

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

4 OCTOBER 2017

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROGRESS UPDATE: QUARTER 1 (APRIL – JUNE) – 2017/18

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of performance across Children's Services. It is based on the Children's Strategy priorities agreed by Cabinet in June 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the report, and in particular the achievements around

1. the performance of schools
2. the impact of the recruitment campaign for experienced social workers and
3. the continued excellent performance of residential care homes in Stockton.

DETAIL

1. This report summarises performance information in relation to the Children's services Strategy 2017-20. This strategy, agreed by Cabinet in June 2017, sets out the key priorities for Children's services, and the key performance indicators associated with delivery.
2. The update report is in three parts:
 - a. Update on our 2017/18 priorities
 - b. Update on other actions and progress against the wider strategy, including key performance measures.

Update on 2017/18 priorities

3. An update on the key priorities for 2017/18 is provided below:
 - a. **Redesigning our approach to early years, children's centres, health visiting and school nursing as part of our early help approach:** the procurement period for new services closed on 18 August. The project will enter a mobilisation period from October, with new services in place from 1 April 2018.
 - b. **Reviewing our pathways and outcomes for early help** – this programme is included as part of the range of reviews in the Smarter Working programme. An outline of the basis of the review was considered at the Health and Wellbeing Board

in April 2017, and at the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in June 2017, and further work will lead to a relaunch of our approach in April 2018 to coincide with the new 0-19 model.

- c. **Redefining our role in supporting educational achievement** – a report summarising work undertaken around our strategic education role will be presented to Cabinet in October 2017. This will include activity to reshape services, reduce costs, develop a more commercial trading model, and secure additional external funding.
- d. **Implementing the review of SEND** – as part of the work to remodel our approach to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, new arrangements for Enhanced Schools are currently being developed for implementation, and the associated review of staffing has been implemented. This not only provides a more effective early response and triage approach, but also delivers significant savings which have been factored into the work on our role as above.
- e. **Introducing a new edge of care approach** – consultation is underway on the staffing model to support a new edge of care model, based on changing the role of Princess Avenue residential children's care home. This model will provide more intensive support to avoid young people having to come into care, as part of our wider focus on reducing the need for children and young people to become looked after.
- f. **Tackling domestic abuse through a new strategy** – the new domestic abuse strategy was launched in July 2017, and includes a detailed and specific action plan for delivery. A coordinator is being recruited to provide oversight of the delivery process, working to the Domestic Abuse Steering Group.
- g. **Improving our response to supporting children and people who are subject to VEMT (Vulnerable Exploited Missing Trafficked)** – additional support has been provided in a VEMT Coordinator to oversee the process and ensure effective working. There are currently 19 Stockton children subject to detailed planning due to the risk of potential exploitation.
- h. **Implementing the S-WORK project as a whole systems change programme for children's social care** – this programme will also be included as part of the Smarter Working review programme. The principal Child and Family Social Work Board will continue to act as a reference group for this programme. The basis of the programme is action in a number of areas – the 'S's' – including:
 - i. **Staffing and recruitment** – the recruitment campaign has been successful overall – we have recruited 16 new social workers of which 13 have experience. A regional agreement to cap rates of agency pay to a standardise recruitment and management practice will commence on 4 September 2017. This will help to support stability and value for money, and is hoped will encourage agency workers to seek employment within the statutory sector. More work is planned on capacity and caseloads.
 - ii. **Skills and capacity** – we are supporting the development of a new workforce strategy and associated focus on practice, including the use of a new online support tool, Community Care Inform, which will be supported by a particular practice focus over the next 12 months, such as adolescent neglect. This will support both supervision and individual social worker Continuing professional Development.
 - iii. **Systems** – work is progressing on the development of the new social care system, and the rollout of smart phones and tablets to social work teams. Teams are reporting efficiency gains from the technology. Work is also being undertaken into administrative support models.

- iv. **Services** – the interface between social workers and services and partners is a key area of focus. The initial work is targeting mental health services.
 - v. **Structures** – the project will include examining the extent to which changes in structures to become more locality based or to create specialist teams should be pursued. This strand will also in time explore options for shared service delivery, building on the Children’s Hub model.
 - vi. **Spaces** – the quality of premises and the potential opportunity to rethink a locality model will inform the last strands on the workspace model for social workers: modern flexible space which supports effective practice.
- i. Develop a new approach to support children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing – additional work has been completed on new arrangements, including the work underway in schools to develop new approaches; the rollout of mental health first aid training to schools; the piloting of an earlier help model with CAMHS services and the testing of models of delivery, including around family therapy.

Update on other actions and progress

Giving children the best start in life

4. In addition to the commissioning process for 0-19 services, there are a number of other outcomes and updates to report on:
- a. In relation to the roll out of the 30 hours of support overall, the Council remains on track to deliver the required numbers of places, and to support a gradual increase in uptake. There are currently 538 parents registered. Current provision includes capacity for around 1600 places, and demand is forecast to rise slowly from September. This will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure a supply of places.
 - b. A report elsewhere on the agenda seeks approval to bring additional facilities on stream.
 - c. Options for the future delivery of support around quality and sufficiency for early years providers will be included in a report to Cabinet in October 2017 on the ‘strategic role of the Council in education’.

Focusing on schools and learning outcomes

5. Key areas of update for this priority include:
- a. Data examination outcomes is included in the more detailed report elsewhere on the agenda.
 - b. The latest data on Ofsted rankings is set out below. The table clearly illustrates the extent of improvement, with Stockton now ranked significantly higher than national averages for all phases. Further analysis is included elsewhere on the agenda.

	All schools		Primary schools		Secondary schools	
	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016
England	89	+2	91	+3	79	+2
North East	87	-2	91	-2	66	-2
Stockton	94(2nd)	+9	96(=3rd)	+3	89 (1st)	+45

- c. The Council worked with other partners across Tees Valley to submit a range of proposal to the Government's Strategic Schools Improvement Fund. These projects were steered through the Strategic Education Board, and focused on a range of priority areas including English and Maths and inclusion. The outcome of these proposals will be known in September. A second round of proposals will be invited for submission in October, and will be steered through a new Tees Valley Improvement Board which meets for the first time on 15 September.
- d. A report elsewhere on the agenda sets out a range of proposals for securing additional secondary school places to meet demand over the next 5 years.
- e. Following the 'reporting in' scrutiny review, new arrangements have been put into place which include a shared post with Hartlepool Borough Council.
- f. We are working with schools and Stockton Riverside College to develop a range of options for alternative curriculum delivery. Proposals to expand the Skills Academy in Billingham are also contained in the investment strategy report elsewhere on the agenda.

Delivering effective early help

6. Additional activity to report on includes:

- a. The 0-19 commissioning process agreed by Cabinet in July 2017 includes the implementation of a new outreach and volunteering service which will form a key part of the revised early help arrangements, alongside the implementation of Family Hubs.
- b. The Council has entered into a funding agreement with Safe Families for Children, a national charity which specialises in supporting families through the efforts of volunteers – providing resources (donated goods); help, support and advice, and the opportunity for short respite breaks where young people spend some time with a 'host family. Evaluations from elsewhere suggest this project is having an impact on reducing concerns and in some cases preventing children and young people from coming into care.
- c. Early help approaches will be refined and launched alongside the new 0-19 arrangements in April 2018, and work is therefore underway to refine pathways and to ensure effective provision, including a greater focus on targeting through identification as part of a preventative approach.
- d. We are continuing to prioritise Graded Care Profile 2 as a tool to assess and identify neglect, working with the NSPCC.
- e. The revised model for the delivery of open access youth provision was launched on 1 April. The new Youth United Stockton website includes the details of current activity and programmes as the new approach to open access provision is developed and implemented. <https://www.yus.org.uk/>
- f. A key focus remains on young people not known or not in education, training or employment. Data for June 2017 indicates continuing good performance. Members will be aware of Stockton's emphasis on minimising the 'Not Known' category as this is potentially the most vulnerable group of young people:

Academic Age Year 12-14	Tees Valley	Stockton
Cohort	17972	6374
NEET Total	1113	380
EET Total	15410	5981
In Learning Total	14709	5692
Not Known Total	1431	3
Other (Not In EET or NEET)	18	10
Progress		
NEET %	6.20%	5.97%
Not Known %	7.97%	0.05%
In Learning %	81.93%	89.44%

Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and young people, backed by outstanding social work practice

7. Key highlights include:

- a. The continuing successful rollout of Signs of Safety approaches to create better support plans, with greater family engagement. This approach is starting to have an impact on the number of children on child protection plans, down from 307 in March 2017 to 276 in June 2017.
- b. An experienced Family Group Conferencing manager has been seconded from Lincolnshire County Council (an acknowledged leading authority in this area and one of the DfE's 7 'partners in practice' authorities) to help develop our approach to Family Group Conferencing, an evidence based approach to enabling more young people to stay safely in their family.
- c. Consultation has commenced on the development of an edge of care model, focused on intensive support to young people and families and a different role for Princess Avenue.
- d. We continue to refine our approaches to Vulnerable Exploited Missing and Trafficked Children, which remains a focus for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- e. A progress report on the Children's Hub was brought to Cabinet in April 2017. Progress continues to be positive, with the hub realising significant reductions in the number of cases transferred to the Assessment Teams, and high quality multi-agency work being completed as part of their initial assessment. Quality of decision making remains good, and there are very few challenges.

8. In terms of key performance data collected and analysed in Children's Services:

- a. 99% of single assessments are completed within timescales;
- b. In June 2017 the number of children subject to a child protection plan was 276 and this number is continuing to decline;

- c. Timeliness factors including the proportion of cases reviewed in the required timescales and the timeliness of child protection conferences remains high (98% and 93% respectively).
 - d. There are some signs of an increase in the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time which is being monitored closely
9. Case file audits continue to be a key element of the overall quality assurance framework to monitor the quality of social work practice, and a regular programme is undertaken on a monthly basis.
10. The latest comparison of audit results indicates a positive trend:

Judgement	April 2016 report		August 2017 report	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Outstanding	0	0%	1	2%
Good	10	32%	29	63%
Requires Improvement	20	65%	16	35%
Inadequate	1	3%	0	0%

11. All audit outcomes are considered by the management team, and the more detailed outcomes reported to the LSCB.
12. The current position in relation to agency workers and vacancies is:
- a. We have recruited 16 social workers this calendar year, 13 of whom were experienced (our key target market)
 - b. Although we continue to offer a ‘golden hello’ to all experienced Social Workers joining Stockton from another Local Authority, none have cited this as their reason for applying. Common themes emerging are:
 - i. Support/open door policy
 - ii. Approachable managers and senior managers
 - iii. Good IT / admin support
 - iv. Commissioned contact service.
13. We currently have 8 vacancies across the teams. The vacancies that we have had have been the result of a number of different reasons – internal promotion, movement into specialist teams or as a result of a completely different chosen career path. No Social Worker has left Stockton to do the same work in another Local Authority.
14. Agency Social Workers: These are covering maternity leave, sickness, secondments and vacancies until the pending starters commence/the remaining vacancies are recruited to. There are 13 agency workers currently in post.
15. The above represents a much improved position than 12 months ago when we had 15 FTE Social Worker vacancies across Assessment and Fieldwork.

A consistent and relentless focus on better outcomes for children in our care and care leavers

16. Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 12 July 2017 to exempt care leavers from Council Tax until they are 25. This approach was endorsed and recommended by the Multi-Agency Looked After partnership.
17. Proposals are being developed to work with ARC on a set of creative engagement opportunities for children in our care.
18. The detailed proposals for the development of Adoption Tees Valley, the ‘regional’ adoption agency will be brought to Cabinet in October 2017. Stockton will host the new agency.

19. The use of the Mind of My Own App (MOMO) is continuing to be positive, and enables young people to feed through regular updates. Stockton's take up of the application has been recognised by the national charity which has developed it.

20. In terms of key performance data:

- a. There were 433 children in our care at the end of June 2017. This number remains high though has been relatively stable in recent months.
- b. 93% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation and 63% of care leavers are employment, education or training – an increase but one which the Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) is continuing to address.
- c. All residential care homes remain good or outstanding (note that this relates to inspections at the end of this period i.e. to June 2017).

Home	Date of last full inspection	Judgement
Ayton Place	22.11.16	Good
Tilery House	24.08.16	Outstanding
Princess Avenue	31.05.17	Good
Rose House	14.06.16	Good
Piper House	08.11.16	Outstanding
Hartburn Lodge	18.10.16	Outstanding
Red Plains	28.06.16	Good
Old Vicarage	07.06.17	Good
Fairview	02.05.17	Good

Leadership, management and governance

21. An update on progress includes:

- a. The Local Safeguarding Children Board is supporting the development of new local safeguarding arrangements as required by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. This Act provides for the abolition of LSCBs by March 2019 and their replacement with new locally developed arrangements.
- b. The Council will receive a regional peer challenge in October 2017 which will focus on looked after children, and in particular planning and sufficiency aspects. This will be the first regional peer review of its kind, and will be led by Durham County Council.
- c. The recent borough wide annual conversation event will inform the future priorities for the Youth Assembly and for partners in the Children and Young People's partnership, and will be reported to Cabinet in October.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

22. There are no specific community impact implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no specific financial implications. The management of budgets has been included in the Children's Services Strategy as a key priority and is therefore subject to the oversight process for the strategy as a whole. The key financial implication arising from the costs associated with out of borough placements, and this is subject to additional oversight through the Children's Multi Agency Panel process. Overall demand pressures in Children's Services continue.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no specific legal implications arising from this update report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

25. There are no specific risk implications from this report. Key risks remain the extent to which the Council can continue to meet the demand for placements for children in care.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

26. The issues and updates provided in this report have specific relevant to all of the Policy principles:

Policy Principles:

- Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention – Children’s services plays key role in the identification and assessment of the needs of children, young people and families and
- Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention – Children’s Services works proactively through early help to support families who may be in need of specific, and often time-limited support to be able to access the same opportunities as others.
- Developing strong and healthy communities – Children’s Services works with a range of partners to support healthy choices, and promoting wellbeing. A specific focus is on the emotional health and wellbeing of children, through work in schools and in partnership around the delivery of services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health services.
- Creating economic prosperity – Children’s services working in partnership with schools supports young people in benefitting from a high quality education, and in receiving support to enter the labour market and live independently.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

27. The specific actions in the strategy around children in our care and care leavers are focused on the delivery of corporate parenting

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

28. The Cabinet member for Children and Young people has been consulted.

Name of Contact Officer: Martin Gray

Post Title: Director of Children’s Services

Telephone No. 01642 527043

Email Address: martin.gray@stockton.gov.uk