

**Report to the Children, Young  
People, Families and Learning  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Commission**

17 November 2025

**Wards:** All

<b>Section 17 Audit action plan</b>
-------------------------------------

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Report Status:**

This item is not exempt

Therefore exempt reasons are not applicable

This is a non-key decision.

**1. Purpose of the Report and Summary**

- 1.1. This briefing aims to provide the Committee an update and reassurance on the progress of the findings of the Section 17 audit completed November 2024, by Southwest Audit Partnership (SWAP), who supply internal audit services for Hull City Council. This report should be read in conjunction with the S.17 action plan included with this paper.
- 1.2. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the degree of reassurance this provides to the administration and oversight of S.17 payments within children's services.

**Recommendations**

- 1.3. That the Committee receives a further update in March 2025 regarding completion of the outstanding actions and further progress made.

1.4. In order to progress the actions within the action plan consultation has taken place with key stakeholders including; Welfare Rights Service, Liquidlogic IT Team, Finance Service, Children’s Social Care Heads of Service, Group Managers, Team Managers, Team Coordinators and Front of House members of staff.

**2. Background**

2.1. The law governing Section 17 payments is contained in The Children’s Act 1989 which places a duty on councils to meet the needs of children who are in their area who are “in need”, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children’s needs. The law says that councils can provide accommodation, giving assistance in kind or in cash support to meet children’s needs.

2.2. Under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, a child is considered "in need" if:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the local authority.
- Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without such services.
- They are disabled, which automatically qualifies them as a child in need

2.3. Before assistance is offered under Section 17 it is expected that families will have maximised their income from other sources. This will include benefit maximisation as well as consideration given to the possibility of obtaining assistance from Hull City Councils Immediate Financial Help, Welfare Rights Services, Household Support Fund, Charities, Health Start Scheme and/or Foodbanks. The Local Authority should be the last resort when all other efforts to obtain financial assistance have been exhausted.

2.4. Section 17 funding is accessed by families who are open to Childrens Social Care safeguarding teams, including Assessment, Localities and Childrens Disability Service

**3. Findings of the audit and next steps**

3.1. The audit identified thirteen findings under different categorisations of priority; the action plan included 20 actions against these findings.

<b>Findings</b>	
<b>1</b>	s17 payments should not take the form of regular allowances
<b>2</b>	No leaflet to inform claimants
<b>3</b>	Version controlled procedural document required
<b>4</b>	Section 17 Guidance 2016 is out of date

5	Evidence of financial checks to be recorded
6	Cumulative S.17 payments exceeding approval limits
7	Request forms for S.17 payments are not routinely utilised
8	Children for S.17 claims need to be recorded
9	S.17 request forms are not correctly populated
10	Only authorised officers to process S.17 payments
11	Missing NI numbers
12	Standardised Locality Office form for processing S.17 payments
13	Receipts for some claims require consideration

### 3.2

Priority rating	Priority 1 Findings that are fundamental to the integrity of the service's business processes and require the immediate attention of management	Priority 2 Important findings that need to be resolved by management.	Priority 3 Finding that requires attention.
Number of findings	1	10	2
Number of actions against the finding	4	14	2
Actions completed	2 (50%)	9 (64%)	2 (100%)

### 3.3 Outstanding actions

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
2 Both in progress with a timescale for completion by 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	5 All in progress with a timescale for completion by 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	0

3.4 There has been significant progress in actions being completed (65%) in the last three months.

3.5 There are two outstanding actions currently in progress under priority one:

1. Direct communication of processes to all teams; This work is underway and aims to ensure consistent and transparent communication of key processes across all teams.
2. Scoping and planning of a Head of Service S.17 Payment Request Panel. This action is focused on enhancing governance of Section 17 payments.

Both actions remain on track for completion by 30th November 2025.

3.6 The majority of outstanding actions under priority two pertain to the integration of forms into the Liquid Logic recording system. These forms were developed by a task and finish group that concluded in July 2025. While the forms have undergone testing, full implementation had to be deferred until after the scheduled system upgrade on 28th October 2025.

3.7 All outstanding actions are due to be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Nicola Tuton/Fiona Bell Telephone No.: (01482) 616363

Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: -

- SWAP Internal Audit Services and action plan- June 2025

## Implications Matrix

**This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications**

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant Director/Assistant Director	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	N/A
I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.	Yes
I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	N/A
Any human rights implications are included within the report	N/A

I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report	N/A
I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are included within the report	N/A
I have considered how the decision may contribute or impact on culture and heritage within the city.	N/A
I have included information about how this report contributes to the Community Plan/ Area priorities within the report	Yes
I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report.	N/A
I have considered the impact on Children Looked After and Care Leavers and any resulting actions/implications have been included within the report.	Yes