

Overview and Scrutiny



Children and Young People Select Committee Agenda

Tuesday, 19 September 2023

7.00 pm, Civic Suite

Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

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Children and Young People Select Committee Members

Members of the committee, listed below, are summoned to attend the meeting to be held on Tuesday, 19 September 2023.

Jeremy Chambers, Monitoring Officer
Monday, 11 September 2023

Members	
Councillor Luke Sorba (Chair)	
Councillor Luke Warner (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Yemisi Anifowose	
Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin	
Councillor Jack Lavery	
Councillor Hilary Moore	
Councillor Jacq Paschoud	
Oluwafela Ajayi	Parent Governor Representative - Special Schools
Clive Caseley	Parent Governor Representative - Secondary Schools
Bryan Strom	Parent Governor Representative - Primary Schools
Monsignor N Rotheron	Catholic Church Representative
Rev. Erica Wooff	Church of England Representative
Councillor Rudi Schmidt (ex-Officio)	
Councillor Ese Erheriene (ex-Officio)	

The public are welcome to attend committee meetings. However, occasionally, committees may have to consider some business in private. Copies of reports can be made available in additional formats on request..

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MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 15 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Luke Warner, Yemisi Anifowose, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Jack Lavery, and Hilary Moore and Clive Caseley

APOLOGIES: Councillor Jacq Paschoud and Monsignor Nick Rotheron

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Barnham (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) (Cabinet Member), Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director for Children & Young People) Sara Rahman (Director of Families, Quality and Commissioning), Jentai Gen-One (Young Mayor) and Shanti Elliott (Young Advisor), Katy Brown (Advisor to the Young Mayor), Simon Whitlock (Head of Service – CYP Joint Commissioning), Claude Jouselin (Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)), Johanna Dench (CYP Emotional and Mental Health Joint Commissioner), and Susan Rowe (Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Councillor Rudi Schmidt (ex officio), Bryan Strom and Maryland Ocansey (Services Manager – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital))

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

RESOLVED

That

- Cllr Luke Sorba be appointed as Chair of the Committee
- Cllr Luke Warner be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee

Introduction

It was agreed that Jentai Gen-One, Young Mayor, and Shanti Elliott, Young Advisor, be given speaking rights.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Response to referral to Mayor and Cabinet

- 4.1. Katy Brown, Advisor to the Young Mayor, informed the Committee that she attended a workshop on 5 May to begin the development of a participation strategy in consultation with the Young Mayor and Advisors. Future engagement with young people in the community was important.

RESOLVED

The response be noted.

5. Children and Young People's Wellbeing and Mental Health

Witnesses

Cllr Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children and Young People

Sara Rahman, Director of Families, Quality and Commissioning

Simon Whitlock, Head of Service – CYP Joint Commissioning

Claude Jousselein, Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)

Maryland Ocansey, Services Manager – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)

Johanna Dench, CYP Emotional and Mental Health Joint Commissioner

- 5.1. Sara Rahman and Simon Whitlock introduced the report.

Members and the Young Mayor and Advisor put questions to the witnesses. The following key points were raised:

- 5.2. Events had been held and an anti-racist action plan was being developed to address the underrepresentation of Asian, Black and Mixed Race young people in referrals. In recognition that CAMHS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) was not reflective of the community and that making the workforce more representative would take time, a further programme was being considered under which paid mentors would encourage and support young Black, Asian and Mixed Race boys to attend appointments.
- 5.3. For 2023/24, the representativeness of the workforce would be a focus; certain CAMHS teams would employ people with different levels of qualification and experience and train them to work in the services.
- 5.4. In the spirit of cultural humility, South London and Maudsley Hospital (SLaM) was piloting a Patient Carer Race Equity Framework under which it would ask the community how CAMHS could be improved to increase access and engagement by minority communities. As the number of staff exceeded the number of residents in attendance at initial engagement event in November 2022, SLaM had engaged with the community at a recent well-attended parent exposition held by a voluntary organisation and planned a further engagement event for September 2023.
- 5.5. CAMHS was reaching out young people and their families where they lived, rather than waiting for them to come to services. A walk-in service was being provided via general practices and services via schools.

- 5.6. Services were encouraged to use voluntary and faith groups to engage with the community.
- 5.7. To learn from The Big Conversation, links had been established with The Albany, which had been the key coordinator of the event. How the steering group resulting from the Big Conversation could be supported in the longer term was being considered.
- 5.8. The increased number of children not attending school, due to absence or elective home education, was noted. CAMHS was providing assessments via the Virtual School and special educational needs and disability and had contributed to the new SEND strategy.
- 5.9. Increased referrals to eating disorder services were contributed to by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Research was underway to establish more recent drivers, which may have included the 'cost of living crisis'.
- 5.10. In relation to the 117 young people waiting 38 to 52 weeks or more for assessment, it was reported 9 of them had to wait more than 52 weeks. All of those nine young people had appointments assigned for within the next three weeks; it was noted they had all missed about three previous appointments, contributing to their long waiting times. More suitable and accessible assessments were being offered, such as twice-monthly Saturday clinics, in addition to usual provision. Services understood peaks and troughs in demand and sought to configure capacity around them. Services were working with the voluntary sector to provide young people with support before they required more-specialist services. Young people who were waiting for assessment received contact, information and advice and group interventions from volunteers.
- 5.11. Following the increase resulting from the pandemic, demand for services was slowing but had not returned to pre-pandemic levels. National data and research indicated that increased children and young people mental health and wellbeing needs would remain; the situation was not unique to Lewisham or London. The Chair noted that the Select Committee had warned 18 months ago that a sustained surge in demand inevitably leading to longer waiting lists for CAMHS was imminent.
- 5.12. A proactive national strategy to address workforce challenges would be welcomed.
- 5.13. The Mulberry Centre, delivered by a voluntary organisation with NHS support, provided drop-in support in the north of the borough for young people. Kooth enabled young people to access online counselling and support of several forms, with the option of anonymity. How such services, self-referral and referral without parent or carer, school or GP involvement could be expanded were being explored. It was noted that many young people were unaware such support existed.
- 5.14. It was noted by the Young Advisor that when a young person acknowledged their mental health needs, it was likely those needs had been present for a while, and that accessing support was stigmatised and the support available from CAMHS were viewed negatively in the community.
- 5.15. Engagement had been undertaken with the local system regarding the development of a Single Point of Access (SPA) associated with the Family Hub programme. The SPA would provide an avenue for children and their families to access the most appropriate support available from a broad range of services delivered by a number of bodies, which would otherwise be

confusing to navigate. The SPA was being designed locally in partnership as there was not a one-size-fits-all model. It would include the multi-agency safeguarding hub and CAMHS staff.

- 5.16. The Cabinet Member, accepting there remained cause for concern regarding waiting times, highlighted that the number of young people waiting a long time had significantly reduced and funding had substantially increased in recent years. The significant pressures faced by young people were reflected in increased demands on health, social care and education services. It was still not empirically proven that early help would reduce demand for acute services, but the Cabinet Member was hopeful such impact would become apparent in the next year.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

ACTION

Claude Jousselein, Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital) to provide the gender breakdown of referrals to eating disorder services.

6. Select Committee work programme

- 6.1. The Chair suggested four topics were cornerstones of Committee's work: the annual school standards (assessment/examination results) report; implementation of embedding race equality in schools; budget proposals; and monitoring of children's services improvement, including any inspection findings. He proposed four further topics: in-depth (research and site visits leading up to a single-issue meeting) scrutiny of holistic school improvement; family hubs; post-16 education; and early years provision. He suggested holistic school improvement include career pathways, inclusion, behaviour management and schools dealing issues such as pupils' home lives and wellbeing, and refer to the council's Education Strategy.

The following further suggestions were made by the Committee and Susan Rowe, (Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum):

- 6.2. Falling primary and secondary school rolls and published admission numbers and their impact.
- 6.3. School standards (assessment and examination results).
- 6.4. Post-16 education, opportunities and pathways. It was suggested the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Skills be invited as a witness.
- 6.5. Youth violence.
- 6.6. Future-focused career opportunities, particularly in the technology sector, including ones which don't require a degree or which enable young people to live and work in the area.

RESOLVED

The following items be included in the Committee's work programme:

- Budget proposals

- Embedding race equality in education
- Children’s social care improvement, including any inspection findings
- Holistic school improvement
- Post-16 education and career pathways
- Youth violence
- Primary and secondary school organisation: estate, published admission and roll numbers and planning for the future
- School standards (validated data)
- For information only: school standards (unvalidated); admissions numbers; attendance and exclusions; and children’s safeguarding partnership annual report.

7. Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan

7.1. It was clarified that a site had been identified in which to create a safe and appropriate place for young people who were taken into police custody for safeguarding to be taken to. Young people would be accommodated there for a short time while arrangements were made for their safe return home to other care arrangements, options for which included emergency foster care placements.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

8. Notes of visit to Greenvale School

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.23 pm

Chair:

Date:

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Children and Young People Select Committee

Declarations of Interest

Date: 19 September 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Director of Law and Corporate Governance

Outline and recommendations

Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

1. Summary

1.1. Members must declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda. There are three types of personal interest referred to in the Council's Member Code of Conduct:

- (1) Disclosable pecuniary interests
- (2) Other registerable interests
- (3) Non-registerable interests.

1.2. Further information on these is provided in the body of this report.

2. Recommendation

2.1. Members are asked to declare any personal interest they have in any item on the agenda.

3. Disclosable pecuniary interests

3.1 These are defined by regulation as:

- (a) Employment, trade, profession or vocation of a relevant person* for profit or gain
- (b) Sponsorship –payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than by the Council) within the 12 months prior to giving notice for inclusion in the register in respect of expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member or towards your election expenses (including payment or financial benefit from a Trade Union).
- (c) Undischarged contracts between a relevant person* (or a firm in which they are a partner or a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest) and the Council for goods, services or works.
- (d) Beneficial interests in land in the borough.
- (e) Licence to occupy land in the borough for one month or more.
- (f) Corporate tenancies – any tenancy, where to the member’s knowledge, the Council is landlord and the tenant is a firm in which the relevant person* is a partner, a body corporate in which they are a director, or in the securities of which they have a beneficial interest.
- (g) Beneficial interest in securities of a body where:
 - (a) that body to the member’s knowledge has a place of business or land in the borough; and
 - (b) either:
 - (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person* has a beneficial interest exceeds 1/100 of the total issued share capital of that class.

*A relevant person is the member, their spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom they live as spouse or civil partner.

4. Other registerable interests

4.1 The Lewisham Member Code of Conduct requires members also to register the following interests:

- (a) Membership or position of control or management in a body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Council
- (b) Any body exercising functions of a public nature or directed to charitable purposes, or whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy, including any political party
- (c) Any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

5. Non registerable interests

- 5.1. Occasions may arise when a matter under consideration would or would be likely to affect the wellbeing of a member, their family, friend or close associate more than it would affect the wellbeing of those in the local area generally, but which is not required to be registered in the Register of Members' Interests (for example a matter concerning the closure of a school at which a Member's child attends).

6. Declaration and impact of interest on members' participation

- 6.1. Where a member has any registerable interest in a matter and they are present at a meeting at which that matter is to be discussed, they must declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered. The declaration will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. If the matter is a disclosable pecuniary interest the member must take not part in consideration of the matter and withdraw from the room before it is considered. They must not seek improperly to influence the decision in any way. **Failure to declare such an interest which has not already been entered in the Register of Members' Interests, or participation where such an interest exists, is liable to prosecution and on conviction carries a fine of up to £5000**
- 6.2. Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest they must still declare the nature of the interest to the meeting at the earliest opportunity and in any event before the matter is considered, but they may stay in the room, participate in consideration of the matter and vote on it unless paragraph 6.3 below applies.
- 6.3. Where a member has a registerable interest which falls short of a disclosable pecuniary interest, the member must consider whether a reasonable member of the public in possession of the facts would think that their interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair the member's judgement of the public interest. If so, the member must withdraw and take no part in consideration of the matter nor seek to influence the outcome improperly.
- 6.4. If a non-registerable interest arises which affects the wellbeing of a member, their, family, friend or close associate more than it would affect those in the local area generally, then the provisions relating to the declarations of interest and withdrawal apply as if it were a registerable interest.
- 6.5. Decisions relating to declarations of interests are for the member's personal judgement, though in cases of doubt they may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

7. Sensitive information

- 7.1. There are special provisions relating to sensitive interests. These are interests the disclosure of which would be likely to expose the member to risk of violence or intimidation where the Monitoring Officer has agreed that such interest need not be registered. Members with such an interest are referred to the Code and advised to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance.

8. Exempt categories

- 8.1. There are exemptions to these provisions allowing members to participate in decisions notwithstanding interests that would otherwise prevent them doing so. These include:-
 - (a) Housing – holding a tenancy or lease with the Council unless the matter relates to your particular tenancy or lease; (subject to arrears exception)
 - (b) School meals, school transport and travelling expenses; if you are a parent or

guardian of a child in full time education, or a school governor unless the matter relates particularly to the school your child attends or of which you are a governor

- (c) Statutory sick pay; if you are in receipt
- (d) Allowances, payment or indemnity for members
- (e) Ceremonial honours for members
- (f) Setting Council Tax or precept (subject to arrears exception).

9. Report author and contact

- 9.1. Jeremy Chambers, Director of Law and Corporate Governance
jeremy.chambers@lewisham.gov.uk, 020 8314 7648



Children and Young People Select Committee

Report title: Early Help and Serious Youth Violence

Date: 8th September 2023

Key decision: N/A

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Jannet Hall, Keith Cohen, Maleeka Dachi, Patricia Garner, Desmond Zephyr, Mark Humphries

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview to the Children and Young People Select Committee of the work in relation to youth violence in the borough. This paper will cover the work of the Youth Justice Service, the Safer Communities Service, Prevention and Early Help and the Safe Space Social Work teams.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

N/A

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Public Health Approach to reducing violence, together with tackling Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls has been a long-term priority for Lewisham. This paper will provide a summary of the key strategic and operational work in relation to this area and provide insight into some of the preventative and early support initiatives taking place. The paper will summarise the work of Safe Space which is the statutory social work offer for children at risk of serious youth violence, the Youth Justice Service (YJS) which is the statutory response for children and young people known to the criminal justice system, and Safer Communities whose work underpins the Local Authorities response to the Public Health Approach to youth violence.
- 1.2. A recent review of the Children and Young People Department's offer to adolescents highlighted the varying arrangements in different service areas. Although this

demonstrated positive work in specific areas, the review identified a need for more join up and improved pathways for children and young people at risk of harm outside the home. As a result of this review, in July 2023 the Youth Justice Service and Safe Space Social Work Teams were merged to create the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service sitting in the Families Quality and Commissioning Division.

- 1.3. The vision of the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service (IASS) is to build on the positive work of the YJS and Safe Space service and to create a multi-agency approach to understand and respond to children at risk of extra familial harm leading to improved outcomes. The service will work closely with the Safer Communities service to ensure there is a whole council approach to the Public Health Approach to youth violence.
- 1.4. In terms of the governance arrangements, the current Youth Justice Management Board will develop into a wider Lewisham Adolescent and Youth Justice Partnership Board to provide the multi-agency strategic steer for CYP, with the youth justice performance and operational board sitting below this.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Children and Young People Select Committee is asked to note the contents of the report for information.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2026 outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Of relevance to youth violence, the strategy states "we will continue to focus and develop our successful public health approach to youth violence, aiming to tackle knife crime and reduce sexual exploitation across the borough".
- 3.2. Statutory requirements from the Police and Justice Act (2006), introduced additional duties, which were updated by subsequent legislation that includes the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2011. The requirements included the production of a Strategic Assessment and a Partnership Plan.
- 3.3. The Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan 2023, highlights priority areas the Council have identified to focus on as a Partnership for Lewisham.
- 3.4. There are three priorities identified in the Plan, one of which includes, a Public Health Approach to tackling violence, with a focus on youth violence
- 3.5. The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) operating protocol is being fully utilised to manage child exploitation and violence concerns. The Child Exploitation Strategy and Strategic plan was agreed by the Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- 3.6. The Government announced legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty on public bodies. The Duty is part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence, taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focused on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.
- 3.7. Responsible authorities in the Serious Violence Duty include the Local Authority, Police, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Justice Organisations (Youth Offending Teams and the Probation Service) and Health Bodies (Integrated Care Boards).
- 3.8. Lewisham's Serious Violence Duty strategy must set out the agreed definition of serious violence for the borough, summarise the key aspects of the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, partnership arrangements that have been agreed locally to lead on delivery of the Duty, the areas of activity to prevent and reduce serious

violence, and activity to engage with voluntary sector organisations and communities. Lewisham will have 12 months to finalise the Strategy and the Assessment with a proposed date of January 2024 for completion.

4. Background and Summary of Current Approach

4.1. The Youth Justice Service (YJS)

- 4.1.1. The Lewisham Youth Justice Service is committed to providing services and support to children and young people, aged between 10 and 17 years, to prevent offending and re-offending.
- 4.1.2. Lewisham remodelled its Youth Justice Service and implemented trauma informed and restorative justice practice approaches when working with young people. A revised vision to meet the needs of children based on 'Child first' principles and practice to further reduce first time entrants, re-offending rates and use of custody, includes three key themes;
 - Facilitating intervention which responds to statutory Orders such as a Referral Order, providing long-term and high-end interventions,
 - Early preventative measures seeking to prevent young people from the risk of offending and looking at a range of diversions to deter them away from criminality, and
 - A therapeutic hub delivering on a unique family therapy offer to those at risk of or involved in offending, Child Adolescent and Mental Health Service (CAMHS), speech and language (additional needs), and community engagement and diversion.
- 4.1.3. The Lewisham Youth Justice Service aims to protect children and young people in the context in which they experience extra-familial harm, improve understanding of the contextual factors leading to serious youth violence and develop appropriate responses including a focus on preventions.
- 4.1.4. Tackling child exploitation is a priority area to prevent children and young people being targeted for exploitation and developing a child exploitation response in schools, social media, online, and in care and Services that provide support.
- 4.1.5. The Lewisham Youth Justice Service continues to extend the influence and reach to promote anti-racist policy and practice and other inter-sectional inequalities taking forward the feedback from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) Thematic Inspection in 2021, which sought to explore how the Youth Justice system met the needs of black and mixed heritage boys, Lewisham. In addition, Lewisham founded the Trauma-Informed, Anti-Racist and Restorative Approaches model, 'TIARRA', to achieve better outcomes for children and families as well as a focus on staff wellbeing. Furthermore, to add to the MJ Award received in 2020, in June 2023 Lewisham YJS were successful in being awarded the MJ Award for Innovation in Building Diversity and inclusion.
- 4.1.6. This year has seen a significant strengthening of the prevention of children and young people entering the youth justice system through the Engage and Turnaround initiatives. The Turnaround Programme seeks to prevent children and young people becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour through targeted systemic family support aimed at reducing the risk of entry to the youth justice system. This is delivered alongside the Engage project, which identifies risk factors associated with serious youth violence and provides appropriate targeted interventions.
- 4.1.7. Lewisham is lead borough for Engage with three youth workers based at Lewisham

and Bexley Police custody suites. The new Turnaround initiative was established quickly, with police referrals into the project being particularly high. These projects have strengthened existing and developing programmes in Lewisham's Early Help services including Family hubs.

4.1.8. The service is currently governed by the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB) and has a line to the Safer Lewisham Partnership overseeing the response to youth criminality. As shared earlier, the YJMB is under review and will develop into the wider Adolescent and Youth Justice Board by the end of December 2023.

4.1.9. **Performance and Impact**

4.1.10. The overall performance of the YJS suggests a positive trajectory for Lewisham in some of the key performance indicators. The Youth Justice Board method for measuring Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) nationally has been defined against the three measures as follows:

- A reduction in First time entrants (FTEs) to the criminal justice system – Number per 100,000 of local 10-17 population
- A reduction in re-offending - binary
- A reduction in the use of Custody – Number of custodial sentences (per 1000 of local 10-17 population)

4.1.11. For the Jan 22 – Dec 22 KPIs, FTEs are down (The decrease in FTEs 20%). This is despite an increasing 10-18 population.

4.1.12. Re-offending down 7.3 % (Aggregated binary rate latest data) and this is a significant reduction.

4.1.13. Lewisham custody have halved– now 5 per year (March 22 –March 23) compared to 10 (March 21-March 22). Custodial rates have started to rise nationally. This is the lowest number Lewisham has recorded for an annual period. Our data informs that here has been a continuation in certain serious offences and these sentences are longer as a result virtually all transitioning to adult establishments.

4.1.14. For serious youth violence the number of offences has reduced but the proportion of caseloads has increased higher than it has family neighbours, therefore, this will be monitored. Seventy-Five percent (75%) of Lewisham's caseload are either robbery, drugs, or a violent offence.

4.1.15. The Lewisham YJS has worked closely with the Police to implement the use of the Concordat in taking the Child First approach in that all children will be eligible for bail unless it is against the public protection. The National Concordat also reminds agencies of adultification and having a Child First approach supporting the TIARRA model.

4.1.16. The introduction of Operation Harbinger with the Police has led to a reduction in the number of Lewisham children detained in Police Custody – between December 2022 and February 2023, out of 47 Operation Harbinger operations 3 children were detained.

4.2. **Safe Space**

4.2.1. Safe Space Practitioners support young people (aged 11-17) who are at risk of harm from factors outside of their family home. This does not mean that there are no concerns about the parenting or care a young person is receiving at home, however, this will not be the primary concern.

4.2.2. The core function of Safe Space Service is to carry out s17 and s47 assessments/investigations for young people where the primary presenting concern is extra familial harm. For example, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), Serious Youth Violence (SYV), Harmful Sexual Behaviour

(HSB), gang affected young people, Radicalisation, concerning patterns of missing episodes and Youth Homelessness.

- 4.2.3. In July 2023, the Safe Space Service merged with the Lewisham Youth Justice Service to form an Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service. Both services work closely with the Safer Communities Violence Reduction Team who sit within the Safer Communities service in the Community Service Directorate, working in partnership to reduce youth violence and exploitation in the borough.
- 4.2.4. Safe Space contribution to this priority is to ensure that all children that meet the above criteria are offered a statutory assessment. This includes coordinating and leading on Strategy Meetings where a young person is deemed to have significant harm because of violence and/or exploitation.
- 4.2.5. Over the last year Safe Space have developed an offer of family support via allocation of Family Practitioners alongside the statutory work being undertaken by the Social Workers. We have seen the benefit of this for the young people having the opportunity to build trusted relationships, with relatable practitioners that can quickly tailor support to their needs keeping in mind the principles of the contextual safeguarding and trauma informed approaches as well as adopting an anti-racist practice lens, to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation, violence and entering the criminal justice system.
- 4.2.6. In alignment with our commitment to the public health approach to tackle knife crime and reduce sexual exploitation across the borough, we have successfully developed various MACE activities to understand our profile in Lewisham and to inform partnership and strategic planning.
- 4.2.7. The Pre-MACE operational activities which include an exploitation panel, serious youth violence panel and newly launched missing children's panel interlink and influence strategic planning identifying themes and trends in relation to exploitation and youth violence.
- 4.2.8. In addition to the above, Lewisham were successful in securing a bid earlier this year from the Home Office in relation to devolved decision making, for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) process, for young people who are victims of modern slavery.
- 4.2.9. The impact analysis from the NRM Panel is in its infancy, however there has been success in making timely decisions for young people who are victims of modern slavery in under 45 days, compared to the Home Office, which could take up to 500 days for a decision to be reached.
- 4.2.10. Whilst the criteria for this panel is modern slavery, some young people are defined as vulnerable to or at risk of youth violence alongside the exploitation. By having a positive NRM decision for offences relating to modern slavery young people are offered access to an Independent Child Trafficking Guardian from Barnardo's, as well as having a defence in court which can reduce entries into the criminal justice system.
- 4.2.11. **Performance and Impact**
- 4.2.12. The 2022/23 Annual Exploitation Report provides an overview of how Safe Space, YJS and the Local Safeguarding Partnership have worked together to respond to children and young people who are reported missing and those who are also at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation and other forms of extra-familial harm.
- 4.2.13. The report provides key highlights following the implementation of the MACE protocols:
 - There has been consistent multi-agency attendance and participation from key partners and lead professionals at MACE and Pre- MACE meetings.

- 63% of CYP referred to MACE were successfully closed following a review of the CYP at MACE, demonstrating effective intervention and risk management.
- The Pre-MACE is working effectively to review cases and ensure high-risk CYP are escalated to tactical MACE. 53 CYP referred with low and medium risk were reviewed and closed.
- MACE reviews all high-risk CYP every 12 weeks, or sooner if required, this oversight is having positive impact, 6 CYP initially referred as high risk and subsequently closed following multi-agency intervention to reduce the harm.
- The re-referral rate is low with just 3 re-referrals concerning CYP who were previously closed to MACE within the last 12 months.
- Police and Safer Communities provide geographical data on gang related activity, violent crimes, anti-social actions and places within the borough (hot spots) associated with this behaviour. MACE has progressed several tactical actions in response to emerging themes, incidents and locations of concern. This includes work led by the Safer Communities service to disrupt children and young people's access to alcohol, working with gambling establishments, supporting specific schools, and undertaking community engagement work.
- The police have issued eight Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) on individual adults in response to concerns shared at MACE and strategy meetings.
- Lewisham Children's Services has established a senior officer post to lead for Adolescent Safeguarding (in the FQC division) the interim postholder has been instrumental in the transition from Concern Hub to MACE and the updated Exploitation Strategy
- Since its inception in 2020, the Safe Space team has continued to develop, providing social work interventions to children and young people at risk of extra familial harm and homeless 16 & 17year-olds. In children's social care practice audits, the majority of practice in Safe Space is judged as good.
- In August 2022, the Safe Space team established a Contextual Safeguarding Thinking Space (CTS) intended to enable access to the expertise in the Safe Space team when CYP are open to other services but are also affected by extra familial risk. CTS offers consultation, advice, reflection, signposting and risk analysis using the context weighting tool for cases where there is a risk relating to contextual/extra familial harm. CTS is held fortnightly, and since its launch it has provided guidance and support to 56 practitioners.
- The Police Basic Command Unit (BCU) have integrated several resources into a dedicated Child Exploitation Unit with responsibility for CYP at risk of exploitation. This has increased capacity, reduced duplication and improved working across the partnership.
- The positive work of the Safe Space team was recognised by Ofsted in November 2022 through a Joint Targeted Area Inspection as follows

"Tenacious child-centred practice with children and young people by skilled practitioners in the child exploitation safe space teams is making a real difference to reducing risks and protecting them from further harm. Decision-making when children are at risk is positive and timely".
<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50206436>

4.3 Safer Communities

- 4.3.1 The Safer Communities Service has a key role in preventing, reducing, and responding to risk taking behaviour and crime, and the impact of related harm in relation to vulnerable individuals and communities. As a result, most of the teams in the Service, straddle all age groups, be it the victim, alleged perpetrator or both. A multifaceted Service, which in conjunction with core partners, addresses violence, through prevention and intervention.
- 4.3.2 Whilst the Safer Communities Service as a whole does not have 'intervention' aged restrictions, the Violence Reduction Team (VRT) and Mental Health link worker, primarily work with young people and adults aged up to 25 alongside their families/carers. The VRT work within a multi-agency framework, supporting colleagues/stakeholders across services and disciplines within the Council and wider, including housing, education, health, Children and Adult services, the Probation Service, Integrated Care Boards, Voluntary Sector and the Youth Justice Service. They deliver training across the borough for various stakeholders, however as part of the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) they offer a bespoke training offer, which is currently being reviewed as part of a wider LSCP training review. The aim of the training offer to enhance the knowledge of stakeholders/colleagues to assist with their understanding of violence, and exploitation, and the impact this has when committed or perpetrated by those under the age of 25. This approach is aligned with a public health approach to reducing violence through education, awareness and early intervention.
- 4.3.3 The Safer Communities Service have enhanced their offer of support and intervention through the introduction of a Mental Health Link Worker (MHLW). This offer is part of the Community Multi-Systems Violence Reduction Programme (CMSVRP), Vanguard, funded by the National Health Service England (NHSE). The MHLW has a specific focus on supporting young adults aged 18 – 25 where mental health has been identified as a feature associated to violence. The offer began in October 2022, with Lewisham recruiting a relevant qualified officer in February 2023. The programme remains a pilot and is funded until September 2025. Work has commenced to recruit a further worker, also funded by the Vanguard programme.
- 4.3.4 The Safer Communities VRT offer direct support to young people and adults, up to the age of 25, which is delivered in a range of ways including direct work with the individual and their family/Carer, liaising with services to provide protective measures to safeguard the family home, advice and support to address substance misuse, violence, accommodation challenges and guidance on how to mitigate violence and or exploitation through a trauma-informed, contextual safeguarding approach.
- 4.3.5 Within current safeguarding structures, a Safer Communities representative co-chairs, with the police, a weekly Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Panel. The Panel is made up of staff from the Safer Communities Service and partners including education, Police, the Probation, Youth Justice Service, Children's Social Care and partnering agencies including Youth First, who are Lewisham's Youth Service provider.
- 4.3.6 The SYV Panel provide weekly oversight to manage and mitigate risk of violence and exploitation to young people in Lewisham. The Panel does not hold case responsibility but works across the partnership to highlight, identify, and reduce risk. The Panel provides an opportunity to gather and share information and intelligence, across the partnership in order to reduce risk and prevent harm, provide guidance and support and is a pathway to escalate concerns, to the Police and/or the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) framework, which meets monthly to address safeguarding issues for young people.
- 4.3.7 The Safer Communities Service is a core member of the MACE due to the nature of service provisions including violence reduction and community safety more generally. As a Service it is able to provide intelligence and support in regards to safeguarding young people either through its Violence Reduction Team provision or other service strands from Anti-social Behaviour and Licensing through to Prevent, CCTV and the Violence Against Women and Girls teams.

- 4.3.8 In addition to the above, business as usual management of risk includes a twice weekly Violence Assessment Meeting, which takes place to assess recent incidents of violence that are either significant in terms of injury, likely to require co-ordinated work between agencies to provide a comprehensive response, have had or are likely to have a significant impact on a particular locality or community, including through reporting in the media. Following incidents of those 24 or under, immediate consultation takes place with the Police Violence Suppression Unit and the Violence Reduction Team in order to manage any immediate risk and safety plan. Wider intelligence is shared monthly at the Tactical Tasking and Coordinating group led by the Police; capturing thematic concerns across the BCU, which all BCU local authorities represent. Mapping incidents is continuous, whereby as a Partnership we are continually monitoring presenting factors (The identified problem), predisposing factors (historical issues), precipitating factors and perpetrating factors (triggers) in order to manage risk.
- 4.3.9 In addition to a number of risk/safeguarding management meetings the Service has secured funding from various projects that seeks to reduce risk, which includes a project, which tackles robberies against young people on their journeys to and from school and a therapeutically informed programme based in the community that co-works with key community members whom they train to become culturally competent, offer clinical support to, in order for them to be able to assist young people impacted by violence and exploitation in their community to receive support.
- 4.3.10 Softer community intelligence to manage violence has included the Safer Communities Service commissioning projects to support the Council's adherence to the Serious Violence Duty and the Council's Public Health Approach to violence reduction.
- 4.3.11 The first project was an Appreciative Inquiry exploring what was working well in the Council's delivery of violence reduction and the tackling of Domestic Abuse. The second project focused on the Council's Combatting Drugs Partnership and provided insight from a Citizens Panel pertaining to the issues of substance use in Lewisham and services available to support residents and clients. The third focused on youth violence in Lewisham and provided insight and feedback from community conversations.
- 4.3.12 Whilst the Safer Communities Service has led on most of these developments, it is clear in its directive that only a Partnership approach can tackle violence, regardless of the age of the individual.

4.3.13 Impact

- 4.3.14 The Safer Communities Service has worked alongside a strong Partnership in order to deliver a number of achievements in line with the Public Health Approach to reducing violence, some of which have been identified in previous performance and impact sections of this report. These include:
- An expansion of the Community Champion Project (MOPAC Capacity Building to Support Incident Response in the Community Capacity grant). This will allow for the continuation of therapeutic/trauma informed interventions in an area that is impacted by violence, deprivation and exploitation. Young people have been supported to improve in all aspects of their mental wellbeing and factors that might negatively impact this. Improved mental wellbeing, self-esteem/self-confidence, an ability to respond to stress or trauma Improved life skills has led to an increased overall life satisfaction (Evaluations). Partnerships between local organisations has developed and residents have participated in local activities. This has improved access and use of community resources and support and has increased community awareness of local initiatives. There has been increased collaborations/partnerships between community groups/organisations, which in turn has led to increased engagement within the wider community. Co-collaboration with the community has also fostered areas of trust, which in turn has assisted in the management of harm.

- The commencement of the Tackling Robberies during school journeys project, which assists with tackling robberies in crime hot spots across the borough. Stakeholders which include colleagues from Youth First, the Council, the Police, Children's Social Care have worked with the Safer Communities Service to design a curriculum of street theft workshops. Sessions take place all year round, in the daytime in schools, and in youth clubs after school and during the holidays. Structured personal safety and street theft awareness workshops and advice sessions will be delivered in key locations in the borough, with a focus on Lewisham Central and other places where street theft is highest. The curriculum will be delivered in an interactive way, with opportunity for role play, discussion, information sharing and advice. Young people will learn preventive strategies to keep themselves and their friend's safe, gaining understanding of how to respond safely in an incident, where to go for help to report it, and any related trauma. We will also work with police colleagues to educate young people about the consequences of being a perpetrator of street theft, what to expect from the criminal justice system, and likely longer-term impacts. Alongside structured sessions, engaging young people to discuss the effect and consequences of street robbery has been prioritised. Parent/Carer work is also undertaken to raise awareness, provide advice and to seek to build 'self-run' community groups who help one another.
- Securing funding via the Hyde group to commission the James Ross Hunter foundation to deliver Sip and Talk in Sydenham and Honor Oak. Sip and Talk provides support to parents, carers and families affected by violence.
- Protecting Lewisham from the impact of underage sales of alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, solvents and weapons by carrying out 107 underage sales visits to business premises and achieving a high level of compliance (96%).
- The delivery of a full Prevent programme, including successful completion of community-based projects, a comprehensive training programme and a risk assessment and delivery plan.
- Successful use of funding including the application of Critical Incident Grants from MOPAC in response to critical incidents of violence in Lewisham to support family, friends, community impacted and affected by violence. Funding has also been used to secure a mentoring provision in the borough (London Crime Prevention Fund), an Appreciative Inquiry, interactive drama in schools and embedding a restorative and trauma informed approach within schools.

4.4 Next Steps and areas for future consideration

- 4.4.1 A public health approach to tackling violence requires a long-term and sustained commitment from Lewisham and the wider partnership. The true impact of the approach may not be seen for several years if we are to truly address and unpick deep rooted issues. In addition, consideration will need to be given to the Serious Violence Duty and the formation of the Lewisham Combatting Drugs Partnership. Both of which will have an impact on the management of crime and violence in the borough given their relationship and links. Both will require separate Strategic Needs Assessments that are currently being devised, both of which will seek to inform the Partnership direction.
- 4.4.2 Enhance the early preventative support for young people through developing a better understanding of the cohort of children at risk, co-ordination of the existing offer, improving pathways to targeted services including a wider therapeutic offer.
- 4.4.3 The formation of the Integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service provides further opportunity to strengthen this area, and work has already begun to develop a more coordinated offer such as a review of the data sets available to develop an enhanced integrated dashboard and developing a multi-agency targeted offer for children and young people at risk of exploitation and serious violence.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1. This report is for information and there are no expected cost implications. In a wider context, Lewisham have a vision to improve outcomes for young people by improving prevention for serious youth violence and exploitation and reducing higher costs at a later stage.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1. There are no direct legal implications with this report.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1. A priority in the Safer Lewisham Plan 2023 is Lewisham's Public Health approach to violence reduction and the reduction of disproportionality. The Committee will consider wider Equalities matters when reviewing the Plan and when making any recommendations. The IASS adopts a trauma informed, anti-racist approach that builds on the successful work of the Lewisham YJS. Disproportionality is now a standing feature of the YJS performance reporting such as ethnicity and gender, and this will assist in identifying areas that need attention in relation to anti-racist practice and the journey of the black and mixed heritage child.

8. Climate change and environmental implications

- 8.1. N/A

9. Crime and disorder implications

- 9.1. The purpose of the Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan 2023 is to set out the strategic approach to crime and reducing violence. The approaches outlined in this report are in line with this plan in partnership with the wider Council.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1. The overall purpose of the Public Health approach is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all residents in the borough. Crime and serious violence have wider implications for the borough such as resident safety, desirability to live in Lewisham, mental health, education, and employment outcomes and so on. Taking a public health approach allows the partnership to take a place-based approach to tackling these issues.

11. Report author and contact

- 11.1. Sara Rahman, Director of Families Quality and Commissioning – sara.rahman@lewisham.gov.uk

Comments for and on behalf of the Executive Director for Corporate Resources

Mark Humphreys, Senior Accountant and Mala Dadlani, Strategic Business Partner CYP.



CYP Select Committee

Post-16 and career pathways

Date: September 2023

Key decision: No

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Contributors: Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation, Education Services.

Outline and recommendations

Outline

As part of its work programme the Committee has requested a report on Lewisham's Post-16 participation and career pathway outcomes. Officers produce this report annually as part of accountability and performance monitoring.

Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to note the successful outcomes in the work programme that supports Lewisham young people by:

- Tracking young people aged 16-to-18 to ensure that they are participating in suitable education, employment or training.
- Supporting young people who are at risk of not being in suitable education, employment or training (NEET).
- Working with partners and post-16 institutions to ensure that young people have sufficient and appropriate post-16 provision and career pathways.

1. Summary

As part of its work programme the Committee has requested a report on Lewisham's Post-16 participation and career pathway outcomes. Officers produce this report annually as part of accountability and performance monitoring.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the information contained in the report.

2.2 The Select Committee is asked to note the successful outcomes in the work programme that supports Lewisham young people by:

- Tracking young people aged 16-to-18 to ensure that they are participating in suitable education, employment or training (NEET).
- Supporting young people who are at risk of not being in suitable education, employment or training.
- Working with partners and post-16 institutions to ensure that young people have sufficient and appropriate post-16 provision and career pathways.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Lewisham's 2022-26 Corporate Strategy will continue the fantastic work of the last four years, supporting our schools to improve and increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham.

4. Background

- 4.1 This report describes how Lewisham delivers its statutory duty under the Education and Skills Act 2008 relating to the participation of young people aged 16-to-18 (up to 25 with SEND) in education, employment or training.

Since September 2015 all young people are under a duty to participate in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 18. Young people need to continue to study or train in one of three primary routes:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider.
- Full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training.
- An Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship.

The Government's approach is to give local authorities freedom and flexibility to decide how to fulfil those duties.

- 4.2 The report outlines the implementation and delivery of Lewisham's Post-16 Participation Strategy:
- Lewisham Council will act in close collaboration with a range of other projects and partners to deliver the strategy.
 - The accountable officer for the strategy is the Director of Education, and the implementation manager is the Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation.
 - The funding for the delivery of the strategy is contained within the Post-16 Participation budgets.

5. London context on post-16 participation

- 5.1 London has a growing 16–18-year-old population, which is set to expand to 331,892 by 2028¹.

London has an increasingly diverse provider base spread across the city with a broad learning and training offer and there is a highly mobile cohort of young people who are prepared to travel to meet their learning requirements.

There appears to be a link between higher deprivation levels and lower life chances for young people in London with lower attainment in the more deprived areas of the city.

London has historically high participation levels and its overall 16-to-18 year-old participation level is the highest in the country at 97.5 per cent (July 2022)².

Participation varies significantly by borough; some boroughs have nearly over 89 per cent participation and are close to achieving their Participation targets.

The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in London has consistently remained below the national average. The number of 16-to-

¹ http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/borough_insight

² http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/borough_insight

18 year-olds whose activity is 'not known' in London remains high with much variation in borough level performance.

- 5.2 London's employment rate among 16-to-24 year olds is the lowest in the country (39.2 per cent) but the unemployment rate is not the worst, with three regions out of 10 performing worse than London. This is likely due to people in education in that age range, so not employed but also not unemployed.

However, in Lewisham, there is a high claimant count (number of people receiving benefits) among 18-to-24 year olds compared to London wide, with London performing worse than the UK as a whole:

Claimant count by age - not seasonally adjusted (June 2023)				
	Lewisham	Lewisham	London	Great Britain
	(Level)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Aged 16+	12,470	5.8	4.9	3.7
Aged 18 To 24	1,855	7.6	5.1	4.8
Aged 18 To 21	895	7.2	5	4.9

5.3 Lewisham context on post-16 participation

Lewisham's 2022-27 Education Strategy sets out how our schools will work together, and how the local authority will work with them, to build an inclusive and high-achieving system of local schools in which all children can succeed; a network of local schools which promotes a positive culture to foster and celebrate achievement, respect equality, and reflect our diversity. There is a particular focus on the following priorities within the Participation strategy:

5.4 Priority 1: a place in a good school/setting for all our children and young people

What we need to do	Measuring success
Work in partnership with providers to develop a relevant and comprehensive post-16 offer for Lewisham, including apprenticeships.	Increased proportion of young people accessing post- 16 provision in the borough.

5.5 Priority 2: supporting all children and young people to reach their potential

What we need to do	Measuring success
Support the development of comprehensive pathways that will enable school leavers to progress their learning and secure positive labour market outcomes, including children looked after and those with SEND.	Low percentage and reduced disproportionality for pupils that become NEET.

- 5.6 The vast majority of 16-to-18 year-olds already continue in some form of education or training. However, the small group of young people not participating includes some of the most vulnerable.

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In June 2023 young people who were participating in learning was at 94.6 per cent, compared well with national and London benchmarks: London at 95.8 per cent, young people nationally at 91.9 per cent.

Lewisham young people who were NEET, was at 1.9 per cent (June 2023), compared well with national and London benchmarks: London NEET 1.7 per cent, young people nationally who were NEET 3.1 per cent.

Also, in June 2023 Lewisham 16-to-18 year-olds who were 'unknown'³ were 2.4 per cent. This is compared to national and local benchmarks: London 'unknown' 1.3 per cent and young people who are 'unknown' nationally 1.9 per cent.

The local authority continues to focus on those who are more vulnerable to becoming NEET, in particular teenage mothers, young carers, young offenders, young people with substance misuse, young people with SEND and our care leavers.

5.7 Lewisham participation, NEETS and unknowns

	Target	Population (16-18)	Participation 'in learning'	Adjusted NEET (16-18)	'Unknown' (16-18)
June 2023 (by residents)	2% NEETs Under 5% Unknowns	6,579	94.6% 6222YP	1.9% 123YP	2.4% 159YP
June 2022 (by residents)	2% NEETs Under 5% Unknowns	6,470	95.1% 6,063 YP	1.8% 99 YP	2.8% 189 YP
June 2021 (by residents)	2% NEETs Under 5% Unknowns	6,378	95.1% 6,152 YP	1.8% 112 YP	2.8% 179 YP

5.8 Lewisham NEET vulnerable groups

Group	June 2022 (% of cohort)	June 2022 (%of NEET)	June 2023 (% of cohort)	June 2023 (%of NEET group)
Children in Care (CLA)	1.4% (85)	21.4%	0.8% (51)	50%
Care Leavers	0.0 (3)	66.7%	0.0% (1)	50%
Pregnant	0.2 (10)	90%	0.0% (3)	66.7%
Teen Mothers	0.1 (7)	100%	0.1% (8)	75%
Refugee / Asylum	0.2 (10)	20%	0.0% (3)	0%
YOS	2.1% (129)	16.9%	1.6% (98)	23.7%
SEND	1.4 (86)	5.8%	0.4 (26)	12%
Sub misuse	0.2 (13)	38.5%	0.3 (19)	55%
Young Carers	0.2 (11)	50%	0.1% (7)	14.3%

5.9 Volumes

Projections show a five per cent increase in total resident learner (aged 16-to-18) volumes in Lewisham over the five years⁴.

4.10 Lewisham travel to study

The majority of Lewisham residents aged 16-18 do not continue their studies after school within Lewisham. As can be seen in the table below just 36 per cent continue

³ Current Situation Not Known

⁴ http://www.intelligentlondon.org.uk/borough_insight

their studies within Lewisham with the rest travelling to neighbouring boroughs. Lewisham also imports 1346 young people to post-16 learning, which is usual practice across neighbouring and London boroughs. Young people, in making their post-16 pathway choices, travel to alternative programmes not on offer in Lewisham and travel is convenient throughout the London transport network.

Travel to study borough 'in learning' residents	Number	Percentage
Lewisham	2,124	36%
Bromley	1,156	17.5%
Greenwich	738	11.2%
Bexley	419	6.3%
Southwark	513	7.8%
Croydon	243	3.6%
All others	1,406	18%
Total	6,599	100%

5.11 Enrolments in Lewisham post-16 institutions

Spring 2023 Census	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14
Haberdashers' Hatcham College	132	140	
Haberdashers' Knights Academy	115	144	
Sydenham School	123	141	
Sedgehill Academy	25	38	
Forest Hill School	113	90	
Prendergast School	135	209	
Greenvale School	19	21	17
Drumbeat ASD School	9	10	17
Christ the King Sixth Form College	930	450	
Lewisham College (16-18)	319	336	240

5.12 Supply of places

Based on Lewisham residents (aged 16-to-18) who stayed in borough for post-16 study (2124) and imported learners (1709) there are sufficient places in Lewisham institutions to meet these learner needs.⁵

⁵ (Source: June 2023, NCCIS).

The capacity of Lewisham post-16 institutions is c. 4500 with potential supply outstripping current demand by almost 15 per cent.

This spare capacity could absorb growth in the 16-to-18 population, changes in travel to study patterns and any in or out of borough changes to the post-16 landscape.

5.13 Quality of post-16 provision in Lewisham

Ofsted inspects post-16 providers. Of the 10 current post-16 providers, all sixth forms are graded by Ofsted as good and better:

School / College	Date of Last Ofsted	Overall Effectiveness
School Sixth Form		
Forest Hill School (SFH6)	October 2021	Requires Improvement Sixth Form – Good
Haberdashers' Hatcham College	February 2019	Good Sixth Form – Good
Haberdashers' Knights Academy	July 2017 / March 2023	Good Sixth Form – Good
Prendergast School	November 2013	Outstanding
Sedgehill School	September 2022	Good Sixth Form – Good
Sydenham School (SFH6)	May 2017 / September 2022	Good
Special Sixth Form		
Greenvale School	June 2023	Good
Drumbeat School and ASD Service	April 2019	Good (16-19 – 1) Sixth Form – Outstanding
FE or Sixth Form College		
Lewisham College (NCG)	January 2022	Good
Christ the King Catholic Sixth Form College	April 2017	Good

5.14 Post-16 statutory duties and responsibilities

Lewisham has responsibilities to support young people into education or training, which are set out in the following duties to:

- To secure sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people in Lewisham who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 with SEND and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained⁶; and
- To make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 - 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training⁷.

In addition the statutory duties for Participation⁸ are:

- to promote the effective participation in education and training of 16-to-18 year olds

⁶ Sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009))

⁷ Section 68 Education and Skills Act 2008

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>

- in their area with a view to ensuring that those persons fulfil the duty to participate in education or training;⁹; and
- to make arrangements to establish the identities of those not participating and who are failing to fulfil the duty to participate in education or training¹⁰.

Local authorities must champion young people's learning by identifying quality issues and gaps in provision for:

- a) persons in our area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and
- b) persons in our area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 with SEND.

The Participation Strategy is central to the delivery of the Participation statutory duty. There is a Participation and Engagement Strategy Group in place to support the work of the strategy. It is led by the CYP Directorate and comprises the other CYP colleagues, Adult Learning Lewisham, Lewisham Sixth forms, Lewisham College and Christ the King Sixth Form College, DWP, alternative providers and government funded providers & initiatives.

The local authority tracks the participation of young people in education and training, and ensures that young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are supported to participate. This means that local authority already collects information to identify young people who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so and ensures that all 16-to-18 year-olds receive an offer of a suitable place in education or training by the end of September each year¹¹.

In Lewisham, the local authority continues to support and monitor schools and colleges to deliver this duty and still retains the duty to support vulnerable young people which includes Looked after Children, Care Leavers, Teenage Pregnant, Refugee / Asylum seekers, Youth Offenders, SEND, Substance Misuse and Young Carers.

5.15 **Ensuring independent and impartial information, advice and guidance**

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to set young people on the path that will secure the best outcome which will enable them to progress in education and work and give employers the highly skilled people they need. That means schools and colleges must act impartially, in line with their statutory duty or contractual requirement, and not show bias towards any route, be that academic or technical. They should promote a full range of technical options¹².

All secondary schools and colleges are expected to use the internationally recognised Gatsby Benchmarks¹³ (non-statutory) to develop a careers programme that increases opportunities for young people to access everything from experiences of the workplace and personal guidance with a careers adviser, to engagement with employers, colleges, training providers and universities. It is vital to ensure that all young people are aware of the benefits of apprenticeships, T Levels, HTQs and other approved technical education qualifications and can consider them, alongside academic options, when making decisions about their next steps.

Schools and colleges should understand and plan for how careers guidance features in Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and in the individual handbooks for

⁹ Section 10 ESA 2008

¹⁰ Section 12 ESA 2008

¹¹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/transitionintoeducationandtraining/a0064102/offersofeducationandtraining>

¹² [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹³ [Gatsby launches Good Career Guidance: Reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks | Education | Gatsby](#)

maintained schools and academies and further education and skills.

The governing body of a school or college must make sure that independent careers guidance is provided to all pupils throughout their secondary education (11- to- 18 year-olds) and students aged up to 25 with an education, health and care plan, and that it is:

- presented in an impartial manner, showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular institution, education or work option;
- includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and technical education routes; and
- guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the students to whom it is given.

Lewisham secondary schools and colleges offer a range of information, advice and guidance to their pupils through careers events, one to one career interviews, external speakers and workshops.

5.16 **Promotion of post-16 pathways promotion**

In addition, the local authority promotes post-16 pathways and provides a range of activities to support impartiality and independence:

- The Lewisham Education Business Partnership (EBP)
- T Levels in Lewisham
- Lewisham Challenge
- Lewisham education website
- Lewisham post-16 video: [Post 16 options in Lewisham - YouTube](#)
- Facebook: Lewisham young people
- Post-16 institutions / options brochure
- Lewisham Life
- Professional Meetings earmarked for all those working with young people across the sectors e.g. schools/FE/private providers/CYP/ third sector organisations.

5.17 **Lewisham Education Business Partnership (EBP)**

The EBP (council based) supports the raising of achievement, motivation, confidence and abilities of the young people in Lewisham to help them prepare for education, employment, training or progression to higher education.

The EBP works with employers and schools to develop skills for the world of work. To achieve this through a range of activities like work experience and careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG).

The EBP works with a range of employers and businesses to provide young people with a rewarding and realistic introduction to the world of work. This offer is available at Key Stage 4 (aged 14-16) and Key Stage 5 (aged 16-18) and commissioned by all Lewisham secondary schools.

5.18 **T Levels in Lewisham**

T Levels are a two year qualification for 16-to-19 year olds designed in collaboration with employers. Each T Level is equivalent to three A Levels, with the aim to support the young person to develop their skills, knowledge and to thrive in the workplace.

Launched in September 2020, these courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and education providers so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for entry into skilled employment, an apprenticeship or related technical study through further or higher education.

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T Levels offer young people practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days¹⁴. The courses are available at selected colleges in Lewisham:

Christ the King Sixth Form College	Health and nursing (from September 2022) Engineering (from September 2022) Digital Design (from September 2023)
Lewisham College	Digital Support (from September 2023) Early Year Educator (from September 2023) Supporting Health Care (from September 2023) Plumbing and Heating Engineering (from September 2023)

5.19 Lewisham Challenge programme

The programme provides young with a range of opportunities that will complement their sixth form studies and help them explore future opportunities in higher education and careers. The programme is run and funded in partnership with Lewisham schools and colleges and is supported by universities, employers and other agencies.

The programme is only available to young people enrolled at one of the Lewisham school sixth forms or colleges. Over 250 Lewisham young people were involved in the programme in 2022-23.

Programme 2023-2024: widen young people’s knowledge and experience, further develop skills and help build a CV. There are several different strands to the Lewisham Challenge programme, and young people can apply to take part in more than one of these strands, depending upon interests and ambitions.

The following are the main strands currently on offer, although others are planned to come on stream during the year.

Oxbridge: Starting with the launch of this programme in September, young people will have an opportunity to take part in organised visits to both universities in the autumn and spring terms. There will also be workshop sessions on how to make a strong application and how to prepare for interview. Young people will meet with university staff and with current students, including those who have been part of the Lewisham Challenge programme and have gone on to study at Oxbridge. Young people will also be kept informed of the many Oxbridge opportunities that will be available to them in Y12 and Y13. Those wishing to apply for this programme must have a good range of high GCSE scores and have the potential to achieve A*/A grades at A Level.

The two Oxbridge partners for this programme are **Gonville and Caius College Cambridge** and **Queens College, Oxford**.
The Oxbridge launch event is planned for Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 4.30 – 6.15 and there will be university visits to both Oxford and Cambridge during the autumn half-term.

Law: Run in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London, the programme will advise on pathways to career opportunities in law, provide opportunities for young

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-t-levels/introduction-of-t-levels>

people to experience the work of barristers, solicitors and other legal professionals, enable access to the legal world including Chambers, High Court, Parliament, etc., provide opportunities for the development of skills and knowledge, support young people through the HE application process with advice and mentoring by graduate ambassadors.

The launch event is planned for 4th October 2023

Engineering

If young people are considering a career in any aspect of engineering, or simply interested in finding out what HE and career opportunities are available, then this is an ideal programme.

An opportunity to meet with professional engineers and staff involved in delivering engineering degrees as well as with ex-students who have gone on to careers in engineering.

There will also receive details about work experience opportunities.

The launch event for this strand is planned for 15th November 2023

Medicine and Health

This programme will be of interest to any student thinking of a medical or health-related career. Young people will have an opportunity to meet with medical practitioners, university staff, students currently studying medicine related subjects and with ex-students (including those from Lewisham schools/colleges) who have recently completed their studies and are now in practice. Young people will receive advice on making a strong UCAS application and how to prepare for interview. There will also be some work placement opportunities.

The launch event is currently planned for 27th September 2023

Creatives: Run in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London, this programme will be of interest to any Y12 student studying creative arts subjects (e.g. art, film, media studies, photography and IT) and/or may be considering higher education and/or a future career in some aspect of the creative industries. It will also be relevant for those interested in studying journalism and gaming in the future.

The launch event is planned for 11th October 2023

Apprenticeships: An increasing number of young people are applying for an apprenticeship following on from their sixth form studies. There will be a workshop on **8th November 2023 at 4.30 – 6.15** which will help young people find out more about apprenticeship opportunities with an emphasis on higher level/degree apprenticeships. Speakers at the workshop will include apprentices - past and present, employers and universities.

5.20 **Unit 19, Lewisham shopping centre**

The local authority provides support for NEET young people and targeted support through Unit 19, Lewisham Shopping Centre, which is a drop-in service for targeted Lewisham young people staffed by the Lewisham Participation Team (Baseline).

Targeted young people are those who are NEET, and for those in education, employment or training (EET), young people identified as those at risk of becoming NEET.

Young people in Lewisham can attend at any time during opening hours to receive information about a range of services as well as guidance and support. Young people can also self-refer if they believe they require additional support. Services include:

- initial assessment of a young person's needs

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- signposting to other services, e.g. sexual health advice, DWP
- computer access for information, advice and guidance
- The **Bank of Things** is a partnership project between the Young Mayor and Young Advisors and Lewisham Local, originating from the young people's ideas and run by Lewisham Local. The Bank of Things stocks toiletries and school supplies, including revision guides and some uniform. The idea is simple, every young person should have the essentials they need to participate fully in their lives. These items are available free of charge from Unit 19 on Wednesday and Friday from 3 to 5:30pm. Young people can self-refer and do not have to evidence their need. They are asked to limit their visits to one per half term and that they ask for only what they need, with a maximum of ten items in total in any one visit. Young people can also volunteer with the Bank of Things, giving them skills and experience and creating peer to peer support. There are regular campaigns at Christmas, Back to School and at Exam time requesting donations which are then redistributed to young people. Bank of Things receives donations from members of the public, organisations and corporate sponsors as well as raising money to buy products through charitable funds. School groups have also collected for Bank of Things and last Christmas the shopping centre appeal was for donations to the Bank of Things. As well as young people accessing Unit 19, Bank of Things has distributed Christmas parcels to local voluntary youth groups and organisations and done "pop ups" at different youth events and projects. One of the priorities for the upcoming year is to develop the outreach programme to go out to the areas of the borough where young people have the need but might not be aware of the Bank of Things or access the shopping centre.
- The **'Community Fridge'** is a tried and tested way of stopping good food ending up in the bin and promoting a spirit of sharing and mutual support within a community. The Community Fridge at Unit 19 is specifically for young people, making surplus food available for free and is open after school on Wednesdays and Fridays. Surplus perishable food is donated by local businesses or members of the public, currently this has included Greggs, the Coop, Muffin hut and a relationship with the Felix Project will see the variety of food extended in the next school term. The Community Fridge is a recent addition to the 'Bank of Things' and is run with the support of volunteers. As well as saving surplus food the Community Fridge addresses a need in the current cost of living crisis, where we know some young people struggle to have enough food.

Parents, carers and professionals will also be able to use the service to support a young person if required. Baseline staff work with other agencies to ensure an exit plan for all NEET young people, with a follow up of support from workers for ongoing intervention and ensuring information sharing. Baseline workers utilise an effective referral mechanism with partnership agencies and record NEET reduction activity on the NCCIS database.

5.21 **Collaboration with Lewisham Works & the Jobs and Skills Team**

Advisors from 'Lewisham Works' are also based in Unit 19, supporting residents aged 18-to-25 who are looking for work, education or training opportunities. Lewisham Works, the Council's flagship 18+ employment programme, launched in May 2022 and has already supported 190 residents into 'good work' and 375 residents with training. This service continues to provide holistic and compassionate support for any residents seeking employment. Lewisham Works has two specialist youth employment advisors. In 2022/23 Lewisham Works supported 129 young people aged 18-24, achieving 51 employment outcomes and 55 training outcomes.

Lewisham Works, Baseline and Adult Learning Lewisham have agreed to collaborate from September 2023 until December 2023 on a joined-up campaign to support

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residents 18-25 considered NEET. Coordinated by Lewisham Works, these services will work together to support 100 young people into employment or education by the end of 2023. Our services have recognised the complex challenges some of our young residents face, particularly with cost-of-living pressures.

5.22 **The Mayor's Apprenticeship programme**

The Mayor's Apprenticeship Programme continues to show good performance, with 27 internal Council opportunities created in 2022/23. With our external partnerships, the programme recorded 67 apprenticeships in total during 2022/23. Our apprentices won three awards at the 2022 London Borough Apprenticeship Awards, half of the total. The Council is pleased that two more nominees have been shortlisted in 2023 in the 'Best Progression' and 'Best Manager' categories.

Our 2022 'Apprentice of the Year', Ryan Robertson, will be speaking at this year's ceremony. To improve access to our apprenticeships by care-experienced young people, the service is currently developing a 'Care Leaver Internship' which will launch in 2024. Similar to 'Kickstart', the Government's Covid-19 job creation programme for young people, Care Leavers will be able to access a 6-month paid employment opportunity which will be complimented with employability skills training.

5.23 **Specialist Employment Support for Care Leavers**

Jobs and Skills have also been working closely with Lewisham Council's Leaving Care service to enhance the employment support received by Care Leavers. The Council recognises the challenges this cohort can face in securing their ideal job. While Lewisham Works already supports care leavers who are actively seeking employment, some require a service which is specifically geared towards their needs. In recent months, the service has involved young people with lived experience in the design of their ideal care-leaver specific employment service. Lewisham Works is currently advertising a three-year contract for a specialist provider to provide bespoke, holistic care-leaver employment support which will launch by January 2024.

6. Action Plan

Action Plan	Actions	By whom	By when
Lewisham post-16 Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved post-16 outcomes for students in Lewisham. The effective promotion of a high quality, comprehensive and inclusive local post-16 offer. 14-19 progression routes that are clear, challenging, accessible and attractive to students into Lewisham. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Lewisham Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme is to raise aspirations amongst young people across all of the Lewisham post-16 providers and to inform their decisions about HE and career opportunities. This is a programme unique to Lewisham. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, HEIs, Lewisham post-16 providers, employers.	Ongoing and annual
Analysis of provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase to breadth of Lewisham provision for vulnerable groups e.g NEETs, teenage parents, SEND, offenders. Increase number of 16-18 year olds accessing Apprenticeships / and pre-Apprenticeships. Increase the breadth of Level 1 and 2 provision. Increase the breadth of GSCE or equivalent English and maths provision. Based on the employment sector analysis develop appropriate sector specific vocational provision that enables young people to progress into employment, Further or Higher Education (Level 2-3). Further develop T Levels in Lewisham. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Ensuring the right balance of post-16 provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with interventions and programmes that have the greatest impact on participation. Establishing the cost effectiveness of interventions and programmes. Ensuring the quality and effectiveness of actions or programmes. Eliminating the interventions and programmes that have limited impact on participation. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Ensuring young people at risk are targeted effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-to-one support for long-term NEET young people 16-18. The Participation Team will ensure that designated and expert caseworkers will work with NEET young people. Participation support is currently delivered through Baseline. Baseline is a one-stop shop where young people can go for information, advice and guidance in Unit 19, Lewisham Shopping Centre. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Post-16 early intervention	Develop the capacity across all Lewisham post-16 providers to work together to ensure that no young person should fall into NEET and to establish an approach to a fresh start where appropriate.	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Ensuring that no young person slips through the net when they drop out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that where young people do drop out, data and information is provided to the NEET Tracking Service on a weekly basis. Twice yearly Post 16 – events to support the impartial careers advice for students in years 9 to 13 take place in March and on GCSE results day in August. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Tracking Lewisham	Lewisham's NEET reduction strategy has in place robust client management and client tracking systems,	Head of Service Access, Inclusion	Ongoing and annual

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young people	with an efficiently maintained database and associated analysis.	and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	
Promotion of effective participation	<p>Methods of communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lewisham Education website ▪ Lewisham Post-16 video: Post 16 options in Lewisham - YouTube ▪ Facebook: Lewisham Young People ▪ Post-16 institutions brochures ▪ 14-19 Lewisham's Course Directory (online) ▪ Lewisham Life ▪ Professional Meetings earmarked for all those working with Young People across the sectors e.g. schools/FE/private providers/CYP/ third sector organisations. ▪ CYP Voluntary sector organisations e.g. religious/faith groups. Particularly working with providers in wards with concentration of worklessness. 	Head of Service Access, Inclusion and Participation, Lewisham post-16 providers.	Ongoing and annual
Information sharing	The law is relatively straight forward – providing the local authority is requesting the information in pursuance of obligations under Section 68 of the Education and Skills Act, then education providers must provide it. (See appendix xx)	DfE, Local authority, schools and colleges, other public bodies.	Ongoing and annual

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The actions proposed in this report will be contained within the overall budget of circa £600k as such there are no financial implications arising from this report.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The latest guidance: Participation of young people: education, employment and training Statutory guidance for local authorities on their duties relating to the participation of young people in education, employment or training, 20 October 2016¹⁵.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to equality impacts when making decisions in the exercise of their functions (Public Sector Equality Duty, PSED). In particular, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>

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characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following as protected characteristics for the purpose of the PSED:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnicity)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

9.2 Lewisham Education strategy 2022-2027 reflects the Council's commitment to work in partnership with providers to develop a relevant and comprehensive post-16 offer for Lewisham, including apprenticeships. Also to Support the development of comprehensive pathways that will enable school leavers to progress their learning and secure positive labour market outcomes, including children looked after and those with SEND.

10. Glossary

Term	Definition
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
EET	In education, employment or training
DfE	Department for Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

11. Report author and contact

11.1 Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation

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Opportunity England

How colleges can transform life chances, overcome inequalities and boost economic growth

JULY 2023



Foreword

The next general election offers the chance for the political parties to set out their vision for our country after many years of political, constitutional, health and social turbulence and uncertainties. We passionately believe that colleges can be unleashed to contribute even more to addressing the challenges of the modern world, but also to realise the opportunities.

Opportunity England, at its heart, is therefore a plea to politicians to understand how, with the right investment and policies, colleges can play an even bigger role in an inclusive, tolerant, welcoming, strong society and a growing and productive economy. For too long colleges have been overlooked and under-funded and yet despite that they have contributed greatly in their communities and labour markets.

The document sets out our vision for a new tertiary education system, with clear priorities and great impact. It shows how colleges contribute and what changes are urgently needed to allow them to do even more. Colleges are an incredible public resource which can be relied on to deliver efficiently and effectively even in the toughest of times, as we showed during the pandemic and since.

I hope that *Opportunity England* is read widely and that it helps generate the debate and discussions we want to have about the future shape, purpose and funding of the post-16 education system. Please challenge us, engage with us and help to reach the cross-party consensus that is both possible and desirable for a long term step change in lifelong learning and investment in colleges.



David Hughes

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

JULY 2023

Introduction

Whoever wins the next general election faces many well-documented challenges, including the threat of recession, stagnating growth and productivity, and ever-widening skills gaps across the economy. Tackling these, and building an economy fit for the future will require bold action, and a cohesive education and skills training system, set up and supported to deliver for people, businesses and for communities.

Education and training will be crucial in addressing five of the biggest challenges and turning them into opportunities, including:



AGEING POPULATION

Growing numbers of older people will increase the demand for health and social care services and heighten the demand for more flexible forms of employment, education and training across the labour market.



BRITAIN'S PLACE IN THE WORLD

Changing trade and migration arrangements with continental Europe will increase the need for our system to support people to get the skills needed in our labour markets in low, medium and high skilled sectors and jobs, and to keep pace with changes in those jobs.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Increasing urgency to reduce carbon emissions will change the skills in many sectors, but particularly in the construction, energy, manufacturing and transport industries.



DIGITALISATION

Greater use of digital data, telecommunications and artificial intelligence is likely to alter the demand for skills, the need for re-training and maintaining currency of skills as well as changes in how education and training are delivered and assessed.



ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

The ambition for a high-skill, high pay economy will increase the need for more people to be skilled at higher levels and in growth sectors of the economy. Meanwhile, the growing emphasis on redressing regional economic inequalities necessarily requires a focus on addressing unequal attainment in our education and training system, and supporting people to be able to retrain and upskill later on in life.

Education and training systems within the UK are organised separately in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and there is much to learn across all four nations. In England, these five big challenges need a strong response from government but our post-16 education and training system is not regulated, funded and organised to deliver as it can and must.

Most of the issues we face are not unique to this country, but the opportunity is there for the next government to unleash the potential of colleges to make a step change and make skills a great British success story. Opportunity England sets out what the next Government needs to do to think big, to think bold, and to take on the future with optimism and hope.

This will require proper reform of the tertiary education system, to:

1. **Drive economic growth and improve productivity**
2. **Overcome regional inequalities**
3. **Offer better life and work opportunities for all**
4. **Bring about the green transition**
5. **Deliver the health and social care workforce revolution**
6. **Build safe, cohesive and integrated communities**

Achieving these will not be easy. Which is why we urgently need to see a bold and confident vision for tertiary education and a long-term strategy that is sustainable, deliverable, and supported by all parts of government.

We need a system in which:

Every young person and adult will be supported to attain and maintain the skills they will need throughout their lives

Every employer is supported to innovate, improve productivity and develop their workforce to have the skills needed in the transition to a green and flourishing economy.

Every community boasts of post-16 learning opportunities which meet the needs of all their citizens through an ecosystem of learning organisations delivering a coherent, diverse and compelling set of opportunities for people to learn and train.

Colleges are recognised, regulated and funded to play the unique role that only they can play in providing a truly comprehensive set of learning, training and education opportunities to people of all ages and at all levels whilst supporting employers to innovate and grow.

ONE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Colleges, universities and other learning organisations need to be regulated and funded together as one tertiary system. Current separate regulation, funding, data and success measures make it hard for people and employers to understand and navigate the learning and skills they need and want. Learning organisations are forced to compete for scarce resources, resulting in a reduced breadth of offer, efficiency and quality of provision.

We need a national post-16 education and skills strategy developed in partnership with learning organisations and across a range of other institutions including local government, employer groups, unions and community organisations.

The national strategy and priorities would inform and drive local learning organisations to come together, alongside devolved authorities and others to show how local priorities, action and delivery help deliver the national vision and strategy. A more coherent and planned devolution presents an opportunity to deliver more coherence for learners and employers, more efficiency through collaboration and simplicity and ensure decisions about what are needed are made where they will impact.



UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF COLLEGES TO DELIVER ON THIS AGENDA

Policy recommendations

The incoming government should focus on five areas of urgent actions to unleash the potential of colleges to deliver:

- 1.


A new statutory right to lifelong learning
- 2.


An apprenticeships system that works
- 3.


A curriculum for all
- 4.


A workforce strategy
- 5.


Investing in our future

RECOMMENDATION 1



A new statutory right to lifelong learning

THE CHALLENGE

At the very time when changes in our economy and society need people to gain new skills, we have seen a significant decline in the levels of participation in adult education. Since 2004 participation numbers in government-funded learning have almost halved (down 49 per cent) with only one in three adults self-reporting any participation in learning (the lowest level in 22 years). Meanwhile, more jobs require education at Level 3 and above and AI and other technology changes will only accelerate the need for a better-skilled workforce.

Currently only 60 per cent of young people reach Level 3 by age 19, while 15 per cent fail to reach Level 2 and the numbers studying higher and intermediate technical and vocational courses are lower than competitor countries. Those who do participate are far more likely to be well-educated and better off. The poorest adults with the lowest qualification levels are the least likely to access adult training despite being the group who might benefit most. Those who work for many employers are given no support or training at work, and flexible opportunities to learn outside of work have been greatly reduced.

Meanwhile, too many people who are unemployed cannot access the training that could get them into good jobs because of the disconnect between skills and welfare, with the current welfare system actively impeding people from getting the skills they need.

All of this results in millions of people missing out on opportunities to retrain and upskill for a new job or career, employers unable to fill key vacancies where skills gaps exist, slower economic growth and a huge impact on health and wellbeing.

THE SOLUTION

We need a revolution in lifelong learning. This should be articulated through a new statutory right to lifelong learning consisting of three components:

- i) A universal entitlement to a first full Level 3 qualification, building on the Lifetime Skills Guarantee introduced in 2020 but with a wider range of courses on offer and with maintenance support. Local Level 3 priorities should be available to anyone, irrespective of their prior achievement levels, in line with local skills improvement plans (LSIPs).
- ii) Building on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) to stimulate growth in higher level skills, with grants being made available as well as loans to ensure wider access and to incentivise learning in local skills priorities. That demand-side stimulation should be matched with investment in colleges to develop the offer at levels 4 and 5, in partnership with local employers to meet labour market needs.
- iii) Better access to adult education and training for people in receipt of Universal Credit (UC). Existing UC conditionalities which pose a major barrier to many from accessing training and reskilling opportunities should be removed, together with expanding local partnerships between job centres, colleges and other education providers to strengthen local working.



RECOMMENDATION 2



An apprenticeships system that works

THE CHALLENGE

The overall apprenticeship programme is not working – for many people, employers, areas of the country and sectors of the economy. We have seen a dramatic decline in the number of young people undertaking apprenticeships, from an already low bar – now down to just 60,000 young people starting apprentices each year.

Recent analysis has shown for example that we have lost over 160,000 engineering and manufacturing apprenticeship training places since the reforms were implemented – directly contributing to the current record of 84,000 vacancies in this sector alone.

The apprenticeship levy has been successful in persuading more large employers to participate in the programme and has fostered new high-quality apprenticeships as part of their workforce plans. But overall, the government's failure to set any priorities for how the levy is used by employers has seen unwanted and major shifts, with higher-level apprenticeships for existing employees in big companies growing at the expense of opportunities for young people and new labour market entrants where numbers have reduced. Many small companies are put off by the bureaucracy. Overall employer investment in education and training remains low, compared to OECD counterparts.

Oversight of apprenticeships is messy, involving the Department for Education, IfATE, Ofqual, Ofsted and OfS and there are no programme levers for any of them to ensure that priorities are being met.

THE SOLUTION

A fundamental rethink of our approach to apprenticeships would have five key elements:

- i) Apprenticeships to be integrated into the wider system with clear articulation and simpler progression routes into and out of apprenticeships with other qualifications at all levels.
- ii) A review of the levy should be held, to look at where the money is currently spent, what forecasts suggest about future spending, whether there are options to pool employer contributions and whether it will be necessary to increase the levy rate from 0.5% to 1.0% as some have suggested.
- iii) Apprenticeships to be focused on new job starters. We should return to the recommendations of the 2012 government review which stated that an 'apprenticeship should be redefined... clearly targeted at and promoted to those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained or substantial training.
- iv) Training and accreditation of existing workers should be delivered separately, as should provision aimed primarily at entry level jobs. This requires more investment in new routes into apprenticeships for those who are not yet ready and different arrangements, outside apprenticeships, for those who are no longer new in role.
- v) At least half of the levy should be spent on apprenticeships, as defined above. Government should set priorities in consultation with the range of social and economic partners for the use of the levy, as it does on other programmes funded from taxation. This might, for instance, require more transparency from employers on how they use the levy by publishing their starts, completions and outcomes as well as the requirement to use a certain percentage of the levy on young people.



RECOMMENDATION 3

A curriculum for all

THE CHALLENGE

The technical education reforms started in England in 2016 are in their infancy and will need to evolve over the next few years as we learn more about how they fit, how they work and which students will benefit most from them. Overall, technical and vocational qualifications are still not respected and understood as they should be. But the speed of change brings great risks. As the Education Select Committee said, 'rushing ahead with major reforms to post-16 qualifications risks leaving young people stranded without suitable qualification pathways and deepening worker shortages in key sectors'. Current plans to withdraw funding for many existing qualifications risks constricting student choice and narrowing progression opportunities, with the potential for an increase in the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The wider challenge on qualifications, though, is that there is no overview of how qualifications work for the whole cohort of young people and adults, across their lives, in all pathways and across all industrial sectors, subjects and professions. The result is that students, parents, advisers and employers are confused about how things work. For instance, does a T Level (Level 3) allow progression onto an apprenticeship at Level 4? What option is available for someone with a Level 2 in English and maths at grade 4 wanting to do engineering when the T Level entry requirement is for a grade 6 in maths?



THE SOLUTION

We need an immediate pause to the proposed defunding of existing Level 3 and below VTQs, until we can see how T Levels are working in terms of accessibility and progression for students, meeting industry needs and promoting social mobility. This pause would allow a wider review of the whole suite of qualifications to ensure that they are enabling and supporting every young person and adult to access the best possible pathways and outcomes.

Longer term, government needs to work with colleges, awarding organisations, employers and other partners to develop an overarching strategy that brings together the entire offer, both technical and academic, for young people and adults.

Key components of a more coherent system of qualifications includes:

- i) A qualification plan for every sector with a range of specialist vocational and technical qualifications at different levels. One framework or format doesn't fit all but there need to be stepping-on and stepping-off points with progression opportunities, including into apprenticeships
- ii) Appropriate qualifications for adult learners with opportunities to study the same qualifications (or parts of) as 16 to 18-year-olds, but in a flexible way that recognises prior learning and experience (for example micro credentials and options for hybrid learning).
- iii) An ESOL strategy for England for better co-ordinated support to those in our communities whose first language is not English to improve integration and labour market access.
- iv) Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG): both online and face to face, which starts in at least early secondary for young people and is easily accessible for adults. There should be an expectation that students in KS4 have access to extended tasters of post-16 education and training options.
- v) Opportunities which go beyond qualifications with every young person entitled to study English, maths and digital skills, to benefit from work experience, to learn life skills, to cover relationships, sex and health education, political, economic, environmental and cultural literacy and enrichment, including sports, arts, guest speakers, skills competitions (e.g. WorldSkills and international mobility visits through the Turing Scheme and alignment with Erasmus+).

RECOMMENDATION 4



A workforce strategy

THE CHALLENGE

There is a crisis in college workforce recruitment and retention, driven largely by poor pay but also by a sense that college staff are not valued by the government as much as school staff. Turnover is high, with too many good staff leaving the sector for better pay elsewhere. Finding and keeping teaching staff in skills shortage and priority sectors is increasingly difficult, leading to many colleges having to restrict the offer they make in the very areas where skills needs are greatest, creating a vicious cycle of intractable challenges.



THE SOLUTION

There are three elements to addressing the college workforce recruitment and retention crisis:

- i) Poor staff pay must be addressed. The average pay for teaching staff in colleges sits c£8000pa below that of their colleagues in schools and for other staff the gaps are equally significant. Funding rates need to be increased for colleges to at least be able to match the new starting salary of £30,000 a year for teaching staff in schools and a longer-term approach which ensures no gap appears again, whilst as importantly addressing the pay of support staff too.
- ii) There is also a big pay gap between college lecturers and the industries they are training people for. The government should invest in a cadre of sector experts to be employed by colleges in priority sectors, paid closer to industry levels, to stimulate demand, engage with employers and to help ensure curriculum, delivery, quality, CPD and work placements are all adequate to meet labour market needs.
- iii) The mechanism for setting a non-binding pay recommendation through the National Joint Forum (NJF) between AoC and staff unions has come under strain in recent years, with the government as major funded absent from the process. AoC is keen to explore and test other options to setting pay, through discussions with the government, the TUC, relevant education unions and with member colleges.





RECOMMENDATION 5

Investing for the future

THE CHALLENGE

A growing economy needs ongoing investment in skills, for jobs today and to be agile as job needs change. Investing in skills gives instant as well as long-term returns through supporting innovation and higher productivity, helping employers find and develop productive workers and in turn delivering higher wages.

Sadly, that investment is lacking in our country - post-16 education funding is way behind what is needed to boost economic growth. Without additional investment in further education and skills, particularly from government and from employers, we will not be able to fill skills shortages in key priority areas of the economy nor deliver the labour market the country needs.

The apprenticeship levy was put in place in recognition of the need to secure higher employer investment, but it is not enough. An extension of the apprenticeship levy, focussed on priorities will help increase investment, but government also needs to invest more.



THE SOLUTION

Higher investment in post-16 education and skills is the overall goal, with more work to encourage as well as require employers to invest more in their own workforces. But it is also about choices for the government into where they invest: in recent decades higher education has won more of the scarce resources than other parts of the post-16 system. That needs to change.

Addressing this requires concerted action:

- i) The next government needs to increase investment in young people aged 16 to 18 to ensure there are places for the growing population but also to ensure young people get the right foundation they need, whichever route or qualifications they opt for.
- ii) More investment is needed for transition programmes at age 16 and beyond age 18 to help those who do not succeed at GCSEs at age 16 to turn things around in their last few years of compulsory education.
- iii) There is a need for accelerated investment in skills for the transition to low carbon, for construction, engineering, health and digital skills. This needs to be additional to maintaining existing provision at Level 2 and Level 3. More investment is also needed to support adults who do not have English as their first language in order that they can participate fully in work and life.
- iv) Colleges as public institutions are keen to work with government to simplify the way in which they are funded, organised and regulated. Multi-year grant agreements, more centralised purchasing and modernised data collection could all contribute to reducing administration and investing more in the system – together with a wider review of regulatory oversight, with a view to removing duplication and inefficiencies.
- v) Government's £2.8 billion capital investment in further education between 2022 and 2025 has helped colleges, schools and other providers provide places for the growing 16-19 population, modernise facilities for technical education and tackle a large maintenance backlog identified by the Post 18 review in 2019. The task after 2025 will be to finish the job of improving buildings but also to transform energy systems to cut a large bill and to reduce carbon emissions. A small number of colleges have tested systems that combine ground-source heating with solar and exchanges with the grid to meet net zero targets. Similar approaches are needed across the 800 campus estate.
- vi) Meanwhile, colleges spend an estimated £210 million a year on VAT that they cannot reclaim because education is exempt and because, unlike councils, academies and other public sector organisations they are not covered by the VAT refund scheme. These VAT costs are a tax on FE students – the beneficiaries of college activity – and are damaging to government aims because they fall more heavily on those taking technical education programmes and those who are more likely to be disadvantaged.

Appendix

Opportunity England sets out recommendations to improving our country's tertiary education system. Below gives wider context to the issues and shares some case studies of colleges doing great work on each area.

STRONGER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

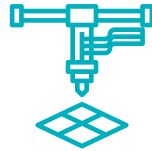
We suffer from poor levels of productivity (ONS, 2018), and are particularly ineffective at transferring groundbreaking innovations in process, design and technology into routine, day-to-day use by SMEs and micro businesses, which make up over 95 per cent of businesses across the UK (BEIS 2020). The need to innovate is critical, as employers seek to take up the benefits offered through technological innovations and seek to adapt at pace to deliver a net-zero carbon economy.

Addressing these long-standing challenges requires concerted and coordinated action from governments. Colleges have a key and expansive role to play as a part of this agenda, working in close partnership across local, regional and national systems, as a key strategic support to employers. Colleges can and must play a central role in convening, coordinating and providing high quality strategic support to employers, across innovation and skills, and in stimulating demand, particularly from SMEs and micro businesses.

This must become recognised as a core part of what a college networks delivers, in close partnership with universities, local authorities, business chambers, trade unions and others. This is vital as part of a skills-led economic recovery, as we redress long-standing regional and social inequalities and as we move towards a sustainable, net-zero carbon economy supported by a green technology revolution.

A more expansive employer service would provide a mechanism for stimulating demand from employers, coordinating strategic engagement and building new deeper relationships between employers and the education and skills system.

This would see colleges working closely with universities, employer representative bodies, local government and others, to play an expanded role in innovation and knowledge transfer, whilst also equipping employees with opportunities to develop new skills.



CASE STUDY

Dudley College of Technology supporting employers with close to market innovation and business development

Dudley College of Technology have developed an advanced manufacturing & engineering facility, reflecting their expertise in this area, which includes an innovation zone that local employers can use. This includes a rapid prototyping lab with a 3D scanner, printer, a wide range of software and other kit, all available for employers to test for proof of concept. Employers who don't have the space have used it for everything from development space to a team building venue.

When the college developed the new Institute of Technology they took this up a level, building a large hangar where employers can do larger projects. This has access to rapid prototyping facilities, CNC, robotics and other much more besides (some of which have been donated by local employers who sell the equipment). This facility aims to support SMEs to try new equipment before investing, by piloting design projects for them and giving them access to the technical equipment they need to do it.

This work supporting business with innovation and business development is something that could and should be extended across the sector, with the right support from government. Colleges are deeply embedded with SMEs within their communities, and could and should be central to boosting productivity right across the country.



OVERCOMING REGIONAL INEQUALITIES

Redressing regional and social inequalities is rightly a major political focus - as we recover from the impact of the pandemic and the global recession, and as we look forwards to growing megatrend challenges such as an aging population, the climate emergency and technological innovation and AI.

Colleges have a central role to play as key institutions at the heart of their regional economies. There are exemplary practices from colleges across the country, where their vital role has been well embedded. But equally, this is an area where the existing systems can fail to fully utilise or recognise the potential of colleges - where the approach to funding, accountability and oversight, constrains what colleges can offer, where there is insufficient alignment within other national/ regional strategies and where ultimately colleges are left delivering despite, rather than because of, the system.

CASE STUDY



Hopwood Hall driving regional economic development

As an anchor institution in the Borough, the Hopwood Hall College chairs the work and skills group for a cross borough Mayoral Zone project, linked to advanced manufacturing, machinery and materials - which is one of the most significant projects in a generation, Atom Valley.

Within Rochdale there has been a 10% increase in the number of students participating in Further Education (excl. SFC), because of the exciting and innovative curriculum offer that has been developed at Hopwood Hall College & University Centre. The attainment level in the borough lags behind the rest of the North West at levels 1-4, but since last ONS published data in 2018 the borough has reduced the gap and increased attainment at levels 2-4 at quicker rates than is being seen nationally. There is a direct correlation between partnership work with our key stakeholders and our continually developing technical education curriculum, apprenticeship and higher technical qualification that meets the ambitions of a high skilled economy that meets sector specific skills gaps.

OFFERING BETTER LIFE AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

The changes and challenges that we face mean that people need to be able to engage with education and training throughout their lives to have the skills and opportunities they need for good jobs and to live well.

This will be needed as people adapt to technological changes and to changing practices; as we ensure that people in low-skilled, low-pay sectors are not left behind, as disadvantaged groups suffer from limited opportunities to get into good quality jobs and progress within them; as we move urgently towards a carbon-neutral, green economy; and in responding to changes in the labour market and economic shocks.

In the context of ongoing technological advances, a flexible, personalised lifetime service must crucially include a radical expansion of the online and blended offer colleges deliver to people. This will require serious investment in digital infrastructure, resources and college staff expertise and capacity.

Alongside this increasingly blended offer, colleges' physical estates and resources will remain critical – and as we describe below, the role that colleges must play in place-making will only become more important in addressing social and regional inequalities and more vulnerable communities who risk being hit hardest by changes in the world of work, climate change and technological changes.

This will have to be supported through funding and student finance that ensures that cost is not a barrier to engagement with lifetime learning opportunities – and ensuring that pathways across all aspects of the education and skills system are equally valued and supported. It will also mean colleges offering much more informal support, with people of all ages using the college estate to support independent learning, to access high-quality skills and careers advice and guidance, and as a hub, incubating entrepreneurship.





CASE STUDY

New City College supporting new arrivals to get the English they need to get on in life

New City College (NCC) has over 20,000 students across the East London area. ESOL at NCC starts young, 14-19 year-old new arrivals to the UK learn English alongside GCSEs, A Levels and vocational qualifications. And, for adults, ESOL leads to employment through the college's innovative ESOL Plus programme. Jennie Turner, Curriculum Director for ESOL explains: "At NCC we recognise the enormous contribution migrants make to our society and economy and that English language is crucial to unlocking and developing the skills we need as a nation."

NCC's ESOL Plus career routes range from teaching assistants, health care and service industries through to accounting and business management. As a result of the college's carefully tailored opportunities, over 400 ESOL students will progress to adult vocational qualifications in the next academic year. Through this focused approach to English language support alongside vocational qualifications, individuals get unrivalled life and work opportunities, communities are upskilled and migrant capabilities across the region are unlocked.



DELIVERING THE GREEN TRANSITION

To deliver on the net zero carbon transformation and biodiversity targets, there is an urgent need for businesses to transition to more sustainable practices and for decarbonisation projects to move at pace. This means a transformation centred around people and their jobs.

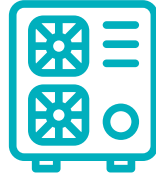
Modelling from the “Place-based Climate Action Network’s Just Transition Jobs Tracker” suggests that one in five jobs in the UK require skills that could experience demand growth (approximately 10% of UK jobs) or reduction (approximately 10%). People whose skills are no longer in demand will need retraining and upskilling, and the right careers advice to recognise and use skills they already have differently. Across the UK there are over 410,000 jobs in low carbon businesses and their supply chains already. This shift comes at a time when due to mega-trends affecting the labour market, 9 in 10 people (over 30 million people) will need to be reskilled by 2030. Colleges play a vital role in key sectors that will be affected.

Colleges are uniquely placed at the heart of communities to support a fair transition to a green economy for people and employers. They must be invested in and empowered to play their role in the journey to net zero and meet the need for green skills and green jobs.

Colleges educate and train people of all ages for key low carbon sectors and those that are on the journey to transforming, from construction and energy to agriculture and transport. They train the workers of tomorrow, upskill and retrain those transitioning into other jobs, and act as a stepping stone to progress into higher education and other training relevant for the green economy.

Colleges also provide careers advice to support every student with the right education and training pathway for them, including working with JobCentre Plus to signpost courses that support the green economy. Whether an employer is in an established green sector that is growing, an emerging green sector that is predicted to grow throughout the transition, or a sector experiencing significant transformation and/or decline, colleges work every day to meet their skills needs.

At the same time, small and medium-sized enterprises are not always sufficiently aware of how to adapt to be more sustainable, what skills are needed, and their investment in green training is often limited. As strategic partners, there is an important role for colleges to support local businesses with these changes, to build partnerships that can share knowledge and work together to support the right skills development and innovation.



CASE STUDY

The college sector's role in training heat pump installers

The government has confirmed an ambition for all new heating systems installed in UK homes from 2035 to be low carbon and recently set a target to deploy 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028.¹⁸ Colleges will play an important role in training and upskilling installers. Decarbonising households and workplaces could support 240,000 jobs across the sector by 2035. To meet net zero targets by 2050, over 44,000 heating installers will be required to meet this ambition by 2035, according to the Heat Pump Association.¹⁹ This will need to include both young people and those within existing workforces. To overcome any future skills shortage, the boiler manufacturing workforce will be critical for both safeguarding jobs and harnessing existing skills. Individuals with the needed skills could also come from air-conditioning manufacturing and the automotive industry. As a recent Friends of the Earth report stated, "whilst the technology is different, many of the engineering and component assembly processes are similar."

The recently announced initiatives from the Government to drive down the cost of low carbon heating technologies like heat pumps through government grants mean that demand is expected. However, a college can only implement training in the new skill set when there are jobs for those who undertake the training to progress in to. That's why AoC has been working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and heat pump industry representatives to bring colleges and industry closer together in a working partnership. This is with the aim to try and reduce the lag between training delivery and skills demand. The conversations have been considering the upskilling of the existing workforce, the migration of other workers from jobs in lower demand, and the training of young people who would seek to enter the sector.



DELIVERING THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Meeting existing and future workforce needs is one of the biggest challenges facing NHS leaders. By better embedding colleges into core NHS workforce development, and better using their local recruitment and training power, we can help to ensure a sustainable, agile and innovative future health and care workforce.

Colleges currently play a significant role in the training and upskilling of health and care staff, providing a strong base from which to better understand how closer working can develop and promote new career pathways. In many ways, colleges are the main link for the NHS to recruit in the communities it serves, opening up opportunity to a much greater and diverse pool of talent and increasing the ability to retain and further develop its workforce.

Alongside their role in progression towards university, colleges offer a breadth of qualifications from Level 1 to foundation degrees that lead to a range of NHS and social care career pathways – including roles from healthcare assistants and lab technicians to catering staff.

But we strongly believe colleges should be seen more as recruitment partners. There is also an opportunity to jointly promote the health and care sectors as a career to communities. The important role they play could be enhanced through honing health and care career paths through careers education, information advice and guidance (CEIAG). This requires collaboration with other partners, such as schools, to engage young people. A national, college-led campaign could help to celebrate NHS careers and achievements through the college sector, with recognition of the workforce's significant contribution in response to COVID-19. Apprenticeships provide a key opportunity to put this into practice, as do T Levels which include industry placements that will require coordination.

And beyond this, colleges have a key role in public health. Health outcomes can be improved through collaborating on the development of college courses that lead to pre-prepared and tangible entry points into job roles. This is important for those found furthest from the labour market, such as those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), low education attainment, homelessness, care leavers, carers, a criminal record and low aspirations. As we look to future health and care roles, college courses should increasingly focus on innovative health and wellbeing services that are strongly aligned with the NHS Long Term Plan and local growth plans. This includes social prescribing and new tech-driven approaches to health and care.



CASE STUDY

Bridgwater and Taunton College- Nursing Provision

The nationwide shortage of qualified nurses is well documented, but the problem is particularly acute in Somerset, a county with no major cities or traditional university campuses. Young people wishing to enter the nursing profession have previously had no choice but to leave home to gain the necessary degree qualification, whilst those already employed by the NHS who aspire to progress further have been unable to do so without major disruption to home and family life.

Bridgwater and Taunton College has spent a decade negotiating, collaborating and innovating to overcome this challenge, becoming the first FE college to gain the consent of both the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) and its university partner (University of the West of England) to deliver nursing degrees locally and in its own right. The College was also the first FE College to be invited and accepted into the Council of Deans of Health, and now sits alongside university healthcare faculties at the heart of policy and political debate.

The college is the first – and still the only – FE college in England to gain NMC site approval to deliver direct entry (via UCAS), fee-paying registered nursing degrees and has enrolled 190 students to its nursing degree programmes since September 2021. The Trainee Nurse Associate (TNA) programme has been successfully delivered to 230 learners, with course retention rates of 96% that far exceed the national averages of 58% (19/20) and 74% (20/21) and consistently outperform the overwhelming majority of the university sector. Of those successfully completing the programme, 89% (205 graduates) have been directly employed into the NHS across the Southwest region. The college has of last week received approval from the NMC to offer the Nurse Associate Route as direct entry. This is of particular importance in addressing widening participation.

In partnership with the college, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust is strategically addressing some of our biggest workforce challenges and threats to the delivery of high quality, sustainable health care across the South-West region. This provision is a superb example of a college responding to local workforce demand. Not only has it opened up exciting new career and progression routes for individuals of all ages in Somerset, but in doing so has made a hugely positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of the entire community, whilst also ensuring that local talent is retained in-county, where it is desperately needed to help resolve a critical workforce crisis.

BUILDING SAFE, COHESIVE AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES

Colleges are important anchor institutions in communities across the country, but this dimension is not sufficiently supported or incentivised. Colleges can and must play a significant and expanded role in building safe, cohesive, integrated communities - including through addressing digital poverty and literacy, supporting non-English speakers to learn the language, providing digital hubs to people of all ages who are able to access infrastructure, resources and basic training. This requires working closely with other community partners, including adult and community learning providers, local authorities and others, to develop coherent joined-up strategies.

Colleges at their best are one of the few places where all parts of a community will come together – and as they become touchpoints available to everyone throughout their lives, the role that colleges will play in deepening social inclusion and cohesion and tackling discrimination needs to be given greater prominence. This must also include the college estate genuinely being recognised and used as a community asset – with sport and performing arts facilities for example being used by local partners, and colleges playing an active role with other community partners in supporting health and wellbeing strategies.



CASE STUDY

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College working to reduce re-offending

In2Sport is a sport education programme designed for individuals with experiences of the criminal justice system and those overcoming addiction. The overarching aim of the provision is to reduce reoffending rates and support learners into meaningful employment. Referrals are made into In2Sport via prison, probation and addiction support services.

Across two academic years, learners complete both Level 2 Gym Instructing and Level 3 Personal Training qualifications, as well as having the opportunity to complete work experience with the college and the wider community.

At present, reoffending rates in the UK stand 24%, with the average cost per prisoner at around £45,000 per annum. Since 2021, the In2Sport programme has successfully engaged 24 males, none of whom have returned to prison, saving the taxpayer over £1 million.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students in further education



Inquiry Report - July 2023

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Students

All-Party Parliamentary group for Further Education and Lifelong Learning

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Introduction

The APPG for Students' inquiry and report into the impact of the cost-of-living on students, which was published in March, focused on the experiences of students in higher education, but we agreed to conduct more detailed research into the experiences of students in further education (FE) faced with the current cost of living pressures. We were pleased to work in partnership with the APPG for FE and lifelong Learning, and their secretariat the Association of Colleges, and conducted further polling and oral evidence sessions to better understand the financial pressures on students in further education colleges.

Whilst many of the issues outlined in the first report represent pressures on the student experience across both further and higher education, there are some key areas where further education is experiencing unique difficulties. This report aims to unpack how FE students are struggling, to investigate how wider support available – such as bursaries, college provisions, and localised measures – has been able to assist them and provide recommendations to FE providers and government outlining what additional support is needed.

This report identifies both the immediate issues that FE students are experiencing as well as highlighting some of the longer-term consequences that the current financial pressures are going to have on students in FE colleges. As such, we collated written evidence and survey data from FE colleges and students, as well as holding an oral evidence session.

Based on the evidence we received, we believe that most FE students are feeling the effects of current financial pressures, and this is causing many to need to work insecure jobs and excessive hours alongside their studies, with some forced to drop out of their studies to make ends meet. Unlike those in HE, many are under pressure to provide financial support not just to themselves but also to wider family members, meaning that continuing in education is no longer a viable option. Many students in further education aim to complete technical education and studies that would enable them to fill essential skills gaps in the current UK workforce, and we predict that these ongoing cost of living pressures coupled with the longer-term pressure on FE funding is likely to impact not only a generation of students but on skills that are essential to the UK workforce.

We recognise the demands and pressures across every area of government spending but feel that our recommendations for both an immediate spending commitment to support students who have been placed in significant financial hardship, as well as longer-term changes are needed for both current and prospective students.

Paul Blomfield MP (Chair), Robin Walker MP (Vice-Chair), Wera Hobhouse MP (Vice-Chair), Alison Thewliss MP (Vice-Chair), APPG for Students

Peter Aldous MP (Chair, APPG on Further Education and Lifelong Learning)

Background

We received survey submissions and evidence from over 700 students and just under 80 colleges. We acknowledge that this is a small sample, but it confirmed information from sector bodies such as the Association of Colleges and the National Union of Students, and wider evidence on FE from the Sutton Trust and the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The main themes were also reflected in the oral evidence session, where officers of the APPG heard from students and sector experts about current financial difficulties in further education.

As well as dealing with the current cost-of-living crisis, the evidence we received highlighted many aspects of the further education funding system that have been failing to keep up with student need. The financial strain that many colleges are facing has been compounded by a decade of cumulative funding cuts that have exacerbated the impact of the current financial crisis. As a result, the cost-of-living crisis is disproportionately impacting students in FE whilst also contributing to entrenching disadvantage among students, who are losing out on the benefits of further education for skills development and social mobility.

Firstly, it is already well known that young people from a disadvantaged background who remain in post-compulsory education are much more likely to study within an FE college and that FE students are more likely than their peers in higher education to have qualified for free school meals.¹ Given that we know the cost-of-living crisis is disproportionately affecting disadvantaged students, this

¹ The Sutton Trust, "[Going Further: Further education, disadvantage, and social mobility](#)", 2021.

43% of young people from a more disadvantaged background are likely to attend a further education college, compared to 32% from a more advantaged background.

means that FE students – as a proportion of the wider student population – are more likely to be experiencing increased financial difficulty due to cost-of-living pressures. Our evidence suggested that this is having a knock-on impact on their ability to complete studies.

With rising food and energy costs compounding, FE students are struggling to prioritise their studies over maintaining jobs and working more hours to make ends meet.

Secondly, whilst it's clear the current crisis is having an extreme impact in the immediate term on students' daily lives and colleges abilities to provide high-quality education, many of the financial pressures facing FE colleges have built up over the longer term, in the context of continuing erosion of state funding for further education since 2010. It is important to recognise the challenging financial situation in the FE sector, and the impact this, coupled with the cost-of-living crisis, can ultimately have on students. Substantial reforms have been made to the funding of 16-19 education since 2010, in particular with the introduction of a new funding formula for 2013-14. At the same time as this reform, the funding provided to the sector as a whole has been reduced.

For example, the 16 to 19 bursary fund, which was introduced to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in 2011, represented less than a third of the EMA budget and targets a much smaller group of young people. Funding for FE learner bursaries has continued to be cut since 2011, and the total programme funding for 16-19 providers fell from £6.09 billion in 2013-14 to £5.49 billion in 2018-19 – a reduction of 10% in cash terms and 17% in real terms.²

Finally, further education does not receive as much funding or financial support as other areas of the tertiary education sector, meaning that students in further education do not have the same access to bursary or financial support as their peers in higher education. The most recent spring budget didn't mention further education at all, and despite announcements of an increased financial package to address cost-of-living pressures for students in higher education,³ nothing has been announced for an equivalent in further education.

In 2018, the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee published a report on the structure and funding of the post-16 education sector which outlined the difference in respect for the further and higher education sectors, and the unequal public funding system.⁴

Further education is the poor relation to higher education and its position has been weakened and undermined by reductions to its budgets and a complex funding architecture. The separate funding mechanisms create educational silos that prevent innovation. The system accentuates the perception that routes into higher education that begin in further education are inferior to the A-Level/ undergraduate degree option.

As a result of additional funding in the 2021 Spending Review, total spending per student in 16–18 education is set to rise by 6% between 2021–22 and 2024–25. Yet even with this additional funding, college spending per pupil in 2024–25 will still be around 10% below 2010–11 levels.⁵

² House of Commons Library Briefing, "16-19 education funding in England since 2010", 2020.

³ UK Government, [Cost of living boost for students](#), 2023.

⁴ House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, "[Treating Students Fairly: The Economics of Post-School Education](#)", 2018.

⁵ Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Annual Report on Education Spending in England](#), 2021.

With FE student numbers expected to rise by 10% between 2021 and 2024, the introduction of T-levels and nearly a decade of real-term budget cuts,⁶ the pressures on FE colleges when delivering education have been steadily increasing even before the cost-of-living crisis, and this is inevitably having a knock-on impact on students and their experiences during the current financial crisis, where colleges are struggling to provide support to all who need it.

Further education students' experience of the cost-of-living crisis

Many students in further education have been pushed to tipping point by the cumulative effect of ever-increasing food and energy bills, transport, rent and living expenses. Much like students in higher education, the cost of living has impacted FE students in similarly devastating ways.

FE students who responded to our survey reported difficulties with transport, rent and bills, working more hours to make ends meet, struggles with prioritising their course load and classes, and negative impacts on their mental health because of the cost-of-living crisis. 72% said they are facing costs that are putting them in financial difficulty, and of those costs 23% said energy was the main cost pressure, and 21% said transport was the main issue.

In terms of transport, many students told us that they are receiving bursary support to cover their bus fares and their placement travel costs and many reported walking long distances to college to save on bus and transport fares. A [recent report](#) from NUS found that a significant portion of students' weekly budgets is being taken up on travel.⁷ In Scotland, some FE students benefit from the Young Scot National Entitlement Card providing free travel to under 22s, however with 55% of Scottish Students aged 22 or over, there are calls for this to be extended to ease financial pressures on students.⁸

On top of this, students in FE report taking on more paid work and completing more hours throughout the week to cover costs. Almost one half of those in paid employment in our survey have increased their hours due to cost-of-living pressures. Although this was similar for HE students, those in FE were very different in one important respect - colleges who responded to our survey reported a high percentage of students are working to support not just themselves but also their families, which has a direct impact on their studies. Both students and colleges reported that the need to work more hours means students miss classes and fall behind on their studies and attendance because they need to prioritise earning money.

I started to work on the weekend, rather than focusing on my revision. (17-year-old student, East Midlands)

I can't get the grades needed due to excessive working hours. (16-year-olds, Southwest)

I'm struggling to meet deadlines due to having to support my family (16-year-old student, Northwest)

Colleges are also reporting evidence of extreme financial desperation in students and their families at an unprecedented level. Colleges are now regularly reporting cases of extreme student poverty.

⁶ House of Commons Library Briefing, "Further education Funding in England", 2022

⁷ National Union of Students, "[Move it: Student Travel Survey Report](#)", May 2023.

⁸ Transport Scotland, [Young Persons' Free Bus Travel](#), 2022.

NUS Scotland, [Give all students and apprentices half price bus and train travel](#), 2023.

For example, students wearing the same clothes every day for long periods, students wearing college workplace protective clothing outside of college, students staying in college for all their meals and students coming to college to be warm on days when they have no classes.

The Association of Colleges reported in their evidence that bursaries and hardship funds are becoming an essential item for family budgets, for example students will walk several miles to college to give their transport bursary to their family for food or energy costs, students may get very anxious about the breaks and holiday periods even if they get food vouchers to tide them over the break.⁹ While there are similarities with students in higher education, it's clear that extreme financial desperation for FE students is linked to their families and households – 25% of student survey respondents said family financial situation was their biggest cause of financial worry.

In addition to these concerns that reflect those highlighted in the APPG for Students' earlier report, our further evidence and survey data illustrates that in further education, there are some specific and unique experiences that are impacting colleges and students because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Firstly, our evidence indicated that colleges have been reporting increased safeguarding issues resulting from the current financial pressures. The Association of Colleges reported that colleges are dealing with a significant rise in family tensions and domestic abuse because of cost-of-living pressures and have been referring more students to supported housing. The number of 'at risk' learners is greater than ever, and colleges must work with a range of different agencies to support these students. Additionally, some colleges have noted an increase in students that are victims of criminal and sexual exploitation and involvement with criminal gangs. Vulnerable students are often drawn into lawbreaking because of extreme financial destitution, which puts them at serious risk whilst also having a negative impact on their studies. With reduced capacity in external social and public services, many colleges reported that there are limited options when seeking further support for disadvantaged students.

Secondly, there are problems in FE colleges relating to their support of apprentices. Those students on apprenticeship placements, currently earning an average wage of £5.28 an hour, are not eligible for receiving bursaries because of the government limitations on further education bursaries. The National Union of Students (NUS) shared data as part of their evidence highlighting that 91% of apprentices reported that the cost-of-living crisis was having an impact on their income.¹⁰ Additionally, colleges reported that on average students on apprenticeships must travel further than others to reach their placement programme (due to limited apprenticeship placement availability particularly in rural areas), and the required number of hours spent in placements means that apprentices are struggling to afford their travel. Consequently, students are leaving apprenticeships to seek out better paying but often more unstable employment.

I intended on getting an apprenticeship, but the apprenticeship rate doesn't compare to my current wage, so I am debating whether to continue studies. (16-year-old, Isle of Wight)

I don't want to carry on with education after college as I need a better paying job, rather than an apprenticeship wage (16-year-old female student)

Finally, both the written and oral evidence suggested that one of the largest impacts on FE students has been on retention. Whereas in the HE sector, our evidence did not highlight an immediate impact on the number of students dropping out, for colleagues in further education, student

⁹ Association of Colleges, evidence submission to the APPG inquiry, February 2023.

¹⁰ National Union of Students, Evidence submission to the APPG inquiry, June 2023.

retention and attendance has been cited as one of the key issues that colleges have had to focus on this academic year. London Southeast Colleges Group highlighted that a decline in student attendance has been one of the main challenges for their colleges this academic year. Hartlepool college have introduced welfare and retention monitors (“WARMs”) in response to a long tail of students who are finding it hard to engage. Many colleges responding to our survey noted that they are funnelling resources into ensuring they retain students, and they do not drop out of their studies this academic year. Whilst further data has not yet been collected this academic year on student retention in further education, colleges advised us that they are seeing an immediate impact that they expect will play out in the longer term.

Bursary funding and other mitigations

Colleges are reporting a massive increase in students requesting bursary support. Hartlepool College reported that 95% of their 16-18 cohort of students applied for a bursary this year, compared to 65% in the previous year. Around 50% of the 95% who applied came from working families, and there was a 75% increase in request for support with food. On top of this, the Association of Colleges reported that 50% of those on bursaries are from working families. Our own polling found that 83% of colleges noticed an increase in demand for hardship and bursary funding and 87% have increased their welfare casework because of the cost-of-living crisis.

However, many students who have been requesting support do not meet the threshold for the bursaries that are available, as more students than ever from working families request support. The National Association for Managers of Student Services reported that only 40% of students who are requesting support for subsistence are eligible for free college meals.¹¹

In response to this increased demand, many colleges have increased the income threshold for access to bursary funding to accommodate more students. But with no extra funding announced to support this, colleges are struggling to meet demands. Colleges are topping up bursaries from their own college budget, for example adding additional discounts to supplemented food, but this puts unsustainable strain on finances. By using existing college finances to support student bursaries for immediate financial need, this is taking away from enrichment activities and experiences such as visiting open days and extra-curricular support, which ultimately diminishes the student experience for those worst off in further education. Beyond bursary funding, colleges have implemented additional support programmes to help students. Much like universities, colleges have been providing their own dedicated and localised support to students on top of the available bursary schemes – but with far less resources available to them. Colleges reported creating food parcels for students, increasing mental health and counselling support, providing warm spaces and free breakfasts as well as subsidising food and drink.

At a national policy level, there is little maintenance support for young people in further education, unlike at university where students can take out a loan for both tuition fees and maintenance costs. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund was introduced to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in 2011, and the UK Government allocates this funding to local authorities, publicly funded schools and colleges, and other education and training providers in England to support financially disadvantaged students. Its purpose is to provide financial support to help students overcome specific barriers to participation, so they can remain in education. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) outlines that there are two types of bursaries available, bursaries for defined

¹¹ National Association of Managers of Student Services, Evidence given at APPG evidence session, June 2023.

vulnerable groups (up to £1,200 per student) and discretionary bursaries which institutions award using policies they set, in line with these funding rules.¹² Working within these frameworks, and the continuing erosion of bursary funding levels for further education, the cost-of-living crisis has made an increasingly difficult funding landscape much more challenging.

In Wales and Scotland, further education students still receive the Education Maintenance Allowance, providing an additional £30 per week to students from low-income backgrounds.¹³ Many colleges in England however said that the re-introduction of EMA alone will not address the current hardship experienced by students, not least because colleges are seeking support for measures that target not only the individual but also wider programmes for the student cohort as a whole, such as counselling and subsidised food.

On top of this, colleges have outlined in their evidence to the APPG that they experience further administrative difficulties in providing the right level of support. Whereas schools automatically receive data about student background and financial data allowing them to provide the right levels of support, this is not true of colleges. Many respondents outlined that colleges would be able to better support students if this was the case, as the additional administrative burden in collecting the data from students to award bursaries places strain on resources and causes processing delays. Better integration with local services in not only sharing data but also coordinating local authority support could greatly benefit FE students. The National Association of Managers of Student Services and others highlighted that because FE colleges are more embedded in local communities and economies, a more localised approach to solutions would help equip colleges to improve the level of support they can provide students.

Long term consequences for students in further education

Evidence submitted to the inquiry identified several longer-term consequences for students resulting from the cost-of-living crisis.

Firstly, following the immediate issue of student retention which has been highlighted, colleges and sector experts predict that over the longer-term we will see this cost-of-living crisis impact on students' continuation of studies, and on their choice of study with a consequent impact on their careers. Students told us how the cost-of-living crisis was affecting their decision to not only remain in education but the type and length of course, with many leaning towards choosing shorter courses or courses that lead more quickly to securing work. Rather than making longer term career decisions and achieving their potential, students are having to think about what will allow them to best support themselves and their families in the short term, sacrificing longer-term educational goals. Many now consider it impossible to continue into higher education, or to continue into their chosen (higher paid) training route.

Learners are making the decision to not continue with their studies to access work and looking very short term about their careers. (College, South West)

I won't be doing midwifery if I pass, as I have to go into working full time (Student, 21, East Midlands)

¹² Education and Skills Funding Alliance, [16 to 19 Bursary Fund guide 2022 to 2023 academic year](#), 2022.

¹³ Scottish Government, [Support for Further Education Students](#), 2022-23.

I had been thinking of getting into work sooner which may mean a level below what my qualification would offer (student, 16, Northwest)

I really wanted to go to university but due to this situation I have to go to work (25, East Midlands)

I was planning to go for further and higher education but now all I'm thinking of is to find a good paid job (Student, 30 Leicester)

Stakeholders at our oral evidence session outlined their concerns that students who ultimately decide to leave education often do so to take up precarious, insecure jobs. Colleges noted that in the longer-term, we must consider what impact this will have on attempts to plug the skills gap in the UK, for example in areas like construction and social care, courses for which are primarily conducted in further education colleges.

Secondly, the evidence gathered highlighted the severe impact on students' mental health. The Association of Colleges conducted a mental health survey in March 2023 which highlighted that 82% of colleges are encountering a significant number of learners experiencing mental health difficulties without a formal disclosure.¹⁴ The biggest increase of disclosed mental health difficulties is among 16 to 18-year-olds, with 95% of colleges reporting a significant or slight increase within this cohort. Notably, 8 in 10 colleges have made a referral to A&E in the last year related to learner mental health and over 9 in 10 of colleges say they are aware of attempted suicides by learners in the last 12 months, with 70% of colleges reporting an increase in the frequency of these occurrences.

Although 68% of colleges now employ their own counsellors, this is much lower than the provision within universities. The report also noted the increased stress levels of staff, which was reflected in our survey data and inevitably has a knock-on impact on students. Furthermore, APPG polling data showed that 91% of colleges have reported an increase in student mental health issues related to financial pressures. Difficulties in accessing CAMHS for 16-19 learners puts added pressure on colleges when students can't receive help from elsewhere. Additionally, FE providers noted that the lack of data sharing with local authorities means colleges have no data about pre-existing mental health issues or previous support accessed. This data vacuum causes delays in students being identified for support and getting the help they need, both from the college and wider mental health services.

With ongoing pressures caused by the pandemic now compounding under the cost-of-living crisis, mental health issues for students in further education are likely to continue into the longer-term with far-reaching repercussions.

The impact of other services being underfunded, such as social care and mental health means a greater impact on caseloads for college workers (College, Southwest)

Additional services have been needed with no further funding for mental health counselling and mentoring services, external supervision is needed for front line staff working with students with significant mental health issues. (College, East Midlands)

The third long-term consequence identified for students in further education was the impact of the cost-of-living on widening participation and access to education for disadvantaged groups. Colleges

¹⁴ Association of Colleges, [mental health survey report](#), March 2023.

reported that there are increasing numbers of young people in further education experiencing disadvantage or other vulnerabilities which affect their trajectories through the education system.

Whilst the APPG's previous report underlined the disproportionate impact that the cost-of-living was having on already marginalised and under-participating groups of higher education students, our research shows that the same is occurring for students in further education, with students from different backgrounds with unique vulnerabilities experiencing a disproportionate impact. In further education, these present in characteristics including homelessness, Free School Meals, social housing, intergenerational unemployment, learning disabilities and caring/carer responsibilities, Looked After Children and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. Many colleges also outlined that adult learners seem to be struggling significantly and have reported a decline in adult enrolments this academic year.

London South-East Colleges said that potential adult learners are prioritising opportunities in the labour market over learning.¹⁵ With adult learners enrolled in 'English for Speakers of other Languages' (ESOL) more likely to be living on low incomes, there has been a significant increase in non-attendance rates amongst this group of learners.

Asylum seekers exist on very little money and are often rehoused far from the college where they are studying mid-course. This creates financial issues and often ends in poor attendance or leaving the course early. This is not helpful to students or colleges. (College, Greater London)

Ultimately, many of the young people and adults who might benefit most from further education and training are now - because of the cost-of-living crisis - less likely to take up opportunities to study, attend courses and achieve their potential in qualifications studied. Therefore, at an individual level students may be less likely to secure stable employment, progress in work and increase their incomes, and we will not see the desired economic growth and social mobility at local, regional, and national levels which is critical to delivering the skills and levelling-up policy agendas. Given the longer-term consequences on mental health, career choices and access to education, addressing these issues in further education with targeted and localised interventions must be an essential part of any government response to students concerns during the cost-of-living crisis.

Recommendations

To government:

1. **Provide additional funding support for further education** so that providers can increase bursaries and target those most in need.
2. **Review the mandated eligibility criteria for bursary funds** to provide colleges with more flexibility to determine the students that are eligible and the support that is needed. Providers can then introduce more adaptive initiatives to support students.
3. **Consider the case for extending free school meal eligibility** and increase the free meal rate from £2.41 per student, so that colleges can provide more subsistence support.

¹⁵ London Southeast Colleges, submission to the APPG inquiry, February 2023.

4. **Introduce free or subsidised travel** for all 16–19-year-olds in further education or training to help with travel costs.
5. **Increase the apprenticeship minimum wage** and enable providers to use bursary funds to support apprentices.
6. **Take steps to ensure further education providers receive the appropriate and timely data** from local authorities to establish bursary needs in their student cohort, as currently happens in schools.

To further education providers:

- **Undertake research on patterns of paid employment by college students** and its impact on engagement, attainment, and outcomes, working with government on appropriate policy responses.
- **Assess the mental health impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the student body** and take appropriate measures to address it through student support services where possible.
- **Recognise the role of student voice**, and local communities, in ensuring FE provision meets localised needs and work with government to address this.



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Empowering Youth for the Future of Work: **Addressing Challenges and Enabling Opportunities**

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This report was researched by Ceri Finnegan and funded by British Youth Council and YMCA England & Wales.

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CHAIR OF ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON YOUTH AFFAIRS, JO GIDEON MP

There are many rites of passage on the journey from child to young person to adult. At some point, the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” is no longer about what you could be, full of dreams and imagination; it is no longer about being ambitious. Before you know it, it becomes a daunting question that requires a fully formed plan for a perfectly mapped out career. For some, this is easy. They have always known that they will be a teacher or a writer. However, many of us remember how vital that decision felt and the dread of not knowing what steps to take.

Added to the personal challenge are the skills employers need, both now and in the future. We currently face a ‘Skills Gap’, which will impact our ability to attain the green jobs of the future. This is combined with the challenge of being an ageing society where, in coming decades, more people will retire than there will be young people starting their careers. Further, we need to consider the impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have on jobs.

The APPG for Youth Affairs started this inquiry in the hope of identifying ways that the Government can empower young people to meet the world of work and challenges now and in the future. I am incredibly grateful to all the Experts, Charities and Organisations who have submitted written evidence as well as those who have kindly attended evidence sessions in Parliament. We have gained so much from hearing your thoughts. We also wanted to hear as much as possible from young people and were delighted to be joined by our three youth advisors as well as conducting polling from 16 to 24-year-olds, to ensure that young people’s voices are central to our thinking.

We have identified key themes, ideas, and opportunities. Yet, these recommendations are only the first steps to meeting the challenge of bridging education and the world of work, and empowering young people to meet that challenge.

Jo Gideon MP

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs

YOUTH ADVISORS FOREWORD

Young people have been at the heart of this inquiry into what the future of work could and should look like for them. At every step, from launching the inquiry, to deciding on polling questions, to writing this final report, young people have been consulted by the British Youth Council and YMCA England and Wales to ensure the findings presented are truly youth-centred.

During inquiry sessions, we discussed the skills required to ensure young people can access a range of employment opportunities that are both fulfilling to their own abilities and to the needs of employers and society more generally. We also discussed what the UK government could do with its influence, to provide young people with the policies they believe would increase their chances of success in employment. It was fantastic to be inside rooms with key organisations in this space, politicians from a range of parties, and other young people to collaborate on this important topic.

For us, the key takeaway of this report is the importance of meaningful work experience for all young people. Work experience has the potential to ignite a young person's passion for an industry that will carry them through their entire career; it has the potential to introduce young people to mentors who will support them for years to come; it has the potential to dispel myths about professions that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds deselect themselves from; it has the potential to integrate youth voice into companies; and it has the potential to even the playing field between young people. However, at the moment, work experience is not a legal right of all school pupils. This inquiry highlighted the power of work experience, which we already knew to be true, and we hope our findings will impact new thinking about career education in schools across the UK.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the APPG on Youth Affairs inquiry. We are grateful to have had input from diverse stakeholders on this topic to ensure the findings and recommendations can be applied to as many young people as possible.

Amy Murray, Harriett Noon and **Tiegan Bingham-Roberts**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long gone are the days of one job or career for life. The world of work is constantly changing. Yet the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to disrupt the world of work cannot be underestimated. The skills needed for the world of work today and those in the future have the potential to be very different. Young people need to be adaptable and given the tools to thrive without a clear map of what the future will look like.

The skills gap relates to the skills needed for the jobs available and the workforce's skills. This can lead to lacking the necessary skills to do the tasks, impacting productivity or roles remaining vacant as the role cannot be filled with available candidates. It has been estimated that the UK skills shortage will cost the country £120 billion by 2030.¹

The world of work is rapidly changing, from AI to adapting to Net zero. To meet our Net Zero Strategy goals, we need a green workforce. We need a green workforce to meet the UK government's 2020 commitment of 2 million green jobs by 2030. Yet for there to be a green workforce, we need to inspire young people today to study green skills and become technically able to undertake these roles.

Traditionally apprenticeships have been seen as an option for young people to take the first steps in their careers. Yet the number of young people taking apprenticeships is declining, with under-19s accounting for 28.4% (55,580) of all apprenticeships started.² Young people struggle to receive the best career advice needed to make the right career choices and the best opportunities for work experience. They also face the barriers of not having the softer skills needed to thrive in a complex, rapidly changing world of work, and growing mental health becomes a barrier.

We must ensure that we empower young people to develop and provide as many opportunities as possible to thrive in the ever-changing world of work.

APPG Inquiry Recommendations:

1. Publish a Long-term National Skills strategy.
2. Futureproof training and education to ensure it monitors and adjusts to developments in Artificial Intelligence and the needs of the Green Economy. To ensure young people are given opportunities to thrive.
3. Review the Apprenticeship levy.
4. Produce a public campaign on technical education into apprenticeships net zero, future green jobs, and the importance of STEM Skills.
5. Establish a statutory duty to ensure all young people should be given work experience during secondary education (including further education colleges and academy schools) and relevant career advice.
6. Invest in Youth Services to provide extracurricular activities to support young people's development and strengthen partnership, collaboration and coordination between schools and youth providers.
7. Invest in services supporting Young People's Mental health.

The APPG launched a call for evidence on 28 March 2023, the APPG hoped to explore the barriers to youth employment, the impact of skills gaps and identify potential solutions for the Government and other partners.

The inquiry set out to consider the following issues:

- Skills gaps
- Training
- Apprenticeships
- Careers advice
- Social mobility
- Barriers to starting careers
- Future of work
- Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The inquiry set its scope through a public meeting of the APPG, an estimated 116 young people attended to outline what they thought it should focus on.

The APPG conducted five oral evidence sessions in parliament over two hours on two separate days, hearing from 16 witnesses from the world of business, charity, providers, think tanks and experts.

The APPG received 27 written submissions, which investigated the key barriers and potential solutions.

Youth voice

The APPG co-designed the delivery of the inquiry with young people at its heart. The APPG was delighted to be joined by three Youth Advisors throughout the Inquiry who were connected to YMCA England & Wales and the British Youth Council. They could share with MPs their experiences of taking those tentative first steps into the world of work and ask questions of the expert witnesses during the evidence sessions held in parliament.

They helped identify questions for polling young people to find out their thoughts. And shared their thoughts on the recommendations with parliamentarians.

The APPG is tremendously grateful to Amy Murray, Harriett Noon and Tiegan Bingham-Roberts for all their efforts in ensuring this inquiry was co-produced with young people.

1.1 Youth unemployment and economic inactivity

From February to April 2023, the youth unemployment rate was 10.9%, while the unemployment rate stood at 3.8% for the whole population.³ This represents 465,000 unemployed young people aged 16 to 24 from February to April 2023.⁴

It has been estimated that the fiscal cost of youth unemployment, in the form of lower tax revenue and higher benefits spending, was £2.9 billion in 2022.⁵ However, as an ageing society, over the next 17 years, 1.4 million more people will retire than young people will enter the workforce.⁶

Between November 2022 and January 2023, 2.61 million young people (aged 16 to 24) were economically inactive according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force survey. The inactivity rate for young people has risen from a pre-pandemic rate of 37.1% to 38.2%.⁷ The largest relative increases in economic inactivity due to long-term sickness between 2019 and 2022 were among those aged 16 to 24 and those aged 25 to 34. There was a 29% increase in economic inactivity among those aged 16 to 24 and a 42% increase among those aged 25 to 34.⁸

1.2 Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)

In 2022, 12.3% of England's population (aged 16-24) are defined as 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET).⁹ The number of young people not in employment, full-time education or training (1,014,000) is up by 81,000 in the last quarter, or 8.7%. Unemployment among 16-24-year-olds is still significantly higher than the overall working-age population at a time when the number of job vacancies is high. However, 68% of young people not in full-time education or employment are economically inactive, rather than unemployed.¹⁰ Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) found in 2022 that there was a potential £38bn boost to UK GDP from reducing the NEET rate of 20-24-year-olds to the same levels as Germany.¹¹

The 'Power of Potential' report found that young women are more likely to be economically inactive than young men, they were either not looking or unable to work due to family responsibilities.¹² Research investigating young women's experiences of employment opportunities found that young women with multiple, intersectional experiences are most impacted by barriers, such as care experience, long-term physical or mental health problems, and being from racially minoritised communities. In contrast, young men are more likely to be unemployed but looking for work and are slightly more likely to be inactive due to sickness or disability.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from 2021 shows that a quarter (25 per cent) of young people who are NEET experience some form of mental health problem, compared with 9% of those in employment.¹³

2 WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY DOING?

2.1 Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in Schools, Academies and Colleges

Since September 2012, local-authority-maintained schools became subject to a statutory duty to provide impartial career guidance to pupils in years 9 to 11. In September 2013, this statutory duty was expanded to cover pupils in school years 8 (12-13-year-olds) to 13 (17-18-year-olds). In September 2022, following the passage of the Education (Careers Guidance in Schools) Act 2022, this duty was extended to children in years 7 and to academy schools.¹⁴ The Baker Clause requires every state school since January 2018 to give training providers and colleges access to pupils aged 8 to 13 to discuss technical education and apprenticeships. Ofsted Inspectors are required to establish how effectively this is being delivered in schools.¹⁵

2.2 Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)

The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) is England's national body for careers education, supporting schools and colleges to deliver modern careers education. This includes training and supporting careers leaders. Bringing employers, educators, and providers together through a network of Careers Hubs, and sharing practical digital tools and resources. The Government has invested £30 million in the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) to support delivering careers programmes for pupils.¹⁶

2.3 Department for Work and Pensions Provision

The Department for Work And Pension's Youth Offer provides individually tailored Work Coach support to young people aged 16 to 24. They are in the Universal Credit Intensive Work Search group. This includes the Youth Employment Programme, Youth Employability Coaches for young people with additional employment barriers, and Youth Hubs across Great Britain, which provide young people access to enter a variety of work-related support, including Sector-based Work Academy Programmes, work experience, Mentoring Circles, apprenticeships, employer engagement, careers advice and traineeships.

3 INQUIRY KEY FINDINGS

Section 1 Skills gap and long-term national plan

Evidencing the skills gap

'Skills gap' is a term used to describe the mismatch between the skills that employers require and the skills that job seekers possess. The skill gap might mean the employee cannot complete the tasks associated with the job they are currently working in. A Learning and Work Institute (L&W) report found that the UK skills shortage will cost the country £120 billion by 2030. Overall, there will be a shortfall of 2.5 million highly skilled workers and an oversupply of 8.1 million people with traditionally intermediate or low skills.¹⁷ The skills gap also means employers may be unable to find a candidate to fill the vacancy. ONS found that in September-November 2022, there were 1.19 million vacancies in the UK.¹⁸ According to the Government, over eighty per cent of all jobs advertised in the UK now require digital skills. However, employers say the lack of available talent is the biggest factor holding back growth.¹⁹

Economic modelling for the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) found a 10% spike in demand in the economy and the labour market restricted by shortages last year. The UK economy would shrink between 1.2% and 1.6% by 2027, relative to where it would be without these shortages. This could cost the economy anywhere between £30 billion and £39 billion annually.²⁰

The skills gap is particularly acute in various sectors, from Construction, Digital Sector, Engineering, Health, and Manufacturing. The Royal College of Nursing estimates that there will be a shortfall of 140,600 nurses in the NHS in England by 2030/31.²¹ Part of the skills gap is due to schools lacking Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subject skills training. By 2030 basic digital skills are likely to be considerably advanced. In total, 5 million workers could become acutely under-skilled in basic

digital skills by 2030, with up to two-thirds of the workforce facing some level of under-skilling.²² Digital skills are reported as being essential, but the number of young people taking IT subjects at GCSE has dropped by 40% since 2015.²³

The Open University's 2022 Business Barometer estimated that 78% of UK organisations suffered a decline in output, profitability or growth due to a lack of available skills. In response, 52% of large organisations and 47% of SMEs plan to invest more in staff training next year.²⁴

The Government has recognised the importance of Skills for economic growth. The Government established the Skills and productivity board in November 2020, which was later dissolved when the Unit for Future Skills was launched in May 2022.²⁵ The UFS was set up to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of data on skills and jobs, and to become a centre of expertise on future skills. The Government also published a White paper for Skills in January 2021.²⁶ In addition, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, in the Autumn 2022 Budget, tasked Sir Michael Barber with advising the Government on skills reforms.

This role has been extended until December 2023.²⁷ Skills partnership have argued not just of a 'skills gap', but also a 'skills trap'. This is due to the disadvantage, and a lack of opportunities to build essential skills lead to a lack of value placed upon them, limited future opportunities, lower skill score, lower income, and lower life satisfaction. Following research for Skills Builder Partnership conducted by KPMG, they suggest that (about 17% of full-time workers) Skills Trap Proper Individuals start from a position of disadvantage that they do not manage to break out of a cycle of low education, basic skills, and essential skills.²⁸

The need for a Long-term National Strategy on Skills

Representations were made to the APPG advocating for a long-term national strategy on skills. Speakers for Schools called on the Government to develop a long-term skills strategy to provide a joined-up skills ecosystem that brings together the Government departments currently working in silos.

Youth Futures Foundation argued that the skills landscape is complex. They advocate for the Government to produce a long-term national strategy on skills, in collaboration with the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Education and the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities in partnership with Sir Michael Barber, the Unit for Future Skills, local authorities and Employer Representative Bodies in charge of Local Skills Improvement Plans. Youth Futures Foundation advocates that the strategy should detail Ministerial and cross-departmental accountability for delivering the plan to tackle skills gaps within government, key aims of the strategy, alongside cost and measurability of outcomes.

The House of Lord's Youth Unemployment Committee previously recommended a long-term plan, in its report Skills for every young person.²⁹ The Unemployment Committee outlined that:

The Government must develop a long-term national plan for identifying, measuring and addressing skills mismatches with a focus on anticipating and meeting the needs of emerging and growth sectors such as those of the digital and green economy. It must update and publish this strategy annually. Bodies producing Local Skills Improvement Plans should do the same at the local level and be responsible for securing an adequate local supply of training places for young people. As part of the Government's plan, it must:

- Make public the findings of the Skills and Productivity Board and commit to publishing data on skills gaps and shortages on an annual basis;
- Support the promotion of places available in training courses for those sectors identified as experiencing existing and emerging shortages; and
- Review the teaching of sustainability, climate change and green technologies as part of the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy promised in the Net Zero Strategy and recently published in draft, with a view to ensuring that the skills needed to support the development of the green economy are established from an early stage. The commitments set out in the draft strategy are welcome, but more concrete measures are needed to ensure skills development in the green economy is properly embedded in the education and training system.³⁰

The Association of Colleges further supported the idea of a long-term strategy. However, they argued for a ten-year strategy for post-16 education and training, to enable individuals of all abilities and circumstances to continue to learn and reskill throughout their lives. The strategy should explain how every young person and adult will be supported to attain and maintain the skills they need throughout their lives. The strategy will set national priorities for building a high-quality and inclusive system, for key sectors where most change will, and to align education and skills within wider ambitions (for example, public health and social inclusion). This ten-year vision should be developed in partnership with the key stakeholders (employers, education institutions, and local government) across England to support inclusive economic development and community well-being.

Recommendation 1:

The Government should publish a Long-term National Skills strategy.



Section 2 Jobs of the future

Lack of awareness of green jobs despite concern for climate change, Engineering UK shared their concern that the workforce scale needed for tomorrow's challenges will not be met with the current levels of young people undertaking the roles.

They estimate that the Energy Sector will need 400,000 jobs by 2050. Many of the 260,000 new roles will have engineering elements.³¹ In the buildings sector, retrofitting is predicted to require the training of 45,000 technicians each year at its peak in 5 to 10 years, 30,000 each year in fabric improvement and 15,000 each year in heat pump installation.³² Engineering UK advocated that the Government use young people's enthusiasm and passion for tackling the climate crisis and explain the link between practical engineering skills in subjects such as Design and Technology, leading to engineering careers that would play a key role in achieving net zero. Engineering UK explained in the evidence session that young people are concerned about climate change and need to know more about green jobs' potential solutions.

Learning and Work Institute echoed this, that young people are unaware of how to get involved in green jobs and what green skills are. Their evidence argued that many young people are highly motivated to combat climate change and recognised the importance of digital skills but are unsure how this should affect their career choices.

They have uncovered a disconnect between increasing employer demand for green skills and young people's knowledge of what they are: 63% of those surveyed said they had never heard of green skills.³³ This lack of information and advice is a major barrier to young people, particularly young women. Urgent action is needed to counteract this if the UK is to create the workforce of the

future successfully. Learning and Work Institute advocated for careers advocacy programmes at devolved administration and national levels that should inspire young people for the roles of the future by helping schools, colleges, and universities signpost to the education and training pathways that are available.

This is further supported by polling conducted for the APPG by YMCA England & Wales, which identified that only 10% of young people are considering working in Green/Renewable energy.³⁴



Engineering UK argued that needing more young people to enter STEM careers had led to an opportunity for STEM to diversify their workforce. Engineering UK 18% of first-year undergraduates in engineering and technology are women, compared to 57% across all subject areas.³⁵ Currently, only 8% of young women that study maths and physics at A-Level progress to study engineering and technology at university compared to 23% of all young men. Based on current rates, there would need to be an increase of 115,000 young women studying maths and/or physics at A-Level to achieve gender parity in higher education (HE) engineering and technology courses³⁶. This is further supported by polling conducted for the APPG by YMCA England & Wales that identified 42% of girls who said they do not want to work in STEM roles compared to 26% of boys.³⁷

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

There have been increasing advancements in Artificial Intelligence alongside a constant

stream in the press about Artificial intelligence's challenges.

In the first three months of this year, \$11 billion has been invested in reaching Artificial General Intelligence.³⁸ On May 1, 2023, IBM announced to pause their hiring and plan to replace 7,800 jobs with AI.³⁹ Sir Patrick Vallance, the Former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government, told the Science, Information and Technology Committee that, "there will be a big impact on jobs. And that impact could be as big as the industrial revolution."⁴⁰

Onward UK, a think tank explains, that Generative AI will tremendously impact work. To manage the economic shock of AI. They recommend that the Treasury prepare measures to shift the tax burden from labour to capital in the medium term. In addition, the Government should help workers train in tomorrow's skills through more accurate skills forecasting, an expanded retraining offer, and more

high-level STEM qualifications.⁴¹

The APPG was joined by Ali Merali, co-author of Onward UK The Generative AI Revolution, Opportunities, Shocks and Risks, at an evidence session. Ali Merali believes there will be a large amount of job displacement, but it could provide opportunities for those from less traditional backgrounds. Going on to explain that information on skills and demand will help young people identify their career choices. Arguing that young people change their career choice when given more information on salary potential.

Dr Erin Chao Ling, Lecturer in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Future of Work from the University of Surrey argued that AI and automation are most useful in conjunction with human roles. Dr Erin Chao Ling explained that the media is very negative about AI's impact, leading to fear that people will lose their jobs. Historically, new technology leads to new careers that will become apparent in the coming years. Yet we need to be quicker at adapting to change.

Technology changes very quickly, but policy on how to use technology is very slow. University has previously focused on subject-based, not multi-disciplined, AI is multi-disciplined. That will require different knowledge.

Recommendation 2:

The Government should futureproof training and education to ensure it monitors and adjusts to developments in Artificial Intelligence and the needs of the Green Economy. To ensure young people are given opportunities to thrive.



Section 3

Maximising vocational and technical education

Take up of apprenticeships and training

Apprenticeships have historically been a good route into employment for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Figures for the 2022/23 academic year show Apprenticeship starts were down by 4.1% to 195,600 compared to 203,990 for 2021/22 academic year. Under-19s accounted for 28.4% of starts, equating to 55,580 young people starting an apprenticeship. Advanced apprenticeships accounted for 43.3% of starts (84,650), while higher apprenticeships accounted for a third (33.2% or 64,890).

Higher apprenticeships continue to grow in 2022/23. Higher apprenticeship starts increased by 7.1% to 64,890 compared to 60,570 in the same period last year.⁴³

However, data shows that the proportion of learners over 25 starting apprenticeships has increased from 44% in 2015/16 to 47.4% in 2021/22, with the proportion of apprenticeship starts for under 19-year-olds falling from 25.8% in 2015/16 to 22.2% in 2021/22.⁴⁴

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR) raised concerns about T Levels. They explained that many young people currently studying technical and vocational qualifications, which T Levels will soon replace, do not meet T Level higher entry requirements. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR) believes this could lead many young people to become NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Young people without higher entry requirements cannot continue technical or vocational education through T levels or T Levels Transition courses. An alternative qualification is needed to address the needs of young people unable to meet T-level entry

requirements, or transition courses should have accessible entry requirements and be prepared for large enrolments.

Use of the apprenticeship levy Apprenticeships have fallen significantly since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2016, with a shift from entry-level apprenticeships for young people to higher apprenticeships for older members of the existing workforce.⁴⁵ Learning and Work Institute, suggested that the levy system has relatively few incentives for employers to invest in training for young people or those with the fewest qualifications, and, therefore, some reforms are needed to boost employer investment.

Since the levy was introduced, spending on Level 6 and 7 apprenticeships has risen from £44 million

in 2017/18 to £506 million in 2021/22. Hitting £1.325 billion in total over that period.⁴⁶

Starts on level 2 apprenticeships dropped by 53 per cent from 374,400 in 2017/18 to 175,400 in 2021/22, while starts at level 3 fell by 11 per cent from 372,400 in 2017/18 to 330,400 in 2021/22 over the same period.⁴⁷

The Learning and Work Institute advocated for support for young people to stay on in education. The Government should adopt the ambition of 75% of young people to have a level 3 qualification by 2035. As literacy and numeracy are so strongly associated with good employment outcomes, the Government should oblige young people who don't have a level 2 qualification in these subjects to study them until they are 18.

The Government have increased the apprenticeship funding to £2.7 billion by 2024-25.⁴⁸ However, the Department for Education's employer skills surveys indicates that employers' spending on workforce training per employee fell from £1,710 in 2011 to £1,530 in 2019. The 2021 employer skills survey found that 52% of the workforce had received some training during the year, the lowest proportion since the first survey in 2011.⁴⁹ Leading the Public Accounts Committee in their Developing workforce skills for a strong economy report, recommended the Department for Education, working with other government departments, to review how it incentivises employers to invest in skills development, including through the apprenticeship levy, and, in light of its findings, take action to improve the effectiveness of the incentives.⁵⁰

The APPG has found that many organisations have been calling for changes to the levy system for some time. While their recommendations may not fully align, many feel the system is not delivering. Retraining existing workers and adult learners is important, yet this cannot come at the expense of providing opportunities and routes into careers for young people and those without experience.

The Learning and Work Institute (L&W) advocates that The Government needs to make more apprentice places available and take steps to increase apprenticeship completion rates, which currently stand at 51%—increasing apprenticeships for young people, funding apprenticeships for 16–18-year-olds outside the levy at £450 million per year, removing the requirement for SMEs to pay 5% of the cost for 19–24-year-old apprentices, looking at an apprentice premium or ringfencing some levy funds for apprenticeships for young people.⁵¹ Ringfencing half the levy for spending on younger people and allowing some of this to





Awareness of Apprenticeships

The APPG heard throughout the evidence sessions that despite the Baker’s clause, to ensure that young people are given information about apprenticeships and technical training paths, the status and dominance of University as the desired career path still largely prevails. Only 1 in 4 (25.6%) young people said they had heard about apprenticeships five times or more.⁵⁶

for schools and colleges on apprenticeships, with better enforcement of statutory requirements in their Paving the Way 2022 report. The Sutton Trust advocates for more investment in national information sources and programmes on technical education routes to improve the advice available. They also argue that evidence suggests that too many schools are not meeting their statutory requirements under the ‘Baker Clause’.⁵⁸

The Sutton Trust highlights differences in guidance given to students on academic and technical routes. Nearly half of 17- and 18-year-olds currently in Year 13 at both state and private schools say they have received a “large amount” of information on university routes during their education, compared with just 10 per cent who say the same for apprenticeships.⁵⁷ The Sutton Trust calls for better support and guidance should be made available

Recommendation 3 & 4:

The Government should:

- review the Apprenticeship levy.
- produce a public campaign on technical education into apprenticeships net zero, future green jobs, and the importance of STEM Skills.

be spent on wage costs for young apprentices.⁵² They recommend that the Government should also look at increasing the levy’s scope by raising the contribution rate or the number of employers involved, and by widening the types of training eligible.⁵³

The Prince’s Trust advocates for urgent intervention to ensure that apprenticeships remain a route into work and to support the development of skills in young people, particularly in the face of a shift to a higher-skilled Labour market. The Prince’s Trust proposes increasing flexibility in the levy spending rules, which enables employers to spend up to 10% of funds on pre-apprenticeship programmes that support young, inexperienced people into apprenticeships, and the introduction of financial incentives to support and encourage employers to hire young apprentices.

Youth Futures Foundation advocated reforming the Apprenticeship Levy to create opportunities for young people. Removing Level 7 apprenticeships from the scope of the Apprenticeship Levy, with priority given to supporting young people trying to start their careers rather than older workers who already have secured positions. 10% of all Apprenticeship Levy expenditure since 2017/18 has been on Level 7 programmes⁵⁴. YouthFutures Foundation argues that removing Level 7 programmes from the levy will result in an annual saving of £270 million a year from 2024/25⁵⁵, which can be invested in apprenticeships aimed at younger learners. Including high-quality Level 2 and 3 programmes.

YMCA England & Wales have also called on the Government to reform apprenticeships and the apprenticeship levy so that businesses are better incentivised to offer apprenticeships to young people and funded to support young people to achieve Level 2 Maths and English as part of their apprenticeship if they don’t already have these qualifications.



Section 4

Barriers for young people to meeting their potential

Access to careers advice

The Department for Education's 2017 Careers Strategy adopted the benchmarks of good careers guidance developed by the Gatsby Charitable Foundation. Initially, schools were expected to adopt the benchmarks by January 2018 to improve their career provision. Since 2020, the Government has expected schools to work toward achieving all 8 benchmarks, including that all young people should have a careers interview by age 16 and an additional interview by age 18.⁵⁹

The Government's current Careers Strategy was published in December 2017. It set out a series of measures to be implemented between 2018 and 2020 to improve careers guidance in England. This included using the Gatsby Benchmark to improve careers provision. For each school and college to publish a careers program, naming a Careers Leader for each school and college providing information about T-Levels, apprenticeships, and technical information to pupils collecting and publishing data on student destinations, improving the National Careers Service website, ensuring every child has at least one encounter a year with an employer, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) employers.⁶⁰

Equal access to careers advice in Schools

Careers and Enterprise Company explained that 90% (4,499) of schools and colleges in England were part of a Careers Hub in December 2022. A Career hub is a group of schools, colleges, employers and providers within a local area working together to improve Careers practice⁶¹ There is a 20 per cent reduction in NEETs when the most disadvantaged schools meet all eight Gatsby Benchmarks.⁶² However, Only 30% of schools and colleges achieved Gatsby Benchmark 1, a stable career programme in 2020.⁶³ However, according

to Careers and Enterprise Company's research, completing all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks is only achieved by 12% of schools and colleges.⁶⁴



Engineering UK shared their concerns that "Career provision across the country is patchy" and a comprehensive career strategy was needed. The last Careers Strategy was published in 2017⁶⁵ and only gave direction until 2020. This is further supported by the 2022 Youth Voice Census, which found that only 29.7% of young people rated the career advice they received as 'Good' or 'Excellent'.⁶⁶ Engineering UK argued that schools with higher free school meal levels tend to have poorer career provisions. This is supported by Sutton Trust's research showing that 40% of working-class

students did not participate in a range of CEIAG activities, including open days, work experience placements and employer talks. They noted that this is 6% higher than those from middle-class backgrounds.⁶⁷ The Sutton Trust found that 21% of schools in deprived areas have career advice delivered by non-specialists, compared with 14% of schools in more affluent areas.⁶⁸

Arguing the government should develop a new national strategy for career education. The provision would benefit from a clear overarching strategy now that the government's 2017 careers strategy has lapsed.⁶⁹ According to The Sutton Trust, the strategy should sit primarily in the Department for Education, but with strong cross-departmental links, to join up the system's currently disparate elements. The strategy should look at the start of a child's education, throughout the workplace. It should be formed in partnership with employers, with a view to help prepare young

people for future work trends, and link clearly into the government's levelling up strategy.⁷⁰

The Skills for Jobs white paper only offered limited insights into what the government wants to do next to support career provision in schools and colleges. It contains no information about the funding that will be made available for careers provision in schools, nor does it provide any timelines for delivery, and there is no detail about STEM-specific careers provision and the government's plans to improve this across all secondary education. Learning and Work Institute, believe that the Government needs to invest in high-quality and integrated career information, advice and guidance that map career pathways and support young people to progress towards employment in local growth sectors.

Sir John Holman, reviewed Careers advice for the Department of Education. Sir John Holman urged



Ministers to ensure the 9 principles are visible in a future Careers Strategy.⁷¹ The APPG also notes that the Education Committee is currently conducting an inquiry on Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG)⁷²



Young people need help identifying their future career paths in the world of work. Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) argued that young people are basing their career aspirations on the media due to a lack of role models in different careers. Basing their knowledge on popular shows, young people think they know the role of investment bankers or lawyers but do not understand what is involved in those careers. The APPG heard many advocating the importance of engagement with business leaders and employers. Including the importance of work experience in gaining knowledge about work from business and other external speakers is vital throughout young people's time at school.

The Careers and Enterprise Company's data shows that only 56% of schools in 2021/22 students left with workplace experience by the end of year 11.⁷³ Polling conducted for the APPG by YMCA England & Wales shows that 57% had two weeks of work experience. However, 43% of those that did not have the option of work experience felt it would have been useful.⁷⁴

Youth Futures Foundation argued that there were regional differences in the provision of work experience, and the research showed that schools with a larger proportion of lower socioeconomic groups were less likely to receive work experience and have the same experience as peers. They argued that this is due to work experience no longer being a statutory requirement for schools, and given the tight budgets that schools currently face, this will not change without a change in the law. The Sutton Trust supports Youth Futures Foundation's opinion that all pupils should have access to work experience between the ages of 14 and 16. Experience in the workplace can be extremely impactful for students, allowing them to gain important insights into the world of work and



develop essential skills, with support given to help them find relevant placements. This should also be accompanied by additional funding for schools, to allow them to pay for the staff time needed to support students to organise good quality placements.⁷⁵

Speakers for Schools outlined that access to high-quality work experience is limited and not accessible to those from diverse backgrounds. Arguing that there must be universal access to high-quality work experience. Long-term work experience is needed rather than the traditional two-week model. A November 2022 report by Speakers for Schools found that only a third of teenagers aged 16-18 participated in work experience, and only half of 14-16-year-olds did. Pupils from independent schools were twice as

likely to have done multiple work placements as their state-educated peers. Young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have participated in multiple work experience opportunities.⁷⁶ Speakers for Schools launched a Work Experience For All campaign⁷⁷, calling for all young people at state schools to have two meaningful work experiences before they finish their formal schooling.

Recommendation 5:

The Government should establish a statutory duty to ensure all young people should be given work experience during secondary education (including further education colleges and academy schools) and relevant career advice.

Opportunities to build soft skills

Demos found that 60% of employers struggle to hire young people with sufficient technical skills, while 50% say they struggle to hire young people with sufficient transferable skills like leadership, teamwork and emotional resilience. However, transferable skills are important for young people's employability. 57% of employers told Demos they value transferable skills over technical skills, compared to just 10% who say they value technical skills more.⁷⁸ Demos argued that extracurricular activities can play a part in gaining soft skills. And that sustained funding in extracurricular activities so those in deprived areas can access enrichment activities to develop their skills.

Skills Builder Partnership argued that it was important that all young people were given opportunities to develop soft skills to ensure well-rounded young people can adapt to future workplace changes. They explained how Drama lessons can help develop a better understanding of English Literature.

Engineering UK further supported this, which argued that academic subjects had caused artistic subjects like drama and music to be removed from the school day. And not having Design and Technology, a hands-on subject, led to young people not gaining those experiences.



Youth sector can support provision of extracurricular activities

An estimated two-million young people participate in a youth service at least once a week, including youth clubs, uniformed organisations and other organised community groups, equating to over one-third (35%) of young people within the secondary education age range (ages 11–19).⁷⁹

London Youth raised evidence that young Black, Black African, Black British or Caribbean respondents were over 3 times more likely to say they did not feel welcome in their secondary school.⁸⁰ London Youth advocated that this group may potentially prefer exploring future ambitions outside of school with trusted adults such as youth workers.

Demos argued that National and local governments should provide extracurricular organisations with additional funding to widen access to extracurricular activities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds so that all young people can access the skills that can support their employability.⁸¹

Young people feel they develop soft skills through social interaction. Research shows that young people feel increasingly isolated since the lockdowns and feel uncertainty over their ability to maintain and build friendships.⁸² Enrichment activities are essential for developing soft skills, but access to them is not equal, with young people from more advantaged backgrounds more likely to engage in them.⁸³

The Duke of Edinburgh Award and the National Citizen Service Trust both advocated for an enrichment guarantee. Schools, in partnership with specialist youth providers, would facilitate and enable this. This would ensure that every pupil has access to a minimum level of enrichment. It will be delivered both in and out of schools and complement the National Youth Guarantee. This will strengthen collaboration between the education and youth sectors and improve equity of access to high-quality enrichment provision for young people. It could be funded through an "electives premium", as The Times Education Commission recommended.⁸⁴ This would strengthen partnership, collaboration and coordination between schools and youth providers. Leveraging existing resources and infrastructure to connect young people with quality enrichment opportunities in and out of school. This could be achieved through dedicated Partnerships Coordinators, schools as enrichment 'hubs', and establishing digital platforms where schools can more easily find out about local youth provision.

A framework for recognising enrichment achievements and experiences includes accredited, non-accredited, and certified enrichment activities. This will increase the credit and visibility of young people's enrichment experiences and achievements, including for employers and FE providers. Common benchmarks

for the impact of enrichment and non-formal learning. A consistent framework to assess, monitor and evaluate the positive impacts of enrichment across a wide range of outcomes. This would allow for better data collection and comparison between a range of NFL programmes and approaches - supporting young people, families, and the Government to make informed decisions on where to invest time and resources to deliver the greatest impact.

In their recent report, 'Better Together: Youth Work with Schools', National Youth Agency also outlines the benefit of youth services supporting schools to act as facilitators of enrichment activities rather than delivering them all themselves. Developing local youth partnerships nationwide to bring schools, youth work settings and other providers together locally to meet young people's needs. Demonstrating the ways in which schools and youth organisations can work together to improve their youth offer in and out of school.

Recommendation 6:

Invest in Youth Services to provide extracurricular activities to support young people's development and strengthen partnership, collaboration and coordination between schools and youth providers.





Worsening mental health

One of the key barriers and challenges facing young people currently is rising mental ill health, increasingly reported by young people during the recent economic shocks of the pandemic and the Cost-of-Living Crisis,⁸⁶ which is a key driver of growing economic inactivity and disengagement from the labour market and education⁸⁷. Youth Employment UK's Youth Voice Census 2022 found that 51% of people aged 19+ thought mental health challenges were their biggest barrier to accessing work now or in the future⁸⁸. Approximately 20% of young people who were NEET in 2022⁸⁹ had a mental health condition, and longer periods of unemployment can harm mental health and wellbeing, such as anxiety, fear of missing out and lower confidence levels. Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from 2021 shows that a quarter (25%) of young people who are NEET experience some form of mental health problem, compared with 9% of those in employment.⁹⁰

There has been a near doubling of young people not working due to ill health, from 94,000 in 2012 to 185,000 in 2022. Almost one in four (23 per cent) workless young people are inactive because of ill health, up from less than one in ten (8 per cent) in 2012.⁹¹ Four in five (79 per cent) of 18-24-year-olds who do not work due to ill health only have qualifications at GCSE level or below, compared to one-third of all young people.⁹²

Between November 2022 and January 2023, 2.61 million young people (aged 16 to 24) were economically inactive according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Labour Force survey. The inactivity rate for young people has risen from a pre-pandemic rate of 37.1% to 38.2%.⁹³ According to the ONS Labour Force Survey, the largest relative increases in economic inactivity due to long-term sickness between 2019 and 2022 were among those aged 16 to 24 and those aged 25 to 34. There was a 29% increase in economic inactivity among those aged 16 to 24 and a 42% increase among those aged 25 to 34.⁹⁴

London Youth calls for the Government to grasp the need for a long-term Mental Health Strategy for young people. Learning and Work Institute further support this, advocating investing in increasing access to mental health support for young people. Youth Futures Foundation also called for the Government to increase mental health funding to ensure young people have access to mental health support. Prince's Trust raised concerns about mental health pressures on young people and schools.

Recommendation 7:

Invest in services supporting Young People's Mental health.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government should:

1. Publish a Long-term National Skills strategy

The APPG believes that it is essential that all young people have the skills they need for a modern economy. That includes both the skills they will need today but also for the future of work as they progress into their careers. The APPG recommends that the Government should publish a long-term national skills strategy.

This would set out the Government's plan to address today's skills gaps and detail how the Government, Schools, Colleges, Business Sectors and others can help meet the skills gap challenges of the future workforce.

The Government have already taken steps to ensure the priority of Skills in the Department for Education. By creating the Unit for Future Skills. The APPG believes that this strategy could build on the work of Sir Michael Barber on skills policy delivery. And provide a clear direction of travel for the years ahead.

2. Futureproof training and education to ensure it monitors and adjusts to developments in Artificial Intelligence and the needs of the Green Economy. To ensure young people are given opportunities to thrive.

The APPG believes AI will greatly impact work and the world of work in the coming years and decades. Young people must be given the opportunity to thrive. The Government must continue to monitor AI developments and quickly introduce changes. The UK needs a green workforce to meet UK's Net Zero Targets, which is essential for the economy's long-term success.

3. Review the Apprenticeship levy

The APPG believes the apprenticeship levy should enable all workers to gain skills and retrain. However, this should not be at the expense of young workers starting their careers. The Government must ensure that the apprenticeship levy maximises the opportunities that businesses and others can provide young people to start their careers. This could be pre-apprenticeship level 2 and 3 training in addition to apprenticeships.

4. Produce a public campaign on technical education into apprenticeships net zero, future green jobs, and the importance of STEM Skills.

The APPG believes that more young people need to be aware of the links between STEM Skills and the link to Green Jobs to help meet UK's Net Zero Targets. A National Government Campaign on future green careers would help encourage more young people to undertake these roles and have clear information on the career pathways.

The APPG believes that the status of the University routes to careers still prevails. Many young people are unaware of the routes to different exciting careers via apprenticeships and that a national government campaign would spread awareness.

5. Establish a statutory duty to ensure that all young people are given work experience during secondary education (including further education colleges and academy schools), and relevant career advice.

The APPG believes all young people should undertake work experience during secondary education. This would help provide a real-life experience for thinking about careers and work to plan for their future roles. Allowing young people, the chance to experience the world of work and start to plan.

6. Invest in Youth Services to provide extracurricular activities to support young people's development and strengthen partnership, collaboration and coordination between schools and youth providers.

The APPG believes that many schools struggle to provide extracurricular or enrichment activities that help build soft skills like leadership, communication, and confidence. This should not be the sole role of schools to build fully rounded young people with the skills to take on future work challenges. The government should enable the youth sector to actively support schools to deliver extracurricular or enrichment activities.

7. Invest in services supporting Young People's Mental health

The APPG believes that young people's mental health has been impacted over the last few years, and the Government should offer greater support for young people's mental health. This should take the form of preventative measures, such as youth work, to build resilience and wellbeing amongst young people and provide additional direct support to reduce the number of young people on the waiting list needing crisis support.

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Thank you to APPG on Youth Affairs Officers.

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Thank you to the experts, organisations and charities that submitted evidence and attended oral evidence sessions.

- The Edge Foundation
- Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Chartered Management Institute
- National Citizen Service Trust
- The Prince's Trust
- Engineering UK
- Inclusionz
- Demos
- The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS)
- Skills Builder Partnership
- Carers UK
- Speakers For Schools
- Complete-Careers LLP
- City and Guilds
- London Youth
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Youth Futures Foundation
- The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Young Enterprise
- Form the Future
- Creative Youth Network
- UK Youth
- The Careers & Enterprise Company
- Association of Colleges
- The Construction Industry Training Board
- YMCA St Paul's Group
- Learning and Work Institute
- Onward UK
- Dr Erin Chao Ling, Lecturer in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Future of Work from the University of Surrey

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Children & Young People's Select Committee

Access, Inclusion and Participation: School Admissions Report, 2022-23

Date: 19th September 2023

Key decision: No. Information item.

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Contributors: Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation
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Outline and recommendations

Outline: This report provides an update on school admissions in Lewisham.

Recommendations: The Select Committee is asked to note the work programme related to Lewisham school admissions process:

- The outcomes of each of the admissions schemes.
- The challenges the Service anticipates during the coming academic year and how the Service plans to meet those challenges.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The School Admissions and Appeals Service is responsible for:
- Coordinating the planned admissions round for reception infant to junior, secondary transfer and UTC transfer for all Lewisham residents regardless of their destination as well as applications to Lewisham's mainstream schools from out borough residents;
 - all in year applications for Lewisham and out borough residents, to mainstream schools in Lewisham throughout the academic year with the exception of six schools;
 - representing the Executive Director for Children and Young People at admission appeal hearings; and
 - annually consulting and determining the Council's admissions arrangements and school term and holiday dates.

2. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to note the work programme related to Lewisham school admissions process:

- The outcomes of each of the admissions schemes.

- The challenges the Service anticipates during the coming academic year and how the Service plans to meet those challenges.

3. Policy context and background

3.1 The legal framework for School Admissions is the Admissions Code¹

Local authorities have a statutory duty to coordinate applications for the annual planned admissions rounds to mainstream schools for their resident children and to comply with the national closing date and offer date².

Lewisham participates in the pan London admissions scheme, a highly successful collaboration between all 33 London boroughs as well as five county councils bordering London – Surrey, Kent, Hertfordshire, Essex and Thurrock. The scheme follows a defined timetable including statutory deadlines for; closing and offer dates for applicants, as well as exact dates for the electronic transfer of application data via the Pan London Register (PLR) and thorough checking of applications at each stage of the planned admissions processes.

Both primary and secondary schemes include a precise iterative schedule over a two-week period to identify each applicant's highest possible successful preference prior to national offer date. Therefore, it is essential that Lewisham's IT infrastructure is fit for purpose, back-office tools such as the home to school measuring system is 100 per cent accurate, the pupil database is 'clean' and well managed including the identification and resolution of duplicate records, that Lead Admissions Officers are competent, fully trained and capable of managing a highly technical process.

Applications for reception class have been coordinated by the applicant's home local authority in the pan London admissions scheme since the 2011/12 admissions year and since 2005 for secondary admissions.

In the London scheme, parents/carers are eligible to apply for up to six maintained schools within England via their home local authority and to rank them in order of their preference. The ranked order is used during an electronic iterative process, so that the home local authority can offer the highest preference the child qualifies for on National Offer Day (NOD). If the child does not qualify for a place at one of their preferred schools, the home local authority is required to allocate an alternative school place. Lewisham's policy is to offer the closest school to the family home, regardless of whether this is a faith or non-faith school, where there is a vacancy.

Because the success of the scheme relies primarily on interactions across 38 local authorities, involving approximately 190,000 annual primary and secondary applications, Lewisham's Admissions Service is heavily dependent on Lewisham's IT providers' participation and support in relation to:

- Regular maintenance of the pupil database.
- Connectivity with the pan London Register (PLR) and timely upgrades of each relevant application including the home to school measuring facility.
- Providing a robust electronic system (currently EDEM) that enables the local authority to import and export files containing children's information and their applications.

¹ [School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

² 1. The School Admissions Code ('the Code') has been issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ('SSFA 1998'). The Code has been made following a consultation under Section 85(2) of the SSFA 1998 and after being laid before Parliament for forty days.

3.2 The legal requirement for local authorities to coordinate in year (casual) admissions was removed following the revision to the School Admissions Code in 2014. However, Lewisham continues to coordinate in year admissions to mainstream schools with the exception of the Lethersellers Federation of Schools, Bonus Pastor, Sedgehill Academy and St Mary's Primary School. By administering the application process centrally, Lewisham is able to meet its duty to safeguard and track children as well as planning school places more effectively. The recent "Keeping Children Safe in Education" statutory guidance places a responsibility on all schools to inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register. This statutory requirement should enable Lewisham to maintain accurate roll information.

3.3 Fair Access

Part of the Fair Access³ provision falls under the responsibility of the Admissions Service which strives to:

- Work with key partners across the service to ensure that vulnerable and hard to place children access education, this includes the Youth Justice Service, Children Social Care (CSC) Service and other local authorities.
- Negotiate with Headteachers and teachers in all Lewisham mainstream schools regarding the admission of pupils of all ages including complex cases.
- Ensure the Admissions and Fair Access Service maintains and develops effective relationships with schools, other Council Directorates and external agencies which facilitate effective joint working and safeguarding of children.
- Maintain a robust data collection of In Year Admissions and Fair Access placements to ensure an open, fair and transparent allocation of all children especially those who are hard to place.

3.4 The Service provides all schools including Academies (where a small charge is levied), access to the School Access Module (SAM). SAM is a secure method of electronically transferring admission application details to schools. It is a web-based application and enables schools to receive their applicant details securely as soon as they are imported to the main pupil database. Home to school distances is automatically calculated once the applicants home address has been 'matched' and these are also provided to all admission authority schools when ranking their applicants against the school's admissions criteria. Admission authority schools are also required to use SAM to rank their applicants in criteria order.

4. Reception admissions – September 2023 intake

4.1 Pan London there were a total of 87,277 applications for primary school places made via the whole coordinated admissions scheme. Despite previous year on year increases in pupil demand, there was a 2.67 per cent decrease compared to last year. In Lewisham there were **99** less applications made on time by Lewisham residents compared to the previous year.

On 17th April 2023, National Offer Day (NOD), after all applicants were offered a school place, there were **527** places still available in Lewisham primary schools. However, since NOD, Lewisham has received more than **316** late applications from parents who were; unaware of the application process, did not know there was a closing date for applications, assumed their child would automatically transfer from their nursery class to the reception class or had moved into the borough since January 2023.

Based on local data there were **3,143** Lewisham children who were placed under the

³ [School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/school-admissions-code)

planned admissions scheme. The outcomes, with comparisons to other admission rounds, for this cohort of children are as follows:

Lewisham on-time applicants	
2023	3143 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
2022	3242 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
2021	3295 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
2020	3529 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
2019	3480 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
2018	3698 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangement
First preferences offered	
2023	2686 (85.46%) of the 3143 children were offered their first preference
2022	2796 (86.24%) of the 3242 children were offered their first preference
2021	2863 (89%) of the 3295 children were offered their first preference
2020	2964 (84%) of the 3529 children were offered their first preference
2019	2909 (83.6) of the 3480 children were offered their first preference
2018	3097 (83.7) of the 3698 children were offered their first preference
Preference of any rank offered	
2023	3,082 (98.1%) of the 3143 children were offered one of their preferences
2022	3,165 (97.64%) of the 3242 children were offered one of their preferences
2021	3,220 (97.72%) of the 3295 children were offered one of their preferences
2020	3,407 (96.56%) of the 3529 children were offered one of their preferences
2019	3403 (97.73%) of the 3480 children were offered one of their preferences
2018	3611 (97.6%) of the 3698 children were offered one of their preferences
No preference offered	
2023	61 (1.9%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
2022	77 (2.36%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
2021	75 (2.28%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
2020	122 (3.34%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
2019	79 (2.27%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
2018	87 (2.3%) were allocated a place at their closest school with a vacancy because they did not get one of their preferred schools
Online applications	
2023	3138 (99.84%) made their applications online
2022	3193 (98.48%) made their applications online
2021	3,197 (97.02%) made their applications online
2020	3418 (96.85%) made their applications online
2019	3394 (97.5%) made their applications online
2018	3605 (97.48%) made their applications online

Applications for each school in Lewisham by location and ranked preference is attached as **Appendix 1**. This data includes the school's Published Admissions

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Number (PAN) and any additional bulge class it admitted for September 2023.

In accordance with Lewisham's policy children who were not offered a place at one of their preferred schools were allocated a place at the closest school to their home address and where a vacancy was available at the end of the iterative process regardless of whether this is a faith or non-faith school.

NOD was **Monday 17th April 2023**. The results for those who made an online application were notified of the outcome of their application after 5pm that evening by email from Eadmissions. Those who made a paper application received their notification by email after 5pm on that day.

Lewisham is the admission authority for community schools in the borough and Admissions Officers are responsible for defending any appeal lodged against the refusal not to comply with parental preference. During the summer term 2023, 21 admission appeals were lodged for community schools in Lewisham.

In accordance with infant class size legislation the independent appeal panel may only uphold the appeal where:

- a) it finds that the admission of additional children would not breach the infant class size limit; or
- b) it finds that the admission arrangements did not comply with admissions law or were not correctly and impartially applied and the child would have been offered a place if the arrangements had complied or had been correctly and impartially applied; or
- c) it decides that the decision to refuse admission was not one which a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case.

No appeals for a reception class place were upheld for community schools for September 2023.

5. Summer born admissions, out of cohort requests – September 2023 intake

- 5.1 In September 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) published non statutory guidance regarding the admission of summer born children (those born between 1st April and 31st August). Lewisham Council updated its admission policy for the admission of summer born children to its community schools to advise parents of the options available to them.

Lewisham, as the admissions authority for mainstream community schools, allows delayed admission to reception class for summer born children where the parent has provided reasons that demonstrate they believe a delay is in their child's best interests. Whilst there is no statutory barrier to a child being admitted to school outside their chronological year group, there is no duty on the admission authority to agree such a request. There are no specific criteria adopted in Lewisham to determine whether a request will be agreed and each case is considered on its own merits based on the information provided with the request and in the best interests of the child.

Out of Cohort requests	
2023	22 (on time) 51 in total requests received so far
2022	24 (on time) 47 in total requests received so far
2021	26 (on time) 60
2020	37 (on time) 68

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2019	46 at closing date 71
2018	36
2017	32

By the national closing date, 15th January 2023, Lewisham had received **22** requests from parents wishing to delay their child’s admission to reception class and to participate in the 2023 admissions round instead.

- Lewisham asked for additional information **18** applicants as there was insufficient evidence provided which demonstrated a delayed admission was in the child’s best interest.
- Of the **22** on time requests Lewisham received, **21** were agreed.
- However, **one** applicant withdrew their request as they got an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

After closing date Lewisham has received a further 29 requests. Some of these requests came from children who were already attending a pre-school provision and whose application and request to delay admission should have been made in January 2023 but were not. Other requests are from parents or schools who feel that the child is not school ready and where a request for an EHCP may be required.

Further non-statutory advice from the DfE was issued in September 2020, which stated that for a summer born child who started in reception a year later than is usual, parents need to apply for a secondary school place and for an “out of year group place” when the child is in Year 5 rather than Year 6.

6. Background secondary transfer admissions – September 2023

6.1 This year, **92,672** pupils applied for secondary school places through the Pan London Admissions Scheme, which is a one per cent decrease compared to last year.

There were **3,053** Lewisham resident children who made an on-time application by the National Closing Date - by **31st October 2022**. The outcomes for these children are as follows:

Total on-time applications	
2023	3053 Lewisham residents applied on time through the co-ordinated Pan London arrangements
2022	3089 Lewisham residents applied on time through the coordinated Pan London arrangement
2021	3120 Lewisham residents applied on time through the coordinated Pan London arrangements
2020	3136 Lewisham residents applied on time through the coordinated Pan London arrangements
2019	3299 Lewisham residents applied on time through the coordinated Pan London arrangements
2018	3122 Lewisham residents applied on time through the coordinated Pan London arrangements.
First preferences offered	
2023	Of the 3053 , a total of 1958 (64%) were offered their first preference
2022	Of the 3089, a total of 1915 (62%) were offered their first preference
2021	Of the 3120, a total of 1937 (62.08%) were offered their first preference
2020	Of the 3136, a total of 1935 (61.7%) were offered their first preference
2019	Of the 3299, a total of 1886 (57.1%) were offered their first preference

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2018	Of the 3122, a total of 1753 (56.1%) were offered their first preference
First, second and third preferences offered	
2023	Of the 3053 a total of 2641 (86.50%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
2022	Of the 3089, a total of 2615 (84.65%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
2021	Of the 3120 a total of 2668 (85.51%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
2020	Of the 3136, a total of 2714 (86.54%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
2019	Of the 3299, a total of 2755 (83.5%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
2018	Of the 3122, a total of 2532 (81%) were offered their first, second or third preference.
Any preference offered	
2023	Of the 3053 a total of 2855 (93.51%) were offered one of their preferences
2022	Of the 3089 a total of 2826 (91.48%) were offered one of their preferences
2021	Of the 3120 a total of 2910 (93.27%) were offered one of their preferences.
2020	Of the 3136 a total of 2941 (93.78%) were offered one of their preferences.
2019	Of the 3299 a total of 3045 (92.3%) were offered one of their preferences.
2018	Of the 3122 a total of 2800 (89.6%) were offered one of their preferences.
Allocated places	
2023	183 (5.99%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy
2022	264 (8.54%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy
2021	210 (6.73%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy
2020	180 (5.7%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy
2019	254 (7.69%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy
2018	317 (10.1%) were not offered one of their preferred schools and were allocated a place at a school with a vacancy.
Online applications	
2023	3049 of the 3053 applicants 98.86% made their application online
2022	3058 (98.99 %) made their applications online
2021	3075 of the 3120 applicants 98.55% made their application online
2020	3113 of the 3136 applicants 99.9% made their application online
2019	3288 of the 3299 applicants 99.6% made their application online
2018	3088 of the 3122 applicants (98.9%) made their application online
Places available in Lewisham schools	
2023	After all offers, there are 97 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham
2022	After all offers, there were 5 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham
2021	After all offers, there are 77 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham
2020	After all offers, there are 143 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham
2019	After all offers, there are 25 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham
2018	After all offers, there are 178 places available at secondary schools in Lewisham.

6.2 Schools Exceeding PAN

There were **150** Lewisham residents without a school place (who were unlikely to be offered a school place within Lewisham or out of the borough) before the end of the

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iterative process. Lewisham had to strategically increase secondary schools' places available to meet the need. This proposal had some risk attached in terms of schools being over their current PAN and the need to either run larger classes or an additional class. However, the Admissions Service worked closely with schools to monitor acceptance rates and utilised late applications, to ensure full classes as best as possible. PANs were adjusted to reflect the attrition rate.

Schools	Usual PAN	Increased PANs during iterative process	Current PAN
Conisborough	180	240	226
Deptford Green	180	230	180
Forest Hill	180	230	230
Prendergast Vale	120	160	143
Haberdasher's Knights Academy	208	228	227
St Matthews	180	195	179

6.3 Secondary transfer applications, 10 November 2022 Lewisham residents applied on time 31st October 2022

School Name	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference	6th Preference	Grand Total
Addey & Stanhope School	89	82	68	34	31	25	329
Bonus Pastor Catholic College	276	112	108	64	38	32	630
Conisborough College	77	94	57	37	32	33	330
Deptford Green School	121	102	88	57	41	27	436
Forest Hill School	76	71	54	42	27	31	301
Haberdashers' Hatcham College	166	147	119	76	55	53	616
Haberdashers' Knights Academy	119	82	79	69	50	41	440
Prendergast Ladywell School	183	177	192	128	74	59	813
Prendergast School	156	124	104	78	40	22	524
Prendergast Vale School	37	60	74	59	52	42	324
Sedgehill Academy	111	107	81	83	59	58	499
St Matthew Academy	56	66	85	64	55	32	358
Sydenham School	176	116	83	66	35	26	502
Trinity Lewisham CE School	59	66	68	58	64	50	365
Grand Total	1702	1406	1260	915	653	531	6467

Children who were not offered a place at one of their preferred schools were allocated a place at the closest school to the home address and where a vacancy was available at the end of the iterative process regardless of whether the school was a faith or non-faith school.

National Offer Day was **1st March 2023**. Those who made an online application were notified of the outcome of their application by email after 5pm that evening. Those who made a paper application received their notification by email after 5pm on the same day.

Lewisham is the admission authority for community schools in the borough and

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Admissions Officers are responsible for defending any appeal lodged against the refusal not to comply with parental preference. During the summer of 2023, eight admission appeals were lodged for a community secondary school in Lewisham, four were heard.

Unlike reception admissions (which are governed by Infant Class Size Legislation) the scope of the secondary independent appeal panel is wider and may consider the appellant's social reasons for wanting a place at the school and balances the prejudice of admitting an extra pupil to the school against that of the case of the applicant. No appeal for a Year 7 place in a Lewisham community school was upheld.

6.4 Out of cohort requests

Due to a change in the 2021 School Admissions Code, (which came into force on 1st September 2021)⁴, parents now have to apply for secondary school in the year their child would have been had they not been granted permissions to be educated out of their NC year group. This means parents have to apply in Year 5 instead. The number requesting to continue being educated out of cohort is small but is expected to rise over the next few years as the practice become embedded.

Out of cohort requests	
2023	38
2022	9

7. In Year Admissions during 2022/3 academic year

7.1 Although there is currently no statutory requirement for the local authority to coordinate in year admissions, Lewisham Council has determined that it will do so for all mainstream maintained schools, including faith, foundation and free schools and Academies with the exception of the Lethersellers Federation of Schools, Bonus Pastor, Sedgehill Academy and St Mary's Primary School, who have elected to administer in year applications themselves.

A centrally coordinated scheme is vitally important and it enables the local authority to:

- Safeguard, monitor and track children's placement in school,
- refer cases to the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer when a school offer is not taken up and there is no evidence that the child is attending full time education,
- inform the Place Planning Manager of demands for school places and
- Identify trends in applications including outward or inward migration.

In year admissions relate to all admissions to primary or secondary schools in a year group other than the planned admissions scheme to primary (Class R to Year 6) and secondary school (Year 7 to Year 11).

Applications for reception and Year 7 made once the academic year commences are considered as 'in year applications. Applications are made via the Parent Portal, an electronic application tool accessed via Lewisham's website. Once the parent submits their application this can be downloaded by the Admissions Service. An electronic rather than a paper-based application enables Lewisham to administer the in-year process and place children in school more efficiently.

7.2 In Year Primary

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

Data relating to in year admissions to primary schools by year group during the 2022/23 academic year is as follows:

Year	Applications	Offers/accepted	Awaiting proofs	Withdrawn	Vacancies
R	463	305	5	120	162
1	386	321	2	113	193
2	269	217	5	47	394
3	303	248	4	41	268
4	277	227	3	56	281
5	279	237	3	48	331
6	132	117	0	15	420
Total	2109	1672	22	440	2049

7.3 In Year secondary

Data relating to in year admissions to secondary schools by year group during the 2022/23 academic year is as follows:

Year	Applications	Offers/accepted	Awaiting proofs	Withdrawn	vacancies
7	226	140	1	55	20
8	286	177	4	64	12
9	268	165	3	86	18
10	185	118	1	55	15
11	109	61	1	68	185
Total	1074	661	10	328	250
Grand total	3183	2333	32	768	2299

The service has processed over **168** more in year applications compared to last year. This has caused added pressure as the applications now have to be processed in a shortened timeframe, due to changes in the School Admissions Code.

In some cases, it has become necessary to refer cases to the Fair Access Panel for placement including:

- Siblings where other children in the family have been offered a place but where a vacancy does not exist for the child in question.
- Children who are new to the local authority who cannot be placed within a reasonable distance to the family home.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns relating to the child or their family and it is necessary to transfer the child to a school which is full.
- Where information contained in the application indicates that the child is hard to place and their circumstances meets the Fair Access threshold.

7.4 Ukrainian, refugees and migrant applicants

Lewisham has handled **35** (92 last year) Ukrainian applications so far, which have been processed in a timely manner. The DfE informed local authorities that the applications must be processed without priority and without prejudice. However, these applications are harder to process, as the necessary proofs are not always available due to applicants fleeing their country.

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8. Challenges and actions for the Admissions Service

Challenges for the year ahead	Actions to meet the challenges
<p>The demand for school places</p> <p>Historically Lewisham has a surplus of school places with some schools applying to cap the number of places available or formally consulting on a reduction of their PAN to help improve their financial deficit. However, the shortfall in transfer to secondary school places, required some schools to exceed their PAN. See bullet point 5</p> <p>The deficit in school places has had implications when allocating year 9 and 10 places, with a number of applications being allocated and placed via the fair access process. The insufficiency of school places in Years 8, 9 & 10 is reported to the school place planning lead on a monthly basis. A total of 43 applicants have been placed via the Fair Access Panel.</p>	<p>Meeting the demand for school places</p> <p>The Admissions Service can provide the Place Planning Manager with the following information to allow for appropriate strategic planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ application data for reception, by locality, named school and ranked preference within one week of the final import of applications via the pan London Register. ▪ application data for secondary transfer, by named school and ranked preference within one week of the final import of applications via the pan London Register. ▪ data on the outcomes of the planned admissions processes demonstrating the proportion of preferences met and preferences unmet and therefore allocated a school place prior to National Offer Day (NOD) for both the reception and secondary transfer round. ▪ Data on in year applications by year group.
<p>Independent Review Panel's</p> <p>The change to the Admissions Code which came into effect in 2021 and strengthens the intention of Parliament that 'parental preference' for a school is paramount. Also, that a school must demonstrate a very strong case which meets the Fair Access thresholds - to admit the child would have detrimental effect on the school, the class and the teachers involved in teaching the child. This effect of this has seen the timing for Fair Access Appeals go from half an hour to over two hours plus per appeal. The longest being heard over five hours for very complex cases.</p>	<p>Meeting the challenges from the Independent Review Panel's</p> <p>The Service will work in collaboration with schools to ensure all appeals are attended by the headteacher or school representative, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help schools develop their appeal statement so that the information meets the IRP standard ▪ All paperwork is shared 10 days before the date of the appeal ▪ All presenting Officers and school are provided with virtual group training sessions especially new headteachers or those needing a refresher. ▪ provide bespoke virtual training sessions for individual schools ▪ Target those schools where a high number of appeals to offer support.
<p>Challenges from schools</p> <p>The popularity of certain secondary schools in Lewisham continues to be a challenge for the local authority as a whole. Applications for Year 7 by ranked preference is contained in section 5. The overall success rate of Lewisham children obtaining their first preference secondary school on NOD (64.13%) This compares to Bromley (68.70%), Royal Greenwich (65.15%) and Southwark (69.30%).</p> <p>2,056 of 3,053 (67.34% 2023 figure) of Lewisham's Year 6 children (including late applicants) are expected to transfer to a Lewisham secondary school in September 2022. This compares to 67.64% (2022 figure) who transferred to a Lewisham secondary school in September 2022.</p> <p>Neighbouring borough schools where Lewisham</p>	<p>Challenges from schools</p> <p>Lewisham is addressing the local perceptions and popularity of secondary schools by tailored marketing, virtual open days and attending transition to secondary school talks. Many schools have worked hard to organise online Q&As, in person and virtual tours to enable parents and children to make informed decisions. The Admissions and Fair Access Service is also offering school talks and there is a secondary transfer event being organised for Tuesday 5th September 2023.</p> <p>The School Admissions and Appeals Service will provide the Place Planning Manager with application data for all mainstream schools following the final exchange of 'on time' Pan London applications. Schools are able to extract this data for their own school via SAM. By</p>

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children are expected to transfer to and who will admit nearly 30 (one class) of Lewisham children include:

Number of Lewisham children transferring	2022	2023
Schools in Bromley		
Harris Girls Academy Bromley	80	92
Bishop Justice CofE School	60	32
The Ravensbourne School	65	73
Schools in Greenwich		
Eltham Hill School	48	55
Thomas Tallis	49	40
St Ursula's Convent School	27	23
Harris Academy Greenwich*	27	23
Schools in Southwark		
Kingsdale School *	77	103
Harris Boys East Dulwich	39	48
Bacon's College	30	29
St Thomas the Apostle College	33	37
Harris Girls Academy East Dulwich*	29	31
Equal to nearly 19.5 classes of 30 children	Total 564	Total 586

*Kingsdale School increased their PAN for 2023

This is an increase of **22** applicants. In total on national offer day 997 Lewisham children will be attending an out of borough schools.

Although meeting the demand for reception class places has been variable across the borough, with many schools receiving more applications than there are places available, there are some schools who have not recruited well and have experienced budget difficulties as a consequence. Applications for reception class by ranked preference is contained in **Appendix 1**.

Late applications for the planned admissions rounds

For the 2023 academic year Lewisham received just over 316 (so far) primary late and 118 late secondary applications. Applications received after the relevant National Closing Date (31st October 2022 for secondary applications and 15th January 2023 for reception applications) cannot be accepted unless they are considered to be 'late for good reason'.

Late for good reason includes applicants who have recently moved into the area or where a parent has been hospitalised and not able to make an application on time. Those who apply 'late' often

comparing the number of applications by school and preference rank with previous year's applications Lewisham will be able to assess the demand for places and any increase or decrease in popularity of individual schools.

Due to many changes in support staff personnel within mainstream primary schools the Service provides a high level of support to new and/or temporary staff. The Service will look at ways in which to support them via virtual workshops, manuals and guidance notes. The Service will consider providing more detailed and school specific training under a service level agreement.

Late applications for the planned admission rounds

The Service will work in collaboration with nursery and primary schools to ensure all eligible children apply for a reception or secondary school place by the relevant closing date. Schools have access to SAM which enables them to determine whether their 'leavers' have made an application. Admissions Officers will:

- Virtually attend termly SAO workshops and transition school talks.
- Provide virtual group training sessions for new school admin officers or those needing a refresher.

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<p>include siblings of older children and may not qualify for their preference of school and will be offered the closest alternative. There were further complications with late applications and parents wishing to change their preference schools on their application due to the Grammar schools testing applicants later in line with DfE guidance on Covid.</p> <p>The School Admissions Code requires schools which hold admission tests (i.e. schools with ability or aptitude selection criteria) to test early enough to provide results to parents before the deadline for submitting school place preferences (31st October 2022).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide bespoke virtual training sessions for individual schools under a Service Level Agreement. ▪ Target those schools where a high number of their nursery or Year 6 children made a late application to offer support. ▪ Offer paper applications to the most vulnerable families and support them with the application process.
<p>Fair Access placements</p> <p>A new Admissions Code which came into effect on 1st September 2021 has tightened what cases can be discussed at the Fair Access Panel, to further strengthen and protect the most vulnerable pupils. Full details of the Fair Access placements and changes to the code are reported in the Fair Access Annual Report 2022/2023.</p>	<p>Fair Access placements</p> <p>The changes in the code have dictated the need to expedite Fair Access decisions. This meant that “Chair Actions” meetings have been implemented. The meetings are held every two weeks or as necessary, to make sure Fair Access decisions conform to the deadlines within the code. The Chair’s Action decisions are then ratified (as appropriate) at the next primary or secondary panel meeting.</p>
<p>Medical/social applications</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to admit children on the grounds of their or their family’s severe medical or social need for that particular school and who would not otherwise qualify for admission. The application must be supported by a letter from a hospital consultant, social worker or similar professional, setting out the reasons why the school is the only one to meet the child’s needs, before an admission decision is made. The admission decision will be considered in consultation with a panel of teaching and medical professionals. Medical professionals provide advice on applications made under medical conditions and teaching professionals advise on applications made for social or special reasons.</p> <p>The Admissions Service received over 200 medical/social requests for a priority place in a Lewisham secondary school. No requests were agreed.</p> <p>251 medical/social requests for a priority place in a Lewisham primary school. Only one request was agreed.</p>	<p>Medical/social applications</p> <p>Over 450 requests are received which must be processed and those that provide evidence are taken to panel. The whole process takes over four months to process by the service with on average one case being agreed per year.</p> <p>The work taken to process the applications are disproportionate to the outcome. Therefore, the Admissions Service will look at consult on removing the criterion for medical/social for Lewisham schools initially for 2025/26. The proposal will then be sent to Mayor and Cabinet.</p> <p>The Service will work with AA schools who wish to adopt the removal of the criteria to consult appropriately.</p>

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 This is an information only report, as such there are no financial implications arising from this report.

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9. Legal implications

9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising as a result of this report. A summary of all relevant legislation is included in the body of the report.

10. Equalities implications

10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. Climate change and environmental implications

11.1 There are no climate change and environmental implications.

12. Health and wellbeing implications

12.1 There are no Health and wellbeing implications.

13. Report author(s) and contact

13.1 Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation
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Christine Tarrant, Admissions and Appeals Manager
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14. Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1

Lewisham Applicants to Lewisham Schools for 2023 planned round									
Locality	Row Labels	PAN Numbers	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference	6th Preference	Grand Total
C&NE	All Saints C E Primary School	30	5	22	16	5	9	9	66
C&NE	Beecroft Garden Primary School	60	58	66	53	56	40	23	296
C&NE	Brindishe Green Primary School	90	85	66	82	72	43	23	371
C&NE	Brindishe Lee Primary School	30	38	98	63	42	24	13	278
C&NE	Brindishe Manor Primary School	60	102	100	70	37	29	5	343
C&NE	Gordonbrock Primary School	90	100	73	54	33	35	14	309
C&NE	Holbeach Primary School	60	43	42	31	32	20	30	198
C&NE	John Ball Primary School	90	77	26	22	25	22	22	194
C&NE	Prendergast Ladywell School	60	46	57	44	21	30	17	215
C&NE	St Margaret's Lee CE Primary School	30	50	26	22	22	19	16	155
C&NE	St Mary's Lewisham C E Primary School	30	29	15	12	8	11	9	84
C&NE	St Matthew Academy	30	14	8	7	6	4	6	45
C&NE	St Saviour's Catholic Primary School	30	21	10	11	13	4	7	66
C&NE	St Winifred's Catholic Primary School	60	40	20	26	4	7	9	106
C&NE	Stillness Infant School	90	101	60	68	33	33	14	309
C&NE	Trinity Lewisham CE School	60	34	27	37	39	24	20	181
Locality Total		900	843	716	618	448	354	237	3216
Locality	Row Labels	PAN Numbers	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference	6th Preference	Grand Total
NW	Ashmead Primary School	60	54	50	27	24	17	19	191
NW	Childeric Primary School	60	31	10	11	6	4	5	67
NW	Deptford Park Primary School	90	22	11	10	13	7	3	66
NW	Edmund Waller Primary School	60	30	34	21	13	8	5	111
NW	Grinling Gibbons Primary School	30	15	16	14	7	4	4	60
NW	Haberdashers' Hatcham Free School	60	71	45	16	15	4	7	158
NW	Haberdashers' Hatcham Primary	60	37	17	10	8	9	2	83
NW	John Stainer Primary School	60	56	51	65	25	27	9	233
NW	Kender School	60	24	13	11	3	6	3	60
NW	Lucas Vale Primary School	30	15	9	12	7	3	2	48
NW	Myatt Garden School	60	49	44	39	27	19	21	199
NW	Prendergast Vale School	30	40	21	13	13	13	11	111
NW	Sir Francis Drake Primary School	30	20	16	9	17	5	4	71
NW	St James Hatcham C E Primary School	30	12	7	7	4	4	1	35
NW	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Lewisham)	30	10	5	5	2	3	3	28
NW	St Stephen's CE Primary School	30	16	8	7	7	5	6	49
NW	Tidemill Academy	60	55	17	20	13	5	5	115

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NW	Turnham Academy	30	16	8	7	3		8	42
Locality Total		870	573	382	304	207	143	118	1727
Locality	Row Labels	PAN Numbers	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference	6th Preference	Grand Total
SE	Athelney School	60	37	21	15	8	5	10	96
SE	Baring Primary School	30	24	23	18	16	16	15	112
SE	Coopers Lane Primary School	90	87	35	16	13	6	8	165
SE	Downderry Primary School	60	80	40	36	15	7	9	187
SE	Elfrida Primary School	60	31	26	8	11	10	6	92
SE	Forster Park Primary School	60	27	13	26	23	14	13	116
SE	Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School	30	22	11	5	4	14	6	62
SE	Haberdashers' Knights Primary	30	14	12	8	10	2	6	52
SE	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	30	39	39	22	18	11	5	134
SE	Launcelot Primary School	60	24	12	13	8	5	13	75
SE	Marvels Lane Primary School	60	36	14	12	10	7	1	80
SE	Rangefield Primary School	60	25	18	19	12	5	6	85
SE	Rushey Green Primary School	90	51	26	45	29	36	19	206
SE	Sandhurst Primary School	90	109	53	37	28	17	16	260
SE	St Augustine's Catholic Primary School And Nursery	30	23	15	12	8	3	5	66
SE	St John Baptist C E Primary School	30	21	13	5	14	5	5	63
SE	Torridon Primary School	90	78	93	41	39	22	16	289
Locality Total		960	728	464	338	266	185	149	2140
Locality	Row Labels	PAN Numbers	1st Preference	2nd Preference	3rd Preference	4th Preference	5th Preference	6th Preference	Grand Total
SW	Adamsrill Primary School	60	43	38	29	33	21	12	176
SW	Dalmain Primary School	60	48	76	63	48	26	31	292
SW	Eliot Bank Primary School	60	56	56	32	23	15	14	196
SW	Fairlawn Primary School	60	40	42	26	33	21	17	179
SW	Haseltine Primary School	60	36	25	26	21	18	12	138
SW	Holy Trinity C E Primary School	30	13	14	14	19	7	6	73
SW	Horniman Primary School	30	37	33	27	21	18	11	147
SW	Kelvin Grove Primary School	90	46	33	43	22	11	12	167
SW	Kilmorie Primary School	90	122	82	66	54	37	26	387
SW	Our Lady & St Philip Neri Catholic School	60	19	17	9	5	6	1	57
SW	Perrymount Primary School	30	28	26	42	26	27	14	163
SW	Rathfern Primary School	60	92	86	65	52	42	17	354
SW	St Bartholomew's CE Primary School	60	74	31	16	11	10	2	144
SW	St George's Church Of England Primary School	30	23	7	7	7	10	7	61
SW	St Michael's CE Primary School	30	12	12	12	8	3	10	57
SW	St William of York Catholic School	30	21	11	3	7	3	10	55
Locality Total		840	710	589	480	390	275	202	2646
Grand Total		3570	2854	2151	1740	1311	957	716	9729

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Children & Young People's Select Committee

Exclusions and Managed Transfers, Annual Report, 2022/23

Date: 19th September 2023

Key decision: No. Information item.

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Contributors: Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation

Julie Gorton, Exclusion and Reintegration Coordinator

Outline and recommendations

Outline

As part of its work programme the Committee has requested a report on Lewisham's exclusion performance indicators and outcomes. Officers produce this report annually as part of accountability and performance monitoring.

Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to note the significant improvement in the work programme to support and safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people by:

- Reducing the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions from Lewisham secondary schools.
- Increasing in the number of children and young people who are reintegrated back into Lewisham schools.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the context, legal framework and position in relation to exclusions in Lewisham. It also provides an analysis of Lewisham performance indicators and the actions that the local authority and Lewisham education providers are taking to effect progress.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Select Committee is asked to note the significant improvement in the work programme to support and safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people by:
- Reducing the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions from Lewisham secondary schools.
 - Increasing in the number of children and young people who are reintegrated back into Lewisham schools.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Lewisham's 2022-26 Corporate Strategy will continue the fantastic work of the last four years, supporting our schools to improve and increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham.

4. Background to exclusions and managed transfers

4.1 What are Exclusions?

There are two types of exclusion – fixed period (suspended) and permanent (expelled). Lewisham schools are responsible for providing high-quality education provision for all children on their roll. Where it is necessary to exclude a child or young person for a fixed period, schools should set and benchmark work for the first five school days.

A suspension (fixed period exclusion) is where a child or young person is temporarily removed from school. If the suspension is longer than five school days, the school is responsible for arranging full-time education from the sixth school day onwards. The child can be removed for no more than 45 school days in one academic year.

Schools also have the authority to direct pupils to off-site provisions for reasons of behaviour, or to provide alternative education to meet specific needs. The placement must be kept under evaluation and involve parents/carers and the pupils in the assessment of his/her educational needs.

4.2 What are managed transfers?

In the best interests of the pupil and in order to avoid a permanent exclusion on a child's record Lewisham local authority and Lewisham schools offer, at the point of exclusion, an alternative intervention option. At this stage the headteacher refers the pupil to the Lewisham Fair Access Panel for a **managed transfer** to the Lewisham Pupil Referral Unit or other suitable Alternative Provision.

This referral is in line with requirements of the Government statutory guidance on permanent exclusions and a permanent exclusion letter is still issued to the pupil and the family. Most London boroughs deploy similar processes as part of an early intervention model.

4.3 A **managed transfer** means that:

- The pupil and family's option of the managed transfer is considered by the Lewisham Fair Access Panel for its legality and to understand the needs of the pupil.
- The family has the option of an alternative intervention that is in the best interests of their child and encourages a fresh start on reintegration to a mainstream school.
- The pupil does not have a permanent exclusion on their school record and the managed transfer will prevent the exclusion progressing through to the school's governing body.
- The pupil is transferred to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or other appropriate Alternative Provision and will no longer be on the school roll.
- The pupil is admitted to the PRU or Alternative Provision for a range of assessments and is able to access the curriculum and other support appropriate to need.
- The pupil is monitored by the Pupil Referral Unit or Alternative Provision to consider 'school readiness' and where appropriate, an Education, Health and Care Plan assessment.
- Reintegration into a mainstream or special school is considered if and when appropriate.

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4.4 From September 2023 statutory guidance

The latest version of government guidance on suspensions and exclusion can be found [here](#)¹.

4.5 What has changed in this version?

New guidance and amended regulations about a headteacher's ability to cancel an exclusion before the governing board has met to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated. This practice is sometimes known as withdrawing or rescinding an exclusion. If this occurs, the parents, the governing board and the local authority, must be notified and, if relevant, the social worker and Virtual School Head Teacher (if the child is in care).

Governing board reinstatement meetings and IRPs can now be held via the use of remote access (for example, live video link) for suspension and permanent exclusions if requested by the parents, provided certain criteria are satisfied. Meetings held via the use of remote access should not be a default option and face to face meetings should always be encouraged.

5. Exclusions and how Lewisham compares

Pupil-level exclusion data for primary and secondary schools is collected once each term via the Department for Education (DfE) School Census data collection return and published in a Statistical First Release (SFR).

The national exclusion data outlined below is published in the DfE Statistical First Release (SFR) on 20th July 2023 and gives the annual exclusion data for 2021/22².

5.1 Primary exclusions (per 1,000) 2021/22

The permanent exclusion rate for Lewisham primary schools remained at **zero per cent** which was better than England at **0.02 per cent** and London and Inner London at **0.01 per cent**.

The suspension rate for Lewisham primary schools was **1.01 per cent** which is better than England at **1.42 per cent** but worse than London at **0.45 per cent** and Inner London at **0.81 per cent**. All statistical neighbour boroughs saw an increase in suspensions.

Primary	Number of permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate %	Number of suspensions	suspension rate %
ENGLAND	758	0.02	66,203	1.42
INNER LONDON	8	0	1,917	0.81
OUTER LONDON	24	0.01	3,794	0.08
LONDON	32	0.45	5,711	0.45
Lewisham	0	0	236	1.01
STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS				

¹ [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions)

² [Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-exclusions-and-suspensions-in-england-2021-to-2022)

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Hackney	0	0	114	0.60
Haringey	1	0	144	0.68
Islington	4	0.03	235	1.81
Lambeth	0	0	211	1.04
Southwark	0	0	196	0.86
Brent	1	0	194	0.74
Croydon	1	0	367	1.14
Enfield	0	0	237	0.77
Greenwich	0	0	218	0.86
Waltham Forest	1	0	234	0.94

Primary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

The data shows **disproportionality** in Lewisham Primary schools for 'Black African', 'Black Caribbean' and 'White and Black Caribbean' background with suspensions (see **Appendix 1**).

5.2 Secondary exclusions (per 1,000) 2021/22

The permanent exclusion rate for Lewisham secondary schools declined slightly from **0.07** to **0.11 per cent** better than England at **0.16 per cent**, but worse than London at **0.08 per cent**.

The suspension rate for Lewisham secondary schools declined to **11.90 per cent** which was better than England at **13.96 per cent** but worse than London at **8.84 per cent** and Inner London at **9.56 per cent**.

However, most statistical neighbour boroughs saw an increase in permanent exclusions and suspensions. This can be attributed to the first academic year without the COVID pandemic disruption but also the factor of increased mental health issues as a result.

	Number of permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate %	Number of suspensions	Suspension rate %
ENGLAND	15,658	0.16	498,120	13.96
LONDON	535	0.08	49,153	8.84
INNER LONDON	141	0.07	18,173	9.56
OUTER LONDON	387	0.10	30,894	8.13
Lewisham	15	0.11	1,699	11.90
STATISTICAL NEIGHBOURS				
Hackney	30	0.20	2,209	14.98
Haringey	5	0.03	1,698	10.52
Islington	7	0.08	2,001	12.84
Lambeth	14	0.09	1,414	9.07
Southwark	5	0.03	1,867	9.74
Brent	16	0.08	1,443	6.91
Croydon	14	0.06	2,529	10.55
Enfield	9	0.04	2,281	9.20
Greenwich	11	0.06	2,015	11.22
Waltham Forest	23	0.14	1,535	9.27

Secondary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

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The data shows disproportionality in Lewisham Secondary schools for, 'Black African', 'Black Caribbean' and 'White and Black Caribbean' with suspensions; also for 'Black African', 'Black Caribbean' and 'White Black Caribbean' and 'White British' with permanent exclusions (see Appendix 2).

5.3 Locally collected data on permanent exclusions (PEX) and managed transfers (MT) 2022/23

Lewisham council is promptly notified by schools regarding permanent exclusions. Lewisham Council quality assure the circumstances surrounding managed transfers of pupils in Lewisham schools and where possible Lewisham residents in out of borough schools. This data is provisional may change with withdrawals or conversions to managed transfers realising for June and July permanent exclusions and which will alter the DfE First Statistical Release figures in July 2024.

As a result we can collect data for the academic year of 2022/23. In 2022/23 there were **zero** permanent exclusions from Lewisham primary schools. In 2022/23 there were **21** permanent exclusions and **24** managed transfers from Lewisham secondary schools. These numbers can be said to be slightly improved to 2021/22 figures which represented the first full year with all children attending school after Covid lockdown. The breakdown of monthly figures during 2022/23 show March, June and July as the highest months.

	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	April 2023	May 2023	Jun 2023	Jul 2023
Permanent exclusion	1	1	0	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	5
Managed transfer	2	4	1	1	1	2	5	0	2	4	2

The table below shows the four-year trend in permanent exclusions and managed transfers per secondary school in Lewisham.

School name	PEX 2022 /23	MT 2022 /23	PEX 2021 /22	MT 2021 /22	PEX 2020 /21	MT 2020 /21	PEX 2019 /20	MT 2019 /20
Addey & Stanhope School	0 / 597 = 0%	1 / 597 = 0.16 %	0	2	0	3	0	1
Bonus Pastor Catholic College	0 / 923 = 0%	1 / 923 = 0.11 %	1	0	0	0	0	2
Conisborough College	0 / 846 = 0%	0 / 846 = 0%	3	1	0	0	2	4
Deptford Green School	3 / 906 = 0.33 %	3 / 906 = 0.33 %	1	0	3	0	0	1
Forest Hill School	0 / 893 =	1 / 893 =	1	0	0	7	0	0

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	0%	0.11 %						
Haberdashers' Hatcham College (Academy)	0 / 1107 = 0%	3 / 1107 = 0.27 %	1	1	0	2	0	5
Haberdashers' Knights Academy	6 / 1002 = 0.60 %	1 / 1006 = 0.10 %	6	5	1	1	4	3
Prendergast Ladywell School	1 / 877 = 0.11 %	1 / 877 = 0.11 %	4	1	1	0	2	1
Prendergast School	1 / 614 = 0.16 %	0 / 614 = 0%	2	0	1	0	0	1
Prendergast Vale School	0 / 588 = 0%	1 / 588 = 0.17 %	0	0	1	1	0	0
Sedgehill Academy	6 / 665 = 0.90 %	1 / 665 = 0.15 %	3	5	1	0	3	3
St Matthew Academy	3 / 862 = 0.35 %	5 / 863 = 0.58 %	0	2	2	2	5	0
Sydenham School	1 / 1179 = 0.08 %	0 / 1179 = 0%	1	5	1	5	0	2
Trinity Lewisham CE School	0 / 618 = 0%	6 / 618 = 0.97 %	0	6	0	1	1	3
TOTAL	21	24	23	28	11	22	17	26

* With percentage of exclusions against school roll (Year 7-11 census spring 2023)

5.4 Out of borough schools permanently excluding and managed transferring Lewisham residents (2022/23):

In addition there were **three** permanent exclusions and **six** managed transfers of Lewisham residents from out of borough schools in 2022/23. However, these exclusions will not be attributed to the Lewisham data by the DfE in the Statistical First Release.

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Southwark	
One Managed Transfer	St Thomas the Apostle (1)
One Permanent Exclusion	Harris Boys' Academy East Dulwich (1)
Bromley	
Three Managed Transfers	The Ravensbourne School (1), Harris Girls Academy (2)
Two Permanent Exclusions	The Ravensbourne School (1), Harris Academy, Bromley (1)
Greenwich	
Two Managed Transfers	Eltham Hill (1), Halley Academy (1)

5.6 Permanent exclusion and managed transfer reasons - Lewisham schools only

Reason	22/23 PEX	22/23 MT	21/22 PEX	21/22 MT	20/21 PEX	20/21 MT	19/20 PEX	19/20 MT
Drugs / alcohol	1	4	3	7	0	6	2	2
Offensive weapons / knives	3	3	4	3	2	2	1	3
Persistent disruptive behaviour	8	6	11	13	4	6	8	13
Verbal / Physical assault on another pupil	5	6	2	5	2	6	3	5
Verbal / physical assault on an adult	1	4	3	1	1	1	2	1
Sexual misconduct	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	2
Racist abuse	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Damage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Theft	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	21	24	23	28	11	22	17	26

During **2022/23** the main reasons for permanent exclusion and managed transfer are **persistent disruptive behaviour** and **verbal / physical assault on another pupil**.

Persistent disruptive behaviour: Permanent exclusions – **eight** and managed transfers - **six** in 2022/23 and represents a decrease. The data for those pupils permanently excluded and managed transferred for persistent disruptive behaviour are in Year 7 (one), Year 8 (one), Year 9 (six) and Year 10 (six), varied in ethnicity and this year - nine were female.

Verbal / physical assault on another pupil: Permanent exclusions – **five** and managed transfers - **six** in 2022/23 and this represents an increase. The data for those pupils permanently excluded and managed transferred for verbal / physical assault on another pupil are in Year 7 (one), Year 8 (five) and Year 9 (six), varied in ethnicity and this year – eight were female.

Special Educational Needs (SEN): No pupil with an EHCP was permanently excluded from a Lewisham school. However, **nine** pupils permanently excluded in 2022/23 from Lewisham were receiving in school SEN support, **three** excluded for **persistent disruptive behaviour**, **two** for **physical assault on a pupil**, **two** for **offensive weapons / knives**, **one** for **sexual misconduct** and **one** for **theft**. Of the managed transfer pupils in 2022/23, **eight** were receiving in school SEN support, **two** excluded were for **persistent disruptive behaviour** and **one** for **drugs / alcohol** and **two** for **physical assault on an adult**, **two** for **physical assault on a pupil** and **one** for **damage**.

Free school meals (FSM): During 2022/23 - permanent exclusion - **10 / 21** or **48 per**

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cent and managed transfer **13 / 24** or **54 per cent** of those pupils were in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM), the remainder were not entitled nor registered for FSM.

- 5.5 **Permanent exclusions and managed transfers by year group - Lewisham schools only.** Permanent exclusions and managed transfers for 2022/23 were across all year groups but with a spike in Year 9 and 10. This cohort was permanently excluded or managed transferred for a variety of reasons.

Year group	PEX 2022/23	MT 2022/23	PEX 2021/22	MT 2021/22	PEX 2020/21	MT 2020/21	PEX 2019/20	MT 2019/20
Year 7	2	2	3	1	0	1	3	2
Year 8	5	6	1	6	0	3	3	2
Year 9	6	8	4	5	4	7	2	12
Year 10	7	8	9	16	5	7	5	5
Year 11	1	0	6	0	2	4	4	5
Total	21	24	23	28	11	22	17	26

- 5.6 **Permanent exclusions and managed transfers by gender – Lewisham schools only.** More boys were managed transferred, predominately for a variety of reasons, in 2022/23.

Gender	PEX 2022/23	MT 2022/23	2021/22 PEX	2021/22 MT	2019/20 PEX	2019/20 MT
Male	11	13	11	11	8	13
Female	10	11	12	17	3	8
Total	21	24	23	28	11	22

- 5.7 **Permanent exclusions and managed transfers by ethnicity – Lewisham schools only (includes percentage of ethnic breakdown per secondary cohort).** Permanent exclusions have increased to **0.22 per cent** affecting White British pupils. Permanent exclusions at **0.42 per cent** and managed transfers at **0.62 per cent** affecting Black British / Black Caribbean pupils are like 2021/22. Permanent exclusions for Black British / Black African pupils were at **0 per cent** and **0% per cent** for managed transfers which is an improvement on 2021/22.

Ethnicity	2022/23 PEX	2022/23 MT	2021/22 PEX	2021/22 MT	2020/21 PEX	2020/21 MT	2019/20 PEX	2019/20 MT
Any other Black background	1 / 436 = 0.22%	2 / 436 = 0.45%	1 / 452 = 0.02%	1 / 452 = 0.02%	0	0	1	1
Any other Mixed background	0	2 / 734 = 0.27%	2 / 652 = 0.30%	1 / 652 = 0.15%	0	0	0	1
Any other white background	2 / 749 = 0.26%	1 / 749 = 0.13%	1 / 710 = 0.14	1 / 710 = 0.14	0	3	0	1
Any other background	1 / 438 = 0.23%	3 / 438 = 0.68%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2

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background								
Black African	0	0	4	3	4	3	4	4
Black British/Black Caribbean	$\frac{6}{1437} = 0.42\%$	$\frac{9}{1437} = 0.62\%$	5	12	5	9	1	7
Mixed White/Black African	0%	$\frac{1}{321} = 0.31\%$	0	1	0	1	0	0
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	$\frac{4}{614} = 0.65\%$	$\frac{1}{614} = 0.16\%$	4	2	0	1	2	4
Not Known	$\frac{2}{178} = 1.12\%$	$\frac{1}{178} = 0.56\%$	0	0	0	0	1	0
Refused	0%	$\frac{2}{305} = 0.65\%$	0	1	0	0	1	1
White British	$\frac{5}{2217} = 0.22\%$	0%	1	3	2	4	3	5
Total	21	24	23	28	11	22	17	26

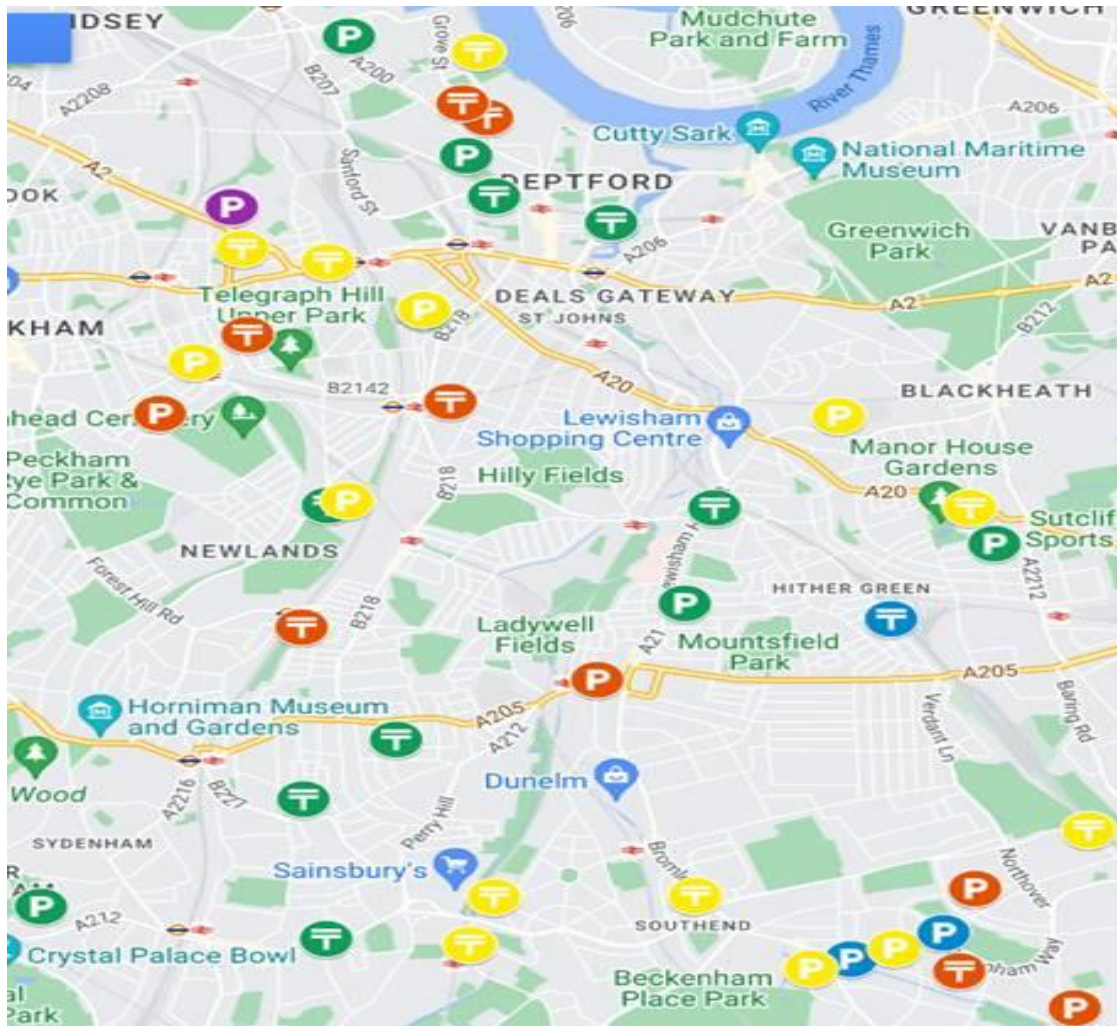
*percentage ethnicity against secondary school ethnic group population (Yr 7-11 census Spring 2023)



5.8 Permanent exclusions and managed transfers Lewisham map – Lewisham schools only

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	 Permanent exclusions	 Managed transfers
Year 7	Blue	
Year 8	Red	
Year 9	Yellow	
Year 10	Green	
Year 11	Purple	

5.9 Time to place

On average it takes five school days to place permanently excluded pupils into alternative provision, this is calculated from the exclusion date to the start date at the provision. This is much quicker than in previous years and is in line with the DfE guidance on placing pupils in education by the sixth day. Pupils start sooner at Abbey Manor College if the parents are fully engaged and supportive in the process. Pupils have their interview and risk assessment carried out on the same day or over two days; with pupils starting the following school day. Abbey Manor provides uniform for pupils, this speeds up their start date as there is no additional uniform costs to parents.

Whilst there is an increase in parental engagement with the local authority and Abbey Manor College, sometimes parents will delay their child's admission to Abbey Manor

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College in the hope they will be successful at the Governors Disciplinary Panel and have their child reinstated into school. These panels must be arranged within 15 school days of the date of the exclusion. Schools will aim to hold these panels as quickly as possible after the exclusion, ensuring less disruption to pupils' education.

It is worth noting that where parents accept a Managed Transfer their children start quicker at Abbey Manor or alternative provision due to an increase in parental engagement. This is beneficial in ensuring children are safeguarded with less disruption to their education, it also results in those children being considered for reintegration quicker than those whose admission is delayed by their parents.

5.10 **Where permanently excluded pupils are placed (2022/23)**

13 / 21 or 62 per cent of permanently excluded pupils were referred to Abbey Manor College. **One** pupil 'to be determined' and **seven** pupils were referred back to their home borough.

23 / 24 or 96 per cent of pupils managed transferred from Lewisham schools were referred to Abbey Manor College. **1 / 23 or 4 per cent** of pupils were referred to other provision - Arco Academy.

The other pupils were referred to other Alternative Provision and the reasons include:

- The pupil has vulnerabilities identified as risk to child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, or gang influence.
- Pupils who live out of borough are referred to their home local authority for education.

5.11 **Reintegration for pupils back into Lewisham schools at Key Stage 3 and 4 (2022/23)**

Historically pupils referred to the KS4 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) rarely had the opportunity of reintegration. It may have been attributed to the pupil's association with other services, e.g. Youth Offending Service (YOS). Also schools hold preconceptions about the pupil's ability to be reintegrated after their involvement with such services.

From the Lewisham PRU:

- In 2016/17 there were 14 in KS3 and two in KS4.
- In 2017/18 there were 29 in KS3 and 10 in KS4.
- In 2018/19 there were 24 in KS3 and 11 in KS4
- In 2019/20 there were 14 in KS3 and six in KS4. There were also four reintegrations from other Lewisham Alternative Provisions.
- In 2020/21 there were 4 at KS3 and 18 at KS4.
- In 2021/22 there were at 7 KS3 and 3 at KS4.
- In 2022/23 there were 6 KS3.

Since the Covid pandemic there has been a decline in the number of pupils reintegrated from Abbey Manor College and other alternative provisions. This is an area of work within the Inclusion Strategy Action Plan and a key focus for 2023/24.

5.12 **Conclusion and next steps to reducing exclusions**

In 2022/23 exclusion figures saw a slight improvement on the previous year, which experienced the significant and challenging impact of the Covid pandemic. Schools have continued to support their pupils facing challenges and barriers to learning and Lewisham Secondary schools withdrew a further four permanent exclusions and implemented alternative resolutions. The continued external factors that pupils face day to day and present in school have been amplified by the effects of the Covid pandemic. Persistent disruptive behaviour (possibly linked to special education need) anxiety, mental health and wellbeing and serious youth violence have continued to impact heavily on exclusions this academic year. This has been reported as similar

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experiences for neighbouring boroughs.

Although pupils were being reintegrated back into Lewisham schools, Abbey Manor College and other alternative provisions have reported that post-Covid, it is still taking longer for many pupils to be ready to return to mainstream schooling. They need intensive support provided by the College for longer.

The efforts of Lewisham secondary schools to avoid last resort approaches, the work of the Fair Access Panel and the Inclusion Partnership remained strong and are captured and incorporated in the Inclusion Strategy 2022-25. The Strategy includes actions:

- Continue with the programme to reduce the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions from Lewisham schools.
- Ensure pupils are actively engaged in the learning and participating in all areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to support children who are identified as vulnerable at primary to secondary school transition.
- Implement a programme to early identify children and young people who are at risk of exclusion and ensure that the Early Help Strategy supports them, ensuring the right support is provided at the right time.
- Review the work programme to successfully increase the number of children and young people who are re-integrated back into Lewisham schools.
- Continue the programme to improve levels of attendance of vulnerable children and young people attending Lewisham schools and Alternative Provision, or educated out of borough.
- Ensure that all provision accessed for Lewisham children and young people is Department for Education Registered or quality assured on an annual basis.
- Continue to develop and implement provision that fills the gaps identified.

5.13 Essential work for the year ahead will be prioritised:

Action Plan	Actions	By whom	By when
Continue with the programme to reduce the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions from Lewisham schools.	1. Focus on Lewisham schools that issue high numbers of suspensions and permanent exclusions to understand the issues and provide more targeted support, using Signs of Safety and Restorative approaches.	LA / schools	Annually – autumn term
	2. Continue to share best practice that exists and identify resources that are available to support schools to reduce exclusions and ensure that pupils achieve the best outcomes.	LA / Schools / APs	Ongoing
	3. Focus on collaboration with SEND Advisors, Lewisham Outreach Inclusion Service and Early Help – Family Thrive, Early Years Quality and Sufficiency.	LA / Schools	Ongoing
	4. Support the work of the Lewisham Tackling Race Inequality Strategy and initiatives to reduce exclusions for specific groups – Black Caribbean pupils:	LA / Schools	Ongoing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver Tackling Race Inequality training for all Lewisham Inclusion Leads. ▪ Develop and distribute a student Questionnaire to achieve YP voice on school experience and exclusions. ▪ Lewisham Tackling Race Inequality video for Leaders. ▪ Improve early intervention and support for those who may be at risk of exclusion. This includes the Early Help Strategy offer and to work to target and tailor mental health services for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) children and young people through Lewisham’s Mental Health Support in Schools Programme. ▪ Consult with all Lewisham secondary schools to review the support for pupils at risk of exclusion and challenge the schools’ behaviour policies and teaching and learning strategies so that practice is more inclusive. 		
	5. Ensure more engagement with parents/carers to ensure that they are better guided through the process and have a voice in terms of the future education of their child or young person.	LA / Parents	Spring 2024
	6. Continue to annually review the Offensive Weapons Protocol.	LA / Schools / Safer Lewisham	Annually
	7. Continue to annually review the Fair Access Protocol.	LA / Schools	Annually

6. Financial implications

6.1 This is an information only report, as such there are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal implications

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- 7.1 The latest guidance: *Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement, Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England, September 2022* (and until September 2023).³

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to equality impacts when making decisions in the exercise of their functions (Public Sector Equality Duty, PSED). In particular, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following as protected characteristics for the purpose of the PSED:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnicity)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

- 8.2 Lewisham Education strategy 2022-2027 reflects the Council's commitment to reducing achievement gaps and negative disproportionality in educational outcomes for specific groups of children and young people. This involves recording and reporting on data around protected characteristics by groups, as presented in this report. This data informs both how we deliver our business as usual functions and the development of strategies and programmes to tackle these inequalities.

9. Background papers

Appendix 1: Lewisham primary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

Appendix 2: Lewisham secondary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

³ [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/suspension-and-permanent-exclusion-from-maintained-schools-academies-and-pupil-referral-units-in-england)

10. Glossary

Term	Definition
Alternative provision	Settings that provide education for children who are unable to go to a mainstream school.
DfE	Department for Education
Suspension	Fixed period exclusion where a child or young person is temporarily removed from school
Permanent Exclusion (PEX)	where a child or young person is permanently (expelled) removed from school
Pupil referral unit	Provision for children excluded from mainstream school or in need of specialist provision because unable to attend school
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

11. Report author and contact

- 11.1 Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation
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Appendix 1: Lewisham primary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

Ethnicity	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate (%)	Suspensions	Suspension rate (%)
Gypsy Roma	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mixed Total	0.00	0.00	55.00	1.34
Any other Mixed background	0.00	0.00	11.00	0.65
Asian Total	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.29
Black Caribbean	0.00	0.00	50.00	2.31
White British	0.00	0.00	30.00	0.50
Any other Asian background	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.40
Black Total	0.00	0.00	112.00	1.62
Irish	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.81
Pakistani	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White and Black Caribbean	0.00	0.00	36.00	2.97
Any other white background	0.00	0.00	5.00	0.18
White and Black African	0.00	0.00	8.00	1.30
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.00	0.00	7.00	0.78
Bangladeshi	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.61
Chinese	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.59
Indian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Traveller of Irish heritage	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Black African	0.00	0.00	45.00	1.26
Ethnicity Unclassified	0.00	0.00	20.00	2.22
Any other black background	0.00	0.00	17.00	1.47
White and Asian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White Total	0.00	0.00	36.00	0.41

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Appendix 2: Lewisham secondary exclusions by ethnicity (per 1,000) 2021/22

Ethnicity	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate (%)	Suspensions	Suspension rate (%)
Any Other Ethnic Group	0.00	0.00	21.00	3.63
Any other white background	0.00	0.00	92.00	6.42
Bangladeshi	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.08
White and Asian	0.00	0.00	3.00	1.38
White and Black African	0.00	0.00	45.00	12.50
Any other Asian background	0.00	0.00	11.00	2.30
Any other black background	1.00	0.19	109.00	20.34
Any other Mixed background	1.00	0.12	122.00	14.06
Chinese	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
White Total	1.00	0.02	327.00	7.27
Black Total	7.00	0.13	902.00	16.95
Traveller of Irish heritage	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Black African	3.00	0.10	352.00	12.31
Mixed Total	5.00	0.23	345.00	15.56
White and Black Caribbean	4.00	0.52	175.00	22.70
White British	1.00	0.03	232.00	7.74
Asian Total	0.00	0.00	18.00	2.33
Black Caribbean	3.00	0.16	441.00	22.89
Ethnicity Unclassified	2.00	0.28	86.00	11.91
Gypsy Roma	0.00	0.00	1.00	16.67
Indian	0.00	0.00	3.00	3.30
Irish	0.00	0.00	2.00	3.08
Pakistani	0.00	0.00	2.00	1.90

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CYP Select Committee

Lewisham Attendance and Children Missing Education

Date: 19th September 2023

Key decision: No. For information only.

Class: Either Part 1 or Part 2.

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Contributors: Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation
Emma Stubbington, Attendance Manager

Outline and recommendations

Outline

As part of its work programme the Committee has requested a report on Lewisham's Attendance (Absence, Persistent Absence and Children Missing Education) performance indicators and outcomes. Officers produce this report annually as part of accountability and performance monitoring.

Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to note the significant improvement in the work programme to support and safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people by:

- Improving levels of attendance of children and young people in Lewisham schools.
- Reviewing and evaluating Lewisham processes to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with Children Missing Education in Lewisham.

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the context, legal framework and position in relation to attendance (absence, persistent absence and Children Missing Education) Lewisham. It also provides an analysis of Lewisham performance indicators and the actions that the local authority and Lewisham education providers are taking to effect progress.

The Department for Education (DfE) attendance data (absence and persistence absence) shows that Lewisham is performing better than national and London.

The roles and responsibilities for the Lewisham Attendance Service are underpinned by Lewisham's Corporate Strategy 2022-26 which includes: We will continue the fantastic work of the last four years, supporting our schools to improve and increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham.

The Service's continued focus is on increasing primary and secondary schools' performance in all attendance measures and has been in line with the London averages which have been met for the last five years.

The Lewisham Attendance Service is also responsible for the local authority's statutory work in relation to Children Missing Education (CME).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Select Committee is asked to note the significant improvement in the work programme to support and safeguard our most vulnerable children and young people by:
- Improving levels of attendance of children and young people in Lewisham schools and attending Lewisham Alternative Provision.
 - Reviewing and evaluating Lewisham processes to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with Children Missing Education in Lewisham.

3. Policy Context

The legal framework for the attendance and Children Missing Education (CME)

3.1 What are the legal requirements on local authorities in relation to school attendance?

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every learner has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;
- encourage parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly; and
- ensure all learners to be punctual to their lessons¹.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

3.2 The Department for Education (DfE) White Paper – Working together to improve school attendance

This year the Attendance Service has focussed on preparations for the implementation of the DfE White paper 'Working together to Improve School Attendance' due to become statutory from September 2023. The guidance prioritises school attendance by ensuring all frontline services work collaboratively to address and overcome barriers to ensure all CYP, particularly the most vulnerable return to full time education after the pandemic years.

3.3 Statutory definition of a Child Missing Education

A Child Missing from Education is defined by the DfE as: "A child of compulsory school age

¹ [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)”.

Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016 states that: *“All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.”*

Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and being not in education, employment or training (NEET) later on in life.

Under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (amended – Education and Inspections Act 2006) Lewisham implements systems to establish the identities of children of statutory school age in Lewisham, as far as it is possible to do so, who are not registered learners at a school, and are not receiving “suitable education” otherwise than at school (EOTAS).

“Suitable education” means efficient full-time education suitable to the child’s age, ability and aptitude. CME should not be confused with:

- Children who are on roll at a school but are not attending regularly; in this case the individual’s school Attendance (Welfare if needed) Officer should be involved or a referral made to the Attendance Inclusion and Participation Service;
- Children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE); and
- Children whose parents have applied for a school place and the application is being managed through the admission procedures².

4. Background – school attendance

4.1 Importance of regular school attendance

Ensuring all children and young people (CYP) fulfil their potential requires regular school attendance to benefit from the developmental opportunities offered by schools. Missed learning opportunities increases the risks of falling behind academically and socially. Educational outcomes for CYP who have low levels of attendance are adversely affected as they are less likely to achieve during their school career and more likely to become NEET (neither in education, employment, or training) following compulsory education.

Nationally CYP who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging in anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own health, safety, and welfare. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their CYP attend school regularly and punctually for them to obtain the most benefit from the opportunities available to them.

CYP in Lewisham come from diverse backgrounds and a range of life experiences. Most attend school regularly and on time and leave as young adults well equipped to enter further education, employment, or training (EET) and can contribute significantly to society. For a small minority, school is the only place of physical as well as emotional safety and may be the most secure aspect of their lives. The link between irregular school attendance and poor academic achievement and limited life outcomes has been established and well researched.

4.2 Attendance and Persistent Absence (PA) - national and Lewisham context

²

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921405/20170831_Exclusion_Stat_guide_Web_version.pdf

Pupil absence data for primary, secondary, and special schools along with Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are collected termly via the Department for Education (DfE) School Census data collection return and published in a Statistical First Release (SFR). Full-year attendance data for special schools is collected annually at the Autumn School Census

The DfE published verified Attendance and PA data for the first term of the academic year 2022-23. Lewisham continues to have better total attendance and lower PA than both the National and Inner London averages in all the areas.

School type	National attendance %	Inner London (IL) attendance %	Lewisham Attendance %	National PA %	IL PA %	Lewisham PA %	Comments for Lewisham
Total	92.48	92.82	93.46	24.18	23.77	21.09	Better than both
Primary	93.61	93.3	94.22	20.89	23.33	18.87	Better than both
Secondary	91.21	92.48	92.63	27.44	23.57	23.27	Better than both
Special	86.62	86.09	87.94	40.90	43.51	39.64	Better than both

4.3 DfE published attendance and PA data for the full academic year 2021-22

Full attendance and PA data for 2021-22 was the first full school year where schools were unable to X code COVID illnesses. As such there is a marked drop in attendance from the previous academic year. Lewisham was still the highest attended inner London Borough.

School Phase	Attendance and Persistent Absence Data	National (2020/21) %	National (2021/22) %	Inner London (2020/21) %	Inner London (2021/22) %	Lewisham (2020-21) %	Lewisham (2021-22) %
Primary	Overall Attendance	96.36	93.74	95.95	94.07	96.43	94.54
	Persistent Absence	8.78	17.70	10.31	17.27	8.61	14.74
Secondary	Overall Attendance	94.51	91.01	94.79	92.96	95.10	93.05
	Persistent Absence	14.83	27.71	13.81	21.97	12.96	20.48
Special school	Overall Attendance	84.79	86.82	87.16	87.31	86.27	89.02
	Persistent Absence	48.94	40.36	39.93	40.19	45.30	36.81

Lewisham schools achieved above national and Inner London outcomes for attendance and lower PA for primary and secondary schools in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. In 2021/22

Lewisham primary schools achieved 0.08 per cent above the national average and 0.47 cent above inner London attendance figures and secondary schools achieved 2.04 per cent above national and 0.09 per cent above inner London attendance data.

PA in Lewisham was also better. In primary schools' PA was 2.96 per cent lower than national and 2.53 per cent lower than inner London data. In secondary schools' PA was 7.23 per cent lower than national and 1.49 per cent lower than inner London data.

Lewisham special schools' attendance was 2.20 per cent higher than national figures and higher than inner London by 1.71 per cent. This trend was same for persistent absence, with

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Lewisham achieving lower persistent absence figures than national figures by 3.55 per cent and lower than inner London outcomes by 3.38 per cent.

The Attendance Service collects attendance and persistent absence data half termly via a 'workbook' from those schools that trade with the service. The workbook is used to monitor current absence data to provide the school and local authority with accurate six weekly (half termly) information to enable the school to take quick action to address individual pupil absence concerns. The workbook is used to provide the school advice and recommendations based on the data information submitted. This two-way tool has been helpful to ensure swift action where needed on areas of development.

The success of data workbook has not only helped improve attendance in schools across the local authority, but it has also been highlighted by OFSTED as an excellent tool of attendance tracking and action planning most recently in recent inspections undertaken at Athelney and Elfrida primary schools in June and July 2022.

The unverified data Lewisham collects via the workbook is very close to the DfE verified data once it is released. Therefore, the Attendance Service can accurately predict and prevent concerning patterns before the six months it takes for the DfE statistical release.

4.3 **Summary of national and Lewisham attendance**

In the last four years the service has risen on the Inner London league tables. The most recent verified data released by the DfE for 2021-22 ranked Lewisham first for primary attendance and third for secondary attendance.

The government launched a data platform (WONDE) in May 2022 to help local authorities collate information on school attendance and persistent absence data. However, many schools and multi-academies trusts have not signed up to WONDE and have opted not to share their data with the DfE.

In September 2022 Lewisham purchased a piece of software called StudyBugs. This application can create a link with all Lewisham's school's management information systems (MIS) allowing users of StudyBugs to view an individual school's attendance registers in real time. In addition to the attendance service accessing Studybugs, other frontline services can access information related to the children and young people they support. This is referred to later in the report.

This year approximately 80 plus per cent of schools in Lewisham signed up to use StudyBugs and it has significantly improved the access, collation and analysing of attendance data going forward. Working with schools that have subscribed provides instantaneous access to attendance and absence data at school and individual level, accessed live schools in-year vacancies and downloadable persistence and severe absence, exclusions, dual registered and off-site information.

Attendance data assists our partner services where admission, exclusions and deregistration not only affect attendance but contribute toward safeguarding concerns and impact pupil outcomes.

4.4 **Lewisham Attendance Service response to DfE statutory guidance³**

The DfE guidance has set specific areas of responsibilities for local authority attendance teams that must be provided to all schools. Lewisham's responsibilities are listed below

³ [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

alongside the Attendance Service response.

4.4.1 **Communication and advice**

Local authorities must circulate clear guidance on how schools, the local authority Attendance Service and other partners should work together to provide intensive voluntary and/or formal support for individual CYP and families.

The Attendance Service Handbook sets out local authority expectations based on the school responsibilities. It includes common practices e.g term time holidays and follow up for persistent lateness so that families. The handbook will be ready for circulation ready in September 2023.

The Attendance Service website provides a one stop shop for all schools to access swift information on attendance matters including links to other services such as Children Missing Education, Early Help and MASH. It also includes practical matters such as local and national data, example policies, development plans, forms for penalty notice, advice on legal intervention and litigation submissions and links to key resources local and national guidance.

Weekly attendance surgeries, this academic year, allow nontraded schools to access to advice and guidance.

Attendance Network Meetings happen every term and invites all schools to discuss common difficulties and to share good practice. These have proved extremely useful with schools sharing their experiences of OFSTED feedback and new initiatives that have improved school attendance.

An Attendance Service newsletter was launched this year and all topics and themes, alongside contact details and links to other services. Schools and partner local authority are invited to provide positive stories, case studies share updated news and information regarding support and intervention.

Annual stakeholder feedback is collated by online survey to enable school colleague's opportunity to provide views and opinions to help shape and develop the service each year. In addition to stakeholder feedback, the attendance service monitors trends and patterns of absence throughout the year and the reasons or causes are used to develop targeted areas and pathways of early intervention support.

Termly reports to schools based on their attendance and persistent absence data provide the schools with advice and recommendations on how to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. The reports are produced termly (autumn, spring, and summer) and have received excellent feedback from Headteachers and senior leaders and governors.

4.4.2 **Targeted support meetings**

Local authorities are expected to organise termly targeted support meetings as part of the core service available to all schools regardless of traded status. They are designed to allow the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's Attendance Service to identify, discuss, and agree joint targeted actions for pupils who are persistently or severely absent and those at risk of becoming so. The targeted support meeting should include helping schools to analyse their own data, compare themselves to other schools across Lewisham and consider how they may learn from or work with other schools who have faced similar patterns or trends.

4.4.3 **Multi-disciplinary support for families**

The DfE guidance states that local authorities should facilitate effective multi-disciplinary support for families, where barriers to attendance for a pupil or family are complex and signposting to services is not sufficient. Schools and local authorities are also specifically expected to have agreed a joint approach for all severely absent pupils. This is likely to include health, youth justice, voluntary and community sector, early help, children's social care, local safeguarding partnerships, special educational needs, educational psychologists, and housing support.

This year the Attendance Service introduced its new multi-disciplinary panel to Lewisham. The panel consists of colleagues from across Early Help, Children Social Care, Special Educational Needs, Virtual School, Safeguarding in Education and Health. Schools are invited to refer pupils who are severely absent (under 50 per cent) where prosecution is deemed inappropriate.

There was a total of 50 pupils with severe absence identified when the first meeting was held in December 2022. In July 2023, the number of pupils referred with severe absence had reduced to 17. This means 34 per cent of cases were successfully supported through the multi-disciplinary approach.

4.4.4 **Severe absence**

The DfE guidance introduced the term 'severe absence' to describe children and young people with attendance below 50 per cent. The guidance states, *'if all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g., an education, health, and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect'*.

Whilst the Lewisham Attendance Service will pursue prosecution against parents where appropriate, the process of prosecution itself is not a safeguard or protection of the child. It is important to consider what school offers and provides to a child's academic, social, and emotional wellbeing and the detrimental impact on these areas of development when a child does not attend school regularly.

4.4.5 **Legal intervention**

The DfE guidance places a responsibility on local authority Attendance Services to set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used. Local authority legal services are encouraged to make use of formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders and use them fairly and consistently.

This year the Attendance Service produced a new Attendance Service parent leaflet for cases where pupils' attendance is impacted by persistent or severe absence. The leaflet includes information on parental responsibility and advises them on steps to improve attendance. Where attendance is not improved, legal action is explained to as a precaution and deterrent.

The Attendance Service has produced parent guides that:

- improve parental understanding of statutory processes
- explain the attendance enforcement process when school attendance does not improve
- inform parents on the escalation process
- explain Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Orders

- litigation evidence.

The Attendance Manager is the named responsible officer for Parenting Orders and Conditional Discharges on education prosecution court dispersals.

This year education prosecutions have continued to be escalated to court in keeping with the DfE guidance and local authority statutory obligations.

Academic Year	No of cases Referred to legal services	No of cases heard at court	No of fines imposed	No of Conditional Discharge	No of Parenting Orders	No of Withdrawn Cases	No of Not Guilty verdicts
2022-23	56	20	8	3	2	20	0
2021-22	34	25	7	12	1	4	1

* 28 pending court dates

This shows an increase of 65 per cent in the number of cases referred for legal action this year. From the 56 cases escalated for consideration of prosecution:

- 36 per cent were presented to court.
- Of cases referred to court, 40 per cent received financial penalties, 15 per cent received conditional discharge, 10 per cent received parenting orders.
- 36 per cent of cases were withdrawn due to delay.

4.5 Lewisham's approach to regular school attendance

The Attendance Manager has been a member and participant of the DfE white paper action group this year and has contributed toward the strategic and operational implementation and guidance issued nationally to local authorities. In addition, the Service Managers were asked by the DfE to present Lewisham's model at the national meeting of local authority Directors and senior leaders in May 2023 as an example of good practice.

The Attendance Service has continued to deliver both statutory and traded services to schools across Lewisham and neighbouring local authorities. The following table illustrates the casework completed by the attendance service this academic year that were delivered to schools who buy in to the attendance service traded offer.

Academic year	Number of referred cases	School meetings	Home visits	LA FAP (pre court meetings)	Court warning	Witness statements	Legal hearings (Magistrate Court)
2022-23	776	737	44	177	341	41	20*
2021-22	660	574	64	128	334	38	34

*28 additional cases are currently waiting for summons to be granted

This year the attendance service referrals increased by 18 per cent. From the 776 CYP referred to the service, five per cent improved school attendance through early intervention. 95 per cent of parents were invited to attend a school attendance meeting.

From the 737 school meetings, 54 per cent of CYP improved their attendance with no further action required. 46 per cent of cases required statutory action. From the 177 pre court meetings 73 per cent of CYP improved their attendance to school and only 27 per cent were referred to court. Prosecution is the last resort and was only six per cent.

4.6 Attendance team traded services with schools and academies

Working closely with schools and academies across Lewisham is essential to achieve

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outstanding school attendance. In 2022-23 the Attendance Service launched the new style service level agreement (SLA) to schools and academies in Lewisham.

This new SLA includes a ‘menu’ of strategic advice, practical support and training for Headteachers, senior leaders, teachers, and support staff on the responsibility of whole school attendance and other interventions that can help schools build capacity within their own practices and policies. It also offers early intervention and resources that schools can use directly with pupils to secure the pupil voice as part of the attendance process and the creation of personalised reintegration support plans.

The new SLA has been a great success and in 2022-23 the Attendance Service not only increased the buy-in of existing schools but attracted the subscription of new schools resulting in the highest revenue accrued since the Attendance Service offered traded services. This is an excellent achievement and example of the professionalism and expertise of the attendance team who deliver the service to schools.

In 2022-23 the Lewisham Attendance Service secured SLAs with 83 per cent of mainstream schools. This includes 100% of special schools, Abbey Manor College (Alternative Provision) and two schools located in Southwark. SLAs have increased and secured revenue to the amount of 17 per cent on 2021-22. This figure includes an increase in the number of schools buying in to the traded offer and some schools increasing their existing package of support already in place.

Number of traded SLA	Lewisham schools (excluding Independent)		Primary schools	Secondary schools	Special schools (including PRU / AP)	Total revenue
2023-22	PRI 69	SEC 14	53	11	5	£ 224,140
2022-23	PRI 69	SEC 14	48	11	6	£ 192,005

4.7 Sir William Boreman’s Foundation

This provides funds from the proceeds of the 1684 Will of Sir William Boreman. The Drapers Company oversees these funds which acts to promote pupils’ attendance and attainment specifically for those living in Lewisham and Greenwich. Lewisham’s Attendance Service is responsible for the administration, accounting, and distribution of these charitable funds within the borough.

The fund is increased by application each year and was awarded a further £2,000 in June 2023. The objective of funding is to improve school attendance and attainment and the outcome of whether this aim is achieved is recorded and included in an annual report written and submitted to the Boreman Trust.

The fund is a unique opportunity for Lewisham to assist parents that are unable to fulfil their responsibility to ensure school attendance because of difficulties that can be supported through financial support. The fund is small and so gate-keeping applications by way of threshold and criteria has been essential to prevent Boreman’s being used for cases of general financial hardship.

In addition, in February 2022 the DfE released new statutory guidance on school uniform. The guidance included reference to the responsibility of schools to help and support families in hardship to secure uniform. In response to this the attendance service updated the Boreman request form including a section for schools to explain why they have been unable to provide the uniform through preloved/ owned clothing or pupil premium funding to help

ensure applications for financial support remain appropriate.

Between September 2022 to March 2023, 42 applications for Boreman's funding were approved. 38 applications were for school uniform, associated clothing and shoes. Two applications were approved to enable children to participate in school journeys and two applications approved for parental travel expenses. The total cost for applications totalled £4,263.12.

Since March 2023 19 further applications have been approved. 14 applications were for uniform items and 3 applications were for parental travel assistance, one application was for school journey and one to replace a bed (this was an exceptional circumstance) these applications totalled £1,885.34 increasing the total spend on Boreman's to £6148.46.

4.8 **Statutory local authority attendance, enforcement and safeguarding for all Lewisham local authority-maintained schools and academies**

In addition to school attendance, the Service has responsibility for delivering other statutory duties on behalf Lewisham. These include the following areas:

- The investigation and implementation of statutory attendance enforcement
- The administration of Penalty Notices.
- Enforcing and licensing Child Employment and Performance.
- Tracking and preventing Children Missing from Education (**information provided in a separate report**).

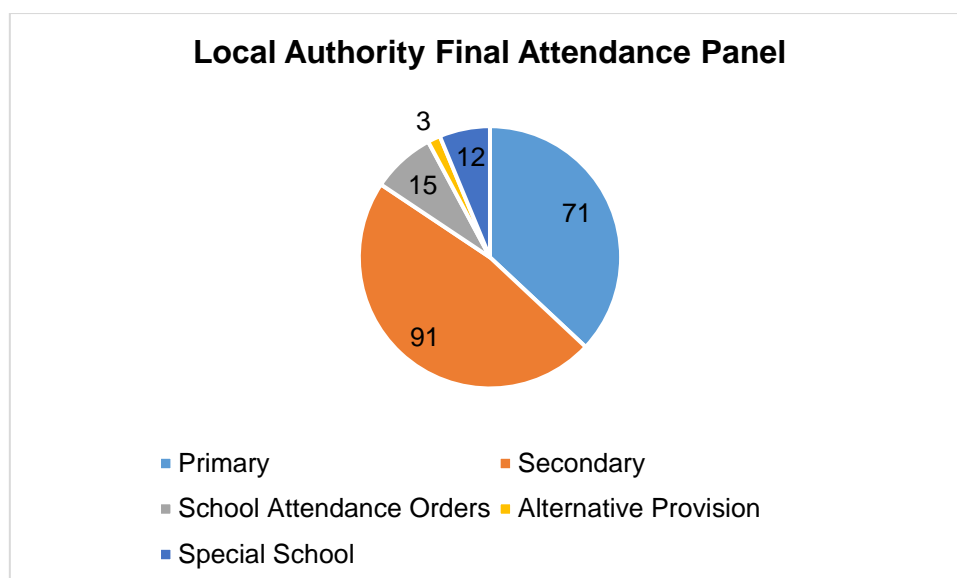
4.8.1 **The investigation and implementation of statutory attendance enforcement**

The Attendance Service will always attempt to work informally with families to address and overcome barriers to attendance either by direct support, advice or by sign posting and referring to support services within the local authority.

The Attendance Service regularly work in partnership with agencies including Children's Social Care, Children with Complex Needs Service, MACE (multi-agency Child Exploitation arrangements), Police and Youth Justice Service and Health professionals to ensure that children do not fall between the gaps.

Where parents do not engage legal intervention is used to enforce school attendance. In casework following a court warning letter, a Local Authority Final Attendance Panel (LA FAP) is convened when attendance remains below national expectations. A LA FAP is the equivalent of a pre court meeting and is held when a CYP's attendance has not improved to satisfactory levels despite early intervention and statutory action being initiated.

In 2022-23 15 LA FAP were convened with parents to explore reasons for non-engagement with a school attendance order to allow opportunity for further support before escalation to prosecution was needed. The Attendance Service received 50 per cent more than 2021-22. Seven per cent of those were received from non-traded schools.



From the 192 LA FAP meetings convened this academic year, 37 per cent were requested by primary schools, 47 per cent secondary schools, 12 per cent special schools, two per cent alternative provisions and eight per cent for school attendance orders. Seven per cent of LA FAP request were made from non-traded school with 93 per cent of LA FAP meetings by traded schools as part of the attendance service enforcement process.

4.8.2 The administration of Penalty Notices

Requests for penalty notices have increased by 85 per cent this year. This is a significant increase on the number issued in 2021-22. In line with increases in other areas of the attendance service, penalty notices require time to ensure quality assurance and administration is completed. The increase in demand has increased the time needed this year to address the statutory responsibility.

This year all penalty notices were paid and the total income generated for penalty notices increased by 123 per cent on the income generated last year. This is a significant increase and an area to monitor next academic year.

Academic Year	Total Number Penalty Warning	Total Number Penalty Notices	% Poor School Attendance	% Holidays in Term Time	Total Income from Penalty Notices
2022-23	55	350	24 (7%)	326 (93%)	£ 13,140.00
2021-22	118	189	43 (23%)	146 (77%)	£ 5,880.00

It is encouraging to see the use of penalty notice to address poor attendance has reduced this year. Poor school attendance is a symptom that something is wrong and requires intervention and support to address and overcome. The Attendance Service Handbook will provide advice to schools on how to challenge holidays in term time and when to apply the use of penalty notices.

4.8.3 Enforcing and licensing child employment and performance

A significant improvement this year has been to reduce the timescales for performance licence applications without compromising the safeguarding element and local authority responsibility.

Although the regulations allow for “at least 21 days’ notice” many agencies assumed this to be an administrative exercise, gave significantly less notice and expected that licences would be processed sooner. The service has commenced work to enable all applications to be made electronically this year thereby streamlining the administrative process, ensuring quicker turn-around times and pressure relating volumes of applications.

The table below highlights an increase of 16 per cent in the number of requests received throughout the 2022-23 academic year.

Year	No licensing application received	No licenses processed	No licences declined	No licence exemptions	Chaperone licence renewals processed	New chaperone application processed	No DBS applications	No work permits processed
2022-23	479	479	0	12	21	30	54	23
2021-22	414	418	0	15	24	38	56	14

4.9 Summary of achievements

- Lewisham school attendance consistently remains the highest against national and inner London schools according to DfE verified data achieving above national and Inner London outcomes for attendance and lower persistent absence for the first term with primary attendance ranking first against inner London schools.
- The number of traded Service Level Agreements purchased by schools and academies across the local authority increased to the highest level since traded service began in both number and cost generating revenue of £224,140.
- The number of referrals from traded schools to the Attendance Service increased by 18 per cent to 776 pupils this academic year.
- 54 per cent of CYP referred to the Attendance Service improved school attendance without the need for statutory intervention and 73 per cent of CYP improved attendance without the case escalating to legal action.
- 90 per cent of traded stakeholders regarded the Attendance Service as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ through online survey.
- 685 CYP deemed not to have a school place were identified and new educational provision and safeguard children and young people living within the London Borough of Lewisham.
- Lewisham Attendance Service was selected by the DfE to present the Lewisham model at the national meeting of local authority Directors and Senior Leaders as an example of good practice.

4.10 Attendance Service priorities for 2023/24

- Ensure school attendance and persistent absence across Lewisham continues to exceed national and inner London outcomes in line with Lewisham KPIs.
- Ensure successful delivery of the attendance service to all schools, especially those new to the service this year.
- Complete the DfE Attendance Audit to ensure Lewisham is compliant with the new statutory guidance and establish action plan where audit suggests improvement should be made.
- Deliver training to Lewisham Services on the white paper to ensure all front-line services are area of the statutory changes early in the autumn term 23-24.
- Establish timely DfE data submissions (Wonde) for schools and academies in preparation of termly meetings.

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- Ensure service delivery maintains high quality of professionalism with stakeholder feedback exceeding 90 per cent.
- Develop Attendance Service Development Plan using criteria from the DFE White paper to ensure compliance with expectations and to measure impact of service delivery against expected outcomes.
- Create the training menu and training programmes offered through the new SLA so that is available to schools from the start of the 2023-24 academic year.
- Review and develop the Leavers and Destination project to improve efficiency and quality of information and frequency provided from schools.

5. Background – Children Missing Education

- 5.1 Lewisham is committed to ensure that its CME protocol is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with its residents who are Children Missing Education.

CME can be vulnerable and at greater risk of significant harm. The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Lewisham adopts the London Good Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Children Missing from School which states that the principles should be adopted by all agencies, responsible for locating children who go missing from school. These principles include:

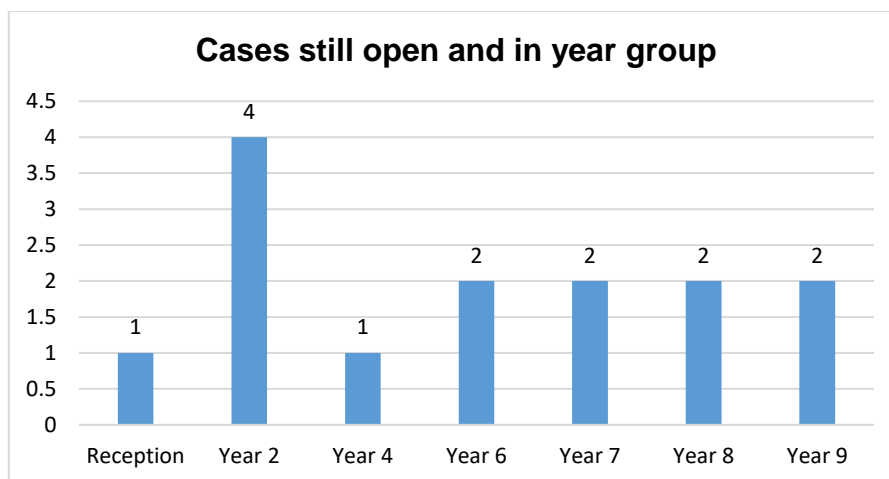
- The safety of the child is paramount.
- Parents are the custodians of the welfare and well-being of their children when they are not in school.
- The primary objective is for local authority and other agencies to work together to locate and return the child to a safe environment.
- Child protection procedures are triggered where there are any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or suffering harm.
- Agency actions will link where appropriate with actions required under related protocols, such as the London Child Protection Procedures.
- Services will be put in place to ensure that when a child is found s/he receives the necessary ongoing support to enable him/her to live in a stable, safe environment and attend school.

5.2 Analysis of Lewisham CME referrals 2022/23

Data is captured and recorded by the CME Officer and the following analysis is taken from the whole academic year August 2022 to end of July 2023 and comparable data is also included from the previous academic year.

There has been a total of **231** cases referred and **217** cases closed this academic year. This leaves **14** cases remaining open at the beginning of August 2022. Last year, from August 2021 to July 2022, there were **235** referrals.

This is the lowest total of referrals in any academic year. The lower number could be due to the high levels of mobility over the past few years; together with a falling role numbers. The CME Service has also worked closer with the Admissions Service to signpost referrals before they become CME. The few cases currently open are new to Lewisham's Attendance and Admissions Services and are awaiting placement.



5.3 Closed cases

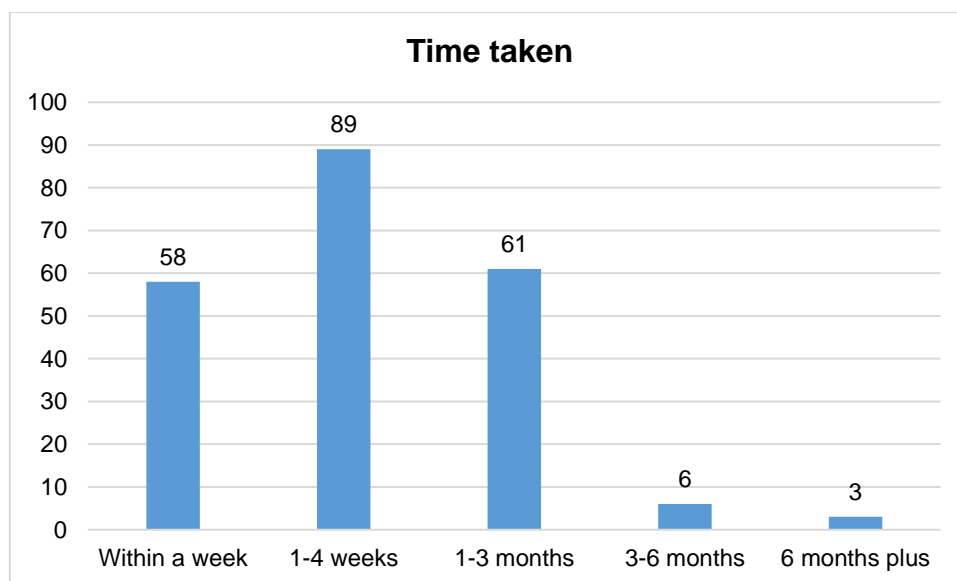
Of the **217** cases that the Attendance Service closed this year:

- **58** (27 per cent) were closed within one week. Nine per cent lower than previous year.
- A further **89** (41 per cent) were closed within a week to one month. Nine per cent higher.
- **68** per cent closure in the first month is the same as last year. But still down on the **77** per cent of cases we had in in 2018-19.

The remaining **70** cases closed within the academic year:

- **61** (28 per cent) between one and three months, one per cent down on last year.
- **six** cases closed between three-six months (three per cent), this is the same as last year.
- **three** cases closed after six months. This is one per cent. The aim is zero.

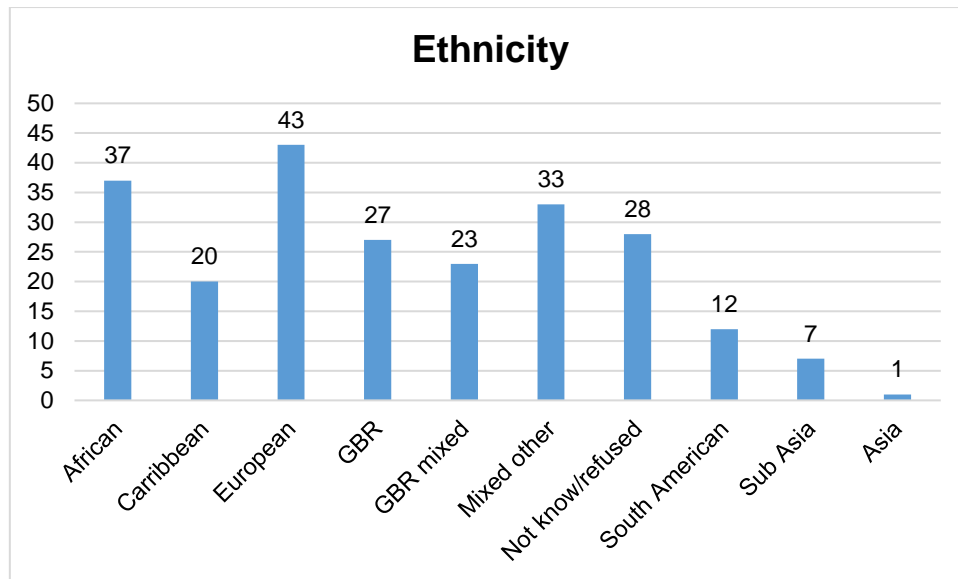
The lack of consistency and cooperation from the National Boarder Force (NBF) continues to be an issue. Lewisham has recently been able to submit some checks which have been agreed by NBF for safeguarding reasons. However, the unpredictable of approvals still results in an increased length of time it can take to obtain confirmation that the child or young person is in a new school, borough or country.



5.4 Referrals by ethnicity

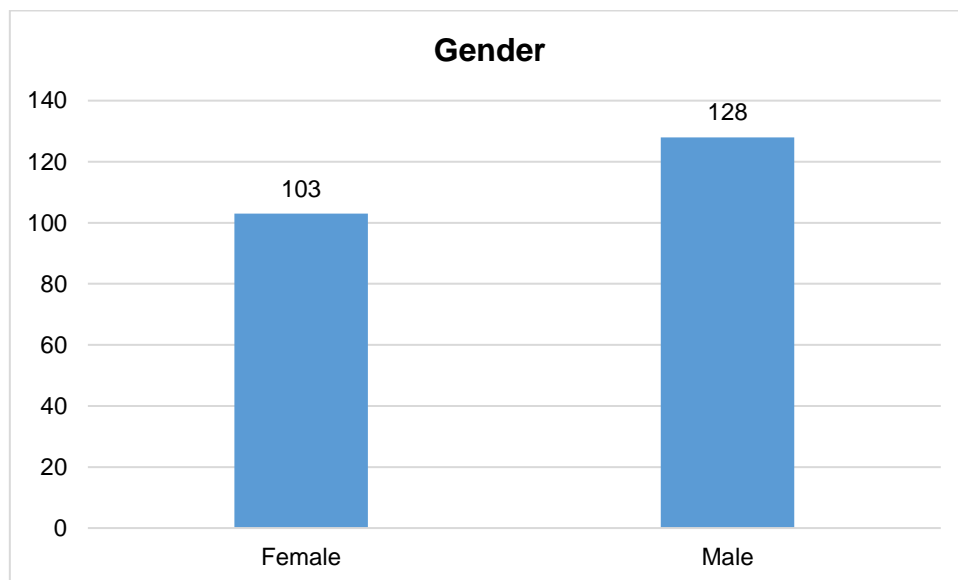
The following table shows the **231** referrals by ethnicity. This shows that 'African' and

'European' backgrounds referrals are equal. The biggest increase is from "mixed other", this can be attributed to the higher number of refugees and migrants who have settled in Lewisham.



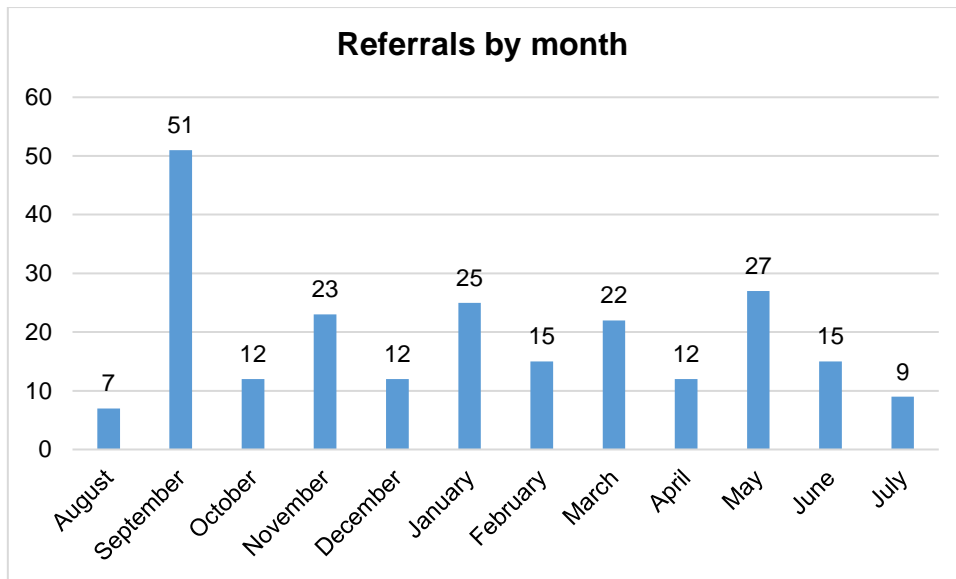
5.5 Referrals by gender

The 2022/23 male/female ratio is almost identical to 2021/22, with males making (128) 56 per cent from to 57 per cent. Whereas the proportion females have risen slightly with (103) 44 per cent up from 43 per cent.



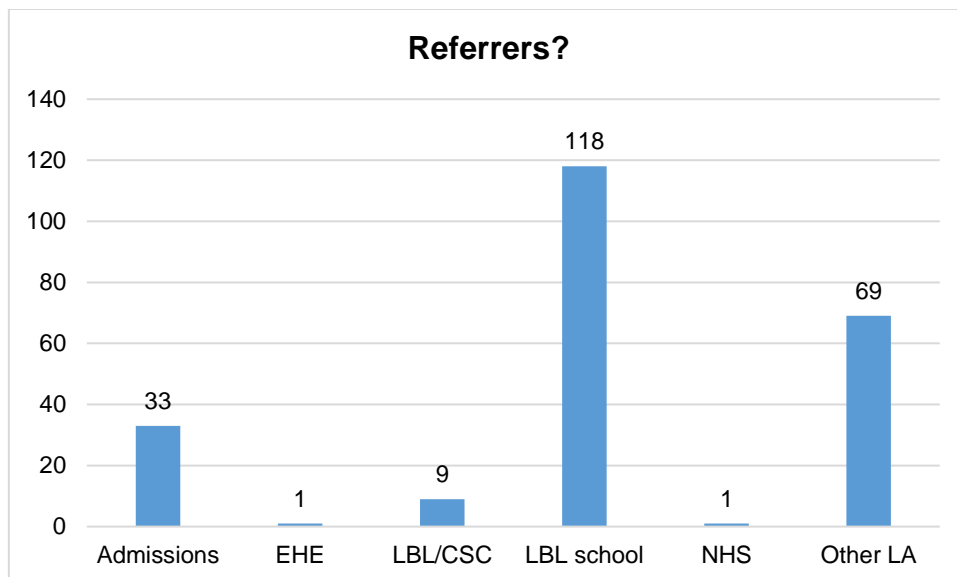
5.6 Referrals by month

The data shows that the date of the referrals is similar year on year. The CME Service had **37** per cent of the referrals between September and November. This is a **one** per cent increase. However, in 2019/20 it was 34 per cent. Everything is quite similar apart from June which had a 50 per cent drop for year on year.



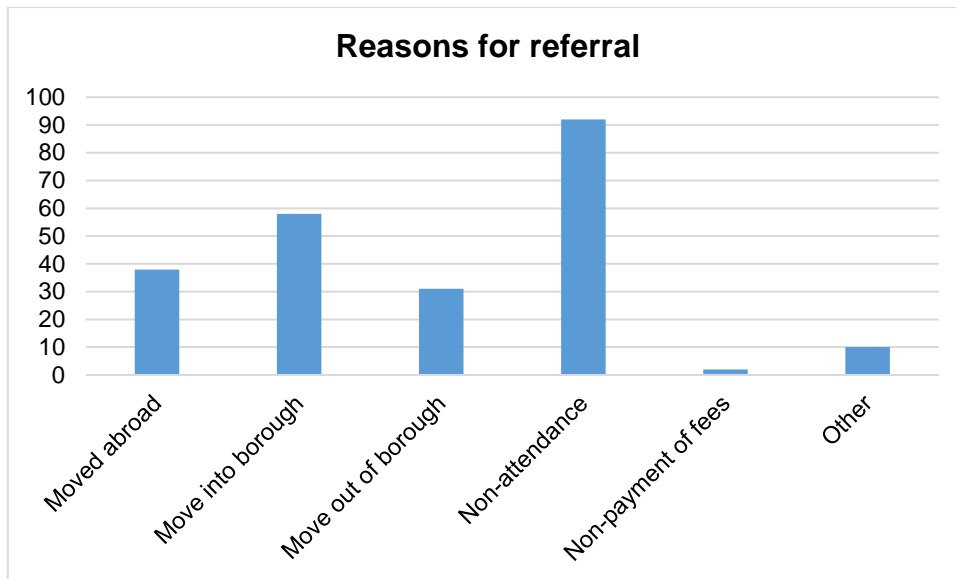
5.7 Who is referring?

The data shows the percentages of referrals from various agencies. The highest referrer is Lewisham Council and this includes Lewisham schools, the Admissions Service and other Lewisham departments. In total they are responsible for 66 per cent of all referrals. Other local authorities were the second highest referrer this year with 29 per cent. Lewisham has no referrals from CSC, this is due to the new Assistant Headteacher within the Virtual School establishing good links with the Attendance and Admissions Services.



5.8 Reasons for referral

The data shows that the highest reason for a referral this year was due to “non-attendance” with 37 per cent, one per cent lower. The highest increase was, ‘moved into borough’ with 25 per cent. The biggest drop was for “moved out of borough”, it improved to seven per cent.

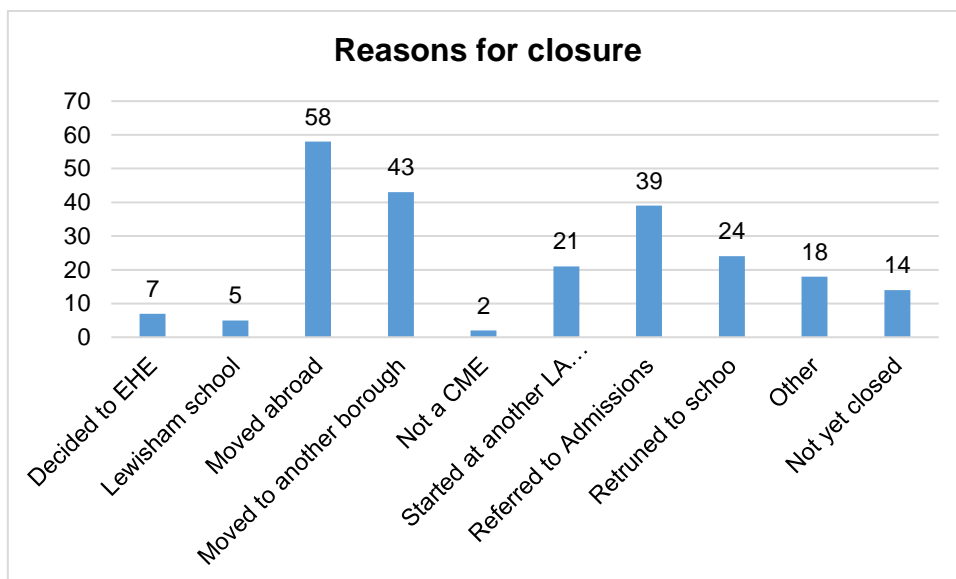


5.9 Reasons for closure

The data highlights the reasons for the **217** cases being closed. The highest reason confirmed is that the child or young person had moved out of the country, although confirming this information is more difficult without boarder checks. The second highest was children and young people who moved to a new local authority. This was via confirmation from another local authority or schools abroad. 46 per cent of the cases fell into this category. This is a four per cent increase from 2021/22.

Referred to the Admissions Service and children and young people who returned to a school after a period of unexplained time away equated to 39 per cent of closed cases.

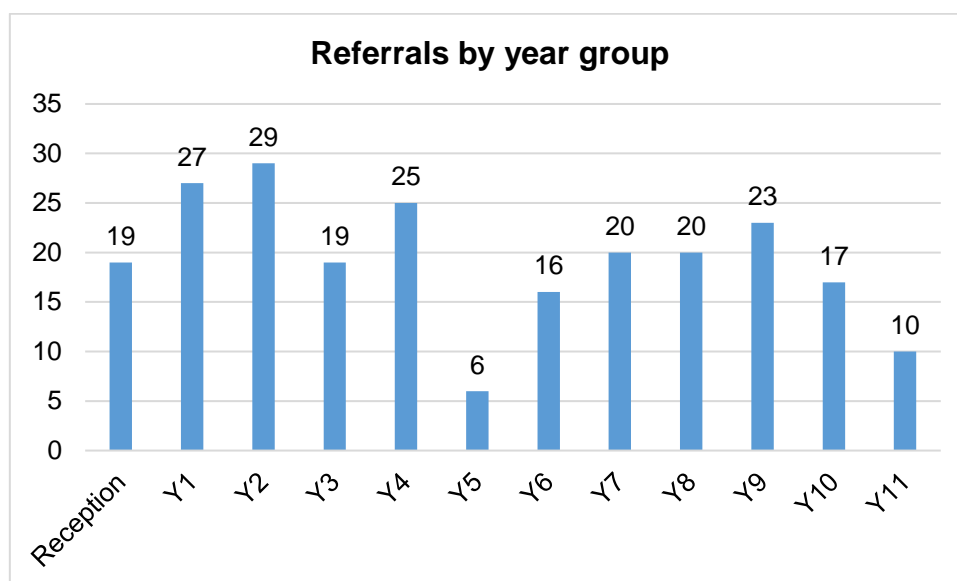
The “other” reasons for closure dropped from 17 per cent to eight per cent. This drop is due to the complex issues people faced last year such as being caught on “red list” counties and being unable to travel have ceased. There is again a slight downtick in the number of parents who decided to electively home educate.



5.10 Referrals by year group

Of the **231** cases referred in 2022/23 there that apart from Year 5 most others have a

consistent number of referrals. Y11 is lower but this generally are due to the young person taking GCSE's. Historically Lewisham saw a higher numbers in Y7 with families not being happy about their allocated school. Due to work undertaken by the Admissions Team, this no longer seems to be the case.



5.11 Summary of findings

One of the most significant findings in 2022/23 is that **55** per cent of referred cases are due to mobility. That is **127** referrals received as a family declaring that they were relocating.

The CME Service continues to reduce the time of closing cases within a three-month period, it is now at **96** per cent.

There has been a reduction in the ethnicity category "not provided". However, the service will continue to collect more specific data going forward.

The target to reduce "other" reason for referrals improved from seven per cent to four per cent. That along with the fall in "not known" ethnicity shows both the local authority and schools have better all-round communications.

In 2022/23 37 per cent of referrals are classified as 'non-attendance' and shows a steadiness with mobility in and out of the borough, and better communication between schools and families as to the reasons.

The Service has provided training to schools on the at Attendance Network meetings in 2022/23 and this will be continued into 2023/24.

Comparing the numbers of referrals from 2021/22 to 2022/23 shows changes in all areas:

- The number of referrals from the Lewisham's Admissions Team's stayed similar at 14 per cent.
- Referrals from other boroughs have stayed at approximately 30 per cent of referrals. This could be due to a continuation of a close working relationship with surrounding local authorities.
- Referrals from Lewisham schools have increased this year, from 48 to 51 per cent. This could be because of the Attendance Service is trading with more schools under an SLA, and Officers are able to identify for CME Services more readily.

- Other inter-agency referrals have reduced as this is due to them being able to make contact with a named CME Officer who is able to answer questions quickly and effectively.
- The Service has established a working relationship with Lewisham Homes and the Virtual School (CP/CiN /LAC) that has helped the referrer understand the CME process.

5.12 CME priorities for 2023/24

- Utilising the data provided by StudyBugs⁴ so a deregistration is never missed and all children and young people taken off a school role have a destination confirmed.
- Refinement of the Children Missing Education and off-rolling guidance for schools to be presented at the joint Secondary and Primary Network Meeting.
- Provision of training to schools who are unable to make the distinction between CME and non-attendance.
- Continue work to enhance casework to meet the target of closing 50 per cent of referrals within one month and 100 per cent of cases being closed within three months.
- To continue cross borough working that is established with neighbouring boroughs to help close CME cases quicker when only “soft” intelligence is available.
- To try and establish a network of agencies that can check children and young people who have moved abroad.
- To try and broach the issue of “no border checks” with the Department for Education.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 This is an information only report, as such there are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The latest guidance: Working together to improve school attendance is to help schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance, including roles and responsibilities, August 2023⁵.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to equality impacts when making decisions in the exercise of their functions (Public Sector Equality Duty, PSED). In particular, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following as protected characteristics for the purpose of the PSED:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity

⁴ Studybugs helps local authorities coordinate across all parties – school attendance team, case workers, schools, trusts, parents, even neighbouring LAs – to take early, targeted action to tackle the underlying causes of poor attendance.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

- race (including ethnicity)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

9. Climate change and environmental implications

9.1 There are no climate change and environmental implications.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

11. Report author(s) and contact

11.1 Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation (ruth.griffiths@lewisham.gov.uk)
Emma Stubbington, Attendance Manager (emma.stubbington@lewisham.gov.uk)



Children and Young People Select Committee

Report title: Select Committee Work Programme Report

Date: 19 September 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Not applicable

Contributors: Benjamin Awkal (Scrutiny Manager)

Outline and recommendations

This report gives committee members an opportunity to review the committee's work programme and make any modifications required.

The Committee is asked to:

- Review the work programme attached at Appendix D.
- Agree to remove the unneeded budget proposals item from the work programme.
- Consider the items for the next meeting and specify the information required.
- Review the forward plan of key decisions at Appendix E to consider whether there are any items for further scrutiny.

Timeline of decision-making

Children and Young People Work Programme 2023/24 – draft agreed on 15 June 2023

Children and Young People Work Programme 2023/24 – approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2023

1. Summary

- 1.1. The committee proposed a draft work programme at the beginning of the municipal year. This was considered and approved, alongside the draft work programmes of the other select committees, by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2023.

- 1.2. The work programme should be reviewed at each meeting to take account of changing priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
- Review the work programme attached at Appendix D.
 - Agree to remove the unneeded budget proposals item from the work programme.
 - Consider the items for the next meeting and specify the information required.
 - Review the forward plan of key decisions at Appendix E to consider whether there are any items for further scrutiny.

3. Work Programming

- 3.1. When reviewing the work programme the Committee should consider the following:

The Committee's terms of reference (Appendix A)

- 3.2. The Committee's areas of responsibility, include, but are not limited to:

- Schools and related services
- Children's Social Care
- Transition for care leavers
- Youth services
- SEND provision for children and young people up to age 25

- 3.3. The Committee has a key role in scrutinising the performance and supporting the development of the council's health and care-related strategies and policies. It also has a role in engaging and reflecting the views of residents in relation to health and care-related matters.

Whether any urgent issues have arisen that require scrutiny

- 3.4. If there is any urgent issue that is brought to the Committee's attention, it should consider the prioritisation process (Appendix B) and the Effective Scrutiny Guidelines (Appendix C) before deciding on its priority.

Whether a committee meeting is the most effective forum for scrutinising the issue

- 3.5. When scrutinising an issue of interest, the Committee should consider if there are any alternative methods for receiving information on the issue that would be more appropriate. For example, would a briefing or a written summary be more effective and appropriate for the issue in question?

Whether there is capacity to consider the item

- 3.6. The Committee should consider which work programme items could be removed or rescheduled to make space for the full consideration of more important issues.

Whether the item links to the priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy

- 3.7. A new corporate strategy has been developed¹ – which sets out the Council's values, priorities and focus for the next four years (2022-2026). These are categorised under the following headings:

- Cleaner and Greener

¹ <https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/corporate-strategy>

- Strong Local Economy
- Quality Housing
- Children and Young People
- Safer Communities
- Open Lewisham
- Health and Wellbeing

3.8. The work of the Children & Young People Select Committee will relate most closely to the 'Children & Young People' priority, which commits the Council to:

- supporting our schools to improve and increasing the opportunities for young people in Lewisham;
- working with our schools and communities to build on the inclusive and high-achieving system of local comprehensive schools;
- ensuring our most vulnerable children are protected from harm, driving improvement in Children's Social Care and aiming to reduce the number of children coming into care through earlier targeted support for families in crisis;
- helping to create new breakfast clubs at schools and continuing to lobby the government to expand their free school meals programme.

3.9. The Committee should consider how its work programme reflects these priorities. The Committee might also consider whether there are suggestions that should be put forward for consideration in the new municipal year.

4. The next meeting

- 4.1. The following items are scheduled for the next meeting. For each item, the Committee should clearly define the information and analysis it wishes to see in officer reports. If the Committee has designated one of its members as a climate change champion, that member should work with the Chair to ensure that officers are given appropriate steers in relation to the reports, to ensure they include relevant climate change considerations.
- 4.2. The Committee should also consider whether to invite any expert witnesses to provide evidence, and whether site visits or engagement would assist the the effective scrutiny of the item.

Agenda Item	Review type	Corporate Priority
Children's social care improvement	Performance Monitoring	Children and Young People

5. Financial implications

5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme will have financial implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

6. Legal implications

6.1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution, all scrutiny select committees must

devise and submit a work programme to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the start of each municipal year.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1. Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.3. There may be equalities implications arising from items on the work programme and all activities undertaken by the Select Committee will need to give due consideration to this.

8. Climate change and environmental implications

- 8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. However, in February 2019 Lewisham Council declared a Climate Emergency and proposed a target to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. An action plan to achieve this target was subsequently agreed by Mayor and Cabinet (following pre-decision scrutiny by the Sustainable Development Select Committee)². The plan incorporates all areas of the Council's work. Items on the work programme may well have climate change and environmental implications and reports considered by the Committee should acknowledge this.

9. Crime and disorder implications

- 9.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have crime and disorder implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report. Items on the Committee's work programme may have health and wellbeing implications and these will need to be considered as part of the reports on those items.

11. Report author and contact

If you have any questions about this report please contact Benjamin Awkal (Scrutiny Manager) benjamin.awkal@lewisham.gov.uk

² See <https://lewisham.gov.uk/TacklingTheClimateEmergency> for a summary of the Council's work in this area.

Appendix A – Children and Young People Select Committee Terms of Reference

The following roles are common to all select committees:

(a) *General functions*

- To review and scrutinise decisions made and actions taken in relation to executive and non-executive functions
To make reports and recommendations to the Council or the executive, arising out of such review and scrutiny in relation to any executive or non-executive function
- To make reports or recommendations to the Council and/or Executive in relation to matters affecting the area or its residents
- The right to require the attendance of members and officers to answer questions includes a right to require a member to attend to answer questions on up and coming decisions
- To consider matters referred to it in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme

(b) *Policy development*

- To assist the executive in matters of policy development by in depth analysis of strategic policy issues facing the Council for report and/or recommendation to the Executive or Council or committee as appropriate
- To conduct research, community and/or other consultation in the analysis of policy options available to the Council
- To liaise with other public organisations operating in the borough – both national, regional and local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working

(c) *Scrutiny*

- To scrutinise the decisions made by and the performance of the Executive and other committees and Council officers both in relation to individual decisions made and over time
- To scrutinise previous performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives/performance targets and/or particular service areas
- To question members of the Executive or appropriate committees and executive directors personally about decisions
- To question members of the Executive or appropriate committees and executive directors in relation to previous performance whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over time or in relation to particular initiatives which have been implemented
- To scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the borough and to invite them to make reports to and/or address the select committee and local people about their activities and performance
- To question and gather evidence from any person outside the Council (with their consent where the law does not require them to attend).
- To make recommendations to the Executive or appropriate committee and/or Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process

(d) *Community representation*

- *To promote and put into effect closer links between overview and scrutiny members and the local community*
- *To encourage and stimulate an enhanced community representative role for overview and scrutiny members including enhanced methods of consultation with local people*
- *To liaise with the Council's ward assemblies and/or Positive Ageing Council so that the local community might participate in the democratic process and where it*

considers it appropriate to seek the views of the ward assemblies and/or Positive Ageing Council on matters that affect or are likely to affect the local areas, including accepting items for the agenda of the appropriate select committee from ward assemblies and the Positive Ageing Council.

- To keep the Council's local ward assemblies and Positive Ageing Council under review and to make recommendations to the Executive and/or Council as to how participation in the democratic process by local people can be enhanced.
- To receive petitions, deputations and representations from local people and other stakeholders about areas of concern within their overview and scrutiny remit and to refer them to the Executive, appropriate committee or officer for action, with a recommendation or report if the committee considers that necessary
- To consider any referral within their remit referred to it by a member under the Councillor Call for Action (Part IV E 10), and if they consider it appropriate to scrutinise decisions and/or actions taken in relation to that matter, and/or make recommendations/report to the Executive (for executive matters) or the Council (non-executive matters)

(e) *Finance*

- To exercise overall responsibility for finances made available to it for use in the performance of its overview and scrutiny function.

(f) *Work programme*

- As far as possible to draw up a draft annual work programme in each municipal year for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Once approved, the relevant select committee will implement the programme during that municipal year. Nothing in this arrangement inhibits the right of every member of a select committee to place an item on the agenda of that select committee for discussion.
- The Council and the Executive will also be able to request that an overview and scrutiny select committee research and/or report on matters of concern and the select committee will consider whether the work can be carried out as requested. If it can be accommodated, the select committee will perform it. If the committee has reservations about performing the requested work, it will refer the matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for decision.

The Children and Young People Select Committee has specific responsibilities for the following:

(a) To fulfil all overview and scrutiny functions as they relate to the social care of children and young people up to the age of 19 years including but not limited to the following activities: -

(i) the social services functions of the Council under the Children Act 2004, and all functions of the Council under the National Assistance Act 1948, the Mental Health Act 1983, Children Act 1989, the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, Children Act 2004, Children and Families Act 2014 and all other relevant legislation in force from time to time

(ii) to invite representatives of other service providers to children and young people in the area to give account of their performance and to answer questions.

(b) In so far as they relate to the provision of services for those under the age of 19 years, the exercise of all of the Council's powers under all relevant legislation pertaining to education from time to time in force. Without limiting the generality of this, this shall include, in particular, schools and school related services.

(c) The exercise of the overview and scrutiny powers of the Council in

so far as they relate to people under 19 years of age in the provision of opportunities for education, training and learning outside the school environment, including pre-school services.

(d) In so far as they relate to children and young people under 19 years of age, to make comments and recommendations to the Executive on the contents and proposed contents of the plans making up the Council's policy framework.

(e) In so far as they relate to people under the age of 25 years, to make comments and recommendations on the provision of education, training and learning by those with special educational needs.

(f) Without limiting the remit of the Select Committee, its terms of reference include the following matters:

- Child protection - covering provision for vulnerable children including children in need and children looked after, placements, foster care and adoption
- Early years provision
- Special needs provision
- Schools and related services
- Youth Services
- Youth offending and challenging behaviour
- Transitional services for those leaving care
- Other matters relating to children and young people

(g) To receive and consider referrals from Healthwatch in so far as they relate solely to people under 19 years of age. Otherwise, such referrals will be made to the Healthier Communities Select Committee.

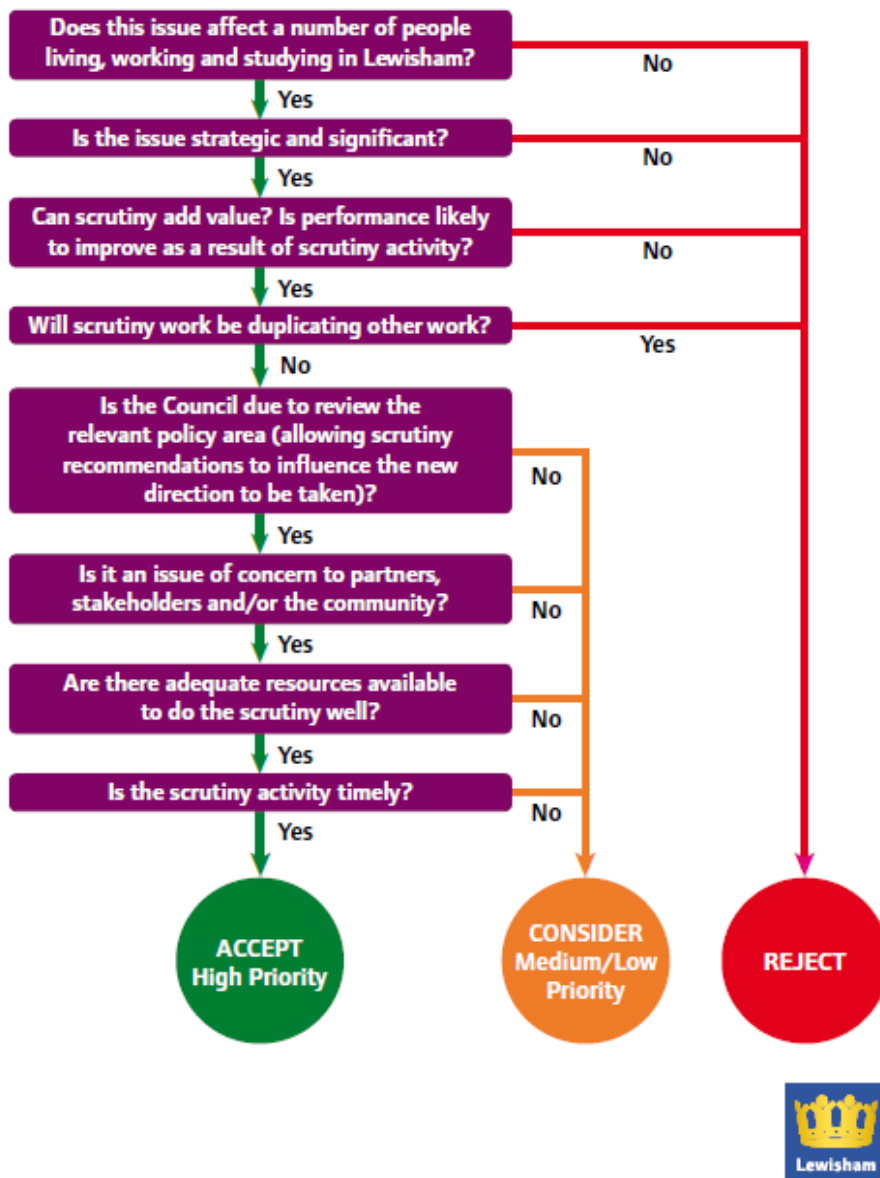
(h) Without limiting the remit of the Select Committee, to hold the Executive to account for its performance in relation to the delivery of Council objectives in the provision of services to children and young people.

NB In the event of there being overlap between the terms of reference of this select committee and those of the Healthier Communities Select Committee, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall determine the Select Committee which shall deal with the matter in question.

Appendix B

The flowchart below is designed to help Members decide which items should be added to the work programme. It is important to focus on areas where the Committee will influence decision-making.

Scrutiny work programme – prioritisation process



Appendix C

Effective Scrutiny Guidelines

At Lewisham we:

1. Prioritise

It is more effective to look at a small number of key issues in an in-depth way, than skim the surface of everything falling within scrutiny's remit. We try to focus on issues of concern to the community and/or matters that are linked to our corporate priorities. We only add items to the work programme if we are certain our consideration of the matter will make a real and tangible difference.

2. Are independent

Scrutiny is led by Scrutiny Members. Scrutiny Members are in charge of the work programme, and, for every item, we specify what evidence we require and what information we would like to see in any officer reports that are prepared. We are not whipped by our political party or unduly influenced by the Cabinet or senior officers.

3. Work collectively

If we collectively agree in advance what we want to achieve in relation to each item under consideration, including what the key lines of enquiry should be, we can work as a team to question witnesses and ensure that all the required evidence is gathered. Scrutiny is impartial and the scrutiny process should be free from political point scoring and not used to further party-political objectives.

4. Engage

Involving residents helps scrutiny access a wider range of ideas and knowledge, listen to a broader range of voices and better understand the opinions of residents and service users. Engagement helps ensure that recommendations result in residents' wants and needs being more effectively met.

5. Make SMART evidence-based recommendations

We make recommendations that are based on solid, triangulated evidence – where a variety of sources of evidence point to a change in practice that will positively alter outcomes. We recognise that recommendations are more powerful if they are:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

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Children and Young People Select Committee work programme 2023-24

Work Item	Type of item	Strategic Priority	15-Jun	19-Sep	23-Nov	11-Jan	12-Mar
Select Committee work programme 2023/24	Constitutional requirement	All					
Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health	Performance monitoring	CP3 and CP5					
Post-16 education and career pathways	Policy development	CP3 and CP4					
Youth violence	Performance monitoring	CP3 and CP7					
Budget proposals	Pre-decision scrutiny	CP3					
Children's social care improvement	Performance monitoring	CP3					
Primary and secondary school organisation	Policy development	CP3					
Embedding race equality in education	Performance monitoring	CP3					
School standards	Performance monitoring	CP3					
Holistic school improvement	Policy development	CP3					

Information reports, briefings, events and visits

Action plan following Joint Targeted Area Inspection	For information	CP3, CP5 and CP7					
Note of visit to Green Vale School	For information	CP3 and CP5					
School standards (unvalidated)	For information	CP3					
Admissions numbers	For information	CP3	TBC				
Attendance and exclusions	For information	CP3	TBC				
Children's Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	For information	CP3	TBC				

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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Forward Plan September 2023 - December 2023

This Forward Plan sets out the key decisions the Council expects to take during the next four months.

Anyone wishing to make representations on a decision should submit them in writing as soon as possible to the relevant contact officer (shown as number (7) in the key overleaf). Any representations made less than 3 days before the meeting should be sent to Head of Governance and Committee Services, the Local Democracy Officer, at the Council Offices or emma.campbellsmith@lewisham.gov.uk. However the deadline will be 4pm on the working day prior to the meeting.

A “key decision”* means an executive decision which is likely to:

- (a) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;
- (b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

June 2023	Delegated decision to award Care Leavers Medium to High Support Supported Housing contract (Pt 1&2)	18/08/23 Executive Director for Community Services	Jonathan Scarth and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
June 2023	Delegated decision to award Mental Health Supported Housing Higher Needs	18/08/23 Executive Director for Community Services	Jonathan Scarth and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
			Care		
July 2023	Appointment of Directors - Lewisham Homes legacy company	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	David Austin, Director of Corporate Services and Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		
May 2023	Approval to procure: School Minor Works Programme 2023 (SMWP 23)	20/09/23 Executive Director for Children and Young People	Lemuel Dickie-Johnson, Project Manager Capital Delivery Programme and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		
August 2023	Approve allocation of Section 106 monies to fund employment and training programmes, and confirm acceptance of a UK Shared Prosperity Fund 'People and Skills' grant	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	and		
June 2023	Articles of Association - transition of Lewisham Homes	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Jeremy Chambers, Director of Law, Governance & Elections and Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS					
Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
July 2023	Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL) Appointment of Directors	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	David Austin, Director of Corporate Services and Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		
March 2023	Contract award for Council Insurances	20/09/23 Executive Director for Corporate Services	Karen Eaton, Group Manager, Insurance and Risk and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy		
May 2023	Contract Award Report for School Minor Works Programme 2023 (SMWP 23)	20/09/23 Children and Young People Select Committee	Lemuel Dickie-Johnson, Project Manager Capital Delivery Programme and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		
May 2023	Contract Award to a Registered Provider for Supported Accommodation for Young People -Site 1 and Site 2	20/09/23 Executive Director for Children and Young People	Chloe Vergara, CLA Placements Contract Manager and		
March 2023	Dementia Strategy	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Tristan Brice, Associate Director, Community Support and Care and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
June 2022	Home Park and Edward Street Development Budget and Programme Update Report	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	James Briggs, Head of Strategic Housing and Growth and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
August 2023	Home Park and Edward Street Development Programme and Budget Update	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Patrick Dubeck, Director of Inclusive Regeneration and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
April 2023	Lewisham and Lee Green LTN monitoring update	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	and Councillor Louise Krupski, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate		
June 2023	Lewisham Homes Interim Business Plan 2023/24	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Katharine Nidd, Head of Strategic Finance, Planning and Commercial and Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		
June 2023	Old Fairlawn Primary School Annexe (nursery) - appropriation for planning purposes	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Luke Riley, Head of New Initiatives and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
			Development and Planning		
May 2023	Permission to award Maximising Wellbeing at Home contracts (Lots 5,6,8,9)	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Tristan Brice, Associate Director, Community Support and Care and		
June 2023	Permission to procure - Integrated Community Equipment Service	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Tristan Brice, Associate Director, Community Support and Care and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
June 2023	Review of all Supported Housing Contracts	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Jonathan Scarth and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
July 2023	Statement of Community Involvement for adoption	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Michael Forrester, Head of Development Management and		
May 2023	to approve the annual Besson Street Business Plan	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Luke Riley, Head of New Initiatives and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
August 2023	Treasury Management Strategy - Mid-Year Review	20/09/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Katharine Nidd, Head of Strategic Finance, Planning and Commercial		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

Date included in forward plan	Description of matter under consideration	Date of Decision Decision maker	Responsible Officers / Portfolios	Consultation Details	Background papers / materials
			and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy		
June 2023	Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review	27/09/23 Council	Katharine Nidd, Head of Strategic Finance, Planning and Commercial and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy		
May 2023	Adventure Playgrounds Grant of Leases and Contract Award	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Harsha Ganatra, Joint Commissioner (FQC) and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		
July 2023	Approval for s106 monies to go to Deptford Challenge Trust	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Julia Robbins, Developer Contributions Manager and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
April 2023	Approval to enter into contract - Drakes Court development	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Eleanor Davies, Associate Director Joint Mental Health Commissioning and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

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February 2022	BfL Programme - Approval to enter into contract Valentines Court	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	James Ringwood, Housing Delivery Manager and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
July 2023	Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL) Business Plan	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Kplom Lotsu, SGM Capital Programmes and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
July 2023	Financial Monitoring - Period 4	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Nick Penny, Head of Service Finance and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy		
August 2023	Gambling Policy 2023-2026	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Richard Lockett and Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		
April 2023	Grant of Leases for Adventure Playground Sites	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Harsha Ganatra, Joint Commissioner (FQC) and Councillor Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS					
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July 2023	Levelling Up Fund Programme - approval for procurement of contractors	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	and		
April 2023	Millwall FC Lease Restructuring Proposals	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Patrick Dubeck, Director of Inclusive Regeneration and		
May 2022	On Street Advertising Contract Variation and Extension	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	and Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy		
August 2023	Property Agreement between LB Lewisham and TfL in relation to the A205 Road Realignment Project	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Charlotte Harrison, Head of Strategic Regeneration and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
March 2023	Public Space Protection Order consultation outcome	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	James Lee, Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure and Councillor Louise Krupski, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate		
July 2023	Sustainable Streets recommendations and next steps - Evelyn	01/11/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Martha Lauchlan, Transport Planner and Councillor Louise Krupski, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate		
August 2023	Gambling Policy 2023-2026	22/11/23	Richard Lockett and		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS					
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		Council	Councillor Sophie Davis, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Homelessness and Community Safety		
December 2022	Ladywell - Budget requirement	06/12/23 Mayor and Cabinet	James Ringwood, Housing Delivery Manager and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
July 2023	Learning Disability Implementation Plan	06/12/23 Mayor and Cabinet	Heather Hughes, Joint Commissioner, Learning Disabilities and Councillor Paul Bell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
December 2022	Mayfield - Budget Requirement	06/12/23 Mayor and Cabinet	James Ringwood, Housing Delivery Manager and Councillor Brenda Dacres, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Development and Planning		
January 2023	Annual progress update on the Autism Strategy Action Plan	24/01/24 Mayor and Cabinet	and		
June 2022	Approval to appoint operator for concessions contract at	24/01/24 Mayor and Cabinet	Peter Maynard, Contract Officer, Green Scene and		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS					
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	Beckenham Place Park Lake		Councillor Andre Bourne, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Communication (job share)		

FORWARD PLAN – KEY DECISIONS

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