

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update November 2022

Scrutiny Review – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The scope and project plan for this review was considered by the Select Committee at their meeting on 8 June 2022.</p> <p>Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.</p> <p>The review is examining the Council's response and approach to the issues of contextual safeguarding, child exploitation and the issue of youth violence.</p> <p>The review mirrors a national focus on the increasing threat to young people from factors outside the home.</p> <p>Four themed meetings have been arranged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background, context, definitions. What makes a child vulnerable? • Our response now, including work in schools • Multi-agency working • Future direction <p>Due to staff sickness, the evidence session for the October meeting was deferred and therefore the November meeting will examine both multi agenda working and future direction.</p>
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	Third and fourth evidence sessions 16 November 2022
On track – yes / no	Yes – the review will report to Cabinet in February 2023.

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>Performance reports are scheduled for:</p> <p>12 October 2022 8 February 2023</p> <p>Key issues highlighted and discussed at the October meeting were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services continued to implement a significant programme of change set within the context of increasing demand for services, cost of living rises, economic uncertainty, external inspection outcomes and financial pressures • A major review of the Children's Services Directorate had been undertaken with completion of the structural changes

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	<p>in March 2022. The review had realigned responsibilities to enable better integration of Children's Social Care and Help and Support. There were also plans to increase the number of social workers alongside a recruitment and retention plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in the recruitment of social workers was being strengthened with the "Grow Your Own" apprenticeship programme • The number of children in care had stabilised and 25% of children in care were now being placed with kinship carers – nearly double the national rate • The Residential Homes programme was a key priority for the year ahead. The shortage of placements was a national issue; the lack of providers driving up costs resulting in significant budgetary pressures for Local Authorities • The majority of children were able to get their first choice at Stockton primary and secondary schools, although there were issues around over-subscribed secondary schools in the south of the Borough. Lower birth numbers were accounting for a reduction in primary admissions • Schools perform well overall. Although national comparative data was not available for the last two years, 93% of secondary schools were good or better (63% nationally) and 97% of primary schools (87% nationally) • In July, a SEND revisit took place. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission determined that sufficient progress had been made against the four areas of weakness in the Written Statement of Action • Operated by the North East Autism Society, Kiora Hall opened in September to provide specialist provision for children and young people with neurodevelopmental needs • Referrals to the neurodevelopmental pathway had increase by 300% post covid due to a radically streamlined referral process; this did not account for an increase in prevalence, with about half of the referrals achieving an autism diagnosis • Although there was a choice of high quality multi academy trusts within the Borough, the benefits of a Council-led Multi Academy Trust were being considered as an option • Although not a formal adoption, Special Guardianship Orders were one of the routes out of care and were particularly beneficial in cases where a family wished to look after a child
Problems or concerns	None
Requests for more information	None

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>Future monitoring items scheduled are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Progress Update – Care Leavers EET - date TBC (Action Plan was submitted September 2021; initial progress update

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	was submitted September 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial Progress Update – Child Poverty – February 2023
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Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews

None

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)

16 November 2022
7 December 2022
11 January 2023

8 February 2023
8 March 2023