

Improving Lives Select Commission Chair's Briefing for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 7th October, 2026

Items covered since the last update meeting:-

- Improving Lives held its meeting on 15th September, 2026 and the following items were considered:-

- Corporate Parenting Partnership Board Update

Members received a verbal update following the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board meetings held on 30th June and 8th September, 2026.

Members welcomed the updates and the positive information that was shared.

- CYPS Performance Annual Outturn

Members received the report and welcomed the opportunity to consider the content focusing on the performance outturn for the reporting year April 2025 to March 2026 for Children and Young People's Services.

The discussion focused on Children's Services performance, with Members exploring a range of issues relating to children in care, early help, youth justice, domestic abuse, elective home education (EHE) and support for care leavers. Officers acknowledged that placement stability for children in care remained below target, but explained that some placement moves reflected positive outcomes, such as reunification with family or progression to more suitable long-term placements.

Ongoing work to improve stability included foster carer recruitment, support for carers, placement disruption processes and therapeutic interventions.

Members also questioned increasing demand across services, including rising early help caseloads and the growth in EHE.

Discussion also covered domestic abuse referrals, which were received primarily through the Police and assessed through MASH, alongside proposals to strengthen specialist support for affected children and families.

Members sought assurance on support for care leavers, health and dental assessments, Family Hub engagement and the use of unregistered placements.

Performance was closely monitored, and services remained persistent in maintaining contact. Significant improvements had been achieved in dental health engagement through awareness-raising and partnership work with health colleagues.

Reassurance was provided that Family Hubs were accessible across the borough, with outreach and digital offers continuing to expand, and that although performance measures often focused on the most deprived communities, services monitored outcomes for all children and families.

Overall, Members recognised strong performance across many areas while emphasising the importance of continuing to learn from best-performing authorities and maintaining focus on areas requiring improvement.

Members, therefore, received and accepted the CYPS Annual Performance Report and accompanying scorecard for the outturn 2025/2026, but sought further information on assessment trends over a six-year period at the end of Key Stage 2, together with comparative outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4, to identify and highlight improvements in pupil progression.

- Update on Family Hubs Performance

Members focused their discussion on the impact and effectiveness of the Family Hubs programme, particularly in relation to engagement, outreach and long-term outcomes for children and families and heard that uptake of Baby Packs had been very strong and had significantly increased Family Hub registrations through a more joined-up approach to service delivery.

It was explained that some families chose not to register due to concerns about personal data, but many still accessed services and continued to receive opportunities to engage.

Discussion ensued about variations in activity attendance and outreach performance, with officers explaining that seasonal factors, such as school holidays and winter periods, could influence participation levels.

Members also explored how outreach support was targeted and officers described a data-led approach that combined registration information, health service data and local intelligence from communities, partners and Elected Members to identify families who were not accessing support and proactively engage them. While members praised the outstanding results

being achieved, they also challenged officers on how deprivation data and heat maps were being interpreted, seeking assurance that services fully understood variations in outcomes across different communities and used this information to inform future delivery.

A significant part of the discussion centred on whether Family Hubs were making a measurable difference to longer-term outcomes and it was highlighted national evidence demonstrating the value of early intervention, alongside positive local feedback and case studies, but acknowledged the need for more outcome-focused reporting to show the long-term impact on areas such as school readiness, child development and future service demand.

Members expressed a desire to see more detailed data tracking outcomes for families who had engaged with Family Hub services over time. The role of Family Hub staff was also discussed, particularly opportunities to strengthen knowledge around SEND and support for older children. Officers outlined the introduction of Best Start Inclusion Practitioners within each hub to act as SEND specialists, inclusion champions and a bridge between families and specialist services.

The meeting concluded with discussion of new developments, including the successful introduction of birth registration services at Swinton and Maltby Family Hubs, allowing families to register births closer to home. Members welcomed the initiative, praised the Family Hubs programme overall and requested that information about available services, locations and future developments be shared more widely to help them signpost residents effectively.

Members, therefore, received and accepted the positive performance and plan which outlined to further strengthen data collection, performance monitoring and digital intelligence systems to better target support and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

Furthermore they asked to receive confirmation of current locations of family hubs and the services that were available and for Elected Members to be included in the circulation of the press release showing the first baby being registered at a Family Hub.

Work Programme 2026-27:-

- Members received the submitted Work Programme and agreed to update by:-

Moving the Youth Justice Inspection and Action Plan to December, 2026 and swapping the CiC & CL Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028 - Annual Update to March, 2027.

Training Session

- Members welcomed the opportunity for a training session via Microsoft Teams with Louise Keith and Joshua Amahwe on 5th October, 2026 at 4.00 p.m. to better understand the finances for schools.

Items to be discussed at the next meeting:-

3rd November, 2026

- Maintained Schools Long Term Maintenance Plan (LTMP)
- Intrafamilial Child Sexual Abuse Strategy