

SCRUTINY ACTIVITY AND WORK PROGRAMME – 2022 to 2024

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Tameside Scrutiny Panels are required to publish an Annual Work Programme of planned activity. The programme of work will cover a two-year rolling period that is to be reviewed, updated and agreed on an annual basis.

The annual work programme will aim to reflect priority issues across the Council and external partners. Work will continue to improve the flexibility, responsiveness and reporting methods of all scrutiny activity undertaken.

Each year a range of emerging topics and issues may require the attention of Scrutiny. It is therefore important to ensure efforts are best placed to support and influence effective decision-making, with the added focus on improving outcomes for residents and communities.

Scrutiny Activity

Work has been undertaken to develop a list of topics for consideration. The Annual Work Programme is to be reviewed and signed off at the next meeting of Overview Panel on 25 July 2022.

There is a range of options available to each Scrutiny Panel as to how activity is planned, with a further need to consider timescales and future reporting. The Chair will work closely with panel members in order to determine the best approach for how activity will be undertaken.

Scrutiny activity will continue to adopt a combination of approaches to review service and performance updates, respond to formal consultations, focus reports of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and areas in need of more in-depth review. This includes a responsibility for:

- Research and insight on a particular issue, including desktop reviews
- Review of decisions and recommendations
- Follow-up (from previous review / municipal year)
- Engagement and consultation – to provide responses to pre-decision activity
- Consideration of decisions and reports from the Ombudsman
- Budget updates
- Receive updates on key issues as they arise
- Active monitoring of national and regional policy and substantive variation to service change

Plans remain in place to keep scrutiny members informed on the range of engagement and consultation activity taking place both within the Council and across partners. Where deemed appropriate, the wider development of scrutiny may include project support and service development work undertaken at the request of the Executive as a critical friend.

Remit of the Panel

The Children's Services Scrutiny Panel has responsibility to consider all matters related to Children's Social Care and Education. The Panel will be the main mechanism by which Scrutiny members will scrutinise and monitor the planning and performance of the Council's services to children and young people and the Corporate Parenting role. This includes regular oversight of improvement related to Social Care, Early Help, Youth Services, the safeguarding partnership, Education and SEND. To promote 'critical friend' challenge to the Council's Executive specific to Ofsted improvement and to deliver statutory functions when educational matters are considered.

Part of the Panel's work will be to seek the lived experience of children and young people about the services they receive. The Panel will look to ensure there are sufficient and adequate mechanisms in place to encourage participation, with the aim to inform service delivery, wider improvement set by Ofsted framework and practice standards.

Past Activity – 2021/22

The table below provides a brief summary of Scrutiny activity and oversight undertaken during the 2021/22 municipal year, for information.

Children's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children's Social Care Improvement Plan• Ofsted focused visit - outcomes• Tameside SEND inspection• Fostering recruitment and retention• Corporate Performance Scorecard• Mid-year and Annual Budget Update

Annual Work Programme

Scrutiny will undertake core assurance activity across improvement activity, to include:

- Children's Social Care – Self Evaluation Framework (SEF)
- Improvement Plan
- Safeguarding Partnership
- Ofsted activity and reports

The work programme below captures the input and discussion of panel members in June 2022. The list of topics does not reflect the order in which activity will be selected or undertaken.

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel
<p>Areas of primary focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children's Social Care<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improvement progress / challenges / benchmarking with 'Good' authorities in GM- Ofsted monitoring and self-evaluation- Safeguarding and child protection – including risk to exploitation / missing children- Transition services - support for care leavers- Placements and accommodation- Fostering and adoption- Health services for cared for children- Voice of the child in practice- Practice standards in social care - Signs of Safety- Access to support / working with parents and families to reduce risk and to prevent statutory intervention- Workforce stability – including recruitment and retention- Partnerships and effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements• Education SEND inspection - next steps and progress against Ofsted key findings <p>Other areas of focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Services for children and young people – including mental health support in schools• Schools White Paper – implications for Tameside / education investment areas• Provision of Youth Services and activities for young people – wider impact on outcomes• Youth unemployment• The Panel to receive regular updates during the year regarding new and emerging areas

Additional in-year monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget updates – annual and mid-year
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback and learning from complaints (LGSCO)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performance monitoring against corporate priorities

Future meetings

The table below shows the dates of future meetings for the 2022/23 municipal year and the topics and monitoring already identified and confirmed.

Children's Services Scrutiny Panel				
27 July 2022	21 September 2022	2 November 2022	11 January 2023	8 March 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's social care update • Corporate Performance Scorecard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to LGSCO focus report – Out of school, out of sight? • Revised SEF • Corporate Performance Scorecard - monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's placement sufficiency • Response to mid-year budget update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children missing from home and care • Children's social care Improvement Plan • Children's social care scorecard • Report – Social Worker Recruitment and Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tameside SEND Services – Ofsted key findings and Improvement (1 year on) • Children's social care scorecard • Response to annual budget update

The Scrutiny Panel to receive a report of the Safeguarding Children Partnership, to include minutes and actions of the partnership meetings. To be tabled at the earliest opportunity and in line with the calendar of meetings.