

## Report for Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) 12 April 2019

### Children in Our Care Strategic Group (CIOCSG) Update

The last CIOCSG was held on 4 April 2019 and will continue to meet 6 weekly.

Items discussed were:

- Draft Sufficiency Statement
- CiOC Health Assessments
- CIOCSG Action Plan

#### Draft Sufficiency Statement

This is an important document and when it is signed off I would recommend that it is shared at the CPB.

The statement sets out the challenges we face associated with the increasing number of children in our care and how we plan to respond to those challenges.

It is however more than this – it underpins our aims to reduce safely the number of children who need to be in care, working towards more children being supported to remain in their family networks but continuing to provide high quality care accommodation and support for those children who do need to be in care.

The Council has a duty to ensure there is a range of sufficient accommodation and services to meet the needs of children in and leaving our care.

#### **Sufficiency Priorities and Commissioning Intentions 2018-2020 set out in the statement:**

- We are redeveloping early help services, with our partners, to better support children, young people and families at an earlier stage, and by keeping children and young people safely within their homes and communities.
- We are enhancing our new Edge of Care model, including further development of restorative approaches and Family Group Conferences. Exploration of the value of more intensive therapeutic programmes of support to children, young people and families.
- We are seeking to increase social work capacity and develop smarter ways of working to enhance support to children, young people and families.
- The *Going Home* work stream commenced in 2018 to explore how we can develop a culture and vision for services which promotes safe and sustainable reunifications within families.
- We are exploring innovative models of peer / network support within our fostering services, including the development of the Mocking Bird model.
- We are reviewing the Foster Care Service with the purpose of explore further efficiencies within the team.

- We are considering research opportunities to develop innovative approaches to support Special Guardianship arrangements.
- We are working with Dartington Research to test the application and value of Dynamic System Modelling to help us understand in real time the operation of our early help and social care system; to manage 'flow', to anticipate placement trends, and monitor the impact of strategies.
- We plan to improve commissioning approaches for external placements that deliver strong placement matches and 'best value', including reviewing and strengthening the NE12 solution.
- We are reviewing the full procedures around admission into our care, including strengthening funding arrangements and agreement processes. This will include greater focus on continuous financial monitoring of placements in order to achieve best value and purpose.
- We are exploring models to improve emotional wellbeing and resilience amongst children in our care.
- We are reviewing the functioning of our in-house children's homes in order to deliver on the coming home, going home work stream. Specifically, to create capacity for short term to medium term placements for complex teenagers where the ultimate aim is to return home.
- We are exploring opportunities through the Joint Venture and Tees Valley solutions to achieve our key objectives to keep more children and young people safely connected to their communities.
- We will re-model in house provision to build on current placement stability and create increased cost efficiencies for those young people in need of residential care.
- We will aim to maintain improvements in the range of accommodation and support packages for Care Leavers.
- We aim to strengthen and embed our approach and delivery of the Regional Adoption Agency, in order that more children leave care through adoption.
- We will make positive use of Short Breaks provision, including the promotion of the Short Breaks Grant to provide families of children with disabilities and additional needs with needed breaks from caring, while the child benefits from the opportunity to take part in social opportunities. Thus reducing the potential of family breakdown.

### **How Will We Measure Success/ the impact on our children in care?**

1. Children and young people will be protected from harm, will be supported to be the best they can be in life and will be resilient.
2. More children and young people will safely remain connected with their communities.
3. More children and young people will be safely and sustainably reunified with their families.

4. We will know who children in our care and care leavers are, how many of them there are, their needs and how best to meet them.
5. By undertaking careful placement matching, we will see more successful placements.
6. By providing a range of effective support and interventions to children in our care and to their carers we will increase placement stability.
7. We will see children and young people exiting care, as directed by their care plan.
8. By receiving positive feedback from children in our care, care leavers, foster carers, adopters and residential staff – and the broader ‘Team Around the Child’.
9. We will achieve more ‘Value for money’ commissioning approaches.

### Children in Our Care (CiOC) Health Assessments

This is an agenda item to be shared at today’s CPB.

While the report was recognised as being very helpful, discussion was undertaken on the need to report on the patterns and trends emerging from Health Assessments.

The importance of evaluation of the impact on CIOC of the services offered to improve their health and wellbeing was seen as a priority.

Moving forward it is planned that whilst compliance will continue to be monitored and scrutinised via the CCG, increased focus will be on monitoring, measuring and evaluating impact.

### CIOCSG Action Plan

The CIOCSG action plan was reviewed following the additional action column being included. It was also agreed to add a further column to the plan – ‘Impact’ to ensure focus remains on how effective our actions are for CIOC.

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