
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.

Corporate Parenting Panel

2. The Panel met on 5 July 2016 and Members were informed by written reports and verbal updates on the Adoption Service, Darlo Care Crew, Darlington Foster Carers Association, Fostering Service and Placement Stability for Looked After Children. Information was shared and an invitation given to Members to attend the Blue Cabin Project Head, Heart and Hands Engagement Day on 16 July 2016. The Head, Hearts and Hands is a project that will make regional arts and cultural activities accessible for looked after children, young people and their carers.
3. The engagement day gave children, young people and carers the opportunity to try different activities and to make suggestions about groups and events that could be set up under the project. The co-ordinator Jenny Young from Blue Cabin attended the Corporate Parenting Meeting on 6 September 2016 and shared more information about how the project was developing and the plans for the future.
4. With regard to Placement Stability for Looked After Children, Members requested that this remain a key focus for improvement with progress being reported to the Panel on a regular basis.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

5. The Board met on 20 July, 2016 and received a report from the Child Death Overview Panel; a joint group across Durham and Darlington where all child deaths are reviewed to consider learning and modifiable factors¹. The full annual report is available on DBC's website: <http://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/local-safeguarding-children-board/information-about-the-lscb/>
6. In a previous report it was noted that a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to develop a multi-agency performance framework. This was presented at the Board meeting and it was well received in terms of presentation and focussing the Board on issues across all agencies. The report enabled other agencies to be challenged at the Board. The performance framework is on a journey, and it will now start to compare year on year quarterly multi-agency data to

¹ If actions could be taken through national or local interventions, the risk of future child deaths could be reduced. (Working Together, 2015)

better monitor the trends and undertake more robust analysis of this data.

7. An Overview report was received which outlined the learning from multi-agency and single agency audits undertaken during 2015/2016. There is a forward work plan for audits for 2016/2017 to seek assurances and quality assure the effectiveness of multi-agency working in Darlington.
8. The Board were updated on the work undertaken by the Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse sub group which focussed on the concerns around children missing from education and children educated from home. The Board was assured there were robust processes in place within Darlington for children missing from education.
9. The Board received an overview report of the findings from an audit (s.11/s1.75) which has recently been undertaken with all primary, secondary and further education colleges in Darlington. The audit looked at eight areas:
 - (a) Leadership and Accountability
 - (b) Recruitment and Selection
 - (c) Complaints, Allegations and Whistleblowing
 - (d) Policies and Procedures
 - (e) Induction, Training and Development
 - (f) Listening to Children and Young People
 - (g) Partnership Working
 - (h) Safeguarding Issues
10. 79 per cent (33) of schools completed the audit and this was the first audit undertaken with the schools by DSCB. The quality of the responses received overall was good. The schools provided a wide range of evidence including the policies and procedures, links to their website and stating who the designated people were. Schools used the audit as an opportunity to ask for support and it also highlighted a mixed understanding of 'privately fostered children' which the Board are to consider how it improves this.

School Forum

11. The Forum will next meet on 4 October 2016.

School Improvement and Educational Performance in Darlington

Early Years Foundation Stage

12. Darlington 2016 Early Years Foundation Stage data submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) continues the trend of improvement in a Good Level of Development. Darlington performance has increased by 3.4 per cent at 69.6 per cent. The gap between the lowest achieving 20 per cent and the cohort median has reduced by 1.2 per cent from Darlington's from 40.6 per cent to 39.4 per cent.

(a) Key Stage 1

The provisional Key Stage 1 Teacher Assessments show Darlington pupils as achieving higher than those of pupils nationally in all subjects.

Subject	Darlington Expected Standard	National Expected Standard
Reading	74.7%	74.1%
Writing	68.1%	65.5%
Maths	75.2%	72.7%
Science	83.8%	81.8%
RWM	63.5%	60.3%

(b) Key Stage 2 Results

Subject	Darlington Expected Standard	National Expected Standard
Reading	68.1	65.5
Writing	73.7	74.1
Maths	74.3	69.5
Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation	73.7	74.1
RWM	56.1	53.1

13. Reading results show that 68.1 per cent of Darlington pupils have achieved the expected standard compared to 65.5 per cent nationally. Darlington's average scaled score was 103 compared to 102 nationally. The scale score benchmark is 100.
14. 74.5 per cent of Darlington pupils achieved the expected standard in Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation compared to 72.2 per cent nationally. The average scaled score was 104 compared to 103 nationally.
15. 74.3 per cent of Darlington pupils achieved the expected standard in mathematics compared to 69.5 per cent nationally. The average scales score for this subject was 103 compared to 102 nationally.
16. 73.7 per cent of Darlington pupils achieved the expected standard in writing based on Teacher Assessments whilst 74.1 per cent of pupils achieved the expected standard nationally. Darlington is less than a percentage point below the national average.
17. 56.1 per cent of Darlington pupils achieved the expected standard for Reading, Writing and Mathematics (combined) compared to 53.1 per cent nationally.
18. Darlington's provisional GCSE results have improved compared to 2015. The proportion of pupils achieving 5+A* -C including English and mathematics is above last year's national average. The 2016 national average will be announced before the end of the autumn term.

School Improvement

19. Officers have also been authorised to continue to review the effectiveness of school improvement strategy and bring forward any proposed revisions. The proposed revisions will take into account the roles and responsibilities for local authorities as outlined in *Educational Excellence Everywhere*.

Youth Employment Initiative

20. A consortia of around 30 Tees Valley providers, headed by the five local authorities, have been successful in securing £19m to deliver the Youth Employment Initiative, which is part funded by the European Social Fund, across the Tees Valley. The project will support 15-29 year olds into employment and will include education and training to help them prepare for the world of work.
21. As part of that bid the Council's Learning and Skills Service was successful in securing £390,000 to support over 180 young people between June 2016 and July 2018. The £390,000 has been matched by £80,000 from Darlington Borough Council and £50,000 from County Durham Community Foundation bringing the funding available up to £520,000. The project is known as Tees Valley Pathways.
22. The Service was also successful in securing funding last year for a Community Learning Mental Health Pilot to deliver adult education courses on mental health, working closely with Darlington Mind. The Learning and Skills Service again secured funding for the academic year 2016/17 which will bring in an additional £128,640.

Children's Commissioning and Contracts – Early Years Provision

23. Take up of two year old funded places is at its highest in Darlington, having increased from 59 per cent in Spring 2015 to 83 per cent of all eligible two year olds in Summer 2016. The increased take-up is due to the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker on the Council's website, the creation of places in schools and increased parental awareness. As well as promoting the delivery of two year old places to new childminders and private and voluntary sector settings, development work is currently taking place to increase the number of places available in the Eastbourne and North Road areas.
24. In September 2017 some three and four year-olds will be eligible for a free 30 hours early years place. This is a significant programme which doubles the eligible free hours.
25. Having submitted a successful expression of interest to the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2016, the Council was invited to submit a capital application for funding to support the local childcare market to deliver +15 hours places for three and four year olds from September 2017.

26. Darlington local authority has been ranked by the DfE as a 'medium' local authority which means that we can submit a maximum of four projects in this capital bidding round. The DfE expects that there will be very high levels of demand for this funding and that the fund will be heavily oversubscribed. As a result, only high quality applications which align closely with DfE criteria will be successful.

Area Locality Teams

27. The Children Centres have continue to offer a full programme through the Summer of activities including outings supported by the parents forum in each centre, with parents involved in the planning and fundraising for activities.

28. The remodelling of the Early help model is continuing and workshops have been held involving staff, partners and further workshops are planned with the Third Sector and service users this will inform the direction of travel and further updates will be available as we progress through the remodelling.

Children's Social Care

29. Children subject to child protection plans has reduced (115 on 15 August 2016) from 135 on 31 March 2016.

30. The number of children looked after is 214 (as of 15 August 2016) which is a slight increase from 205 on 31 March 2016. This increase is being attributed to changes in recent legal decisions regarding the use of Connected Persons Regulation 24 (children placed with family carers).

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Children and Young People Portfolio