
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

Children and Young People's Collective

2. The Collective met on 16 September 2015. Darlington Children and Young People Collective Health Watch are keen to extend engagement of schools in November Youth Watch event. A report was received on Teenage Pregnancy Network's move to become a "virtual network" due to capacity issues. The Director of Public Health presented highlights from the Child Health Profiles 2015. The Darlington Care Crew Pledge (Children in Care) was endorsed. There was an update on the bid for funds to implement Darlington's Children & young person's Mental Health & Wellbeing Transformation Plan. If successful this could attract annual funding of £154 per annum if successful. Finally there was a discussion on the findings of the Ofsted inspection of services to children in need of help and protection, children looked after and fostering and adoption.

Corporate Parenting Panel

3. The Panel met on 14 September 2015 and the meeting focused on the Safeguarding of Looked After Children. The reports presented to the panel included: Roles and Responsibilities of Independent Reviewing Officers for Looked After Children. Panel members were able to listen to information shared by an Independent Reviewing Officer and were able to ask questions for clarification of some areas of this important role. A report Placement Moves of Looked After Children focused on the children and young people who had experienced placement moves and explored some of the reasons why placements have disrupted during the previous six months. Details of how advocacy services are provided for children and young people in Darlington were presented and questions answered. A brief report on Darlington Foster Care Association was shared with panel members giving an update on the provision of Healthy Darlington Cards for foster carers own children. A very clear summary of the current Performance Indicators was provided as of 30 June 2015 giving some comparison with the end of year figures from 31 March 2015. Finally the meeting concluded with a report from the Darlo Care Crew both in written form from the Participation Officer and verbally from two young people who attended the meeting. This focused upon activities available to children and young people with use of the Health Darlington Cards.
4. The next Corporate Parenting Panel will be held on 24 November 2015 and will focus upon the Health and Education of Looked After Children with additional

reports on Adoption, Fostering and the progress made with regard to Apprenticeships for Looked After Children.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

5. The Board met on 16 September 2015 and received further assurances from the Youth Justice Board as the improvement plan for Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre had been shared with the Board. An action was agreed, if a child is placed within this setting, this will be monitored by the Youth Offending Team. Assurance was also provided by County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) in light of the Savile enquiry that all NHS settings have undertaken a significant amount of work to ensure process are in place for volunteers and VIP visitors that will safeguard their patients.
6. The Board received updates from the sub-groups. It was acknowledged from the Performance Sub-Group that the number of young people receiving their Initial Health Assessments (IHA) within 20 working days has significantly improved and the Board wish to continue to monitor this. The Board approved the Training Annual Report and the Managing Allegations Annual Report. These will be made available on the Council website.
7. The Board also considered the LSCB development day on 23 September 2015 and considered how to better engage partners in the work of the LCSB; responded to the Ofsted inspection including working through the Ofsted improvement plan, reviewed the LSCB annual report for 2014/2015 and scoped the future priorities for the LSCB.

School Forum

8. The Schools Forum met on 6 October. The items discussed included a regular Budget Update paper for the current year (2015/16), the School Funding Formula and Budget Setting arrangements for 2016/17, an update paper from the School Forum Officer and an overview paper highlighting research recently undertaken by DfE in relation to funding for young people with Special Educational Needs. All recommendations were approved. The group also discussed and gave approval to support the application for Marchbank Special Free School to expand its numbers.

Education

9. 62 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) have been registered in Darlington Schools so far this academic year, with six carried forward from the previous year. 64 NQTs are participating in the NQT Development Programme delivered through the local authority.

Locality Teams

10. As part of the improvements following the OFSTED report one of the immediate actions we have taken is:
 - (a) Created two Teams from Area 2 with an additional Practice Supervisor;
 - (b) Provided additional Team Clerk and Senior Practitioner time to increase the time available for social workers to undertake work with children and families

Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics

11. The Number of looked after children at 19 October 2015 is 190. Of these three children are Placed with Parents. The number of children both Looked After and on a Protection Plan is seven.
12. The Number of children on Protection Plans is 106, which relates to 49 cases (the categories are 36 Emotional, two Physical, 68 Neglect and none for Sexual). There are 14 new initial Child Protection conferences pending which relates to 33 children.

Children's Commissioning

13. The statutory 2015 Childcare Sufficiency Review was conducted during the Summer and this assessment and the accompanying action plan went to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 2 November. Supply data showed that in 2014-15 the education and childcare market in Darlington which consists of maintained nursery schools, academy and maintained nursery units, private day nurseries, playgroups, child-minders, breakfast, after school and holiday clubs remained fairly stable. Parental feedback showed that, as in 2008 and 2011, there is:
 - (a) unmet demand for affordable, after-school and holiday childcare/activities for all age groups and older children (over eight years) in particular; and
 - (b) unmet demand for affordable, accessible and appropriate childcare for children and young people with disabilities (up to the age of 18 years).
14. In addition, the cost and flexibility of childcare was highlighted by parents as a significant barrier to accessing childcare. As a result, work will be undertaken throughout 2015-16 to encourage childcare providers and schools to 'bridge' these childcare gaps.
15. During 2015 the main area of expansion in the local childcare market has been with the 'Free Childcare for Two Year Olds' programme. Good quality places are now available across the Borough in the private and voluntary sector and also in two nursery schools and four primary schools. By June 2015 with the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker, more places being implemented in schools and

greater parental awareness, the number of eligible children accessing a place had increased from 57 per cent in January 2015 to 74 per cent or 448 children.

16. An area of future development is the expansion of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds from 15 to 30 hours a week. The government is currently consulting interested stakeholders on the detail of the offer as part of its review of childcare costs. Darlington has expressed an interest in becoming an Early Implementer, subject to further guidance, and this would result in implementation by September 2016 rather than September 2017.
17. Since the last meeting of Council, I have:
 - (a) visited St. Aidan's and took part in a French language lesson with students and met with the Head Teacher to discuss progress to date on school improvement;
 - (b) attended an all member briefing on the recent Ofsted Report findings;
 - (c) met with the Director of Public Health to be briefed on in-year cuts to services as a result of the Chancellor's Emergency Budget;
 - (d) gave prizes to summer reading challenge winners at Crown Street Library;
 - (e) attended the Schools Forum meeting;
 - (f) attended the Darlington Partnership Board;
 - (g) briefings on Children's Services improvements in line with the improvement plan with the Chief Executive, Interim Director of Children's Services and the Leader of the Council;
 - (h) accepted a defibrillator on behalf of Skerne Park Academy from a local charity;
 - (i) had a briefing session with Manchester's Lead Member for Children and Young People about their improvement journey;
 - (j) attended the Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - (k) took part in the Library's 130th anniversary celebrations (unveiled two murals designed with help from school children from Skerne Park Academy and Holy Family Academy);
 - (l) met with Officers to map existing governance arrangements touching on issues involving children and young people;
 - (m) attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
 - (n) met with Red Quadrant- the DfE appointed improvement partners;
 - (o) attended a LGA weekend course for Lead Members for Children's Services in Coventry;
 - (p) chaired the Local Authority's Governor's Appointments Panel;
 - (q) chaired the all-Authority Governor's meeting held quarterly;
 - (r) chaired the Children and Young People's Collective;
 - (s) attended the North East Child Poverty Commission Quarterly meeting in Durham;
 - (t) attended the Local Safeguarding Children's Board;
 - (u) attended weekly briefings with the Interim Director of Children's Services and senior managers.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio