

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



Welcome to WCF Annual General Meeting 2022

Monday 26 September 2022 at 1pm

1. Welcome – Rob Morrison Chair of WCF Board
2. WCF Structure 2022/23 – Vision and Mission
3. Presentation of Annual Report – Tina Russell CEO and DCS
 - Emma Brittain – Director of FFD, Children in Need and Partnerships
 - Adam Johnston – Director of Safeguarding and Children in Care and Care Leavers
 - Mel Barnett – Director of 0-25 All Age Disability including SEND
 - Sarah Wilkins – Director of Education, Early Years, Inclusion and and Education Place Planning
4. Financial statements for 2021/22 – Phil Rook Director of Resources
5. Confirmation of Reappointment of Auditors for the coming year
6. Consider any other competent business

- Worcestershire Children First (WCF) review of achievements in our second full year.

Headline Outcomes

- We supported the County's recovery from the pandemic and continued to respond to the needs of Worcestershire children, young people and their families.
- The DfE recognised our improvement and removed the statutory direction placed on the Council.
- Whilst some minor delays as we responded to Covid overall we have achieved success against our business plan and are working collectively as one company.
- Annual Report and financial statements we are about to review today are available on WCF website: www.worcschildrenfirst.org.uk



Tina Russell: Our vision, mission and practice

OUR VISION
Worcestershire to be a wonderful place for all children and young people to grow up.

WORCESTERSHIRE CHILDREN FIRST

OUR MISSION
Supporting children and young people to be happy, healthy and safe.

OUR VALUES

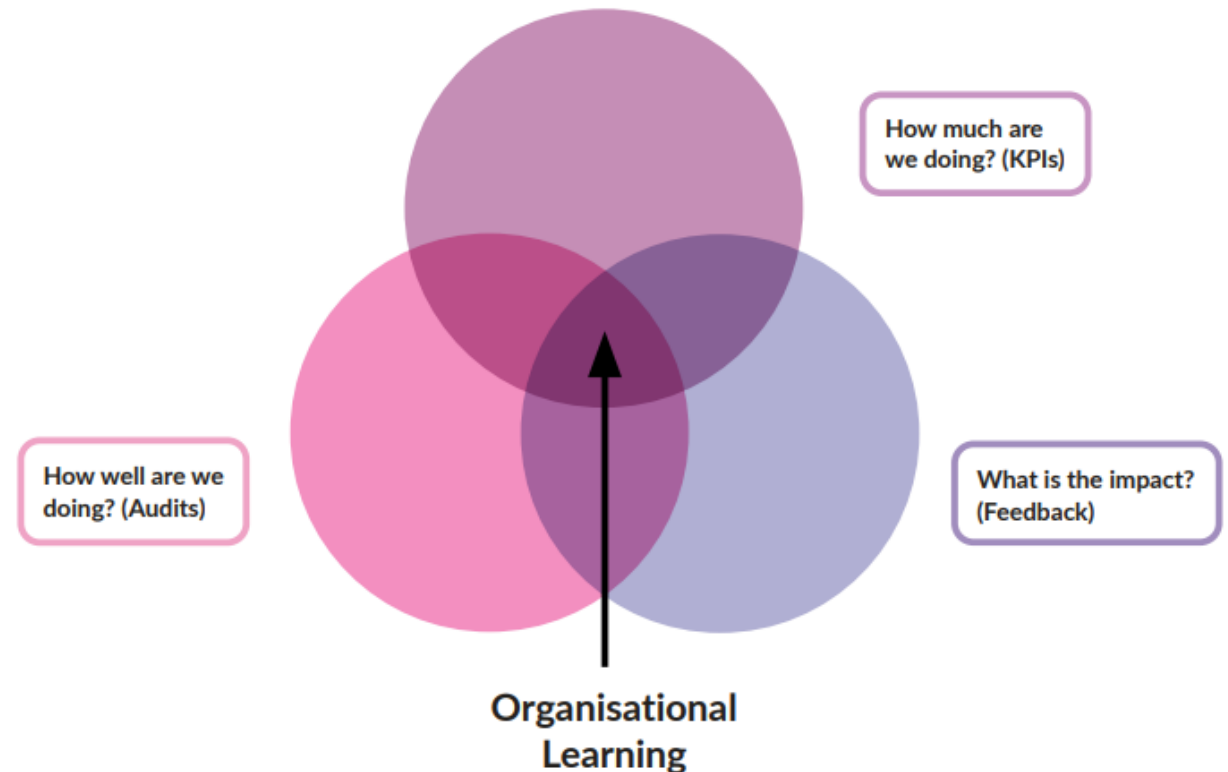
- CHILDREN AT OUR HEART**
We will keep children and young people at the heart of everything we do.
- VALUE FAMILY LIFE**
We will support and empower parents to care for their own children.
- GOOD EDUCATION FOR ALL**
We will value education as the best start in life for all children and young people.
- PROTECTION FROM HARM**
We will act in a professional and timely way to protect children from harm.
- EMBRACE DIVERSITY**
A progressive culture of championing equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Our vision and mission is to: Keep outcomes for Children at the heart of what we do / Value Family Life / Ensure all children receive a good quality education / Protection children from harm and embrace diversity and championing equality and inclusion through our work and services
- During the past two years Children’s Safeguarding Services across the country have experienced an unprecedented rise in demand for Support, Care and Protection.
- Our assessments identify a rise in the complexities of need and risk being experienced by adult parents. The trio of harm, “Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse” rose to 12% in 2021/22 and is rising still.
- We also experience in Worcestershire a high demand for assessment for children with Education Health and Care Needs. Almost almost double the national average.
- **Our approach is to support parents to care for their own children well, offering support and services where we need to in order to ensure all the children of Worcestershire feel Happy, Healthy and Safe**
- Understating the difference we are making is key

- **Key Performance Indicators** – Data headline – demand, timeliness, management of risk and outcomes for children and young people.
- **Service User feedback** – Knowing how our services are experienced by children, young people and their parents/carers.
- **Audit** – Qualitative information on quality of work and experience of children, parents/carers and professional.

Quality and impact of practice

Our Quality Assurance and Performance Management Framework bring together the key processes and activities that contribute to our development as a learning organisation. There are three core principles within the framework, and they are illustrated here:



Our aim is always to support parents to care for their own children well

- **Early Help** is the provision that lies between universal (level 1) and safeguarding services (levels 3/4). It is delivered by a wide range of agencies including universal services, the voluntary and community sector and specialist services. A review of Early Help provision, its approach and model was launched October 2020.
- **Review Outcomes** – Each district across Worcestershire has a single place for families and professionals to access information and services to support families and prevent needs and risk escalating. In the last year the new Early Help Family Support service has worked with 2,806 children.
- **A focus on our Children In Need** has been the expansion of our multi-disciplinary Supporting Families First team, our “Edge of Care/Child Protection”. This past year 92% of families achieved positive changes after an intervention being stepped down and closed. 4% of children have been removed into care as parents have been unable to provide adequate care or keep them safe and 4% have progressed to Child Protection interventions.
- **Get Safe and Get There** – Year three of Get Safe launched and a new Get There service for young people over 18 with additional vulnerabilities. Working across the partnership and with families to identify and act to protect our children from criminal exploitation. Get Safe has been nominated by WCF in the for the regional best team awards.

Through Child Protection Plans we continue to provide support and challenge parents so they can safely and consistently care for their children well.

- The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Worcestershire has slowly risen, taking our number now to 41 per 10,000 which puts us in line with England averages. On average 80% of child protection plans end with successful outcome and risk being reduced.
- **Families Safeguarding Project** - Working with adult parents on domestic abuse, Substance misuse and Mental Health issue supporting them to be good parents. Working with the parents of 250 children, we saw 79% had success in preventing the children being received into care and 75% we were successfully in stepping down from child protection. 34% success in decreasing need for statutory intervention and moving to child in need or closure
- **PAUSE** – Launched Jan 2021 the programme is offered to parents who have had children removed from their care in order to try and prepare them for a positive and safe parenting of a future child. 7 parents have successfully completed the programme and 24 will complete it within this year.
- **Domestic Abuse** – New DA contracts were commissioned this year and services include emergency and safe accommodation, increased support through counselling and play therapy for children and more support for young people in abusive relationships. The services are monitored through the Worcestershire Domestic Abuse partnership forum and WCF have lead managers in the Family Front Door and Safeguarding to ensure the services are working with the most vulnerable families

- WCF issued care proceedings in 137 cases in 2020/21 and pre proceedings in 140 children's cases. Care proceedings is our last step in trying to support and challenge parents to care for their own children well.
- Permanency a “stable and safe care arrangement with solid relationships” : it is important for all children. Care prevention, giving children “ permanency” in birth families is our focus but timeliness of care proceedings to achieve permanency when children are in care is our next.
- Worcestershire in average of timeliness was 26 weeks against the national average of 46 weeks. Children don't “drift” in our care.
- 16% of children left care to a permanency arrangement in less then 12 months and 31% had permanency via a legal order, both improvement from previous years.

- WCF have approximately 950 children in care and over 400 Care Leavers who we support and act as a Corporate Parent.
- Last year we received 210 children into care and 175 moved out of care to permanency or attained the age of 18 years.
- We refurbished our semi independent properties to give our care leavers good quality accommodation local.
- Whilst we have 72% of children placed with Foster Carers, slightly more than the Eng. average we still need more foster carers. We have increased pay, developed a Buddy Carer option and we continue to advertise our strong offer of Support and Learning and development delivered by an experienced and stable team.
- 23% of our children are placed with friend or family acting as Foster Carer for WCF. We see good stability for these children and young people and we will continue to look for family options whenever we need to bring a child into care.
- There is a need for residential care but this isn't where we see the best outcomes for young people and the placement provision limits are increasing; so we are investing in family support and short breaks - keeping families together and together for longer.

- During 2021/22 we created the 0-25 All Age Disability services and staff from WCC Young Adults Team joined WCF in June 2022 in preparation for the next phase of development.
- In November 2022 we had our SEND inspection where we were judged to have made sufficient progress in 8/12 areas for improvement.
- We have developed an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) for improvement on the other four areas and this was signed off by DfE/NHS in April 2022. Reviewed in September 2022.
- We have reviewed functions, systems and processes within SEND and improved the way we work with parents/carers to understand their experience.
- We have begun developing our joint working with Education providers and Health to improve the timeliness, quality and service provision to meet need.
- Our APP is a priority for our business planning in 2022/23 and this work will be incorporated into the All Age Disability services developments.

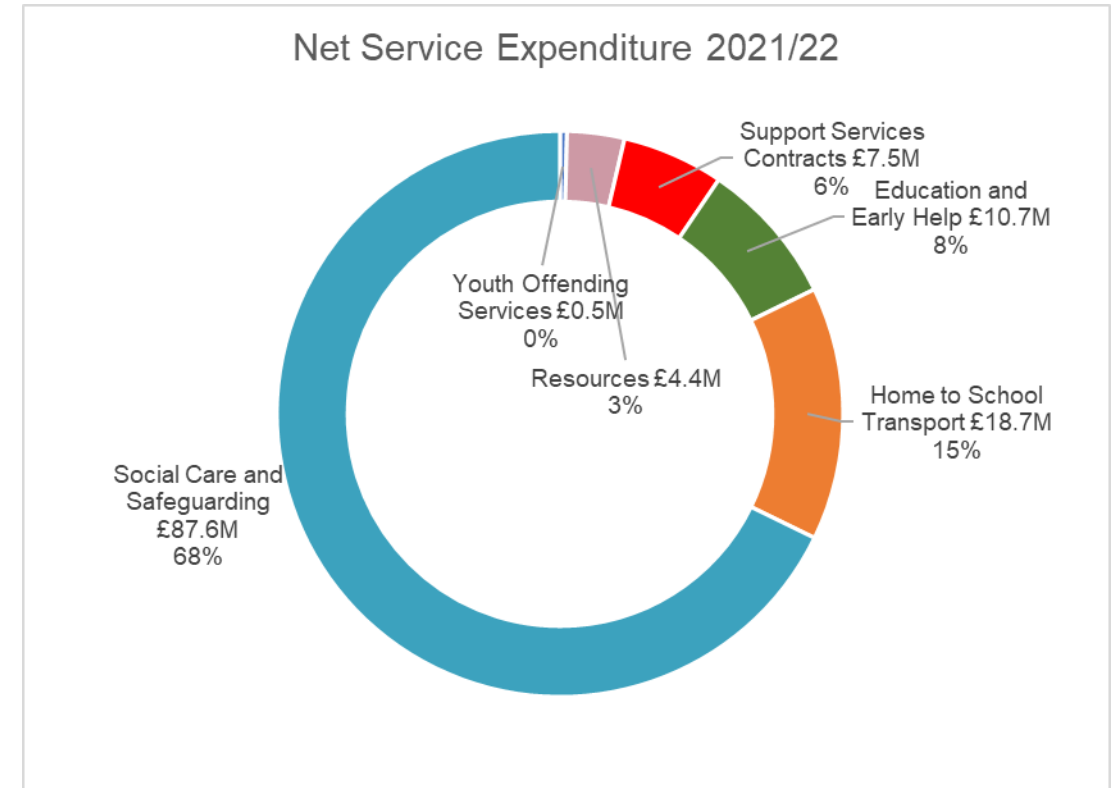
- We are progressing the school capital plans for Condition, Maintenance and New Build, with key developments in Worcester, Pershore and Bromsgrove continuing.
- Our Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) has two key workstreams working with education on both inclusivity and specialist education provision.
- Mainstream, Early Years and SEND sufficiency reports now completed.
- We have 13 Mainstream Autism bases across the county with a new base opening in April 2022 and a further one planned April 2023.
- Our planned model for delivery of our Medical Education Provision has been unsuccessful and it is our priority for 2022/23 to progress this at pace.

- Company board meetings monthly with contracted key performance indicators and business plan progress reviewed.
- Annual Audit report for WCC highlights strong financial governance and positive relationship of WCC / WCF.
- Risk Governance and Audit Board reviewed the 2022/23 Budget in detail prior to approval by the Board, reviewed the 2021/22 financial statements and external audit report in detail.
- Continue to meet with the Council with review of performance, finance, successes and challenges across the business and review of support services provided by the Council.
- Relationships with the council are extremely positive and staff from WCF engaging in key strategic groups to ensure efficient and effective joint working and continue the transparent reporting to elected members.

- WCF separate legal entity.
- Owned and controlled by Worcestershire County Council.
- Financial Statements prepared under FRS102 and compliance with Companies Act.
- Financial statements for 12 months activity to 31 March 2022.
- Final Audit took place virtually throughout June 2022 by our external auditors Grant Thornton.
- Unqualified opinion – which means clean bill of health.
- Approved by WCF Board 2 August 2022.
- Accounts on our website and sent to companies house.



- Turnover of £129.3m (£125.4m contract price).
- Expenditure £129.2m.
- Small surplus transferred to retained earnings £0.05m.
- WCF hold no fixed assets.
- Support services purchased from WCC £7.5m.
- Cash position healthy.
- Consolidated into WCC Group Financial Statements.
- WCF not responsible for pension deficits prior to 1 October and pay contributions set by actuary 18.6% in 2021/22.



- Grant Thornton are our external auditors, who are also the council's external auditors which helps as we use same financial systems and processes.
- Separate engagement partner and independent.
- Good working relationship and built knowledge of company, processes, and systems.
- Pressure in audit market to complete audit on time.

Commercial in confidence



The Audit Findings for Worcestershire Children First

Year ended 31 March 2022

19 July 2022

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- Delivery against our WCF 2022/23 business plan.
- Review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP).
- Ofsted Inspection of our Children's Social Care Services.
- Delivery against the Corporate plan.
- Continue our full quality assurance programme across the company to understand ourselves well and the differences we are making for children and their families.



**Public Questions/
Comments can be
sent to**

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