

Date: Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 5.00 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TU

Cllr Carol Clark (Chair)
Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Nathan Gale
Cllr David Reynard
Cllr Emily Tate
Cllr Katie Weston

Cllr Ray Godwin
Cllr Stephen Richardson
Cllr Sally Ann Watson

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----------|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Evacuation Procedure | (Pages 7 - 8) |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest | |
| 4 | Minutes | |
| | To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 8
March 2023 | (Pages 9 - 12) |
| 5 | Action Plan - Contextual Safeguarding and Youth
Relationships | (Pages 13 - 18) |
| 6 | Children's Services Overview Report 2023 | (Pages 19 - 32) |
| 7 | Chair's Update and Select Committee Work
Programme 2023/24 | (Pages 33 - 34) |

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Democratic Services Manager, Judy Trainer on email judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 8th March, 2023.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice Chair), Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Andrew Sherris

Officers: Martin Gray (Ch'S), Fallon Dunleavy (F,D&R), Judy Trainer (CS)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**CYP
44/22** **Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation and Housekeeping Procedure was noted.

**CYP
45/22** **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CYP
46/22** **Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 February 2023**

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**CYP
47/22** **Employment and Training Hub**

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Economic Development Team on work around employment, education and skills with schools, colleges and universities. The all-age hub provided partnership support and advice covering:

- employability support (CV writing, interview techniques)
- job searches
- apprenticeships
- skills, education and training
- English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- funding and benefits advice
- 1-to-1 support

The presentation outlined provision for young people and plans for the future which included enterprise workshops and the Bridge to Apprenticeship Programme.

AGREED that the presentation be noted.

**CYP
48/22** **Children and Young People - Performance Update**

The Select Committee received a performance update on children's services

covering:

- Change and improvement
- Inspection and action planning
- Improvement priorities by service area
- Key performance data:
 - . Help and Support and Children's Social Care
 - . Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - . Schools

Members recognised the innovative and positive changes that had been implemented and paid tribute to the work of children's services staff.

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Demands on children's services were complex and increasing and there were well recognised national challenges around capacity and funding
- Having received a positive focused visit in December 2021, the September 2022 focused on the "front door" was less positive and pointed to a number of areas for improvement. Building blocks for an effective response and key actions already implemented were outlined
- Work was underway for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion (SENDI) Inspection which would take place in the next three years
- The Help and Support offer continued to evolve in line with relationship-based practice model
- There continued to be a significant demand pressure across children's social care services. Priorities for the year ahead included implementing the actions from the Focused Visit and the current visit and implementing the recruitment and retention plan
- There were extremely good relationships with schools and Stockton schools performed well overall. Priorities would include narrowing the gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- A lot of work had been carried out to ensure sufficiency of school places and there were high rates of children being allocated their first choice of school
- The Schools Capital Programme had implemented significant investment at Stockton schools
- Progress against the SEND strategy was being monitored through the multi-agency SEND Strategic Group which would evolve into the Local Inclusion Partnership

AGREED that the report be noted.

CYP 49/22 Overview and Scrutiny - End-of-Term Report (2019-2023)

The Select Committee considered a report providing details of the work undertaken by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny function over the previous four years.

Members highlighted the vast range of topics completed against an extremely challenging four-year period.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**CYP
50/22**

Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted

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Agenda Item

Children and Young People Select Committee

19 July 2023

ACTION PLAN FOR AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS – REVIEW OF CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS

Summary

Members are asked to consider the Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships will be implemented and target dates for completion.

Detail

1. The Committee's final report of the Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships was considered by Cabinet in February 2023. Cabinet accepted the recommendations.
2. These are now subject to the procedure for monitoring the implementation of agreed recommendations. An Action Plan has now been drawn up and is attached at **Appendix 1**. This sets out how the relevant departments will be taking forward the agreed recommendations and includes target dates for completion.
3. Members should consider and agree the Action Plan. The Committee will receive a detailed progress update on the implementation of recommendations approximately 12 months after the Action Plan has been agreed.

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ACTION PLAN: Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
1	That a strategic partnership approach to Contextualised Safeguarding is agreed and monitored through existing established multi-agency partnerships such as Safer Stockton Partnership, YOT Board, HSSCP and the Children and Young People's Board.	Risk Outside the Home presentations to create discussion and ownership. Ambition is to consolidate this as both a child safeguarding and community safety priority	Strategic Partnerships incorporate Risk Outside the Home in their plans and activity	Adele Moore AD CSC	December 2023
2	That a consistent definition of child criminal exploitation and contextual safeguarding is developed and adopted by all Stockton-on-Tees partners.	Rollout of our new Risk Outside the Home Policy and Guidance. The document provides a working definition to be used across Children's Services	The definition of Risk Outside the Home is shared and understood within the children's partnership	Adele Moore AD CSC	December 2023
3	That clear outcome measures are defined to measure success of interventions and approaches.	Amendments have been made to the children's social care assessment document to better capture those children and young people who are at risk Multi-agency working group to be established to explore performance indicators across the children's and community safety system	Identification of children and young people at risk of harm outside the home is routinely quality assured and	Miriam Sigsworth Service Lead	December 2023
4	That support is provided for schools, in partnership with Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP), to promote understanding of contextualised safeguarding and relationships through the development and delivery of a programme of awareness raising and training supplemented with advice	Contextual Safeguarding / Risk Outside the Home training is freely available and promoted by HSSCP.	School staff are knowledgeable, skilled and are confident in how to identify and support children and young people at risk from outside the home. Increased knowledge and understanding is visible in referrals from schools to	HSSCP	Ongoing rolling training

ACTION PLAN: Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
	and guidance and clear routes into support.		children's services and in how schools support children as a single agency or as part of multi-agency plans		
5	That a training and support programme is delivered to Children's Services staff to enhance understanding of contextualised safeguarding and to help recognise and support young people who are being exploited or at risk of exploitation.	Additional bespoke training has been developed for the Council's children's workforce. Content and approach has recently been tested through a pilot to a children's social work team Learning gained had been incorporated into the rollout of training to staff across social work teams, Help & Support and SEND planned from July 2023	Children's service staff are knowledgeable, skilled and confident to support children and young people and families. This is visible in children's assessments, plans and how we support children, young people and families.	Tanya Evans Contextual safeguarding team manager	Sept 2023
6	That a programme of awareness raising is developed for key partners and elected Members.	This will be achieved through presentations to key strategic partnership groups and HSSCP training programme	Risk Outside the Home is recognised as a safeguarding and community safety priority	Tanya Evans Contextual safeguarding team manager	November 2023
7	That a community guardian programme is introduced within schools and communities across Stockton-on-Tees to provide wider community support.	To identify, liaise and take learning from those LAs where community guardian programmes have been introduced Identification of services that are best placed to lead on this work	This will be scoped and developed	HSSCP	December 2023
8	That multi-agency capacity to support our MACE approach is strengthened to meet need.	Analysis of the current / emerging gaps in MACE capacity with our partners	MACE has the capacity to perform its core functions to identify children at risk and the sources of harm to them; and to coordinate targeted activity to disrupt harm and achieve safe spaces for children	Miriam Sigsworth and Adele Moore	December 2023

ACTION PLAN: Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
9	That an options appraisal is undertaken on how Children's Services can achieve the best outcomes for young people through improved practice and additional capacity and focus, including through the use of voices of experience. This will include options for structure and effective multi-agency working.	Appraisal Paper to CSLT about how we support children at risk of significant harm from risk outside the home	Practitioners and managers know what is expected of them. They are supported to practice with confidence and are able to build strong trusted relationships with children and families.	Adele Moore	November 2023

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Children and Young People Select Committee

Overview Meeting 2023

19 July 2023

Children's Services

Context

Members are reminded of the Council's Vision that supports decision-making:

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm where:

- This means the Borough will be a place where:
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
 - People are supported and protected from harm
 - People live health lives
- This means that the Borough will have:
 - A growing economy
 - Improved education and skills development
 - Job creation and increased employment
- This means we will enjoy:
 - Great places to live and visit
 - Clean and green spaces
 - Rich cultural experiences

The Council plays its part in making sure this is achieved by being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

Performance Reporting

Performance across the Council Plan was reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee. Please see the link:

<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SCR>

Children's Services

Director – Martin Gray / Elaine Redding

Relevant services include:

- Children's Help and Support Services
- Children's Social Care
- Education
- SEND and Inclusion
- Strategy, Quality and Improvement

Council Plan 2023-2026

The Council Plan sets out the aims and objectives for all services and is refreshed on an annual basis.

The key priorities for the Children's Services are attached at Appendix 1.

Children's Services: transformation, change and improvement

1. We continue to develop and implement our approach to change which was initiated in 2020 with a major reorganisation and reshaping of services.
2. Our focus remains on the best way Children's Services can continue to provide the best support to the children, young people and families within the Borough. This is set within a context of increased demand for services; increasing threats to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, increased pressure on families with cost of living rises and economic uncertainty, external inspection outcomes and financial pressures on the Council.
3. The demands on Children's Services are complex and increasing, and there are well recognised national challenges around capacity and funding across the whole system. Through an iterative process of data analysis, engagement with key stakeholders including external partners and system wide thinking, we have developed and refined our improvement approach.
4. We have developed a strategic planning framework as the basis for how we plan, do and review across the Directorate. This is a simple framework which describes:
 - a. What we are aiming to achieve;
 - b. How well we are doing
 - c. What else do we need to be doing

What we are aiming to do

5. The starting point for the development of our priorities are:
 - a. The Council Plan – which sets out our high level actions to contribute to strategic priorities for Council
 - b. The Children and Young People's Plan Strategy which is the partnership focused Borough wide strategy to support the wellbeing and success of children and young people in the Borough.
6. From this we have drawn up a set of key commitments which describe how we want to work, and the things which are most important to us:

- A child focused approach**
- A partnership with families**
- A caring system**
- A focus on local high-quality support**
- A joined-up system**
- A drive for impact**
- A commitment to reflect, review and refine**
- A drive for value for money**

7. These commitments provide the framework for our other strategies and actions plans, which include:
 - a. From Conception to Reception – our strategy for the best start in life;
 - b. Our SEND Action Plan, as reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 28 June 2023;
 - c. Our forthcoming refreshed early help framework
 - d. The new Corporate Parenting Strategy which was last reported to Corporate Parenting Board on 16 June 2023, and will be presented for approval on 11 August.

How well we are doing

8. We have developed performance systems which collate information, feedback and qualitative data and tell us how well we are performing. From these we draw out information on what is working well and what we want to improve and review these through a series of performance and accountability meetings.
9. We focus on:
 - a. Data
 - b. Qualitative reviews such as audit
 - c. Feedback

What else we need to be doing

10. Our analysis of this information helps us to identify our key priorities for action. We have three types of priorities:
 - a. System wide priorities where we are seeking to transform or make fundamental changes and where this usually includes working with partners
 - b. Directorate Improvement Priorities. This includes our Improvement Priorities for Ofsted.
 - c. Service Improvement Priorities which are more specific to each service area and are included in Service Plans.

Inspection and Planning

ILACS inspection

11. The most recent Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services was undertaken in February and March 2023, with the report published on 9 May.
12. The inspection resulted in an overall judgment of 'Requires Improvement'.
13. Ofsted require an action plan to be developed in response and to be submitted to them by 16 August.
14. The Good and Beyond Board was already established as an independently chaired body charged with providing effective oversight and drive for continuous improvement planning. This Board was already providing leadership and focus for actions emerging from the September 2022 Focused Visit. The Board will continue to provide this oversight role for the revised improvement plan.
15. The key areas for improvement identified by Ofsted are around:
 - a. The quality and effectiveness of plans for children and care leavers, including safety plans agreed with parents.
 - b. Sufficiency of suitable foster homes for children.
 - c. Frontline management oversight across the service, in relation to the quality of assessment and plans and the impact of interventions.
 - d. Opportunities for more children and care leavers to have a voice and to influence the development of services.
16. Other key areas around the need for further action were:
 - a. for placement sufficiency, especially for children with complex needs
 - b. More capacity for foster care
 - c. Evidence of the impact of challenge from Independent Reviewing Officers
 - d. The need for more opportunities for participation for children and young people in care and care leavers
 - e. Consistency of PA support
 - f. Better arrangements for health information for care leavers
 - g. The visibility of the care leavers offer
 - h. The need for a refresh of the corporate parenting approach
17. The inspection also detailed the considerable amount of progress since the previous inspection and several areas of good and positive practice:
 - a. There are clear signs of progress and improvement since the 2019 inspection and since the September 2022 Focused Visit;
 - b. Leaders know the services well and are realistic about them;
 - c. Positive statements about the front door responses;
 - d. Skills and ability around issues such as domestic abuse;
 - e. Thoroughness of child protection investigations;
 - f. Improving quality of assessments;

- g. Effective legal planning in deciding when children need to come into care
- h. Sensitive responses for disabled children
- i. Effective arrangements around child exploitation
- j. Tenacious responses for missing children – interviews and responses
- k. A focus on school attendance
- l. Effective responses to homeless young people
- m. Good approaches to family and friends placements
- n. Effective adoption arrangements
- o. Good management of out of area placements
- p. Good support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- q. High levels of ambition from the Virtual school for children in our care
- r. High quality working and commitment from personal advisers
- s. Arrangements for apprenticeships for care leavers
- t. Good feedback from the Courts and from CAFCASS

Governance and oversight

18. One of the key actions we have implemented is to engage an independent adviser, brokered through the Department for Education. This role is held by an ex DCS from Telford and Wrekin Council, who chairs our 'Good and Beyond' Board and provides independent challenge on implementation of improvement activity, supported by the Board which includes the Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and a range of key partner, including Cleveland Police, Hartlepool BC, Department for Education, Local Government Association.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion (SENDI) inspection

19. Work is underway in preparation for the forthcoming SEND and AP inspection which will take place in the next 3 years. This is a new inspection framework, and will take an approach much more like the inspection framework outlined above. It will not result in a graded judgement, but will categorise the local system.
20. As we were only inspected under the previous regime in 2022, we do not anticipate this new inspection immediately, but there is significant work to do to prepare the evidence and ensure we have systems in place to be able to respond.

Opportunity and challenge

21. The sections below describe the opportunities and challenges for all services areas in the Directorate

Help and Support – Opportunities and Challenges

22. The Help and Support offer continues to evolve in line with the relationship-based practice model.
23. The introduction of the Liquid Logic Early Help Module allows for clear access to information for both our CHUB and Children's Social Care. Our current diagnostic of

our use of the system being undertaken via North Tyneside Council will identify how we can use this system to help drive data, intelligence and improvement further.

24. The Stockton Multi-Agency Response team (SMART) which acts as our Early Help Hub ensures all referrals into early help are triaged in a timely way by experienced practitioners. This has developed over the past 6 months into a key part of our system.
25. Our Family Hub offer continues to evolve. A recent addition is the implementation of multi-agency drop-in sessions for families, which are focused on seeking to meet the needs of families who may be unaware of support available or who are struggling to cope for a variety of reasons.
26. The strategic partnership with Family Action, a national charitable organisation who have considerable expertise in delivering a range of community led family support, is embedded and now over 12 months old.
27. School Support Advisers Workers are working proactively across education settings to respond to early identification of issues within school. This team uses our Vulnerable Children's Database to support the targeting of their work.
28. Our Integrated Project and Interventions function is continuing to work with social care teams and is being successful in reducing waiting lists and clearly direct work to the right practitioner at the right time.
29. The Family Solutions team provides more intensive family support and intervention for both for families who need more intensive or long of loving term support. Referrals are allocated in a timely way and with increased management oversight and supervision there is a stronger bigger focus on impact and outcomes.
30. We have continued to focus on the importance of early years, through the 'From Conception to Reception' strategy, including through the development of the Stockton-on-Tees Talks programme, for early years education setting and families which seek to reduce the need for specialist intervention.
31. The Youth United Stockton consortium is working to develop a long-term investment strategy for young people. This will support both additional activity and the establishment of new physicals youth hub. We are also opening a Stockton town centre base in 2023.

Help and Support priorities

32. Our priorities for 2023 include:
 - a. The development of a shared partnership plan for early help.
 - b. Better reporting capacity from our systems.
 - c. Increasing the quality and quantity of Early Help Assessments
 - d. Engaging with communities to ensure that Family Hubs are reaching the most vulnerable.
 - e. Further refinement of our support offer to schools, integrating with the expanding Mental Health Support Teams.
 - f. Continued development of SMART as an early help hub, including new approaches to triaging contacts to prevent them from escalating through the system.
 - g. Secure investment for new and refurbished youth facilities
 - h. Expand our strategic partnership with Family Action

- i. Ensuring more young people are diverted away from crime, and from exploitation.
- j. Deliver on commitments in the Stockton Attendance Strategy to work with children and families to promote and encourage school attendance

Children's Social Care – Opportunities and Challenges

33. There continues to be significant demand pressure across children's social care services, (see Appendix One for a snapshot of performance data and regional comparisons at the end of March 2023).
34. The Children's Hub (Chub) continues to provide an effective service. This was recognised in the ILACS report which referenced timely referrals and effective processes. Cleveland Police have committed to improving their processes, and we are also exploring the development of a more integrated triage approach, based on good practice models from elsewhere.
35. We have refreshed our People Strategy which sets out the key areas for us to invest in the recruitment, development and retention of social workers. We have retained our 'Grow Your Own' initiative, expanded continued our successful apprenticeship programme and supported the national Step Up to Social Work programme. We have recently been successful in securing funding for the development of a new Academy for newly qualified social workers which we feel will help develop their potential and help retain them. We have also implemented a market forces supplement of 15% for new experienced social workers, and an equivalent retention payment for existing staff. This has had some success in retention, but we continue to face challenges in the recruitment of experienced staff.
36. The Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership is leading an increased focus on practice for safeguarding and identified child neglect as its key priority for the current year. This work has been taken forward through dedicated resources and has supported training, awareness raising and a media campaign. We continue to develop an effective system for multi-agency audit and for case reviews. The partnership will also be expanding its focus on the views and experience of children and young people in 2023.
37. The number of children in care has stabilised since April 2020. A more recent development in 2022/23 has been the significant increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) allocated to the Borough as part of a national transfer scheme. There are currently 28 UASC in our care. We have been very successful in being able to keep a much higher proportion of children in care with kinship carers.
38. We are the highest performing authority in the country around keeping children and young people as close to home as possible.
39. We are developing new children's homes, supported by some funding from the DfE capital funding.
40. We are participating in the regional foster care programme which is designed to generate more potential foster carers. It will also support the expansion of the Mockingbird model.
41. ILACS criticised our approach to participation and engagement of children and young people and revised proposals were presented to Corporate Parenting Board to address this on 16 June through a new strategy. Our children and young people-led Let's Take Action group is central to this new approach.

Children's Social Care – priorities for the year ahead

42. The priorities for the remainder of 2022/23 are:
 - a. Implement the action plan arising from ILACS
 - b. Implementing our recruitment and retention plan to attract experienced and high quality social workers including a new social work academy model
 - c. Evolve our approach to contextual safeguarding taking the CYP Select recommendations into account
 - d. Deliver on commitments in the Stockton Attendance Strategy to work with children and families to promote and encourage school attendance
 - e. Continue to focus on embedding our practice model
 - f. Lead on the development of a new strategy for children in our care and care leavers (including a refreshed approach to corporate parenting)
 - g. Expand our offer for foster carers and secure the benefits of the regional foster care programme
 - h. Ensuring that the needs of CIOC with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are being consistently reviewed, in a more joined up way
 - i. Open new children's homes
 - j. Refresh our approach to care leavers, including reshaping the support to them, developing a new offer, and undertaking a review led by the DfE adviser.

Schools – Opportunities and Challenges

43. The majority of children are able to get into their first choice of school, at both primary and secondary, and the admission round in spring 2023 resulted in a high proportion achieving their top 3 choices: primary 99.46% and secondary 98% achieving one of their 3 preferences.
44. There is sufficient capacity in primary schools to meet the demand for places, though the reducing birth rate suggests there will be additional surplus capacity in the primary sector for many years, and some schools will be forced to reduce their admissions numbers in the next 2 years, as some have done over in the last 2 years.
45. Overall, there are also enough secondary school places in, though there are challenges around over-subscribed secondary schools especially in the south of the borough. The number of in-year admissions requested by parents/carers continues to increase, as well as movement into the Borough from out of area and overseas, causing further challenges for over-subscribed secondary schools. However, this is expected to ease from 2023/24 when the lower cohorts currently in Year 6 transition into secondary and allow more capacity for in-year admissions
46. Our schools perform well overall, being the best performing in the region, and above national averages on most measures. We reported on progress on educational outcomes to Cabinet in October 2022 and in January 2023, the latter report focusing on gaps for more vulnerable children and young people with some issues about the gap between those children from poorer backgrounds, those with special educational needs and for children in care where the gap with peers needs to continue to close.
47. We continue to implement the schools capital programme with major projects on site at Outwood Bishopsgarth and Bishopton PRU. Detailed planning work is also underway

for the refurbishment of Oxbridge Lane Primary School. Additional improvements are planned for Ian Ramsey, St Michael's and for North Shore, the latter as part of plans to expand the PAN and to create additional provision for children with Special Educational needs.

48. There are currently:
 - a. 18 maintained schools and 42 academies in primary phase
 - b. 1 maintained and 12 academies in secondary phase
 - c. 5 academies – special schools and alternative provision
49. Although the main provisions of the Education White Paper in 2022 have been withdrawn by Government, schools are continuing to convert to Academy status and this trend is projected to continue. We are continuing to work with existing maintained schools on their future options.
50. Our Teacher training provision, the SCITT, continues to perform well and is graded good by Ofsted.
51. We continue to work with Tees Valley Music Service as the national music plan is refreshed. Proposals for the further development and implementation of music hubs were announced

Schools – priorities

52. The priorities identified for the remainder of 2023 are:
 - a. A strategic review of education functions.
 - b. The specific challenges of continuing to focus on narrowing the gap (for children in care, those with SEND, those on free school meals; gender; BAME). This is the subject of a scrutiny review in 2023/24.
 - c. Continued development of the emotional health and wellbeing offer for education settings including Healthy Schools.
 - d. Ongoing work to ensure sufficiency of school places especially in response to the ongoing popularity of secondary schools in the south. This work also includes the responses to where there is significant new housing development.
 - e. Continue to work with schools and Academy Trusts to ensure an effective school improvement system. This will include consideration of the scope for a Council led Multi Academy Trust.
 - f. A sustainable future and vision for the Tees Valley Music Service following submission of an application for the next phases of the programme in September 2023.

SEN and Inclusion – challenges and opportunities

53. The local area SEND strategy was launched in 2021 and sets out commitments across six key priorities. Progress against this is monitored through the multi-agency SEND strategic group and reported through Health and Wellbeing Board. In 2023, we will evolve this governance into a Local Inclusion Partnership, in line with the recommendations in the SEND Green paper in 2022, and we will agree a strategic action plan for the partnership in advance of a fully fledged new Local Inclusion Strategy being developed in 2024.

54. In line with our strategic priority to ensure that most children and young peoples' needs can be met in local, inclusive mainstream schools, we have remodelled our Enhanced Mainstream Schools (EMS).
55. Sufficiency of placements for children continues to be an area of focus. We have expended places at Abbey Hill and we are also developing and expanding provision for children from local special schools to be educated in satellite provisions in mainstream settings, building on the successful Abbey @ North Shore model.
56. The implementation of specific support to children and families affected by autism continues to be a significant priority and remains a challenge. Referrals into the new Neurodevelopmental pathway have significantly increased and work is ongoing with colleagues in the Integrated care Board to reduce waiting times for diagnosis. There is an extensive menu of support which can be accessed without the need for a diagnosis.
57. We have been working as part of the national Delivering better value (DBV) programme in 2022/23 which involves external analysis of our spend on high needs. This has resulted in a submission for additional funding for 2023-24, and will focus on:
 - a. Work to support mainstream choices post 16;
 - b. Testing new approaches to tackling anxiety, ASD and trauma where it effects school attendance
 - c. Improving the data we use to project future demand
58. 2023 will see the launch of a new Attendance Strategy for the Borough which responds to the requirements of the DfE and focuses on reducing persistent and severe absence in our schools. This has been coproduced with multiagency partners promoting attendance at school everyone's business.
59. We have developed and refreshed arrangements around Fair Access and In Year Transfers, jointly with schools.
60. The Virtual school has strengthened their oversight of children with a social worker by appointing 2 additional members of staff to the service. This will focus on promoting the educational achievements of CiN and CP children.

SEN and Inclusion – priorities

61. The priorities identified for the remainder of 2023 are:
 - a. Implementation of our Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision (SENDAP) Action Plan, delivered through a new Local Area Inclusion Partnership
 - b. Ongoing and improved communication with parents / carers ensuring that our services are accessible and responsive
 - c. Continued support and challenge to mainstream schools and settings in relation to their ability to meet needs
 - d. Continued work alongside schools and settings to increase the quality of SEN support plans
 - e. Working with the Integrated Care Board to ensure therapy services follow a needs led approach, and that support can be provided as early as possible to reduce the need for specialist intervention wherever possible
 - f. Working with the Integrated Care Board to further refine the neurodevelopmental pathway to ensure that children and young people's

needs are being met and, where needed, access to a diagnostic pathway is timely, to include the ADHD pathway

- g. Understanding the impact of COVID-19: school refusal / anxiety / developmental delay / parental impact
- h. Responding and implementing changes as they emerge from the Green Paper 'SEND review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time' including our role as part of the newly established Regional Expert Partnerships.
- i. Implement the Delivering Better Value programme as part of our SENDAP action plan
- j. Deliver the new Attendance Strategy
- k. Develop data sets to enable more accurate forecasting of need
- l. If awarded by DfE, work with Delta MAT to develop an Alternative Provision Free School
- m. Work towards the implementation of the new EYES system across all services

Strategy, Quality and Improvement– Opportunities and challenges

- 62. A Performance and Improvement framework has been launched across the Directorate which increases the breadth and range of quality assurance activity taking place and which supports service improvement and an increased focus on impact and outcomes for children, young people and families
- 63. We have strengthened our scrutiny of performance data at a senior management level as part of our strategic planning framework and are embedding the use of a performance dashboard which provides real time data outside of the Liquid Logic reporting system to service leads, team managers and practitioners to support workload prioritisation, planning, and performance management.

Systems, information and improvement – priorities

- 64. The priorities identified for the remainder of 2023 are:
 - a. Undertaking an external 'diagnostic' of systems for early help and social care to maximise their effectiveness for front line practitioners.
 - b. Further work to ensure data is meaningful and accessible to managers.
 - c. Working with an external partner to test our quality assurance processes.
 - d. Ensuring that the implementation of the EYES module remains on track for Spring 2024 go live and that a suite of reports are available from the outset
 - e. Continuing to embed our approach to quality assurance as set out within our Performance and Improvement Framework including in response to external inspection.
 - f. Delivering our second Practice Week which focuses on identifying and celebrating examples of good practice.
 - g. Continue to model and ensure sufficient school places
 - h. Continuing to ensure efficient transfers for those moving school during the year

- i. Respond to the national changes around early years childcare and wraparound school provision
- j. Leading on SEND placement sufficiency – to ensure enough of the right type of places are available

APPENDIX 1: COUNCIL PLAN – KEY PRIORITIES 2023-2024 (CHILDREN’S SERVICES)

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm means the Borough will be a place where:

- people live in cohesive and safe communities
- people are supported and protected from harm
- people live healthy lives

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- support achievement for all pupils including a focus on narrowing the gap in outcomes
- deliver improvement programme focusing on workforce, practice and partnerships for children and families in need
- continue to develop and enhance provision and support for children and young people with additional needs or accessing alternative provision
- implement the investment proposals for children in our care, including new provision and new models of delivery
- develop a new model for the health and wellbeing of children and young people 0-19 (25 for SEND), working across key partners and including service commissioning
- work with our communities and partners to develop our approach to healthy places, in the context of regeneration plans and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- work with our partners in the VCSE sector and the Community Partnerships to tackle food poverty in the Borough
- continue to prevent and relieve homelessness

A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed means that the Borough will have:

- a growing economy
- improved education and skills development
- job creation and increased employment

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- continue to develop the successful Employment and Training Hub Model

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**Children and Young People Select Committee
Work Programme – 2023-2024**

Date	Item	Attending
19 July 2023	Children's Services Overview	Martin Gray Cllr Lisa Evans
	Action Plan – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	Adele Moore
13 September 2023	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Scope and Project Plan	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
	Progress Update – Care Leavers EET	David Willingham
11 October 2023	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Evidence	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
	Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty	Haleem Ghafoor
15 November 2023	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Evidence	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
13 December 2023	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Evidence	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
17 January 2024	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Draft Recommendation	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
14 February 2024	Scrutiny Review of Educational Attainment – Final Report	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
13 March 2024		

Items to be scheduled each year

Annual

Overview of Children and Young People's Services and Annual Safeguarding Report

Six Monthly

Children and Young People Performance Reports

Progress Updates

Action Plan - Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships July 2023

Further Progress Update – Care Leavers EET September 2023

Further Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty – October 2023

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