

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2017

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROGRESS UPDATE: QUARTER 2 (JULY - SEPTEMBER) – 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 in respect of young people not in education, employment or training
2. the continued performance and outcomes from inspection for our residential care homes

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 process for selection of the new provider for 0-19 nearing completion. The project will enter a mobilisation period from November, with new services in place from 1 April 2018. Detailed work is underway to implement a new staffing structure to deliver the network of family hubs and the associated delivery points.
 - 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. A review of pathways and approaches is being undertaken to report in December.
 - c. **Redefining our role in supporting educational achievement** – a report summarising work undertaken around our strategic education role was presented to Cabinet in October 2017.

- 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 has now been concluded on the staffing model to support a new edge of care model, based on changing the role of Princess Avenue. 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 come into care.
- 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 has been pointed to provide oversight of the delivery process, working to the Domestic Abuse Steering Group. The Operation Encompass model is currently being reviewed to identify any issues.
- g. **Improving our response to supporting children and people who are subject to VEMT** – 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. The SWITCH team in Youth Direction are now working with young people who do not meet the threshold for VEMT interventions but where there remain concerns.
- h. **Implementing the S-WORK project as a whole systems change programme for children’s social care** – this programme will also be include 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.
- 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.

Focusing on schools and learning outcomes

5. Key areas of update for this priority include:
- a. The latest data on Ofsted rankings as at end September – the figures for secondary schools are as below, taking into account the one inspection report in this period – Ian Ramsey (good).

Pupils...	% attending outstanding	21%
	% Attending Good	71%
	% Attending Requires improvement	7%
	Special Measures	0%
Schools...	% good or better	92.53%

- b. The range of procedures and policies relating to behaviour and inclusion, including the use of managed moves and the prevention of exclusions was refreshed over the summer. A new schools led challenge group has been established to review practice. The first few weeks of the new school year have seen an increase in the use of fixed term exclusion by schools. This will continue to be monitored and will provide the basis for a further review by the Children and Young People Select Committee commencing in November, as part of the review of the Council's role in education.
- c. The Council worked with other partners across Tees Valley to submit a range of proposal to the Government's Strategic Schools Improvement Fund.
- d. No proposals in the north east were successful in the first round.
- e. The School Improvement Board for the Tees Valley has now been established and is steering the process of proposals for the second round of bids.

Delivering effective early help

6. Additional activity to report on includes:
- a. 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.
 - b. We are continuing to prioritise Graded Care Profile 2 as a tool to assess and identify neglect, working with the NSPCC, and this has been recognised nationally by NSPCC as an example of good practice.
 - c. A key focus remains on young people not known or not in education, training or employment. National data was released by DfE in September covering 2016/17. This indicates continuing good performance:

	Number of 16 and 17 year olds known to the local authority (1)		Total number NEET (inc not known)	Proportion NEET (inc not known)	change in overall NEET measure since 2015	
England	1,155,350		69,540	6.0%	-0.5	▶
North East	55,370		2,960	5.4%	0.1	▶
County Durham	10,940		610	5.6%	-0.2	▶
Darlington	2,350		100	4.3%	0.1	▶
Gateshead	3,870		190	5.0%	0.3	▶
Hartlepool	2,260		110	4.8%	0.6	▲
Middlesbrough	3,040		170	5.4%	-0.5	▼
Newcastle upon Tyne	5,510		370	6.6%	0.4	▶
North Tyneside	4,210		180	4.2%	0.6	▲
Northumberland	6,700		310	4.6%	-0.3	▶
Redcar and Cleveland	3,040		220	7.2%	1.1	▲
South Tyneside	3,170		140	4.5%	0.2	▶
Stockton-on-Tees	4,260		190	4.4%	-1.0	▼
Sunderland	6,030		380	6.4%	1.0	▲

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

7. Key highlights include:

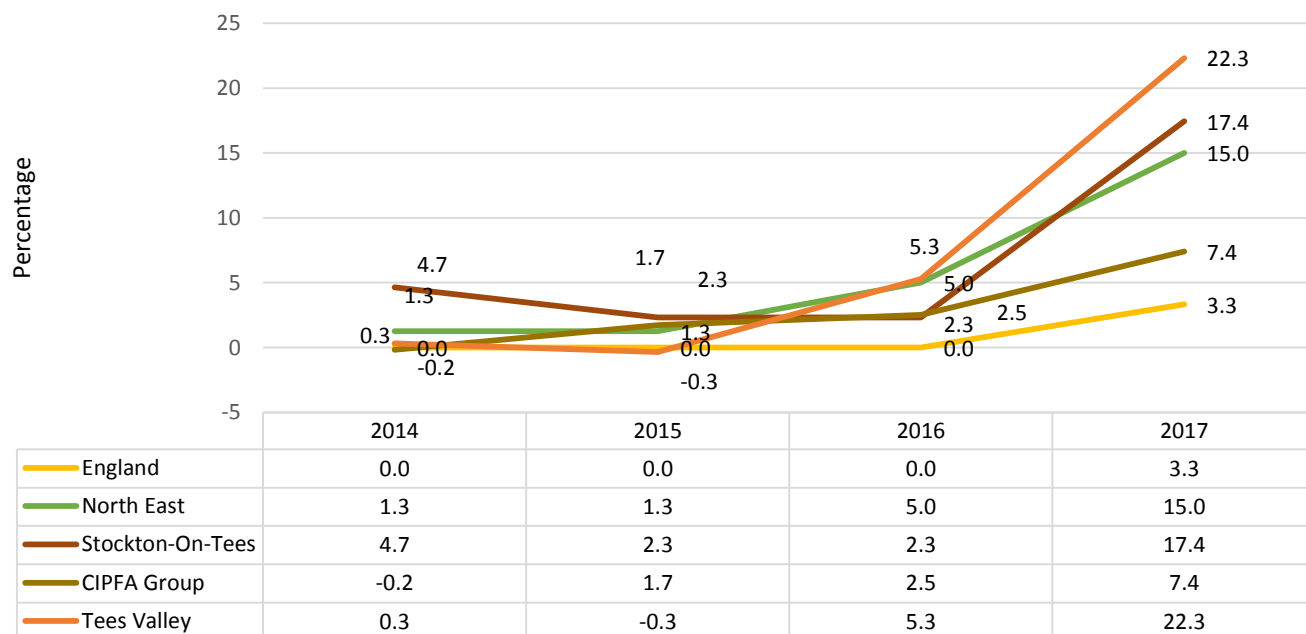
- a. The continuing successful rollout of Signs of Safety approaches to create better support plans, with greater family engagement. This approach is starting to have an impact on the number of children on child protection plans, down from 307 in March 2017 to 276 in Jun and to 234 at the end of September. This is a positive trend.
- b. We continue to refine our approaches to Vulnerable Exploited Missing and Trafficked Children, which remains a focus for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- c. A major 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 Team, 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. However, partners are continuing to face some challenges in resourcing their functions in the hub, which has been without a co-located designated safeguarding nurse since 26 July 2017.

8. In terms of key performance data collected and analysed in Children's Services:
 - a. In June the number of children on child protection plans was 276 and this number is continuing to decline, as of end September this figure was 236.
 - b. 99% of single assessments are completed within timescales;
 - c. Percentage of child protection plans lasting for 2 years or more remains low at 1.3%
 - 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
 - e. Proportion of child protection plans reviewed in the required timescales is 97.5%
 - f. Timeliness of child protection conferences (ie held within 15 days of strategy meetings was 94%.
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 audits indicate a continuing positive trend. A more detailed report will be provided in quarter 4.
11. We have recruited 17 social workers so far this calendar year, 15 of whom were experienced (our key target market).
12. As at the end of September there were 6 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.
13. Agency Social Workers: These are covering maternity leave, sickness, secondments and vacancies until the pending starters commence/the remaining vacancies are recruited to. As at the end of September there were 17 agency workers currently in post.

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

14. There were 440 children in our care at the end of September. This number remains high though has been relatively stable from March 2017. There has been considerable national media reporting of the increases in children in care nationally, and the impact of this on Council budgets.
15. In summary, our rate of children looked after has increased in year by 17%, compared to a regional increase of 15% and a national increase of 3%

**Percentage Rate of Change on 31 March 2013 for Children Looked After
at 31 March
(2014 - 2017)**



16. The data suggests that our most significant issues is not necessarily the rate at which children come into care, but in the rate at which children leave care, which has slowed considerably in 2016/17.
17. Safely reducing the number of children need to be in care is one of the key priorities in the Children's Services Strategy, and as part of the financial sustainability element. A specific programme of work has been established to identify and prioritise solutions. This project will be exploring prevention; decision making; sufficiency of placements; opportunities to expand our approach to reunification; and a review of out of borough placements.
18. Proposals are being developed to work with ARC on a set of creative engagement opportunities for children in our care. This resulted in the submission of a proposal to the North East Culture Bridge fund for a 2 year programme of work.
19. The business case for Adoption Tees Valley has been finalised (and was agreed at Cabinet on 12 October). The new service will be located in Stockton and will go live from 1 April 2018. Detailed planning on staffing and transition has been undertaken in this period and will continue as part of the implementation plan.
20. In terms of key performance data:
 - a. 94% of care leavers are in suitable accommodation;
 - b. 41.7% of care leavers are in employment, education or training at the end of this period – though this figure in September is artificially low pending the start of the academic year. This is an issue which the Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) is continuing to address
 - c. All residential care homes remain good or outstanding. In this period there were 2 inspections for Tilery and Hartburn Lodge, with both retaining their outstanding rating.

Leadership, management and governance

21. An update on progress includes:
- a. A refresh of the corporate training on safeguarding has been developed and is currently being rolled out to members.
 - b. The Council is leading on the discussions to consider and develop new 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. Initial proposals are being considered to explore closer working with Hartlepool Borough Council on a new safeguarding partnership. This will be developed further with a view to a firm proposal being developed by Christmas. The Government will also be consulting on a revised version of the Working Together guidance in November, which will include further detail on the requirements of new arrangements.
 - c. The first phase of rollout of restorative practice training has been delivered. This training is focused on the development of an approach which places a more significant emphasis on the role of families, and in our role in providing high support and high challenge in the system. It fits well with the models being developed in the Signs of Safety approach.

A look ahead

22. The next quarter will see:
- a. The award of the contract for the 0-19 service
 - b. A report on education outcomes for vulnerable children to Cabinet in December
 - c. An update on the peer challenge process and outcomes
 - d. An update on issues associated with waiting lists and times for children around autism diagnosis which is a significant issue for children, young people and families and has also been identified as a significant risk for a future SEND inspection.
 - e. An update on the borough wide annual conversation and how this will be taken forward.
 - f. Feedback on the next corporate parenting event, and the regional children in care conference, both being held in Stockton in November.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

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

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

24. 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

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

RISK ASSESSMENT

26. 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

27. 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

28. 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

29. The Cabinet member for Children and Young People has been consulted.

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