

# Children's Services Scrutiny Committee



## Future work at a glance

Updated: October 2013

This list is updated after each meeting of the scrutiny committee  
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### Items that appear regularly at committee

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<p>The Council's <b>Forward Plan</b></p>	<p>The latest version of the Council's <b>Forward Plan</b> is included on each scrutiny committee agenda. The Forward Plan lists all the key County Council decisions that are to be taken within the next few months together with contact information to find out more. It is updated monthly.</p> <p>The purpose of doing this is to help committee Members identify important issues for more detailed scrutiny <i>before</i> key decisions are taken. This has proved to be significantly more effective than challenging a decision once it has been taken. As a last resort, the <b>call-in</b> procedure is available if scrutiny Members think a Cabinet or Lead Member decision has been taken incorrectly.</p> <p>Requests for further information about individual items on the Forward Plan should be addressed to the listed contact. Possible scrutiny issues should be raised with the scrutiny team or committee Chairman, ideally before a scrutiny committee meeting.</p>
<p>Committee work programme</p>	<p>This provides an opportunity for the committee to review the scrutiny work programme for future meetings and to highlight any additional issues they wish to add to the programme.</p>

<b>Future committee agenda items</b>		<b>Witnesses</b>
<b>11 November 2013</b>		
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources	To provide updates on requests from the June meeting.	Interim Director/Asst Directors
The working of the new Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)	The framework for the Quality assurance Framework findings from the Lead Member (Children and Families) visits to children's homes which will in future be undertaken as part of this framework.	Assistant Director (Safeguarding, LAC & SEN),
Scrutiny review of school exclusions in East Sussex	The one-year monitoring report of the scrutiny review which addressed some fundamental questions about school exclusions, such as why some schools in East Sussex appear to resort to exclusions more readily than others.	Nathan Caine, Head of Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Service
<b>10 March 2014</b>		
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources	To review and suggest improvements to RPPR in the light of the Committee's work; and, to consider the extent to which the Committee's recommendations have been accepted.	Scrutiny
<b>16 June 2014</b>		

<b>Current scrutiny reviews and other work underway</b>	<b>Date available</b>
<p><b>Improving educational attainment in East Sussex</b></p> <p>During 2012/13 the scrutiny committee noted that Key Stage 4 (GCSE) attainment in East Sussex was disappointing compared with many other authorities. Schools in some areas of the County appear to be improving whereas there is a lack of improvement in others. Possible lines of scrutiny inquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the underlying reasons for differences in attainment might lead to better strategies to tackle underperforming schools or pupils;</li> <li>• The 'Proposition for Partnership' strategy: how the Council works with the different types of schools to improve educational attainment and school performance; the effectiveness of support to underperforming maintained schools and the developing Council roles of influencer, partnership broker and service marketer to academies/free schools.</li> <li>• Academies: during 2012/13 the Secretary of State for Education alleged that East Sussex was obstructing the progress with academies conversion: to consider the current position and actions being taken.</li> </ul> <p>(scoping meeting to be established shortly)</p>	<p>June 2014</p>

<b>Potential future scrutiny work (Proposals and ideas for future scrutiny topics appear here)</b>
<p><b>Raising the Participation Age (RPA)</b></p> <p>The preparedness of East Sussex for the raising of the participation age (RPA) of young people in education and training) to 17 in summer 2013 and to 18 in 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role the County Council, and others, in helping to overcome barriers to education and work and to align the aspirations of young people with employment and learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Reducing the number of NEETs (people Not in Education, Employment or Training) amongst young people has been of particular ongoing interest for the committee.</li> </ul>

**Potential future scrutiny work**  
**(Proposals and ideas for future scrutiny topics appear here)**

**Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms/ Transition from children’s to adults’ social care**

An initial scrutiny investigation early in 2013 found that the Transition Service, after a year of operation, had demonstrably reduced the potential for a ‘cliff edge’ drop in services experienced by young people with the most challenging needs as they change from children’s to adults’ social care services. Further scrutiny could be undertaken to investigate:

- the experience of young people with moderate or minor needs as they move from children’s to adults’ social care services.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – the impact of the reforms and the Pathfinder approach that has been trialled in East Sussex.

**Early intervention / THRIVE**

The Troubled Families Programme (known in East Sussex as Family Keywork) is a key Government initiative. Improving early help and prevention services is a key priority of the Council’s Children’s and Young People Plan. Possible lines of enquiry could include:

- How East Sussex is improving early help and developing effective prevention initiatives. This is a key part of THRIVE.
- The impact of the Family Keywork programme in East Sussex in relation to outcomes for both children and families.
- The role of children’s centres in providing effective early help for children and the potential for making wider use of them to promote community wellbeing for example as community assets through a ‘one-council’ approach
- the effectiveness of foster carer recruitment

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**Background / information reports available to the Committee**  
**(Items in this list appear on committee agendas when proposed for scrutiny)**

**Date available**

**Performance monitoring**

Performance monitoring is an integral part of scrutiny. The committee is alerted to the relevant quarterly **reports** that Cabinet and lead Members receive. Members can then suggest matters for scrutiny to investigate in more detail.

In the performance reports, achievement against individual performance targets is assessed as either ‘Red’, ‘Amber’ or ‘Green’ (‘RAG’):

- ‘Green’ means that the performance measure is on target to be achieved
- ‘Amber’ means that there is concern about the likelihood of achieving the performance measure

Every quarter

<b>Background / information reports available to the Committee</b> (Items in this list appear on committee agendas when proposed for scrutiny)		<b>Date available</b>
	<p>by the end of the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Red' means that the performance measure is assessed as inappropriate or unachievable.</li> </ul> <p>The 'Red' and 'Amber' indicators also include further commentary and the details of any proposed corrective action.</p> <p>Requests for further information about individual items in the performance reports should be addressed to the listed contact. Possible scrutiny issues should be raised with the scrutiny team or committee Chairman.</p>	
<b>Children's Commissioner report on illegal exclusions</b>	<p>This report outlines the government response to an earlier report by the Children's Commissioner about illegal school exclusions called '<i>Always Someone Else's Problem</i>'. The original report and government response are particularly pertinent because of the scrutiny review of exclusions carried out by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p><a href="http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_705">http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_705</a></p>	August 2013 (available from indicated website)
<b>Skills and Employability Capital Project</b>	<p>This briefing describes a project that is about to invest in the 'learning and skills infrastructure of East Sussex' with the aim of supporting the development of a highly skilled workforce and provide access to more sustainable employment.</p>	October 2012 (available on request)
<b>Children's Services statutory complaints report 2011-12</b>	<p>This includes information about compliments and other representations for the period April 2011 – March 2012.</p>	November 2013

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<p><b>Enquiries:</b> Scrutiny Team  Author: Paul Dean, Scrutiny Manager Telephone: 01273 481751 Email: <a href="mailto:paul.dean@eastsussex.gov.uk">paul.dean@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>  Website: <a href="http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/scrchildren.htm">http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/scrchildren.htm</a></p> <p><b>Download this document:</b> <a href="http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/downloadchildrens.htm">http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/downloadchildrens.htm</a></p> <p><b>Find scrutiny agendas and minutes on the web:</b>  <a href="http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/scrchildren.htm">http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/committees/meetings/scrchildren.htm</a></p>	<b>Version: 26</b>
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## Glossary of terms and acronyms appearing in Children's Services Committee papers

<b>Term</b>	<b>What it means</b>
<b>CAMHS</b>	The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) provides advice, diagnosis of mental disorders and therapeutic work with young people to treat complex, severe or persistent mental health difficulties.
<b>Child Protection Plan (CPP)</b>	A detailed inter-agency plan setting out what must be done to protect a child from further harm; to promote the child's health and development; and, if it is in the best interests of the child, to support the family to promote the child's welfare.
<b>Children in care</b>	Children being looked after by the local authority. See also LAC – Looked after children.
<b>Children's Centre</b>	East Sussex Children's Centres offer all families with children under five a range of services, information and support. Services vary depending on local needs but typically include: advice; home visiting; family 'drop-in'; child health information; help finding specialist and other services they can't provide directly.
<b>Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)</b>	The CYPP sets out the shared priorities of the <b>Children and Young People's Trust</b> partners to improve the lives of children, young people and their families in East Sussex.
<b>Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT)</b>	The East Sussex CYPT is a group of partners that work together in different ways to improve what we provide for children, young people and families.
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education (Government department)
<b>Early years foundation stage (EYFS)</b>	The EYFS is a set of welfare and learning and development requirements, which must be followed by providers of care for children below 5 years old – the age of compulsory education in the UK.
<b>ESBAS</b>	East Sussex Behaviour & Attendance Service
<b>Key Stage 1 (KS1)</b>	The two years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Year 1 and Year 2, when pupils are aged between 5 and 7.
<b>Key Stage 2 (KS2)</b>	The four years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, when pupils are aged between 7 and 11.

<b>Term</b>	<b>What it means</b>
<b>Key Stage 3 (KS3)</b>	The three years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Years 7, 8 and 9, when pupils are aged between 11 and 14.
<b>Key Stage 4 (KS4)</b>	The two years of school education which incorporate GCSEs, and other exams, in maintained schools in England, Wales, normally known as Years 10 and 11 in England and Wales.
<b>Key Stage 5 (KS5)</b>	An unofficial label used to describe the two years of post-compulsory education for students aged 16-18, or at sixth form, in England and Wales.
<b>LAC (Looked After Children)</b>	Children who are either looked after or in the care of a local authority, or are provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by a local authority. We use the term 'children in care' to include all children being looked after by a local authority.
<b>Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)</b>	The Children Act 2004 places a duty on every local authority to establish an LSCB. Members of the East Sussex LSCB include an independent chair, two lay members and senior representatives from a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The LSCB coordinates the work undertaken by its members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in East Sussex, and to ensure that the safeguarding work is effective. See <a href="http://www.eastsussexlscb.org.uk">http://www.eastsussexlscb.org.uk</a>
<b>NEETs</b>	People who are <b>Not in Education, Employment or Training</b> .
<b>Pupil Premium</b>	The pupil premium was introduced in April 2011 and is an additional payment paid directly to schools by the government for every pupil who has been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years (known as 'Ever 6 FSM'). Schools also receive funding for children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months, and children of service personnel.
<b>RPA (Raising the school participation Age)</b>	From summer 2013, all young people will have to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From summer 2015, this will change to their 18th birthday.
<b>RPPR</b>	Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources is the County Council's budget and business planning process.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protecting children from maltreatment</li> <li>- preventing impairment of children's health or development</li> <li>- ensuring that children are growing up with safe and effective care</li> <li>- undertake that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.</li> </ul>
<b>Schools Forum</b>	A body which advises the local authority on how the schools budget is spent. Members include headteachers, school governors and councillors.
<b>SE7(South East 7)</b>	South East 7 group of local authorities is a partnership of local authorities in the South East that are committed to working



<b>Term</b>	<b>What it means</b>
	together on some key work areas for mutual benefit.
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs
<b>SEND Pathfinder</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Pathfinder is a national programme trying to find better ways to help families who need it. The main thing is to put families at the centre of the process when assessing their needs and those of their child, to give them more choice and control over the help they can get.
<b>THRIVE Transformation programme</b>	In East Sussex - a means of improving outcomes for children by investing more money in the early help services to give families the support they need <i>before</i> they get into difficulties. The thinking is that if families solve their problems before they escalate, the need for more costly social care services, such as Child Protection Plans or taking children into care, is reduced.
<b>TYS Targeted Youth Service)</b>	The Targeted Youth Support (TYS) Service offers young people advice, information and support around issues such as: sexual and mental health, drugs and alcohol, family and relationships, money and accommodation. Youth work sessions include: sports and arts based activities, getting involved in youth councils and local volunteering opportunities.
<b>Youth Offending Team</b>	The Youth Offending Team aims to cut youth crime by changing the behaviour of young people who offend. It helps them get into mainstream education and health services, so that they can be diverted from crime in the future.
<b>VSB</b>	Virtual Schools Bank.



## Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Programme Appendix

### Notes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee away day held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013

#### Main themes

##### 1) School attainment – scrutiny review to be undertaken

Need to start with some basic and regularly updated information for all Members as well as specific information related to each school:

- Numbers of academies/free schools etc – and schools planning to convert
- Numbers of schools in special measures
- Latest Ofsted inspection outcomes

Need to explore *Education Standards Panel* relationship with scrutiny – to develop a more complementary role.

The value of 'soft' data (eg. the nature of the relationship between the local authority and individual schools) is critical but tricky to acquire because of the sheer volume of information and also sensitivity issues when reporting.

##### 2) Reaching every child

Concern at the difficulty in reaching all vulnerable children and to ensure that every child comes 'within the radar'.

- Children's centres are focussed in areas of need – we understand the demographics of each area
- Other agencies – health, GPs, health visitors – are increasingly 'joined up' so it ought to be possible to fulfil our duty to every child
- Many children go to private centres and are potentially lost from the radar
- Looked after children – 2/3 children returned home go back into care – need to watch.

##### 3) Improving committee effectiveness

Pre-meetings (prior to each meeting of the committee):

- Considered helpful by most Members, especially co-optees to enhance their ability to participate fully in meetings
- Used to share thoughts and ideas and ensure a professional approach is adopted in proceedings

- There is no compulsion for members to attend.

Essential for committee members to read the papers and ideally raise issues and questions before the day of the committee.

Questioning techniques – booklet distributed containing hints and suggestions. Aim to follow lines of questioning, with members backing each other up working as a team. Ensure the ‘killer questions’ get asked.

Will request officers presenting reports to assume that the reports have been read and not to present too much detail.

In future, will aim to ensure agendas contain meaningful issues and not simply ‘good news’ items.

Councillor Kathryn Field  
Chair