



CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

4th September 2025 at 4.30pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)

Councillors Augusta (substitute for Clough), Boyd, Cairns, Crofts (substitute for K. Swinburn), Farren, Lindley, Patrick and Wheatley

Co-opted Members: Canon Ian Robinson (Church of England)

Officers in attendance:

- Paul Cowling (Service Director – Regulated Services)
- Drew Hughes (Head of Strategy Policy and Performance)
- Guy Lonsdale (Interim Section 151 Officer)
- Bev O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Julie Poole (Head of Service, Practice, Performance, Quality and Assurance)
- Rachel Revell (Deputy Service Director – SEND)
- Jennifer Steel (Service Director – Education, Inclusion and Integration)
- Charlene Sykes (Service Director – Safeguarding and Early Help)

Others in attendance:

- Councillor Cracknell (Portfolio Hold for Children and Education)
- Chief Superintendent Paul French (Humberside Police)

There was a member of the press in attendance for this meeting.

SPCLL.18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. Swinburn and Clough.

SPCLL.19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SPCLL.20 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting held 31st July 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

SPCLL.21 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPCLL.22 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the current forward plan with a view to identifying any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

Mrs O'Brien mentioned the Youth Justice Plan that was to be received by Cabinet on 16th September 2025. She informed Members that this was to be considered at a joint meeting with the Communities Scrutiny Panel on 8th September 2025.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

SPCLL.23 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel considered a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED - That the tracking report be noted.

SPCLL.24 2025/26 QUARTER ONE COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the council's financial performance during the first quarter of 2025/26.

There was a question about the dedicated school's grant. Mr Lonsdale explained that we were not alone and were in the same position as our statistical neighbours. There were two brand new schools, which meant, twelve places with a RSP (Resource Specialist Provision) setting within them. She added that a raft of RSP was being developed so our children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) could be taught locally.

A panel member queried the number of referrals made to the 'Front Door'. Ms Sykes explained that early part referrals had gone up because they were now identifying the right children for the service. The panel wondered if they could be informed of the number of these referrals that actually go on to use our services. Ms Sykes confirmed that she would inform the panel after this meeting.

Another panel member asked about the eight vacancies in the Social Workers Team that was mentioned at the last panel meeting. They wondered if they had been successful in appointing to these vacancies. Mr Cowling confirmed that it had been very successful, and they were not far off being fully permanently staffed. Ms Sykes confirmed that six positions were filled.

The panel asked for clarification on the following:

- Key Stage 2 pupil levels.
- Amount of care leavers noted on the performance report.
- Attainment gap.
- Key Stage 4
- 19-21s being in suitable education

Officers present were able to clarify Members queries.

One Member asked whether Early Years Foundation Stage profile had been put into Family Hubs. The Member believed that it was an ideal place to make sure it was targeted early. Ms Sykes confirmed that this work was already taking place in Family Hubs.

The panel congratulated the Team on getting finances from red to amber, however, a panel member asked whether Officers thought that it would ever get to green. Mr Lonsdale asked Members to note where the Council was last year with the Children Services finances. He stated that the team had done very well. They were working hard but would still have challenges to face. They would make sure that the budget setting process was done accurately to make sure the services had required provisions available.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Service Director for Safeguarding and Early Help inform members of this panel how many of the Front Door referrals received, actually went on to use our services.

SPCLL.25 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The panel considered a report from the Director of Children's Services presenting the Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report.

The Chair noted how the changes had been quite incredible, and this report showed that a lot of work had taken place. He asked about Section 47 and how the enquiries had increased. Ms Poole stated that they had increased because people were now more aware and there were now better resources in place.

One Member asked how violence against women and girls fed into the strategy. Ms Poole explained that it was more about the aspect of giving them a voice. It was more to make sure that it was being disclosed appropriately and then being fed into the governance correctly. Chief Superintendent French confirmed that this workstream sat within the community safety partnership.

A panel Member asked whether there was any potential for rejoining the youth parliament. Ms Poole stated that it was something they were keen to do, but the priority had been the voice of the young people. She said that in the future they would look at it as part of the voice and influence partnership.

RESOLVED – That the Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2025/25 be noted.

SPCLL.26 CHILDREN’S SERVICES OFSTED REPORT

The panel considered the recent Ofsted Report detailing the outcome of the most recent Ofsted Inspection.

The panel congratulated the team on the result of this visit and enquired how further improvements would be made. Mr Cowling explained that they didn’t do what they did for Ofsted, they did it for the children. They were dedicated to continuing with further developments and the transformation plan. He also added that they had received three recommendations, which would help them to build the service further.

Members stated that the team needed to carry on doing what they had been doing but, moving forward, this panel needed to make sure that they asked more for assurance not reassurance.

The Chair asked whether the Children’s Homes were due for an Ofsted inspection. Mr Cowling confirmed that they had recently had an inspection, and they were very pleased with the outcome.

RESOLVED – That the Children’s Services Ofsted Report be noted.

SPCLL.27 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from Members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

SPCLL.28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - That the public and press be excluded for the following item on the grounds that discussion of the following business was likely to disclose confidential information within paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 172 (as amended).

SPCLL.29 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT

The panel were provided with an opportunity to discuss any confidential matters of concern with the Director of Children's Services. There were no matters discussed.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.