

Work Programme of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 2025/26

The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board is responsible for:

- (a) all of the functions of the Council as an authority under the Education Acts, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and all other relevant legislation in force from time to time (i.e. pre-school, statutory and post 16 education);
- (b) any other education related services for children and young people;
- (c) services for children, young people and families;
- (d) any trust or partnership, including the Sandwell Children's Trust, which involves the care of local children and young people and to review and scrutinise the performance of the Sandwell Children's Trust including consideration of bi-annual performance reports, the Annual Report and the Improvement Plan.
- (e) local safeguarding arrangements for children and young people including the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the Safeguarding Children Board;
- (f) corporate parenting, including services and support to care leavers;
- (g) early years services;
- (h) Targeted Youth Support.

Monday 30 June 2025				
Agenda Item	Scrutiny Objective	Purpose of Report and data Required	Alignment to Council Plan	Lead Officer/invitees
EHCP Completion Rate	Seeking Assurance	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the work around the completion of Education Health and Care Plans, to identify challenges facing the service and what work has been undertaken to mitigate ongoing pressures for the service. To understand current service pressures and how this has impacted service delivery. To understand the process around EHCPs completion and how timescales are communicated to parents / carers. To understand how the service works with those children and young people who are looked after / care experienced in being assessed / obtaining an EHCP. To understand the demographic breakdown of those with EHCPs and their placement across Sandwell (special / mainstream / out of borough). To understand the data around the number of EHCPs and the data around timeframes and meeting statutory / council deadlines. <p>Information Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What work has been undertaken to mitigate ongoing pressures for the service? How many EHCPs do we have at each stage of the process and what are the timescales. – what has been the impact of the increase in EHPCs on the service? The data around the number of EHCPs and the data around timeframes and meeting statutory / council deadlines? 	<p>Children, young people and their families receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.</p> <p>All children and young people have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential and are supported by adults, including parents and carers, to establish high aspirations.</p>	Judith Nash

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many children / young people go to Special / Mainstream / Out of Borough? What is the data around EHCP distribution across the borough – what is the demographic breakdown. How many EHCP are for the children we care for/ care experienced and what are the completion rates for those children? 		
Agreement of Children and Families Strategic Plan	Policy Development/pre-Decision	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the Children and Families Strategic Plan prior to it being considered by Cabinet in July. 	We want Sandwell to be a great place for children to grow up and to ensure a brighter future for children and young people, where every individual is valued and given access to the tools to succeed.	Samantha Harman
Transition to Adulthood	Scrutiny Review	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish a working group of the Children's Scrutiny Board to undertake a review into the transition to adulthood experience of those looked after and care experienced young people. To set out the scope and parameters of the working group. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timescales and deadlines for the working group. The proposed scope and areas for consideration for the working group. The scrutiny review scoping document. 	Be a good Corporate Parent for the children we care for, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family'. All children and young people have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential to establish high aspirations.	Connor Robinson

Monday 8 September 2025				
Agenda Item	Scrutiny Objective	Purpose of Report and data Required	Alignment to Council Plan	Lead Officer/invitees
Adoption@Heart Annual Report	Seeking Assurance	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive and comment upon the Adoption@Heart Annual Report. The annual report is presented on an annual basis to the Scrutiny Board. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual report setting out the performance of the regional adoption agency over the last 12 months. The performance of the agency both at a regional and local level. 	Children and young people in Sandwell are able to grow up in a safe, stable loving home.	Simon Green (Head of Service Adoption@Heart)

SCT Annual Report/ Performance Update Focus – residential sufficiency update	Seeking Assurance	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on the Sandwell Children’s Trust Performance over the past 6 months. To receive a focused update on any update regarding the Residential Homes Sufficiently <p>Information Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a knowledge and understanding of the Sandwell Children’s Trust Performance over the past 6 months and to understand current priorities, challenges and successes. To understand the recent work gone into the Residential Homes Sufficiently and updates on progress 	<p>Work alongside community partners to ensure that all parents and carers in Sandwell are offered are offered the right support, at the right time in an accessible way, so that problems and difficulties do not escalate.</p> <p>Children and young people in Sandwell are able to grow up in a safe, stable loving home.</p>	<p>Graham Archer</p> <p>Emma Taylor</p>
Elective Home Education Action Plan	Policy development	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the current levels of children and young people who are Elective Home Educated (EHE). To understand the support provided by the local authority to those who are EHE. To understand what the EHE action plan. To understand what the local authority does to ensure safeguarding of children and young people, and the support provided to ensure they are not neglecting their education or SEND support provision. <p>Information Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children and young people who are EHE in Sandwell and how these figures have changed over the last five years. Detail on what the action plan sets out and how this will impact and support children and young people who are EHE. The impact on legislation on EHE. Detail on the support provided by the local authority for those who are EHE. 	<p>Children, young people and their families receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.</p>	<p>Sue Moore</p>

Monday 10 November 2025

Agenda Item	Scrutiny Objective	Purpose of Report and data Required	Alignment to Council Plan	Lead Officer/invitees
SEND Transport	Seeking Assurance	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review and consider the impact of the changes to the SEND Transport provided by the local authority. To consider how the new purchasing system has impacted the local authority in terms of both finance and service delivery. To understand the impact of changes to SEND Transport to delivery and impact on children, young people and parent / carers. <p>Information Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail on the changes made to SEND Transport in Sandwell. Information on the money saved through the new purchasing system. Information on how the service has changed, following the introduction of the new system. How the change has been received by children, young people and parent / carers. 	Continue to improve home to school transport, providing a cost effective, quality service.	Sue Moore
The impact of permanency plans for those children and young people who access the service	Seeking Assurance	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the services provided by SCT in relation to those who access SCT services. The number of children and young people who access SCT services. How permanency plans are delivered and impact children and young people. <p>Information Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of permanency plans that are administered by SCT. Impact of permanency plans and how they are assessed and outcomes monitored. The demographic breakdown of those who access services. 	Work alongside community partners to ensure that all parents and carers in Sandwell are offered are offered the right support, at the right time in an accessible way, so that problems and difficulties do not escalate.	Emma Taylor
Educational Attainment	Seeking Assurance / Policy development	<p>Purpose of Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand how schools / academies will be supported following the end of the Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) programme in schools. To understand results and how the PEIA had impacted attainment across subjects. To consider options available to the local authority to continue to support schools / academies in boosting / maintaining attainment. 	Children and young people make good progress at school from preschool to when they leave school age 16 – ambition to reach national standard.	Julie Andrews

		Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attainment levels across schools and how these have been impacted by PEIA. What has the local authority done to support KS2 and KS4 in maintaining any progress in their educational attainment. 		
Tracking and Monitoring	Holding to account	Tracking and monitoring of scrutiny recommendations.	One Council One Team	Cabinet Member Sally Giles

Monday 5 January 2026				
Agenda Item	Scrutiny Objective	Purpose of Report and data Required	Alignment to Council Plan	Lead Officer/invitees
SCSP Annual Report	Seeking Assurance	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand the work of the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership. To receive and comment upon the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership and how it is constituted. The performance of the Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership and detail on any serious case reviews. 	Children and young people in Sandwell are able to grow up in a safe, stable loving home. Work alongside community partners to ensure that all parents and carers in Sandwell are offered the right support, at the right time in an accessible way, so that problems and difficulties do not escalate.	Carol Bodenham
SEND Transformation	Seeking Assurance / Policy development	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on the progress made with regards to the SEND Transformation programme. What changes have been implemented Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail on the various programmes of work currently being undertaken and a timeframe for their completion. The progress made on enhancing the partnership approach. Impact of workstream delivery plans and effective reporting mechanisms. How the improvement plan is being delivered. How have the changes been received by service users. 	All children and young people have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential and are supported by adults, including parents and carers, to establish high aspirations. Children and young people have the right skills and support to take the next step in their life and are well prepared for adulthood.	Sally Giles
Child Friendly Sandwell	Seeking Assurance	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive a progress update on Child-friendly Sandwell process and implementation. 	Achieve UNICEF UK Child Friendly status	Samantha Harman

		Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has been achieved so far in attaining the Child-friendly Sandwell status? What challenges have been encountered so far? What will be achieved over the next 12 months? 		
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Monday 23 March 2026				
Agenda Item	Scrutiny Objective	Purpose of Report and data Required	Alignment to Council Plan	Lead Officer/invitees
SCT Performance Update	Seeking Assurance	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive an update on the Sandwell Children's Trust Performance over the past 6 months. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain a knowledge and understanding of the Sandwell Children's Trust Performance over the past 6 months and to understand current priorities, challenges and successes. 	Work alongside community partners to ensure that all parents and carers in Sandwell are offered are offered the right support, at the right time in an accessible way, so that problems and difficulties do not escalate.	Graham Archer Emma Taylor
Transition to Adulthood	Policy development	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive the findings of the Transition to Adulthood working group and consider any recommendations to Cabinet. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail breakdown and report into the findings of the Transition to Adulthood working group. 	Be a good Corporate Parent for the children we care for, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family'. All children and young people have the same opportunities to achieve their full potential to establish high aspirations.	Connor Robinson
Protected Characteristics / Corporate Parenting	Seeking Assurance	Purpose of Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess the impact of Corporate Parenting being designated a Protected Characteristic and how this has impacted local authority services. Information Required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on how Corporate Parenting as a Protected Characteristic has been received. What has the take up been across services. What raining has been undertaken to ensure the local authority was aware of the change. What has the impact been on service users. 	Be a good Corporate Parent for the children we care for, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family'.	Rosa DaSilva
Tracking and Monitoring	Holding to account	Tracking and monitoring of scrutiny recommendations.	One Council One Team	Cabinet Member Sally Giles