



Budget Scrutiny

Education and Children's Services

12 January 2023



Agenda

- Overview of the Portfolio
- Portfolio priorities
- Our Service in Numbers
- Revenue Budget 2022/23
- Revenue forecast Q2 Cabinet
- Revenue budget savings since April 2020
- Proposed changes to the Revenue budget
- Overall Proposed Revenue Budget
- Challenges, risks and opportunities
- Top 5 contracts
- Fees & Charges
- Capital Budget and forecast 2022/23
- Proposed Capital Programme
- Questions
- Appendices
 - Benchmarking / VFM indicators

Overview of the Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: [Councillor Anita Cranmer](#), Deputy Portfolio Holder: [Councillor Joseph Baum](#)

The Education and Children's Services Portfolio includes the following services and functions. All of these are statutory functions required of the council by law or by our regulator Ofsted.

Children's social care - specialist social care services provide support to children in need of help and protection.

- Our services include:
 - statutory assessment and care planning for children at risk of significant harm
 - provision for looked after children and those leaving care
 - youth offending
 - fostering and adoption services

Education – Ensuring all children and young people have access to a good education is of primary importance.

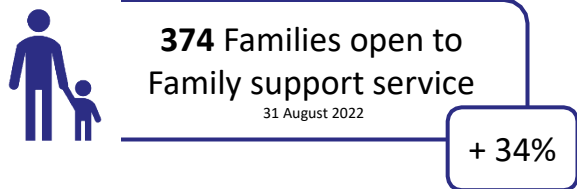
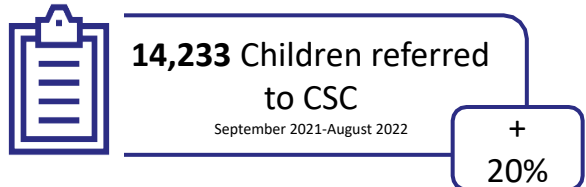
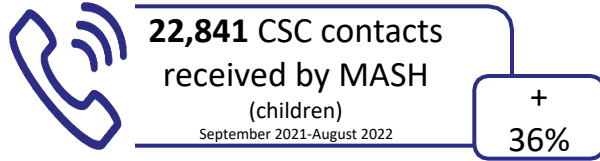
- Our services include:
 - Support for early years provision
 - School Improvement service
 - Adult Learning service
 - Integrated Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) service
 - Family Support Service
 - Delivering the statutory responsibility to provide sufficient early years and pupil places as well as managing the fair allocation of school admissions.

Portfolio Priorities

The Education and Children's Services Cabinet Portfolio have identified the following priorities:

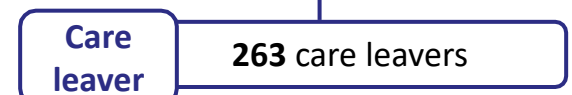
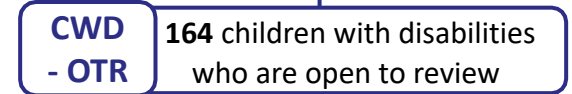
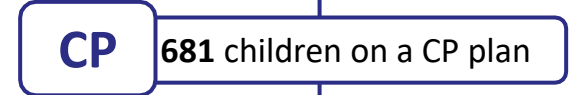
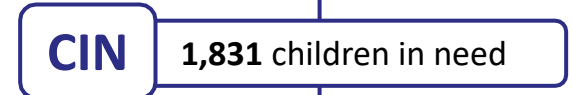
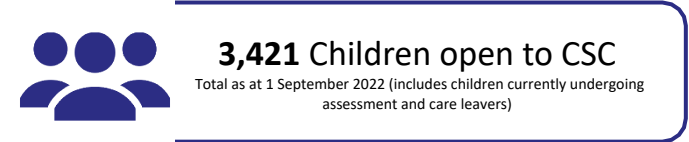
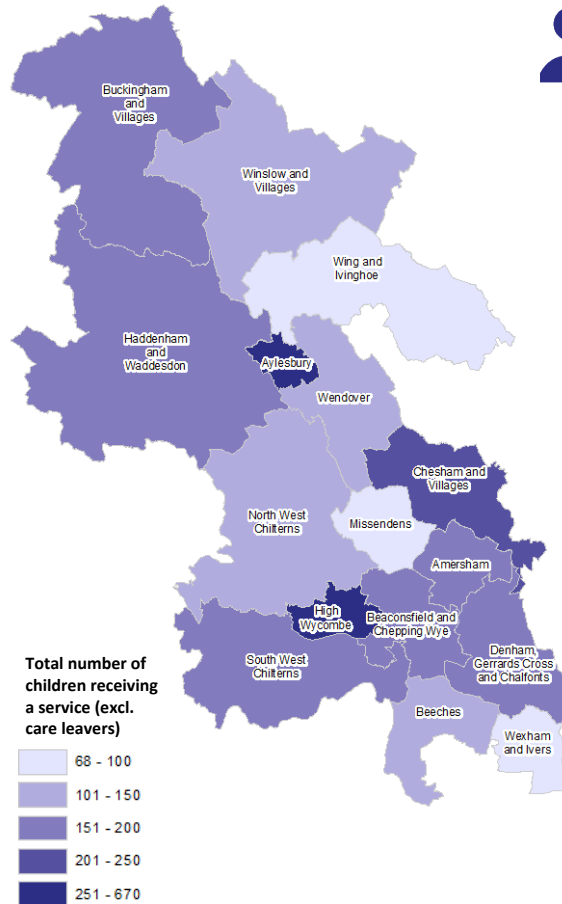
1. Deliver the actions set within our Ofsted Improvement Plan and SEND Improvement Plan to secure better outcomes for children and young people and deliver our ambition to be good/outstanding.
2. Manage the greater level of risk, complexity and seriousness of casework as a result of the pandemic and more recently, the cost of living crisis.
3. Recruitment and retention of social care workforce
4. Placement Sufficiency for Looked after children and special school places for children with SEND.
5. Improving Education Provision and Educational Outcomes
6. Work with schools to ensure that young people have access to good mental health support
7. Developing early help offer and increase the support available to children and families through Partners and the voluntary sector.

Our Service in Numbers

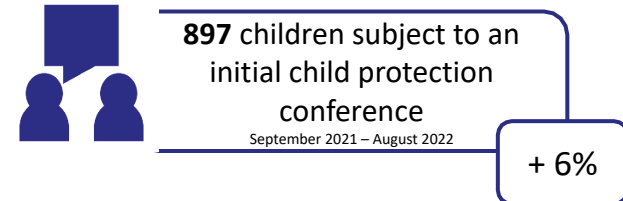


*% increase/decrease compared to 2020/21

Our Service in Numbers



*CP/CLA children counted under both CP and CLA categories



Our Service in Numbers



88,942 Total number of pupils attending state funded schools

May 2022



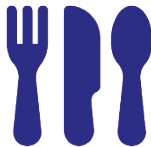
5,635 EHCP's maintained by Bucks

5 Sept 2022



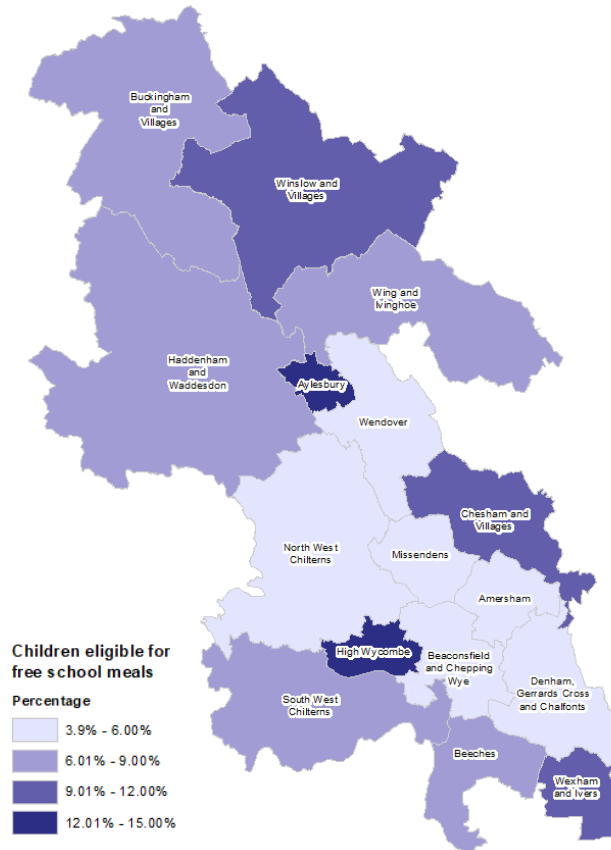
902 Children electively home educated

31 July 2022



10,892 Pupils eligible for free school meals

May 2022



67 Children missing from education (CME)

31 July 2022



1,594 Pupils attending special schools

May 2022



9,417 Pupils with SEN support

May 2022



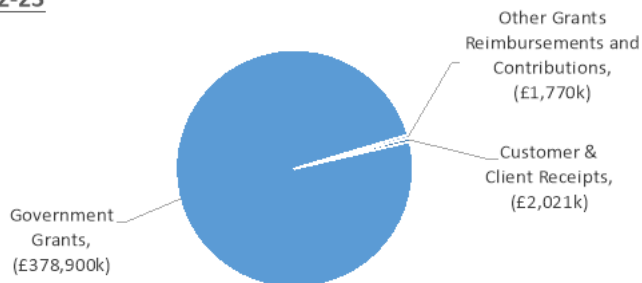
1.6% (207) Not in education employment or training (NEET)

July 2022

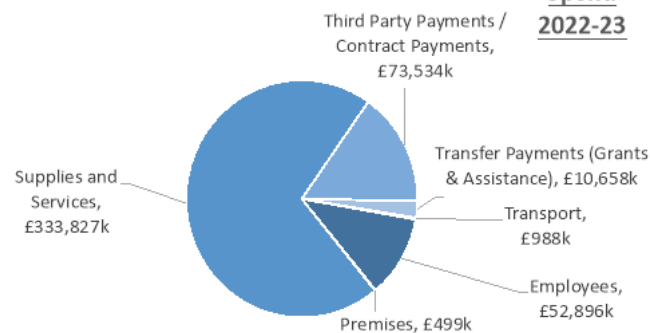
Revenue Budget 2022-23

		2022-23		
		Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget
Children's Social Care	Children in Care	(4,996)	52,930	47,934
	Children with Disabilities	-	6,619	6,619
	Quality, Standards & Performance	-	4,275	4,275
	Safeguarding	-	10,565	10,565
	Social Care central costs	(1,372)	6,730	5,358
Children's Social Care Total		(6,368)	81,119	74,751
Education	Early Help	(4)	6,904	6,900
	Education & Learning	(6,224)	7,967	1,743
	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	(126)	6,237	6,111
Education Total		(6,354)	21,108	14,753
Education - Dedicated Schools Grant	Central block		5,295	5,295
	Early Years Block		32,515	32,515
	Funding Block	(351,256)		(351,256)
	High Needs Block		104,011	104,011
	Schools Block	(18,713)	228,148	209,435
Education - Dedicated Schools Grant Total		(369,969)	369,969	-
Grand Total		(382,691)	472,195	89,504

Income
2022-23



Spend
2022-23



Revenue Forecast at Q2

	Budget	Y/E Outturn	Variance	Change in Variance (from Q1 Cab) £000
	£000	£000	£000	
Expenditure	79,660	90,140	10,480	
Income	(4,520)	(5,780)	(1,260)	
Children's Social Care	75,140	84,360	9,220	4,140 ↑
Expenditure	26,310	26,520	210	
Income	(11,380)	(11,250)	130	
Education	14,930	15,270	340	100 ↑
Expenditure	319,010	318,690	(320)	
Income	(319,010)	(318,690)	320	
Education - Dedicated Schools Grant	0	0	0	0
Education & Childrens Services	90,070	99,630	9,560	4,240 ↑

Education & Children's Services Revenue: Budget £90.1m, Forecast £99.6m, Var +£9.5m

- An adverse variance of £9.5m is projected against the budget of £90.1m. This is an adverse movement of £4.2m compared with the previous quarter.
- An adverse variance of £9.2m is reported against the budgets for Children's Social Care and an adverse variance of £0.3m against budgets for Education
- The factors contributing to the significant overspend continue to be:
 - Increase in demand experienced by front line social care teams leading to the requirement for additional staffing in order to manage caseloads. This represents an increase of 26% since 2020.
 - National position in relation to the sufficiency of placements for children looked after is leading to a shortage of available placements and very high unit costs of those placements that can be accessed. This is also resulting in the need to develop creative solutions to support young people with complex needs and manage risk.
 - Increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) coming into Buckinghamshire is 120% on last year and 29 out of 30 have come through the National Transfer Scheme since April. This leads to an increase in the costs of accommodation for care leavers as those young people turn 18.
 - Continued increases in seriousness and complexity of support needed for children with disabilities.

Revenue budget savings from April 2020

	Actual		Forecast
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Savings			
Placement Sufficiency Strategy	-500	-1,607	-43
Reduced demand for legal services	-545	0	0
Social Care: Review of the delivery of non-statutory services	-723	-250	0
Education: Review of the delivery of non-statutory services	-114	0	0
Savings achieved in Accommodation Costs through joint work with Housing	0	-275	
Social Care: Home Working Savings	0	-43	0
Education: Home Working Savings	0	-12	0
Social Care: Staffing Review	0	0	-170
Education: Staffing Review	0	-28	0
Total	-1,882	-2,216	-213
Additional Income			
Increased Trading with Schools	0	0	-50

Proposed changes to the Revenue Budget (1 of 2)

Education & Children's Services		Change 2023-24 £000's
Children's Social Care		
Growth	Impact of demand and complexity on case loads within Social Work teams	3,168
	Impact of National Placement Sufficiency on unit costs	2,683
	Increase in demand in statutory social care services due to demography and complexity	1,322
	Increase in Domiciliary Care and Direct Payment Costs	1,150
	Increased costs from National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs)	1,724
Income	Additional income from partners for complex needs packages	(200)
Inflation	Increase in contract costs	197
	Increase in placement costs for looked after children	5,042
Savings	Developing local solutions for placement sufficiency strategy	(620)
	Efficiency savings through development of Edge of Care services	(390)
	Partner Contributions for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	(500)
	Reduction in agency staff costs	(407)
Special Items	Impact of demand and complexity on case loads within Social Work teams	(1,413)
	Increased costs from the expansion of the Social Work Academy to support recruitment and retention of permanent staff	141
	One-off expenditure funded from Supporting Families reserve	300
	Reserve funded costs from expansion of the Social Worker Academy	61
Reserves	One-off reserve funding for additional social workers	1,413
	Use of reserves to fund expansion of the Social Worker academy	(61)
	Use of Supporting Families reserve	(300)

- New growth proposals prioritise meeting the additional costs of meeting increased demand and managing the impact of a lack of sufficiency of placements for children in care
- New savings proposals focus on the development of local solutions to reducing demand for placements and developing local provision

Proposed changes to the Revenue Budget (2 of 2)

Education & Children's Services		Change 2023-24 £000's
Education		
Growth	Increased case loads for staff carrying out statutory assessment work	515
	Loss of School Improvement Grant	542
	Pressures on Education central services	383
	Supporting participation in Education, Employment and Training for Post-16 students with Special Educational Needs (SEND)	163
Income	Increased income from trading with schools	(50)
	Loss of School Improvement Grant	(81)
	Review of fees and charges	(13)
Savings	Efficiency savings in Education central services	(383)
Reserves	Reserve funding for loss of School Improvement Grant	(461)
	Use of Supporting Families reserve for first year	(163)

New growth proposals for 2023-24 prioritise

- Increased staffing to carry out statutory assessment work
- Additional costs of school improvement work following the cessation of grant funding – this pressure will be met through a mixture of income from schools and use of reserves
- Increased support for participation in Education, Employment and Training for students with SEND – this pressure will be met through use of reserves in 2023-24

Overall Revenue Budget 2023-24

		2023-24		
		Income £000	Expense £000	Net Budget
Children's Social Care	Children in Care	(4,996)	62,391	57,395
	Children with Disabilities	(200)	7,769	7,569
	Early Help		300	300
	Quality, Standards & Performance		4,416	4,416
	Safeguarding	1,413	11,913	13,326
	Social Care central costs	(1,372)	6,427	5,055
Children's Social Care Total		(5,155)	93,215	88,060
Education	Early Help	(4)	6,904	6,900
	Education & Learning	(6,369)	8,048	1,680
	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities	(126)	6,752	6,626
Education Total		(6,498)	21,704	15,206
Education - Dedicated Schools Grant	Central block		5,295	5,295
	Early Years Block		32,515	32,515
	Funding Block	(351,256)		(351,256)
	High Needs Block		104,011	104,011
	Schools Block	(18,713)	228,148	209,435
Education - Dedicated Schools Grant Total		(369,969)	369,969	-
Grand Total		(381,623)	484,889	103,266

Change Type	Total £000
Growth	12,100
Income	(344)
Inflation	5,239
Savings	(2,750)
Special Items	(658)
Reserves	175
Grand Total	13,762

Challenges, Risks & Opportunities

The Education and Children's Services Portfolio have identified the following challenges and risks impacting on the budget:

Increases in Demand

- The portfolio is seeing increases in demand and complexity across Early Help and Children's Social Care
- Increases in demand are being experienced nationally
- The impact is initially seen on the staffing requirement across the portfolio as caseloads increase, this is resulting in a risk of up to £1.3m against the staffing budget
- Continued demand pressures may impact on the capacity of the portfolio to maintain our current Ofsted rating and to deliver on our ambition to be good/outstanding

National Placement Sufficiency Issues

- Placement sufficiency on a national basis is in crisis. Demand significantly outstrips supply leading to providers profiteering and unit costs for individual placements rising.
- Inability to source appropriate placements – can lead to high cost care packages in the community (eg £30k per week, £1.5m per year for one child) in order to manage risk and keep young people safe
- High unit costs – average unit costs for external placements have increased since April. For example the average unit cost of external residential placements made since April 2022 is £6,800 per week compared to a budgeted weekly average cost of £4,487
- Unprecedented level and pace of change leading to highly unpredictable costs – likely to increase pressure on placement budget by up to £3.5m based on current estimates

Recruitment of permanent staff

- Inability to recruit permanent staff and Increased agency staff numbers
- Cost of agency staff has increased over the last 12 months

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- Impact of National Transfer Scheme – mandatory scheme, started March 2022, requirement to take 10 young people per month – compared to 6 in total for last year. Initial estimates suggest risk of £0.5m in the current year.

National Care Review

- Includes recommendations to address the issues of placement sufficiency through the development of regional care consortia
- Government response required to include review of family support functions

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Challenges, Risks & Opportunities (2)

Demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- Demand for EHCPs has increased by approximately 10% per annum in recent years. All local authorities are experiencing increases in demand for EHCPs
- The financial impact is on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and on the staffing requirements within the Integrated SEND Service

SEND Sufficiency and capital implications

- Development of sufficient places to meet the needs of pupils with SEND within Buckinghamshire schools
- Capital development required to provide additional places – funding includes specific grant funding, developer contributions and bid to DfE free school programme

Education White paper

- The most significant reform is the commitment to ensure every school will become part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) by 2030. Local authorities to be allowed to set up their own MATs.
- Review and reorganisation of roles and responsibilities across partners including schools, MATs, LAs, Regional Schools Commissioners and the DfE.
- Risk that new duties are not fully funded

SEND Green Paper

- National review of SEND Services to have implications for service delivery and cost

Further development of early help services

- Reducing reliance on local authority services and developing partnerships with other sectors

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit

- Like many other local authorities, the council has a DSG deficit due to pressures in particular around High Needs, with a deficit management plan in place. The deficit at the end of the 2021-22 financial year was £3.6m

Top 5 contracts

Vendor	Annual Contract Value £k	Description (inc. Contract End Date)
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	10,002	CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Joint funded with BOB ICB - 83% ICB, 17% BC 5 year contract with 2 year extension Extended end date 30/09/2022 and waiver till 31/03/2023
Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust	3,764	Integrated Therapies: Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational therapy Joint funded with BOB ICB - 54% CCG, 46% BC 3 year contract with 2 year extension Extended end date 31/03/2022 and waiver till 30/09/2023
Buckinghamshire College Group	3,480	Post 16 Education
Action for Children Services Limited	2,918	Countywide Integrated Short Breaks service for disabled children and young people aged 0-19 years Joint funded with BOB ICB - 18% 6 year contract, end date 31/03/2025
Aspire Schools	1,897	Alternative Education Provision 3 year contract with 2 year extension Extended end date 31/08/2023

Fees and Charges

Each year, as part of the MTFP, we review the schedule of Fees and Charges

The majority of Fees & Charges are amended by an inflation increase.

The Fees and Charges schedule for Education and Children's Services is being reviewed in detail as part of the MTFP process. The main areas where fees and charges to members of the public are applied are:

1. Adult Learning – community courses
2. Penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school (statutory charge)

There are also a number of services that are offered on a traded basis to schools and early years providers. The traded offer, and associated price structure, is also reviewed as part of the MTFP.

Capital Programme

Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty under Section 14 of Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient early years and school places in its area to ensure that schools in its area are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide education suitable for the different ages (including pupils who are over compulsory school age but under the age of 19), abilities and aptitudes and special educational needs of pupils of school age.

The council also has duties under the Education Act 1996 and the SEN Code of Practice 2014 to identify, assess and make provision for children with SEN where necessary.

The proposed capital programme enables the LA to provide additional school places to meet its statutory duty and provides a rolling programme of maintenance and improvement to ensure school premises continue to be a safe and suitable environment for our young people.

Capital Budget and Forecast Q2

Service / Project	Actuals to Date £000	Released Budget £000's	Unreleased Budget £000's	Total Budget £000's	Forecast Outturn Released £000's	Forecast Unreleased £000's	Forecast Outturn £000's	Forecast Variance £000's
Children's Homes	0	0	499	499	0	0	0	-499
Children's Social Care Total	0	0	499	499	0	0	0	-499
Primary School Places	-587	4,986	1,567	6,553	2,840	500	3,340	-3,213
Provision for Early Years	0	83	101	183	10	0	10	-173
School Property Maintenance	2,480	5,625	0	5,625	5,625	0	5,625	0
Secondary School Places	10,356	24,385	-2,990	21,394	21,278	-100	21,178	-216
Provision for Special Educational Need	692	1,760	2,631	4,391	1,881	1,000	2,881	-1,510
School Toilets	127	217	0	217	217	0	217	0
School Access Adaptations	52	151	0	151	151	0	151	0
Schools Total	13,118	37,206	1,308	38,515	32,002	1,400	33,402	-5,113
Grand Total	13,118	37,206	1,807	39,014	32,002	1,400	33,402	-5,612

Education & Children's Services Capital: Budget £39.0m, Var -£5.6m

- A favourable variance of £3.2m against schemes for primary school places, including an underspend of £1.4m against the Kingsbrook Primary school project. Underspends will be utilised in the delivery of future projects to increase school places in line with the council's sufficiency duty.
- A favourable variance of £0.2m against secondary school places.
- A favourable variance of £1.5m against schemes to deliver additional capacity for SEND provision. The underspend will be rolled forward to develop provision in line with the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.

Proposed Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2025-26

Service Area	Project Group / Project	Values				MTFP Total
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Education	Schools					
	Primary School Places	8,105	21,000	19,875	13,575	62,555
	Provision for Early Years	-	-	-	-	-
	Provision for Special Educational Need	4,855	14,600	7,740	2,000	29,195
	School Access Adaptations	200	200	200	200	800
	School Property Maintenance	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	24,000
	School Toilets	250	250	250	250	1,000
	Secondary School Places	6,311	3,000	1,300	200	10,811
	Provision for Cost Inflation	2,900	5,000	3,800	2,400	14,100
Total Expenditure		28,621	50,050	39,165	24,625	142,461

- The proposals take into account projected pupil numbers across the county based on expected birth rates, housing development and migration. Projections are monitored and reviewed continually and the programme reprofiled to align with housing development etc
- Priorities for the delivery of additional places for pupils with SEND are driven by the SEND Sufficiency Strategy which has recently been consulted on, and includes projected numbers of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. The proposals included in the programme for SEND will enable completion of phase 1 of the sufficiency.
- Extension/maintenance works will improve the school estate and ensure that schools are able to function and remain open as safe environments for young people.



Questions

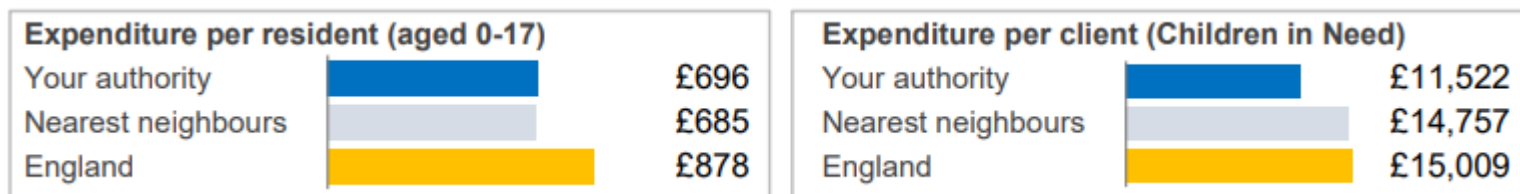


Appendix – Benchmarking and Value for Money

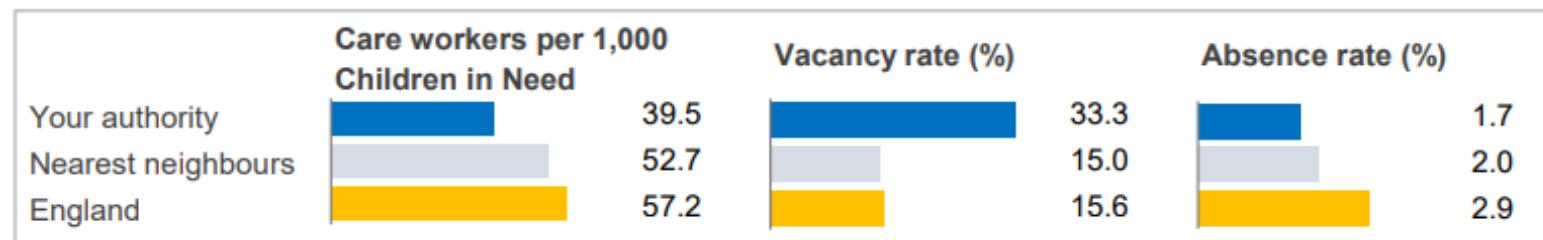
Benchmarking and VFM

- Benchmarking data is based on budgeted spend 2021-22
- Workforce data is taken from DfE data for September 2020
- Unit costs are compared either to the 0-17 population or numbers of Children in Need
- Nearest Neighbour (NN) authorities are taken from a list of statistical neighbour authorities used by the Department for Education (DfE) to compare with Buckinghamshire, and a number of South East authorities

Summary Tables – Relative Spend

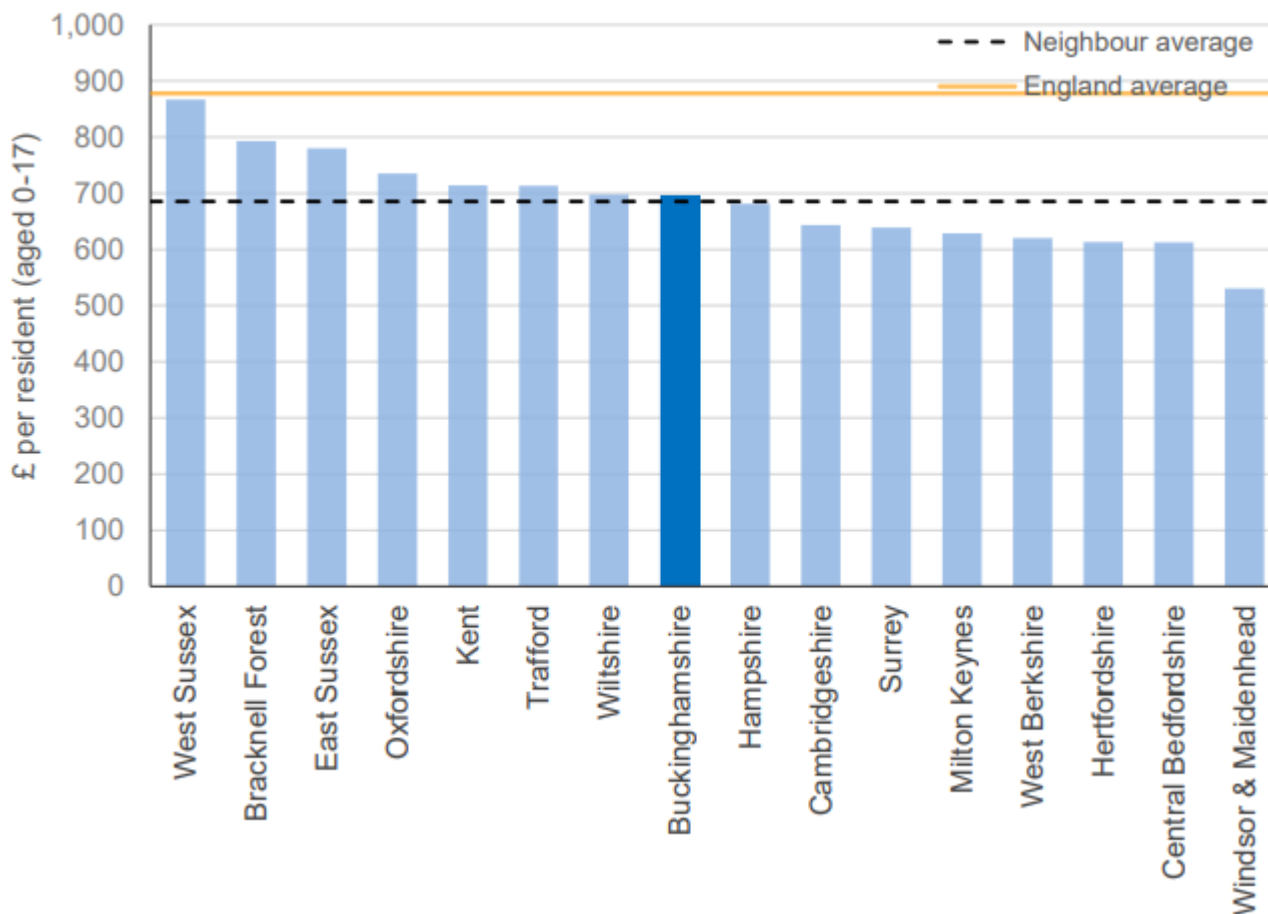


Summary Table – Key workforce statistics (as of 30 September 2020)



Benchmarking and VFM

Table 1 – Children’s Social Care budgeted expenditure per resident (aged 0-17) 2021-22



Budgeted expenditure per resident aged 0 to 17 was 1.5% higher than the nearest neighbour average and 20.7% lower than the England average in 2021-22

Benchmarking and VFM

Table 2 – Composition of Budgeted Expenditure 2021-22

Service Group	Buckinghamshire		NN average (% of total)	England average (% of total)
	(£m)	(% of total)		
Children Looked After	48.653	51.4%	50.2%	50.6%
Safeguarding Children's Services	25.296	26.7%	27.0%	24.3%
Family Support Services	13.516	14.3%	12.2%	11.6%
Other Children's and Families Services	3.029	3.2%	1.1%	2.9%
Services for Young People	2.072	2.2%	3.3%	3.4%
Youth Justice	2.000	2.1%	1.5%	2.0%
Asylum seekers	0.145	0.2%	1.1%	1.3%
Sure Start and Early Years	0.000	0.0%	3.5%	3.9%
Total Children's Social Care	94.711	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Benchmarking and VFM

Table 3 – Budgeted Unit Costs 2021-22 relative to other local authorities

Expenditure category	Your authority		Nearest neighbours			All authorities			Units
	Budget (£m)	Unit cost (£)	Average unit cost (£)	Difference	Rank (of 16)	Average unit cost (£)	Difference	Rank (of 146)	
Children Looked After	48.653	65,967	53,692	22.9%	2nd	47,840	37.9%	7th ●	Children Looked After
Safeguarding Children's Services	25.296	3,077	3,958	-22.2%	13th	3,649	-15.7%	96th ●	Children in Need
Sure Start and Early Years	0.000	0	96	-100.0%	16th	126	-100.0%	136th= ●	Residents (aged 0-4)
Services for Young People	2.072	42	60	-30.2%	12th	80	-47.3%	103rd ●	Residents (aged 13-19)
Family Support Services	13.516	1,644	1,828	-10.1%	11th	1,752	-6.2%	80th ●	Children in Need
Youth Justice	2.000	31	23	39.4%	3rd	40	-21.9%	85th ●	Residents (aged 10-17)
Other Children's and Families Services	3.029	368	189	95.4%	2nd	384	-4.0%	33rd ●	Children in Need
Asylum seekers	0.145								
Total Children's Social Care	94.711	11,522	14,757	-21.9%	14th	15,009	-23.2%	119th ●	Children in Need

Key:

Unit costs: bottom 20% of authorities in England ●●●●● top 20% of authorities in England