

Council/Committee:	Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board
Report Title	Children and Families Strategic Partnership – Children and Families Strategy
Date of Meeting	30 June 2025
Report Author	Samantha Harman – Commissioning Manager Strategy and Partnerships
Lead Officer	Sally Giles - Director of Children and Education Services
Wards Affected	All
Appendices (if any)	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Sandwell’s Children and Families Strategy is an overarching strategy and the mechanism for delivering Sandwell’s commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people. It is informed by current legislation and statutory guidance and reflects the forthcoming national reform agendas across education, children’s social care and health.
- 1.2 The strategy responds to the current challenges that children and young people face in the borough and sets out key ambitions and priorities for addressing these challenges in a collaborative way.

2. Recommendations

The Council/Committee is recommended to: -

- 2.1 Consider and comment on “The Children and Families Strategy 2025 -2028” prior to Cabinet approval.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 3.1 The Children and Families Strategy outlines Sandwell’s commitment to ensuring all children and young people in Sandwell have the opportunity to thrive. Developed in collaboration with key partners and informed by children, young people, families and communities it sets out a shared vision for a future where every child is safe, as healthy as possible, happy, and achieves their full potential.

- 3.2 The challenges for children and young people post pandemic are greater now than ever. This plan prioritises early intervention, strong family support, and accessible, high-quality services.
- 3.3 Officers from across the Council and the wider Partnership have been engaged in the shaping of the strategy, assuring alignment to the council plan and related plans and strategies.
- 3.4 The four priority areas highlighted in our strategy include:
- Family Help
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Early Years
 - Children’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

And these are underpinned by four distinct, yet aligned delivery plans that will deliver on our intentions.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 There are no alternative options, the strategy has been carefully considered with no other feasible alternative options.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out with stakeholders and partners including Sandwell Children's Trust, Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, Black Country Integrated Care Board, and West Midlands Police who all have a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people through a whole system approach.
- 5.2 Officers from across the Council and the wider Partnership have been engaged in the shaping of the strategy, assuring alignment to the council plan and related plans and strategies.
- 5.3 The strategy includes a shared outcomes framework working with the Children and Families Strategic Partnership and Sandwell Children’s Safeguarding Partnership, designed to align agencies and stakeholders towards an agreed set of common goals.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Delivery on the strategy is through a shared partnership approach.
- 6.2 As the plan includes delivery on statutory responsibilities as a core function of the council, facilitation, co-ordination and monitoring of the strategy and action plans will be conducted by the Council utilising a mixture of existing Council core budget and external funding resources.

7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 Governance of the strategy will be delivered by the Children and Families Strategic Partnership jointly chaired by the Director of Children and Education Services and the Chief Superintendent and Local Policing Commander for Sandwell with representation from key stakeholders and partners.

8. Risks

- 8.1 A risk assessment is being carried out to assess the risks associated to delivery. Any risks identified will be addressed with a series of actions to mitigate the risk. Risk assessments are also included in the individual delivery plans and monitored at a local board level.

At present two risks have been identified as significant and are in respect of:
Delivery partners having the resources to deliver on the priorities and outcomes of the strategy.

The strategy not improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is underway

10. Other Relevant Implications

- 10.1 The strategy incorporates the Healthy Child Programme which includes health promotion, early childhood development, and addressing health disparities among children and young people living in the borough.
- 10.2 The strategy is aligned to our Corporate Parenting Strategy and supports the objectives and priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people we care for, and our care experienced young people.
- 10.3 The strategy recognises our commitment as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly Candidate Community, aiming to respect and promote children's rights according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

11. Background Documents

None

12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes: -

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- One Council One Team Approach.

12.1 The strategy supports a partnership approach seeking to improve outcomes for all children and young people, with a commitment to addressing barriers to access and striving to create an accessible community offer for all families, supporting our aspirations to become a recognised UNICEF UK Child Friendly Community.