

The background of the top half of the page is a solid purple color. Overlaid on this are several abstract, thick orange lines that form various geometric shapes and paths, resembling a stylized map or a network diagram. These lines are scattered across the purple field, with some forming closed shapes and others being open paths.

West Midlands Team Excellence Awards 2023



WEST MIDLANDS ADCS NETWORK

A small graphic element consisting of a series of connected horizontal and vertical lines in purple, blue, and orange, resembling a stylized staircase or a network node.Two small, parallel orange diagonal bars, one on the left and one on the right, positioned at the bottom of the page.

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Welcome

Having taken up the role of Chair for the West Midlands ADCS Network in July, I am excited that this is my first event in that capacity. Following on from the success of last years Team Excellence Awards, we now see this as an important fixture in the regions calendar.

Celebrating great achievements is central to any system that wants to thrive, grow and improve, so for those of you who have been nominated as your Children's Services Team of Excellence 2023 a huge congratulations. There was only one nomination from each local authority and trust, so inevitably there are others back at the office, who whilst also doing great stuff, just missed out this year. For those of you in the room at Edgbaston, please remember you are the beacon for your organisation's Outstanding.

Shine the light and lead the way, next year someone else will take the glory. My colleague, Sue Harrison from Birmingham, recently wrote a piece for our Regional Update and it is worth reiterating her point. Sue reflected that we currently have nine in our region, judged Good or better. This is two more than the same time last year and five more than the same time two years ago. I would go on to add, that this means two thirds of our local authority areas have achieved that level. Meaning, that with every inspection we get tantalisingly closer to our goal of 85%. Results like this don't just happen. They happen because people like those we are celebrating at this event, push harder and faster to do wonderful things for the children and families that they support.

We know that at various times we all require support, and we also know that there is good practice in each local authority and trust, irrespective of Ofsted judgment. I hope you will recognise from those presented with Team Excellence Awards, that every local authority has much to be proud of. This event I trust, will serve to propagate the best we have across our wonderful region and feed improvement everywhere. I'll end by paraphrasing an old Churchillian quote:

To improve is to change; to be Outstanding is to change often.

Jo Britton
Chair – West Midlands ADCS Network
& Executive Director – Children's
Services
Telford & Wrekin Council



Early Years Inclusive Learning Service

Our Early Years Inclusive Learning Service (ILS) is a well-established and highly regarded service by Sandwell families. The team works with childcare and nursery settings across Sandwell to secure the seamless progression of all children from their early years into part or full-time nursery or into school.

Our Early Years ILS team provides a range of family, parenting, nurture, learning and specialist assessment services, including access to therapies and diagnostic health screening in partnership with our NHS colleagues.

Team members go the extra mile to provide the best service and this has been recognised by Ofsted / CQC in our recent area SEND inspection.

A multi-disciplinary team:

- general health practitioners ●
- clinicians ● EHC officers ●
- education psychologists ● paediatricians ●
- speech, language and communication therapists ●
- educators ● specialist support staff ●

Professionals work collaboratively and in partnership with our families and education settings to provide the earliest levels of support to any child who requires specialist therapy, diagnostic screening and specialist assessments to support their learning, growth and development.

Investing in our children's future

The team supports nearly 500 families and in the coming months will expand the service to support an additional 80 families in the community as part of Sandwell's family hubs offer.

Sandwell Council has retained its investment in children's services, from the earliest points of help, support and access to specialist assessments and diagnostic pathways. Thanks to the team, many children who have special education needs have access to early intervention and support well before formal schooling begins.

Working in partnership

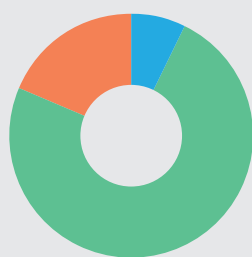
The Early Years ILS team uses strong partnerships with parents and carers, NHS professionals, education and childcare settings and family hubs to support any child in Sandwell who requires any level of specialist support at the earliest point of need and at the right time.

Giving children the very best start in life is our key priority in Sandwell. The Early Years Inclusive Learning Service is integral in making sure we deliver the best outcomes for Sandwell children with additional needs.

WHAT IS THE CORE FUNCTION OF THE TEAM?

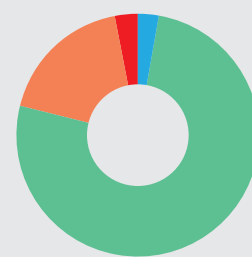
Wolverhampton's SENSTART (Special Educational Needs Statutory Assessment and Review) Team undertakes Education Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) of children and young people between the ages of birth to 25 years of age who have special education, health and care needs. It places children and young people from birth and up to 25 years with Education, Health and Care Plans in educational provision, and it reviews and monitor provision and outcomes set out in a Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

EHCP - BENCHMARKING

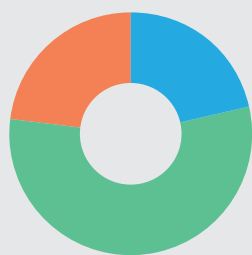


Wolverhampton

Grading of section A		
%		%
7.4	Outstanding	3.0
74.1	Good	76.1
18.5	Requires Improvement	17.9
0	Inadequate	3.0

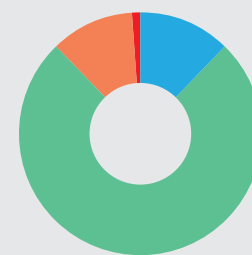


National



Wolverhampton

Grading of section B		
%		%
25.9	Outstanding	12.3
66.7	Good	75.7
7.4	Requires Improvement	11.1
0	Inadequate	0.9



National

WHAT HAS THE TEAM ACHIEVED OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

The team has been through a significant period of change in the last two years, with changes of managers, a restructure and a SEND local area inspection. However, it has remained dedicated to improving the service and keeping children and young people at the centre of their thinking, always striving to improve their outcomes.

The team have dramatically changed the way they work and refocused their approach and this has borne fruit, **with over 80% of EHCPs audited recently graded as either Good or Outstanding** in Sections A and B, a higher proportion in Wolverhampton than in other parts of the country. The local Parent Carer Forum confirmed that there is a visible difference in the quality of EHCPs in these areas.

Likewise the timeliness of EHCPs has also dramatically improved through process changes, and a keen drive to engage with families to ensure that any new plans are completed in a clear, transparent and timely way. What had been a 20% compliance rate in 2021 has become a significantly sustained improvement to over 70%, which is above the national average. More recently, the team are **delivering a compliance rate of above 90%**, far in excess of the national average.

Work has also taken place with wider services across education, health and social care to develop holistic packages of support, consideration of transition, preparation for adulthood, and support for SENCos which helps a shared understanding and collaboration for young people to achieve the best possible outcomes. Shared training and resources are enabling a collaborative approach to SEND and EHCPs.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WOLVERHAMPTON?

As a result of these changes, children and young people are able to receive the education, care, quality and level of support they need at a much earlier opportunity through the EHCP process. Outcomes are able to be monitored better through clearer expectations set out in the plans, and families feel more assured that they are receiving their plans in a more timely manner - this is evidenced in the parent carer survey which is carried out annually.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT ON THE WIDER COUNCIL?

There is visible trust and confidence for the SENSTART team and in the improvements they have made over the last 18 months. Councillors and senior leaders have recognised the changes and, more importantly now, have confidence in the service's direction of travel. There are also fewer complaints and enquiries around delayed EHCPs, and through the implementation of learning sets they now respond to any complaints or compliance issues as a team. The SENSTART team have developed an ethos which strives for continuous learning.

Next Steps are Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Leaving Care Service. They work with Care Leavers aged 16-25.

The team consists of a Service Manager, three Team Managers, four Social Workers, 11 PAs and two Housing Officers. Within the Next Steps also sits the House Project, with one Team Manager and three Project Workers.

It's clear that the Stoke-on-Trent City Council Leaving Care Service is making remarkable efforts to provide comprehensive and caring support to young people who are leaving care or are care experienced. The commitment and dedication of the team members are truly commendable and they are consistently going above and beyond to ensure the wellbeing and success of our young people. Here are some key examples of their achievement and dedication:

Dedicated Team Composition: The team is well structured and consists of a variety of professionals, including a Service Manager, Team Managers, Social Workers, Personal Advisors (PAs), and Housing Officers. The House Project is also integrated into the program, adding an additional layer of support.

Steady Staff Retention: The team boasts an impressive level of staff retention, with no manager or PA turnover for quite some time. This stability contributes to the consistent support and care provided to the care leavers.

Long-standing Commitment: The 30-year tenure of one of our Team Managers exemplifies the deep commitment and loyalty of the team towards the care leavers as well as the city. This long service demonstrates their dedication to the cause and their genuine concern for the wellbeing of children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent.

Personalised Care: The team takes a personalised approach to support, going beyond their roles to meet individual needs. Examples include: assisting with home improvements, attending appointments and even offering emotional support during late-night calls.

Initiatives for Care Experienced Mothers: The creation of a care experienced mother's group demonstrates the team's proactive approach to addressing emerging needs. This initiative supports parents who may feel marginalised or unsupported in traditional parenting groups due to their care experienced backgrounds.

Community Collaboration: The team's collaboration with various community partners and charities showcases their resourcefulness. Donations from libraries, parents, and local businesses demonstrate their ability to use available resources effectively.

Future Endeavors: The upcoming Care Leavers Hub in collaboration with a local charity displays the team's determination to create accessible spaces for care leavers. This hub not only provides practical amenities but also offers an opportunity for shared experiences and learning from veterans.

ILAC Inspection and Continuous Improvement: The recognition of the Care Leavers Service as "Good" by the ILAC inspection acknowledges the positive impact the team is making. This validation is being used as a foundation to further improve and collaborate with corporate parents in the city.

Overall, the Stoke on Trent City Council Next Steps Leaving Care Service's dedication, creativity, and genuine concern for the wellbeing of care leavers are truly inspiring. Their proactive efforts and collaborative approach are making a significant positive impact on the lives of young individuals transitioning from care.

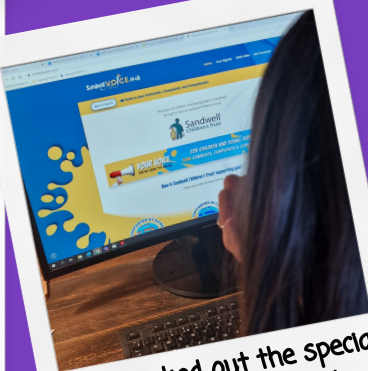


Sandwell Children's Trust

My experience with Sandwell's Participation Team



It was nice to be visited by the participation team



So I checked out the special young people's website



The group looked fun so I went along. I'm glad I did



I took part in loads of exciting activities



Before long I was helping to interview and induct staff



and helping shape the services that affect me



I shared my experience with lots of people



and spoke at events across the country



Now I've left care I am a Care Ambassador



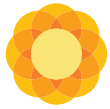
Which means I can still help improve things



and I'm always proud to be part of the family!

These initiatives have been developed over the last 12 months and continue to make a difference to me and people just like me...thanks to the Participation Team!





BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST



Birmingham
City Council

Team Excellence Award Submission for Lifelong Links team

Core Function

Lifelong Links helps to piece together a young person's journey through care – answering fundamental questions that help them to understand their history, family background, culture and heritage. The service connects young people to their family network building sustainable relationships for life.

What we've achieved over the last year

In the last twelve months Lifelong Links has worked with over 60 children, helping them to achieve a range of positive outcomes. Lifelong Links has been embedded into the local offer for care leavers and shortlisted finalists for the CYP Now awards. The impact of this service has been lifelong for many children and young people, reuniting many with lost relatives.

Why do we stand out from the crowd?

Lifelong Links is not unique to Birmingham, but we were the first local authority to take the offer to care leavers and those approaching adulthood. With passion and commitment facilitators help young people to get answers, and will leave no stone unturned in doing so. The team have been known to walk the streets searching for missing relatives.

What has been the impact for children and young people in the area?

Lifelong Links positively impacts young people in many ways including placement stability, emotional wellbeing and on average, increases a young person's network of positive connections from 7 to 26. 84% of children who ask are now reconnected with family. This can be life-changing. The majority of participants ask us to find people for them – often fathers.

When we've exhausted usual options, we offer heritage DNA testing. This has led to finding two fathers that didn't know they had a child, which has enabled the two young people to gain a strong sense of identity, opening up potential to explore a whole new side of the family who can support them into adulthood.

What has been the impact for your Trust?

Lifelong Links is a catalyst for change and provides strong evidence of the importance of building positive relationships with family and community.

Connections Count and Lifelong Links demonstrates this time and time again.



Solihull Council Family Support Service

The team engages with children and families when their needs first emerge, preventing escalation to higher levels of intervention.

The service had been through a tumultuous few years which affected the staff as well as the service they had been able to provide. Managers and staff have worked incredibly hard to implement significant improvements including risk management and tracking, auditing, closing the loop and performance management, whilst creating a culture of high support and high challenge.

The aspirational managers and passion, skill and enthusiasm of the staff have meant that improvements and developments to the service have been seized and driven forward.

Children are now being seen and having their needs assessed quickly in a safe and efficient manner. The managers and staff have designed a new service with senior leaders to improve outcomes for our children and their families.

Despite having new leadership and multiple changes to their remit and structures, their dedication has allowed them to rapidly develop a clear direction and strong team identity, and excellent child focused attitude creating a service that gives better results children and young people in Solihull.

This creates an impact across the wider directorate and the whole of the council by reducing the number of children who need social workers, improving educational outcomes and easing workload elsewhere. Improvement in children's services is the number one priority for Solihull Council. They've embraced change whilst consistently demonstrating the positive attitude required to ensure those improvements are made.



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Education Welfare District and Central Teams

Staffordshire County Council

This small team provides Staffordshire with a vital combination of a specialist knowledge of attendance and high support and challenge to schools and families.

They are outstanding as professionals and work under increasing pressure within their district teams and countywide to help Staffordshire children attend school every day and achieve their potential.



7.2
County
absence rate



7.4
National
absence rate



Equivalent to
500,000
extra school days
attended across
Staffordshire.

Impact on Children and Young People

Many children have been supported but the team will take legal action, where necessary:



87% of children we have worked with have improved their attendance.



23 children returned to education under a school attendance order.

Key Stats



888 children are currently being supported to improve their attendance.



25 AV1 robots utilised to ensure children remain connected with school and friends when unable to attend.



219 children have been provided with alternative provision that supports their re-integration to school.



6,947 penalty notices issued for non-attendance and **526** court prosecutions issued to parents.

Impact on organisation/department

Regular school attendance is essential for a child's attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances, and Staffordshire County Council can be proud of an overall **attendance rate of 92.8%** (national average of **92.6%**) thanks to the tireless work of its Education Welfare teams with Business Support and other colleagues.

Youth Justice Service Team

Walsall Council

Why we stand out

Meaningful work developed through an understanding of lived experience. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) visited Walsall in June 2023. They commended the work saying that the Youth Justice team had responded well to the learning and recommendations within the HMIP thematic report.

- Walsall's Disproportionality Forum meets regularly to provide a safe space for youth justice staff and our partners and is enhanced by a practice improvement group that reviews best practice and discussions in the forum.
- We work in partnership with Open Lens, a local media and organisation, commissioning a documentary exploring what it's like for black boys to grow up in Walsall and developed a strategy to reduce the number of boys with black and mixed ethnicity entering the justice system.



- We've commissioned a local mentor, a former professional footballer from black heritage with lived experience of the justice system, to support our black and mixed heritage boys in custody and to help them resettle back in their communities.
- We delivered stop and search workshops for our children in partnership with the police and crime commissioner and expanded this work to other vulnerable children.

The impact directly to children and young people

- Encouraging increase in their level of personal confidence and self-belief.
- Raised aspirations of what they can achieve going forward
- Identification of personal barriers to their progression and their desire to overcome them.
- Good levels of participation with a willingness to share in discussion forums
- Improved educational attainment and employability.



Case study



A young 15-year-old male who has significantly developed throughout the time spent on the Youth Justice Disproportionality project.

In Ricky Otto's empowerment sessions, he increasingly began to contribute as part of the group. Since then, there has been an increase in his confidence levels as he has spoken on issues important to him through podcasting and developed presentation skills. The participant has continued this good progress during one-to-one sessions and works towards his goal of securing a football scholarship.



Walsall Council

Shropshire school Admissions Team



Tanya Miles
Executive Director
People

The Shropshire School Admissions Team have performed magnificently in supporting the children of Shropshire in accessing their school of preference, under often trying circumstances. They are a wonderful, close-knit group who operate very effectively “under the radar” without fuss or fanfare and so I would like to give them the recognition they deserve.



Core Function:

To serve as admissions authority for all community and VC schools, to co-ordinate the statutory admissions process across all other state funded schools and to provide advice to parents, schools, governors, councillors and MPs on school admissions.

One USP:

The team has had a new manager and new team members this year and has performed really well against a background of difficulties including a new IT system which crashed on secondary offer day.

Achievements over the last year:

Shropshire Council is one of the top councils for first preference and preferred school placements in the West Midlands and better than the England average.

Impact for Young People:

The vast majority of children and young people in Shropshire continue to be able to secure a place at their preferred school in a year when the exceptionally large 2023 secondary transfer group presented a particular challenge. The team were able to work with school leaders to deliver additional places and thus positive outcomes for children and young people.

Impact for the Council and beyond:

The work of the School Admissions Team and the positive outcomes they have achieved meet one of the Council’s key priorities within the new Shropshire Plan to *‘provide access to lifelong learning, supporting people and our communities to prosper through providing the right skills’*.



Coventry Youth Justice Service has seen significant achievements and received an overall rating of 'Outstanding' following an HMI Probation Inspection in 2023.

The Chief of Probation, Justice Russell, said: "Coventry Youth Justice Service is committed and passionate – their dedication to children under their supervision, exemplary in almost every area of their work, was clear to see – despite the challenges of an inner-city environment. Reducing the likelihood of reoffending is for the benefit of

the local community as much as it is for each child supervised by the service – and they are given every opportunity to change and flourish. Inspectors were particularly impressed that the views of each child, and their parents, are integrated routinely into how the service will manage their supervision. This goes up to management board level, where the voice of a children's 'shadow' board – known as Through our Eyes – is influential in how the service is organised."

Working Together

We started in 2021/22, a quarterly feedback group (Through Our Eyes) led by a local charity, Guiding Young Minds, the Exploitation Team (Horizon) and the local Youth Commissioner.

These sessions take place at a local youth club and sees children open to the Service give feedback on their experiences, self-assess the Service, and discuss pertinent issues individually/collectively to improve the Service. The sessions are facilitated externally to encourage and facilitate more honest feedback.

What parents/carers say:

- ▶ *I felt listened to for the first time - someone, stopped and asked what I wanted and how I could be helped; not just telling me what to do.*
- ▶ *Having a space (Parent Group named 'The Friendship Group') to speak with others, not be judged and opportunity to improve things through meeting with Police/YJS leads.*

Achievements

Across 2022/23:

- ▶ More children were supported by the Service through diversion offers reducing the number of children with formal criminal records.
- ▶ Only 1 concurrent custodial sentence for a child serving an existing custodial sentence.
- ▶ Appointment of a Speech and Language Therapist.
- ▶ All children open to the Service received a mental health screening by one of the Highly Specialist Mental Health Practitioners.

What children say:

- ▶ *Be open minded about the intervention. For me, it turned a negative experience into a positive outcome,*
- ▶ *Nonjudgmental - didn't judge me for my mistakes*
- ▶ *My worker was a good and deserves a pay rise!*



THROUGH
Our EYES



Rugby Children's Safeguarding and Support Team

*Nominated by Nigel Minns,
Executive Director of People
Directorate at Warwickshire
County Council*

The team, based in Rugby, leads on child protection, pre-proceedings, court work, and Children in Need support for families in this Warwickshire borough. They embody the council's restorative practice approach and values in all they do. Their work is relationship based, trauma informed, aims to work with families and uses a safe uncertainty model to manage risk. They host and work closely with members of our Systemic Team, delivering consistently positive results and improving outcomes for families.

The team maintain a stable workforce with no agency or temporary staff. They stress the importance of team relationships and wellbeing for all. Team members do lots of activities together - they have gone hill walking, had yoga classes, taken part in a book club and have had senior managers complete stretching exercises with them on the floor!

The team pushes boundaries and promotes challenge. In the last year its work has resulted in a reduction in children in care numbers from 89 to 61 or to 42 per 10,000; they have only 16 per 10,000 children subject to child protection plans; they issued care proceedings on only 4.7 children per 10,000 - all well below our statistical neighbour averages. Around 40% of all children in their care are with connected others and over the last five years a higher percentage of their children left care via special guardianship or child arrangement orders than any other Warwickshire team.

Warwickshire has generic district teams to avoid unnecessary transfers and introduction of new workers to families. Rugby Children's Safeguarding and Support Team is always child focused and will not transfer a young person if it is not in their best interests, for example not moving a child in a secure unit, located hundreds of miles away, to our Child in Care 14+. In respect of this case our senior Judge noted:

"I don't think I have been involved in a case that has involved the kind of social work support these workers have offered. They have gone above and beyond the role of a professional person. It is right to offer my thanks on behalf of everybody for their commitment, dedication and care for this young woman who has so many challenges."

Praise and thanks from families and professionals is a consistent response to the work of the team. The shift in the balance of their work from expensive court and child protection processes has helped Warwickshire upstream and invest in our Early Help offer.



SKILLED



HEARD



HEALTHY



HAPPY



SAFE





Worcestershire's End-to-End Approach in Care Proceedings

Social Workers, Team Managers, Group Managers, Case Progression Officers, IROs, Permanency Team and Legal Services.

We want to recognise not one team, but all teams and services who contribute to our successful outcomes for children and young people in Care Proceedings and Planning for Permanency. Practitioners and Managers across the service work together to ensure early, timely and successful outcomes.

What they have achieved over the last year:

- Contributing to National Events with the Department for Education and Mutual Ventures in learning events on the impact of care proceedings delays on children's services – with a particular focus, and utilising data to tackle delays; this was in recognition of the good practice in Worcestershire. Their average through the year has been 21 weeks for the completion of proceedings and the national average for the same period is 45 weeks – all the roles recognised in our excellence award contribute to this success.
- There is strong partnership working with the family courts and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) to achieve positive and timely outcomes for children.



“When risks increase for children on child protection plans, there is an appropriate escalation into pre-proceedings. This area of work is a strength in Worcestershire and for most children it is effective in reducing risk. Social workers complete assessments of parents and family members and timely decisions are made for children if legal proceedings are initiated. Letters before proceedings are clear about what the concerns are and what needs to change. Careful monitoring of children subject to pre-proceedings prevents any drift and delay. As a result, children's experiences and outcomes improve.”

OFSTED, 2023

One USP that sets them out from the crowd:

Our USP is that our recognition is not for single team, but a service end-to-end approach to achieving timely and good outcomes for children, this is recognised nationally and regionally.

What has been the impact for children and young people in your area:

Early permanence is achieved wherever possible, and the right decisions are made for children; evidenced through our recent OFSTED inspection:

“Decisions to bring children into care are appropriate. The application of the Public Law Outline when children come into care in Worcestershire is effective. Once children come into care, good decisions are made to work towards achieving permanence for most children. Social work evidence and plans are of a high quality.”

OFSTED, 2023

What has been the impact for your council/trust:

Our approach supports risk management and ensures that timely plans are implemented to secure children's long-term future when they are exposed to significant harm. Our social workers are confident about their work with children and families in legal proceedings and they feel well supported by managers as reported by staff and the courts. We have been recognised as a service in leading Good Practice nationally in this area.



Early Years SEND Team and the Early Years Improvement Team

General Information

These teams have worked together to ensure sufficiency and quality of early years provision, education service and support for SEND. They have developed sustainable solutions that are well thought through and executed. Together they have a clarity in purpose and vision for early identification of impending issues supported by thorough data analysis with a holistic approach to solution-focused development work, engaging with all services that needed to be part of the solution. The enthusiasm generated by those reached through the development work is inspirational.

“

As a new SENCO, the early years support has been fantastic! I've had lots of questions, all of which have been answered quickly and have left me feeling confident to carry out my role.

”

“

The support we were given yesterday was fantastic. We were feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work involved but now feel so much calmer. Everything has now fallen into place thanks to our EYIO visit and patience. A huge thank you.

”

Work carried out by the team

- ✓ Redesigned all paperwork to remove barriers to support.
- ✓ Developed an EY SEN support group network for settings.
- ✓ Targeted training.
- ✓ Co-production to develop EY Information Booklet.
- ✓ EY Inclusion Funding aligned with the school's funding matrix to allow equity for our EY children with SEND.
- ✓ Information sessions for all those services that might be a 'front door' to services.
- ✓ Development of the Child Readiness Project.
- ✓ Data focus to inform planning for training, information and support.



At a Glance

The Early Years Teams are:

- ✓ Early Years Inclusion
- ✓ Portage
- ✓ Specialist Communication Teaching Team
- ✓ Early Years Improvement Advisors

Della Pascoe
Early Years SEND Manager

Emily Garner
Early Years Lead Improvement Advisor

Impact

- ✓ 100% YR EHCP children identified in 2022-3 (compared with 92% in 2021 and 43% in 2020)
- ✓ 99/127 children transitioning into local primary schools
- ✓ 39% of the EY SEND Caseload entered school without need for an EHCP
- ✓ Creation of a new Early Years Assessment Base to increase specialist placements at primary level
- ✓ 97%-100% New SENCOs (who attended HC L3 SENCO award course) and practitioners attending targeted training expressed confidence and clearer understanding of key processes and strategies- reflected in improved clarity and preciseness of targets for SEND children's plans
- ✓ Disability Access funding taken up by 50 children, double the previous year
- ✓ A focus on impact of funding, consistency of approach and reducing bureaucracy and paperwork has meant support for an additional 74 children has cost £32,000 (budget for 2021-2 £167,136 for 146 children, £195,810 in 2022-3 for 220 children)
- ✓ A robust multi-agency approach to identifying children who may need specialist support

Children first and at the heart of all we do

Name of team:

Dudley Virtual School

Core function:

Dudley Virtual School (DVS) supports children in the care (CiC) of Dudley Council and those who have/have had a Social Worker, from Early Years to Post 16, to achieve the best possible educational outcomes and life chances.

Achievements:

DVS is “an area of strength in Dudley.” (Ofsted 2022). Ofsted highlighted:

“The highly effective virtual school... is ambitious for all children in the care of Dudley children’s services. Leaders and staff know individual children very well and adopt a personalised approach to meeting the needs of children in care. Most children achieve well relative to their starting points.

“There is a close partnership with schools to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive the right provision. School leaders appreciate the support and guidance they receive to support children’s engagement with education and their educational attainment.”

Dudley Virtual School USP:

DVS spearheads developments locally and regionally, including Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters and Trauma Informed & Attachment Aware Schools and leads on national developments in this area. DVS also offers My Creative Track (Arts), Active Now (Sport) and a range of workforce development and conferences. This work supports all children and young people, highlighting those with a Social Worker and those in care.

Impact for children and young people:

Good attendance and no Permanent Exclusions of CiC for over five years. Year One CiC have improved in greater depth in reading and achieved better outcomes in phonics than national CiC, regional CiC and Dudley all pupils. At Key Stage four there is an upward trend in strong passes in English and Maths. Similarly, there continues to be improvement across Post 16 including upward retention rates and low NEET’s.

Impact for the council:

The Ofsted DVS has engendered an approach that enables positive co-working across a broad range of services across Dudley Council, their partners, the borough as a whole and the region leading to better opportunities and outcomes for Dudley’s CiC.



Telford and Wrekin **SEND and alternative provision** service

Our team



We provide early intervention to assess and meet the needs of young people with SEND services include Educational Psychology, Sensory Inclusion, Learning Support Advisory team.

We provide a wide range of Alternative Provision (AP) providers through the AP directory to help maintain local mainstream provision for young people.



Our innovative approach

Pre-exclusion hotlines to reduce exclusions.

The Belonging Strategy.

A continuum of support through alternative provision.

Outreach from our Key Stage 1 to 3 PRU.

A SEND support tool for quick identification in settings.

Specialist outreach to build resilience in the system.

Specialist hubs and resource bases to manage specialist demand.

Inclusive Schools Forum for high needs funding without an EHC, reducing system demand.

Our achievements over the last year

Nationally recognised (DfE Guidance) for best practices in "High needs budgets: effective management in local Authorities" and "SEND and alternative provision improvement plan."

Selected as the lead for the **West Midlands Change Programme Partnership.**

In March 2023 we achieved **Outcome 1** in the SEND area inspection.

Ofsted and CQC area SEND inspection recognised CYP with SEND are visible, valued and included in the Telford and Wrekin community.

High Needs DSG balanced at the end of the financial year 2022/23.

Education Health and Care Plans completed within 20 weeks, compared to the national average of 49.1%. **100%**

Effectively maintained the number of EHC plans with only a 4% increase, below the national average of 9%.

Our impact on children and young people

KS2 pupils at SEN Support performed better than the National average
Telford pupils with an EHCP achieved better than National across all areas at Key Stage 2.

Continuous improvement of knowledge and skills – through the SHaW Maths hub partnership and Literacy pathway.



77% of new EHC plans received **Outstanding or Good** ratings in Quality Assurance Audits.

Ensured 100% of children received EHC plan naming their new school, as part of phase transition by 15 February deadline. **100%**

Completed all EHC plan for post 16 transition by 31 March deadline – with 88% naming a post 16 provision.

Achieved the **joint lowest permanent exclusion rate** in the West Midlands.

Over 80% of young people accessing AP **reintegrated back into mainstream schools** successfully. **OVER 80%**

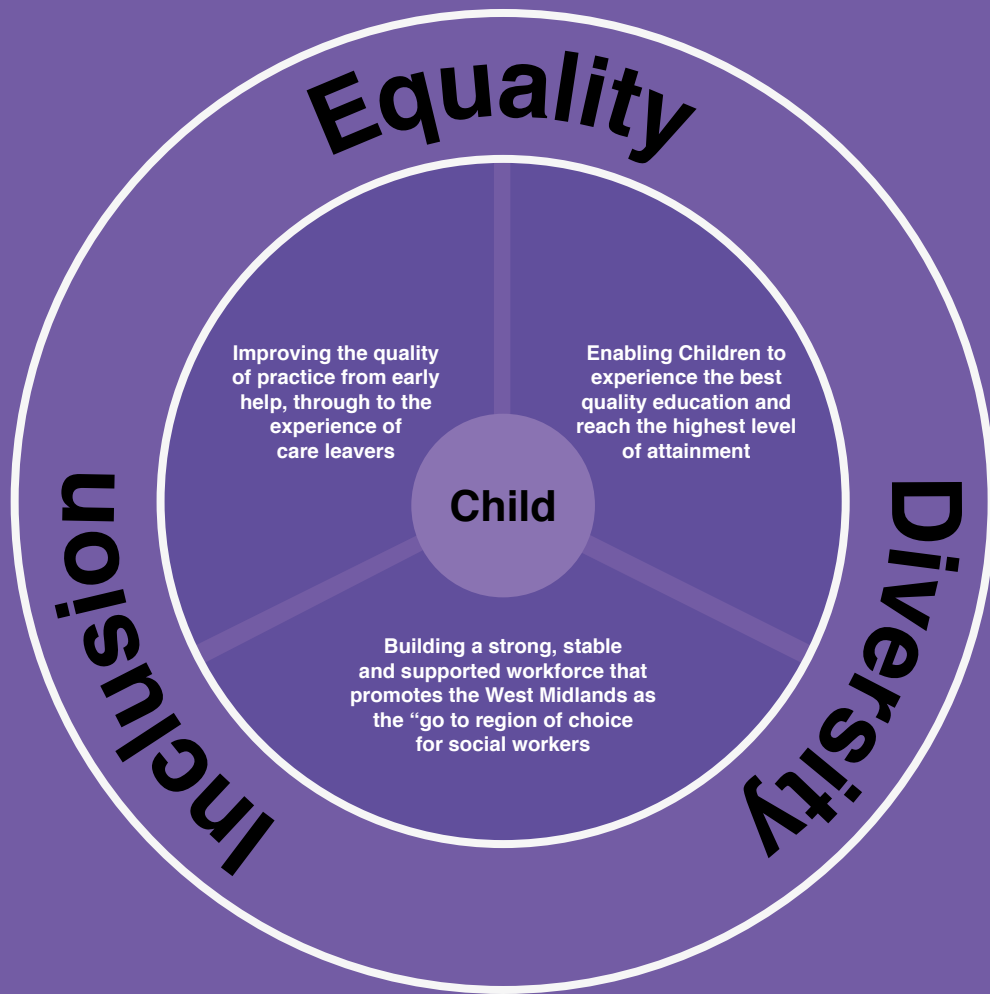
Developed a "small but mighty" **Shout Out for SEND young person's group.**

The impact we have made within our council

Strong collaboration across the partnership to support our young people, resulting in better communication, swift joint responses and de-escalation of crisis services.







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WEST MIDLANDS  **ADCS NETWORK**

