Staying Put)
- Support services for children in foster care including social work, health and education
- Support services for foster carers (e.g. Mockingbird) including training, respite and financial packages

Known issues

- National shortage of foster carers
- Recruitment and retention challenges, particularly for carers of teenagers and children with complex needs, and the time needed to recruit new carers
- Limited awareness/ promotion of fostering opportunities
- Placement instability/ breakdowns
- Support and training for foster carers
- Transition planning for children leaving care

Connected matters

- Corporate Parenting – ensuring the Council meets its responsibilities to children in care
- SEND Strategy – supporting children with additional needs in foster care
- Youth Justice – links between care experience and youth offending
- Education – attainment and attendance of children in care
- Equalities – ensuring diverse and inclusive fostering provision
- Health & wellbeing – safeguarding children in care

Legislative context

Key Legislation and Regulations:

- [Children Act 1989](#): outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in providing services for children in need.
- [Children Act 2004](#): emphasises five key outcomes: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being.
- [Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#): outlines the standards and requirements for fostering services.
- [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#): focuses on the planning, monitoring and review of children's placements in foster care.
- [Care Leavers \(England\) Regulations 2010](#): covers arrangements for children leaving foster care.

- [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#): establishes seven corporate parenting principles that local authorities must follow to ensure they act in the best interests of children in their care.
- [National Minimum Standards \(NMS\)](#): provides best practice guidance for fostering agencies, setting out the minimum expectations for their services and operations, [according to Simply Fostering](#).
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#): outlines essential guidelines for multi-agency collaboration to protect and promote the welfare of children.

Key Aspects of Fostering Legislation:

- **Safeguarding Children:**
 - A core principle of fostering legislation is the protection of children from harm and abuse. Foster carers are expected to provide a safe and nurturing environment, and fostering services have a duty to ensure the welfare of children in their care.
- **Support for Foster Carers:**
 - Fostering legislation recognises the vital role of foster carers and emphasises the need for them to receive adequate support, training, and information to enable them to provide effective care.
- **Placement and Review:**
 - Legislation outlines the process for placing children in foster care, including the assessment of foster carers, the development of care plans, and the regular review of placements to ensure they are meeting the child's needs.
- **Leaving Care:**
 - Legislation addresses the support and arrangements for young people leaving foster care, ensuring a smooth transition to adulthood.

Other Relevant Considerations:

- **Private Fostering:**
 - Separate guidance and regulations exist for private fostering arrangements, which involve children being cared for by someone who is not a close relative.
- **Health and Safety:**
 - Foster carers are expected to adhere to health and safety standards, including those related to fire safety, first aid, and medication management.
- **Behaviour Management:**
 - Fostering legislation and guidance address the management of children's behaviour in foster care, emphasising positive approaches and de-escalation techniques.

3. EVIDENCE GATHERING

Core intelligence required

- Number of foster carers and children in care
- Demographics of foster carers and children in care
- Information on recruitment and retention practices
- Data on placement types and stability
- Feedback from foster carers and children in care

Cabinet Members & Service relevant to this review

Remit

Portfolio(s)	Directorate	Service Areas
Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education	Children's Services	Children's Social Care (incl. safeguarding & corporate parenting)
		Corporate Parenting Panel
		Prevention & Youth Justice (incl. youth services, stronger families and adolescent mental health)
		Education & SEND (incl. Adult & Community Learning, Skills, Lifelong Learning, Music Services and School Travel)
	Adult Services & Health	Children and Families Support Services (incl. Early Years and Children's Centres)

This Select Committee has also established a Panel to support strong oversight of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. The Committee may wish to engage the Panel in its work.

Discussions on draft or emerging recommendations may be undertaken with relevant Cabinet Members as per the Protocol on Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet Relations approved by full Council.

Witnesses

Internal witnesses:

- Children's Social Care
- Fostering Team
- Virtual School
- Participation Team
- Fostering & Permanence Panel representative

External witnesses:

- Foster carers
- Care experienced young people

Initial Papers/ further reading

- Hillingdon Fostering Statement of Purpose ([Hillingdon Statement of Purpose Fostering update 2023 \(1\).pdf](#))
- Ofsted inspection reports
- Local Placement Sufficiency Strategy

Lines of Enquiry

Specific lines of enquiry will be worked up prior to witness sessions.

1. Context and current landscape
 - i. What are the current demographics of foster carers and children in care?
 - ii. Which cohorts of young people are underrepresented in foster care?
2. The new fostering offer
 - i. What does the new fostering offer consist of?
 - ii. How does the new fostering offer compare to the previous offer?
3. Recruitment and retention
 - i. What are the current recruitment and retention strategies?
 - ii. What are the key challenges in recruiting and retaining foster carers?
4. Support and experience
 - i. How are foster carers supported and trained (including PACE/ safeguarding training)?
 - ii. What are the lived experiences of foster carers (including those in the mockingbird constellation) and children in foster care?
5. Placement stability and outcomes
 - i. How effective are placement matching and stability efforts?
 - ii. How can we improve placement stability and reduce placement breakdowns, and what procedures are in place for when placements break down?
6. Partnerships and cost effectiveness
 - i. How does Hillingdon work with the Foster with West London hub?
 - ii. What are the comparative costs and outcomes of in-house fostering vs independent fostering agencies and residential care?

Some early ideas to consider:

1. Enhanced training and wellbeing support for carers
2. Peer mentoring schemes
3. Digital platform for fostering information and applications
4. Community engagement campaigns
5. Flexible financial support packages

4. REVIEW PLANNER

Proposed timeframe & milestones for the review:

Meeting Date	Action	Purpose/ theme	Witnesses/ officers attending
25 September 2025, 19:00	Agree Scoping Report	What do we need?	Democratic Services
13 November 2025, 19:00	Witness Session 1	Understanding fostering in Hillingdon	Director of Children's Safeguarding & Care Assistant Director of Care Provision Services Service Manager – Care Delivery

			Virtual School Headteacher Assistant Director for Education Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
16 December 2025, 17:30	Witness Session 2a (Private session)	Young peoples' experiences/ best practices	Children in care/ care experienced young people Children's Participation Team Manager Fostering & Permanence Panel rep
04 December 2025, 17:30	Witness Session 2b (Private session)	Foster carer experiences/ best practice	Foster carers
07 January 2026, 19:00	Draft findings, conclusions and recommendations	Drafting recommendations	Democratic Services
05 February 2026, 19:00	Final findings, conclusions and recommendations	Finalising recommendations	Democratic Services
12 March 2026, 19:00	Approval of final report	Finalise proposals to Cabinet	Democratic Services
23 April 2026, 19:00	Target Cabinet reporting		

Resource requirements

No financial assessment required at scoping stage. Any recommendations with budget implications will be discussed with Cabinet Members and the Leader.

Equalities impact

The review will consider how to ensure inclusive access to fostering and reduce disparities in outcomes for children in care.

Scrutiny Benefit

This review will:

- Improve outcomes for children in care
- Strengthen support for foster carers
- Promote joined-up working across services
- Drive service improvement and innovation
- Support future external inspections
- Support strategic priorities for children and families

Author of Scoping Report	Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer Mark Braddock, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Date	Updated 28/01/26

Appendix B - Guidance on undertaking policy reviews

Over the years, Hillingdon's overview and scrutiny committees have undertaken successful in-depth reviews of Council services and policies. This has resulted in a number of positive changes locally, with some also affecting policy at a national level. Such committees engage Councillors in a wide range of Council activity and build a greater understanding about service provision to residents.

Policy reviews generally seek to:

1. Address a [significant] matter affecting the Borough
2. Seek to improve the delivery and/or efficiency of local services
3. Consider changes to policies or procedures to improve outcomes to residents/users

REVIEW PHASES

The typical phases of a review are as follows and set out further below:

- 1 Selection of topic
- 2 Scoping the review / setting out objectives
- 3 Witness & evidence stage (this is the main activity)
- 4 Findings and Draft recommendations (possible early report draft)
- 5 Final report approved by Committee
- 6 Referred to Cabinet for consideration
- 7 Monitoring the implementation of recommendations once approved / amended by Cabinet at meetings, i.e. in six months

1. Selection of topic

It is always best to sound out and check the feasibility of potential review topics early on, as there will be lots of ideas coming forward and often knowing what topic will add most value will be difficult to gauge at this stage. It is important not to generalise, e.g. a review into waste services.

It may also not be known whether a topic is currently under review by the Cabinet or Council officers or part of a planned service transformation in due course. All of this and other factors need to be investigated and in particular, any duplication of review activity should not take place.

Whilst most policy reviews last a number of months, not all policy review ideas will suit this and may benefit from a single meeting review. It really depends on the scope of the review. If very narrow, i.e. a particular service policy, then a single meeting review may suffice. If a review seeks to look at an entire way a service operates then a number of months may be required to ensure you can undertake all your witness sessions and secure the necessary evidence and information before you formulate your findings.

Ideas for review topics can come from a number of sources including:

- Committee Members
- Cabinet Members
- Council officers
- External partners/ organisations
- Residents
- Ombudsman findings

When Councillors or the Committee itself considers a potential review topic, it is recommended running it through the Scrutiny Topic Scorecard (see Annex A). This gives you the opportunity to 'score' topics based upon their impacts under the following criteria:

Resident focused	Influence	Achievable
Correct remit	New	Wider support
Drives improvement	Drives transformation and efficiency	National impact

Another way to consider a potential review topic, is to add this as an information item at an upcoming meeting on your work programme, to probe the matter further with Council officers and ascertain whether it merits a fuller review – again perhaps running it through the Scorecard above.

It is strongly advised that one review topic is undertaken at any one time, given resources.

2. Scoping report

Once a topic is agreed upon by the Committee, then officers will prepare a scoping report setting out the objectives of the review for your consideration. The scoping report will show how the review can be timetabled and structured, i.e. through themed witness sessions, along with details of potential witnesses and other contextual information to get the review started, e.g. lines of enquiry or questioning of witnesses.

The scoping report is a 'live' document owned by the Committee. Should the review's focus change mid-review, then the scoping document and its objectives can be adapted.

3. Witness and evidence stage

Ultimately, the Committee's efforts are at their best when external witnesses and residents participate, adding value to intelligence gathering and findings. In support of this, Committees have undertaken a variety of both formal and informal activity "in meetings" and "outside meetings". It is important to pull together a broad evidence based for any potential findings later on. Additionally, the ability for Councillors to bring their 'local' insight is highly valuable. Activities the Committee can undertake include:

- Surveys/ social media
- Promotion of review to seek views
- Invite the relevant Cabinet Member to attend for their views
- Question key council officers
- Hold informal workshops
- Networking events, e.g. with partners
- Have closed meetings, i.e. confidential, such as social care clients
- Commission reports from council officers / externally
- Request data and intelligence on the topic
- Visits to other local authorities
- Undertake site visits within the Borough or council facilities
- Appoint experts or advisors to join the Committee throughout its review
- Selecting the best range of witnesses to get a real user / resident perspectives
- Invite national experts in their field

Whilst information will be provided to Councillors, it may be helpful when preparing for this stage of a review, that Councillors:

- Prepare their draft questions for each witness in advance;
- Read a witness bio or find out more about their organisation;
- Do their own additional research on the topic - you may find something officers don't!

- Use their network of councillors in other local authorities to seek views;
- Tell residents at Surgeries / Ward Walks about your review, get their thoughts.

4. Findings and draft recommendations & 5. Final Report

After hearing from witnesses and receiving evidence, the Committee then will meet to pull together all the information and shape its collective findings, i.e. what needs to be improved or changed as a result.

The Committee will form 'draft' recommendations from this, which consistent with the Protocol on Cabinet and Scrutiny Relations, are usually shared with the Cabinet Member for their feedback and valuable insight.

In developing any recommendation, the Committee should bear in mind the following:

- Meet the initial aims / objectives of the review
- Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Not be a short-term fix, but a lasting outcome
- Consider the financial aspect, e.g. cost neutral, provide savings or if at a cost, then affordable – and if possible aligned with the MTFF (budget planning process)
- Be based on a broad evidence base as possible and 'user or resident' insight
- Not create additional bureaucracy, e.g. if it relates to a policy, then to seek to review or amend existing policies (unless there is an absolute imperative for a new policy)
- If publicity or wider engagement or education is recommended, to target such communications as best as possible rather than generally
- Consider 'conclusions' as well as any specific recommendations.

Around this time, the Democratic Services Officer supporting the Committee will advise further on findings and drafting recommendations. Throughout this process, their role is critical to the Committee, to guide Members and secure the information and any witness activity that Members wish to undertake. They also work with the Chairman to bring the final draft report for the Committee to approve before it is scheduled to Cabinet.

6. Referred to Cabinet & 7. Monitoring of recommendations

The Committee's report will be shared with the Leader and Cabinet Member and scheduled to a Cabinet meeting as soon as possible. There is a legal requirement for any such report to be considered by the Cabinet.

Should Cabinet approve the Committee's recommendations, then they become official policy and officers are charged with implementing them.

A post report review is undertaken in say 6 months or a years' time to see how the Committee's recommendations have been implemented. This is scheduled on your work programme.

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CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Committee name	Children, Families & 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 & 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>

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	
DECEMBER 2025													
26	Biannual Performance Report	Cabinet will receive its biannual report performance report for the current year, looking back on how the Council is delivering on key service metrics and the Council Strategy - and looking ahead at planned actions.	N/A		23 December				Cllr Eddie Lavery / All Cabinet Members	All	Ian Kavanagh	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
34	Consideration of setting a licensed deficit budget for any schools in the Borough	A standard report each year, where Cabinet may consider whether it is required to set any licensed deficit budget for any schools that have applied.	N/A		23 December				Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education / Cllr Eddie Lavery - Finance & Transformation	Children, Families & Education	Luisa Hansen	Steve Muldoon / Julie Kelly	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		23 December				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 December				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	This report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and may include Council Tax Reduction Scheme proposals. Cabinet may also consider the outcome of consultation on proposed mid-year changes to fees and charges.	All		23 December			26 February 2026 - adoption	Cllr Eddie Lavery - Finance & Transformation	All	Andy Goodwin	Steve Muldoon	Public
92	Care Strategy for Children and Care Experienced Young People	The Cabinet Member will consider approval of a strategy for improving outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people in Hillingdon. It will set out the Council's statutory responsibilities, local priorities, and proposed actions to strengthen support, stability, and transition pathways, demonstrating the Council's commitment to providing the highest level of care, support, and opportunities for young individuals who have experienced the care system.	N/A			December			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Poppy Reddy	Julie Kelly	Public
47	Pathways for Young People	Cabinet Members will consider procurement decisions regarding existing arrangements for Staying Close and Supported Accommodation Provision for young people.	N/A			December			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Alex Coman / Sally Offin	Julie Kelly	Private (3)
JANUARY 2026													
103	Provision of Vouchers including Food and Essential Goods Support Scheme	Cabinet will be asked to consider the award of a contract to continue the provision of vouchers (including food and essential goods) designed to support low-income households and eligible households within Hillingdon, which is fully Government funded.	N/A	NEW ITEM	15 January				Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Tracie Bushell / Allison Mayo	Dan Kennedy	Private (3)

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
102	Consultation on lowering the age range of Whiteheath Infant School	This relates to a decision on whether to approve the proposal that the age range of Whiteheath Infant School can be lowered, so that they are able to offer places for two year olds. Should there be no representations, this matter can be determined by the Cabinet Member instead.	Ruislip		15 January				Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Kathryn Angelini / Philip Ryan	Julie Kelly	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		15 January				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		15 January				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
84 Page 107	Local Development Scheme	The Council is required to update its Local Development Scheme (LDS). A LDS is required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This must specify the development plan documents (incl. Local Plan) which, when prepared, will comprise part of the development plan for the area. Full Council will receive an updated plan for consideration after Cabinet's recommendation.	All		15 January			22 January 2026	Cllr Steve Tuckwell - Planning, Housing & Growth	N/A	Gavin Polkinghorn	Dan Kennedy	Public
SI	Audit Committee Annual Report	The Audit Committee is required to submit an annual report to Council outlining the Committee's activities over the previous year. This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee and how it has undertaken its responsibilities in respect of: Internal Audit, External Audit, Counter Fraud, Risk Management and the Financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.	N/A					22 January 2026	N/A	N/A	Democratic Services / Claire Baker	Steve Muldoon	Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	Programme of Meetings for the next Municipal Year	Each year the full Council agrees the programme of meetings for the ensuing Municipal Year, setting out the dates and times of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.	N/A					22 January 2026	N/A	N/A	Lloyd White		Public
SI	Council Tax-Base and Business Rates Forecast 2026/27	This report sets out the proposed Council Taxbase and Business Rates Forecast for the forthcoming financial year and in accordance with the legislation for approval by the full Council. The Council is required to calculate both its Council Taxbase as at 30 November 2023 and the Business Rates forecast for the forthcoming year by the end of January.	All					22 January 2026	NA	N/A	Andy Goodwin	Steve Muldoon	Public
FEBRUARY 2026													
108 Page 108	Outcomes of the proposal to reduce the Published Admissions Number of Field End Infant School	Cabinet will receive a report to determine whether to approve the proposal to reduce the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Field End Infant School from 90 (three-form entry) to 60 (two-form entry), in order to better align with local demand. Cabinet will also be updated on consultations of non-community Schools, including Field End Junior School's own consultation as an academy, regarding their proposal to reduce PAN from 90 to 60, for September 2027. If there are no objections to this proposal, the Cabinet Member instead may determine this under delegated authority.	South Ruislip	NEW ITEM	19 February				Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	James Rogers / Abi Preston	Julie Kelly	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		19 February				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 February				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	2026/27 Budget and Future Medium-Term Financial Strategy (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2026/27 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration and any proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	All		19 February			26 February 2026 - adoption	Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council / Cllr Eddie Lavery - Finance & Transformation	All	Andy Goodwin	Steve Muldoon	Public
93	Stronger Families / Family Help Strategy	The Cabinet Member will consider a strategy which aligns with national reforms and aims to enhance operational effectiveness, modernise practices, and ensure the service remains responsive to the needs of children and families across the borough. A significant part of this transformation is the redesign of the Stronger Families Early Help service, driven by the introduction of the Family Help model. This model promotes early and effective intervention, seamless multi-agency collaboration, empowerment of families, improved access to support services, and a child-centred approach.	N/A			February			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Antony Madden / Vali Danciu	Julie Kelly	
23	Biannual Performance Report	Following Cabinet's recommendation, Council will receive for information, the Council's annual report performance report which will have also been scrutinised by select committees.	N/A					26 February 2026	Cllr Eddie Lavery / All Cabinet Members	All	Ian Kavanagh	Matthew Wallbridge	Public
SI	Members' Allowances 2026/27	The Council is required to undertake an annual re-adoption of its Allowances Scheme and, in doing so give due regard to the recommendations made by the report of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Councillors in London.	All					26 February 2026	N/A	N/A	Lloyd White		Public
MARCH 2026													
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		19 March				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		19 March				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public

APRIL 2026

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		23 April				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
SI	Reports from Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		23 April				TBC	TBC	Democratic Services		Public
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			April			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Nav Minas / Abi Preston	Julie Kelly	Public
SI	Standards and quality of education in Hillingdon during 2024/25	The Cabinet Member will receive the Annual Report regarding children and young people's educational performance across Hillingdon schools, for publication.	N/A			April			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Abi Preston / Michael Hawkins	Julie Kelly	Public

BOROUGH LOCAL ELECTIONS - 7 MAY 2026

Schedule of Individual Cabinet Member Decisions that may be taken each month (standard items non key-decisions)

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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council	TBC	TBC		Public / Private
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Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	Public or Private (with reason)
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	Helen Boundy		Public
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			Cllr Eddie Lavery - Finance & Transformation (in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member)	All - TBC by decision made	various		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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			All	TBC	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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			All	TBC	various		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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			Cllr Ian Edwards - Leader of the Council OR Cllr Eddie Lavery - Finance & Transformation / in conjunction with relevant Cabinet Member	TBC	various		Private (3)

Ref	Business Item	Further information	Ward(s)	NEW ITEM	Decision-Maker				Cabinet Member Lead & Officers				Status
					CABINET meeting	Cabinet Member	Shareholder Committee	Full COUNCIL	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Relevant Select Committee	Report Author	Corporate Director Responsible	
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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			All	TBC	various		Public / Private (1,2,3)
SI	School Redundancy Payments	To consider requests for School Redundancy Payments and decide whether to approve them on behalf of the Local Authority	TBC			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			Cllr Susan O'Brien - Children, Families & Education	Children, Families & Education	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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			All	TBC	various		Public
SI Page 112	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			Cabinet Member Decision - date TBC			All	TBC	various		Public
SI = Standard Item that may be considered each month/regularly													

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

WORK PROGRAMME

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Committee's meetings will start at 19:00 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
12 March 2026	CR6
14 April 2026	CR6

PERFORMANCE DATA

N/A.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

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.

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.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Work Programme

MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2026		2025/2026				2026/27			
Service Areas	Children, Families & Education Select Committee	January 07	February 05	March 12	April 14	May No meeting	June 16	July 16	August No meeting
	Review: Fostering								
Children's Social Care	Policy Review Discussion & Guidance						X	X	
	Topic selection/ scoping stage								
	Witness/ evidence/ consultation stage								
	Findings, conclusions and recommendations	DRAFT RECS	FINAL RECS						
	Final review report agreement			X					
	Target Cabinet reporting				X				
	Regular service & performance monitoring								
Children's Social Care	Reports/ minutes from the Corporate Parenting Panel	X		X			X		
	Corporate Parenting Panel Membership to agree + subs						X		
	Corporate Parenting Panel - update to Terms of Reference								
	Overview of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities						X		
	Hillingdon's Youth Offer & Delivery Model - review of implementation of Cabinet decisions from Sept. 2023				X				
	Care Strategy for Children and Care Experienced Young People								
	Youth Justice Service Strategy 2024-2029 (& update)		X						
	Families First Reforms and Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill	X							
Education & SEND	Learn Hillingdon Self-Assessment Review (annual)		24-25						
	School Place Planning: School Organisation Plan update			X					
	Annual Education Standards report (prior to Cabinet Member)			24-25					
	School Admissions update				X				
	Hillingdon Music Hub Annual Report			To include in Standards report					
	Hillingdon Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 Years 2023-2028 (& update)			x					
	SEND Sufficiency Strategy (& update)			x					
	Hillingdon Education Strategy 2024-2029 (& update)			x					
Business Intelligence	Bi-Annual Performance Monitoring	X							
Democratic Services	Budget & Spending Report	X		X	X		X	X	
	Cabinet budget proposals 26/27	X							
	Minutes of the AGM						X		
	Cabinet Forward Plan Monthly Monitoring	X	X	X	X		X	X	
	One-off information items								
Children's Social Care	Children's Centres delivery model and Early Years Nurseries - review of implementation of Cabinet's decisions Sept. 2023								
Education & SEND	School Admissions Arrangements - Whitehall Infant/ Junior								
	Move-ins to the Borough (in-year admissions)								
	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 (iii) Proposal for some community schools to lower their age range to take two year olds.								
	Outcome of the consultation for the proposal to amalgamate Grange Park Infant and Nursery School and Grange Park Junior School								
	The proposal to amalgamate Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School								
	Update on the Dedicated Schools Grant								
	Proposed Changes to Published Admission Number of Field End Infant School	x							
	Outcome of the consultation on lowering the age range of Whiteheath Infant School	x							
Children & Families Support Services	Proposal to Amalgamate Whitehall Schools			X					
Children & Families Support Services	Early help/ support available to young people Services available to low-income families								
Business Intelligence	Council Strategy 2022-2026 consultation								
Democratic Services	Select Committee Terms of Reference update								
	Scrutiny Introduction (Democratic Services)								
External	Witness session on Higher Education - Orchard Hill College								
	Witness session on Higher Education - Uxbridge College								
	Witness session on Higher Education - Brunel University London								
	Place2Be (external witness session on children's mental health)								
	Past review delivery								
Children's Social Care	Stronger Families Hub: 2022/23 - 2023/24								
	Fostering: 2025/2026								
Education & SEND	Adult & Community Learning Review: 2021/22								
	Persistent Absenteeism: 2024/25								

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