

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 15 OCTOBER 2025

Present: Councillor Asare (Chair);

Councillors McEwan (Vice-Chair), Ballsdon, Eden, Gittings, Griffith, Keane, Lanzoni, Naz and O'Connell

Apologies: Councillors Cresswell, DP Singh and Woodward

11. DELEGATED DECISIONS

The delegated decisions were noted.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

In reference to Minute 3, Cllr Eden provided an update on her visit to Hartland Academy. The Chair requested that if members wanted to visit the school to contact Cllr Eden or the Chair so that this could be organised.

13. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The minutes of following meetings were received:

Health and Wellbeing Board - 14 March 2025 and 11 July 2025

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

One question on the following matter was submitted by a member of the public.

Questioner	Subject	Reply
Peter Evans	SEND Placements in Reading	Cllr Rachel Eden

(It was noted that the full response had not been read out at the meeting to allow for a supplementary question. An updated response was made available on the Reading Borough Council Website).

15. JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION UPDATE

The Committee received a report and verbal update on progress made following the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of multi-agency responses to children in Reading who were victims of domestic abuse. The inspection took place between 24 February and 14 March 2025 and had been carried out by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), and His

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Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP). The inspection outcome was previously reported to the Committee in July 2025.

The Committee was reminded that the inspection had identified an Area of Priority Action relating to inconsistent information-sharing between partners, which was found to result in delays for children and poor-quality risk assessments. An Improvement Notice was subsequently issued to Reading Borough Council (RBC) on 31 July 2025, and a Department for Education (DfE) Improvement Advisor was appointed.

The Committee was updated on the implementation of both single agency and multi-agency action plans. Over 85% of actions were completed or in progress.

Improvements included:

- Enhanced timeliness of strategy meetings and child protection visits.
- Establishment of an Integrated Assessment Service within Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC).
- Relaunch of the QA Framework and Practice Standards.
- Introduction of a new performance framework and PowerBi dashboard.
- Improved escalation processes and oversight mechanisms.

Representatives from partner agencies provided updates on their respective single agency action plans:

- Health (BOB ICB): 15 actions had been identified, with 12 on track and 3 completed. Impact measurement was ongoing, particularly around access to Child Protection Information Sharing systems and capturing the voice of the child.
- Probation: Two actions had been identified, focusing on improving communication around intervention timelines and embedding the voice of the child in assessments. Dip sampling was underway to evaluate impact.
- Thames Valley Police: Improvements had been made in strategy meeting participation, information-sharing, and Operation Encompass. Challenges remained in automating school notifications and enhancing MARAC processes.
- Children's Services: Phase one of the Rapid Improvement Plan was 92% complete. Phase two would focus on quality of practice and workforce development. A new supervision agreement was being rolled out, and a Foundations of Practice programme was being launched.

Steve Crocker, DfE Improvement Advisor, provided an overview of progress, noting positive early action and improved systems. He highlighted ongoing challenges including workforce experience, partnership complexity, and financial pressures.

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Members of the Committee asked questions regarding staffing, supervision, and measuring impact. Officers responded with details of workforce development plans, supervision frameworks, and performance monitoring.

The Committee noted the progress that had been made and the collaborative efforts across agencies to improve safeguarding outcomes for children in Reading.

Resolved - That the progress in the delivery of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Partnership Action Plan at Appendix 1 be noted.

16. DENTISTRY UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from Hugh O'Keeffe, Head of Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental Services at the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), providing an update on NHS dental services across the region.

Mr O'Keeffe outlined the organisational changes affecting dental commissioning, noting that BOB ICB would merge with Berkshire East (Frimley ICB) to form the Thames Valley ICB from April 2026. Preparations for this transition had begun, with both areas operating as a cluster from October 2025.

The Committee was informed of national contract changes that had been introduced in 2022 and 2024 aimed at improving patient access and supporting dental practices. These had included increased UDA payments, incentives for new patient registrations, and flexible commissioning options.

Locally, the ICB had taken steps to address challenges caused by contract handbacks and reductions. Approximately 70,000 UDAs had been recommissioned from April 2024, with procurement underway for five new practices in Oxfordshire - one of which had already opened.

The Flexible Commissioning Scheme, now in its third year, had enabled practices to convert part of their contract to support vulnerable patient groups. Over 37,000 new patients had been seen under the scheme, with 52,000 total attendances. Priority groups included asylum seekers, care home residents, and patients with learning disabilities.

Mr O'Keeffe also reported on the Children's Oral Health Improvement pilot, which aimed to reduce hospital admissions for tooth extractions. The pilot would be delivered through new practices in Oxfordshire and aligned with the local authority's Supervised Toothbrushing initiative.

The Committee heard that BOB ICB had participated in a national blood pressure monitoring pilot, with over 1,000 patients screened in dental settings. This formed part of wider efforts to integrate dental services into preventative health care.

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Urgent dental care access remained a key focus. Following a government commitment to increase urgent appointments by 700,000 nationally, BOB ICB had commissioned additional sessions across 36 practices, including four in Reading. A new incentive scheme was being launched to further expand urgent care provision.

Contract delivery had improved significantly, with no contract handbacks reported in the past year. UDAs delivered in 2024-25 rose to 1.8 million, representing 90.4% of commissioned activity, and 95.7% when including the New Patient Premium.

The Committee noted that a national consultation on substantial dental contract reforms from April 2026 had recently closed. Proposed changes included embedding urgent care into core contracts and incentivising ongoing oral health management.

In response to questions, Mr O'Keeffe confirmed that:

- The ICB was working with NHS 111 to direct patients to urgent care sessions.
- Outreach and engagement with local authorities was ongoing to support children's oral health.
- Waiting times for specialist services remained a challenge, with re-commissioning planned to address capacity issues.

Resolved - That a further report be provided to the Committee in 12 months time and to include data specific to the Reading area.

17. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY 2027/2028 CONSULTATION

The Committee considered a report to determine a proposed consultation on the relevant admission arrangements for 2027-28. Specifically, the consultation would consider the following elements for the academic year 2027/28 (September 2027 to July 2028):

- The admission arrangements for Community Primary Schools in Reading.
- The coordinated scheme for primary and junior schools.
- The coordinated scheme for secondary schools.
- The Relevant Area.
- The primary phase catchment areas.

Copies of the schemes, policies, relevant area and maps were appended to the report.

The report explained that the consultation would include proposed Publish Admission Number reductions for three schools: Micklands Primary School, Moorlands Primary School and Whitley Part Primary School. Other proposed amendments for 2027/28 were also proposed to comply with the School Admission Code 2021.

The Consultation would last for a minimum of six weeks and would take place between 1 October 2025 and 31 January 2026 in the determination year. The Committee noted that the outcome of the consultation and final documents would be presented at the January 2026 meeting for a final decision.

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Resolved -

- (1) That the proposed consultation on the relevant admission arrangements for 2027-28 including the schools below, be approved:**
 - a) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Micklands Primary School.**
 - b) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Moorlands Primary School.**
 - c) The proposed reduction of Published Admission Number at Whitley Park Primary School.**

(The meeting closed at 8.05 pm)