
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Children and Young People Portfolio.

Ofsted Report on Children's Services

2. The Ofsted report was published on 1 September 2015, with an overall judgement of Inadequate. Five individual judgements are made with Help and Protection being a limiting judgement.
3. The individual judgements are :-
 - (a) Help and Protect - Inadequate
 - (b) Looked after services – require improvement
 - (c) Adoption - Good
 - (d) Care leavers - Good
 - (e) Leadership management and Governance (LMG) – Inadequate
4. During this inspection, Ofsted also reviewed the multi-agency Local Children's Safeguarding Board and found this to be 'Requires Improvement'.
5. The Council accept all recommendations and have made rapid progress to address short comings in practice and management oversight. A new IT system, review of performance management and quality assurance arrangements and addressing support and supervision is underway to respond to the key areas of concern.
6. Additional management information officers and a practise supervisor post have been advertised, to add capacity and increase front line management oversight. Regular updates will be provided to Council and the LSCB. An Interim Service Director has been appointed (Alison Murphy) to ensure progress and improvements are continued following the retirement of the current Service Director at the end of September.
7. The report does acknowledge the positive outcomes for children at the different points of the service, including immediate response; child protection process; looked after children services including care leavers and permanency planning.

Corporate Parenting Panel

8. Corporate Parenting Panel took place on 15 September 2015. The theme was 'Safeguarding Children who become Looked After'. The Panel looked at the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer and the importance of independent advocates for young people, to ensure their views are central to any decisions. The Panel also considered placements – how to ensure safe practice by carers and also preparation of young people and children for any placement moves. The Darlo Care Crew attend the Panel and are able to express their views on the reports and their findings. The Panel also received a performance summary and a regular update from the Darlington Foster Care Association.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

9. The Board met on 15 July 2015. Information was shared from British Transport Police regarding their revised arrangements for safeguarding brought to the fore due to the national focus on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) along with concerns raised regarding the recent Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre Inspection and being rated as inadequate. The Board wanted assurance that any young person who may be placed there was safe. Updates were provided from each of the sub-groups, with the following key messages highlighted. The Performance Management Group has agreed to conduct an audit to identify those children subject to an ICPC but for whom no plan is made and those removed from a plan at the first review to establish the effectiveness of early help provision. The missing and Exploited Children Group has agreed in partnership with Hummersknott Academy to host a 'pilot' session for Chelsea's Choice funded by the LSCB. A dedicated CSE team has now been established within Durham Constabulary and should ensure better linkage with Children's Services teams and a performance framework is being established around CSE and missing to allow better scrutiny of multi-agency arrangements. The Policy and Procedures Group is establishing a solution for the maintenance of the Child Protection Procedures and could potentially link up with other regional boards.

Education

10. The latest Ofsted Inspection reports for Harrowgate Hill Primary School and Marchbank Free School were judged to be good in all areas.
11. Maidendale Nursery and Cockerton Playgroup, which were previously graded 'requires improvement', were both judged to be good in their latest Ofsted Inspection report.
12. Darlington College Childcare Centre was judged to be good by Ofsted.
13. Candles Out of School provision (Heighington School) was graded inadequate and the Early Years' Service is working with the school to support the improvement of performance. HOOT Out of School provision (Bishopton Redmarshall School) was judged to be good in their latest Ofsted Inspection report.

14. Of the eight childminders inspected from April to July, four were judged to be good by Ofsted and four were judged to be outstanding.

15. From September 2015 there have been several changes to Head Teachers. An updated list is detailed below :-

(a)	Caroline Green	Beaumont	Deputy
(b)	Peter King	Federation of Mowden	Head
(c)	Julia Thompson	Borough Road Nursery	Head
(d)	Wendy Aitken	St Mary's Cockerton	Head
(e)	Ann Pringleton	Corporation Road	Head
(f)	Rebecca Pavey	Mount Pleasant	Head
(g)	Paul Ayto	Reid Street	Head
(h)	Paula Straughton	St Teresa's	Head
(i)	Sarah Davidson	DSMS	Acting Head
(j)	James Keating	Hummersknott	Head

16. GCSE results are still provisional and may be subject to change. Darlington has reported a provisional figure of 56% for 5 GCSE at A*-C. Across the North East region there is a mixed picture with small dips and gains for a number of authorities. There are no national comparators currently available for 2015.

Instruments of Government for Maintained Schools

17. We have given consideration to new Instruments of Government for schools to be made in accordance with the requirements set out in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

18. The Head of Legal Services has been authorised to compete and formalise the new Instruments of Government for the following schools:

- (a) St Mary's Cockerton CE VA Primary School;
- (b) Corporation Road Primary School;
- (c) High Coniscliffe CE Primary School;
- (d) Mount Pleasant Primary School;
- (e) Northwood Primary School;
- (f) St Teresa's RC VA Primary School; and
- (g) Whinfield Primary School.

19. This will enable the new Instruments of Government to be sealed and issued to the relevant Governing Bodies forthwith.

School Governance

20. There have been a number of new Governors appointed at Darlington Schools over the summer including the appointment of Local Authority Governors at Heathfield Primary School and St. Teresa's RC Primary School by the LA Governors

Appointments Committee, which convened with new members for the first time this year on September 11th.

21. There continues to be a termly meeting open to all Governors in Darlington Schools to attend to discuss and debate issues of interest to schools and Governing Bodies across the Borough.
22. Previous meetings included discussions around the Annual Report of the Virtual Head Teacher on Looked-After Children, the use of Pupil Premium Funding and the Proliferation of Legal Highs and the subsequent report on these from the Darlington Collective.
23. The items for discussion at the Autumn meeting will include the new Common Inspection Framework for Ofsted Inspections of Schools, Early Years and Further Education providers.

Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics

24. 91 children (46 families) were subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of August 2015.
25. The breakdown by category is: Emotional abuse - 23 children; Physical abuse - 2 children; Neglect - 66 children; Sexual abuse - 0 children.
26. The average length of time children are subject to plan currently is between 12 – 18 months.

Children's Commissioning

27. Darlington has met the Department for Education's target of making 634 free childcare places available for eligible two year olds. These places have been met by working in partnership with local nursery schools, schools, private day nurseries, playgroups and child-minders. It is anticipated that by September 2015 the number of places available will be around 639 compared with the DfE target of 634. The project group is looking to encourage additional places within the local childcare market to ensure choice and diversity for parents. Research has shown that parents are willing to travel to access a place, for example, in the West End nurseries.
28. At the end of April 2015, take up of these places by parents was around 60 per cent. However, from 1 April the eligibility checking process was made easier for providers and parents with the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker (available at www.darlington.gov.uk/childcarechecker) and there were planned marketing activities over the summer period, including a series of commercials on Star Radio. In addition, the list regularly released by the Department for Work and Pensions of potentially eligible parents is being refined and utilised by the Children's Centres to contact local parents who have not already taken a place, to explain the offer further and provide support if required. Additionally, more places have been implemented in schools and with greater parental awareness this figure

has increased to 448 filled places by July 2015 ie 71 per cent of eligible children in the Borough are in a free childcare place: of the 448 children, 349 are in a private day nursery, playgroup or with a childminder (78 per cent) and 99 children are in schools (22 per cent).

29. Only providers who are deemed by Ofsted to be at least rated 'good' are admitted on to the provider list, those providers who fall below this Ofsted grading whilst they are on the list are assessed on a case by case basis and where appropriate, they are allowed to remain on the list and intensive support is given by the local authority. At present, of the 57 settings, schools and childminders providing funded places for two year olds 47 are Ofsted rated 'outstanding' or 'good', 2 'require improvement' and are receiving intensive support from the Early Years Team (these providers were 'outstanding' or 'good' when they were accepted on to the scheme), 7 are awaiting their Ofsted inspection following registration and 1 is 'met'.
30. From 1 April 2015 around 380 children in Darlington became eligible for the new Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) which is paid to schools and early education providers to enhance their ability to improve eligible children's outcomes. Three and four year olds accessing funded early education attract EYPP if they meet at least one of the following criteria :-
 - (a) Their family receives either Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working tax Credit or Universal Credit; or
 - (b) they have been in local authority care for 1 day or more, have been adopted from care or have left care under a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.
31. Summer 2015 term data shows that in this first term Early Years Pupil Premium has been claimed for 155 three and four year olds.

Independent Reviewing Officers

32. I met the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) on 13 July 2015 to discuss their work and quality assurance role. They are responsible for chairing Looked After Children Reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Foster Carer Reviews and disruption meetings. They raise issues directly with Social Workers and Managers. The Ofsted Report has made recommendations that these issues must be clearly recorded and escalated if not resolved. These actions will be taken forward by Pixley Clarke soon to take up the role as Head of Review and Development.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio**