

CHILDREN IN OUR CARE PROJECT

1. This report is prepared to provide an overview and update of the work in Year 1 of the Project and an outline of Plans for Year 2.

Information:

What are we trying to solve:

- The numbers and rate /10,000 of CIOC in Stockton is high and is increasing
- The numbers of children becoming CIOC is higher than children ceasing to be CIOC, particularly for school age children
- Too many children are placed out of area in expensive placements. This fractures relationships with families and local services, and reduces the money that is available to develop services in the local area
- Lack of certainty that we're paying the right price and achieving value for money
- Increase the number of foster carers and refresh our support offer

Where Do we want to be?

- More children safely at home with their parents or families
- More children placed closer to home
- Services that are able to meet the needs of children and their families, in the right place, at the right time
- A local offer of effective, end to end evidence based interventions

Work in Y1:

2. Activity has taken place on the following work streams:
 - Multi-agency Audit of Out of Area Placements
 - Reunification work: *Coming Home / Going Home* Task group and panels
 - Joint work with Dartington Service Design Labs to develop evidence based systems approaches
 - Refresh of the CIOC Sufficiency Strategy 2018-20
 - Insights and learning from analysis of SBC information:
 - Development of a business case to expand provision
3. Independent of the Project, there have been other activities which have resulted in increased insights and learning (through case file analysis) and in tangible service changes including a new Edge of Care service, a new Advisory Panel to scrutinise & challenge placement requests, the roll out of Family Group Conferencing and the continuing development of step down services between childrens social care and Early Help services.

Reflection:

4. Despite the work, at the present time the numbers of CIOC are continuing to rise locally, as they are nationally.
5. There are a number of theories as to what is causing this, including the impact of austerity for families and local services; risk aversion in the sector following national tragedies; the changing nature of the social work workforce and expansion of private agency, often transient, staff; and a lack of court confidence in the support that would be offered to families without a statutory order.
6. Local Authorities are able to influence some factors more than others and there is a logic to us focusing activity on these factors.

Work in Year 2:

7. We are reviewing objectives for the next phase of the Project and developing a fresh plan of action.
8. In the meantime, work is ongoing with Dartington Service Design Labs:
 - a. To map/match local needs and local services – *underway*
 - b. To model the child's journey through the social care system to develop a Dynamic Systems Model – *underway*
 - c. To develop tools and thresholds – *due to start from April/May 2019*
9. Findings are due to emerge from late March onwards

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