
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.

Update on Children's Services Improvements

2. We received a further update on the improvements made to date following the Single Inspection of Children's Services which was undertaken in June 2015.
3. As part of a commitment to provide regular progress reports on the implementation of the Children's Services Improvement Plan and notable activities have included a mid-term Improvement Plan progress by Department for Education (DfE) and improvement partners Red Quadrant; the Ofsted monitoring visit in July 2016; and Improvement Board approval of the update of the Children's Services Improvement Plan focusing on remaining priorities for the remainder of the intervention period.
4. The report highlighted the key areas of improvement, which were identified in the Ofsted visit in July 2016. These included a strengthened leadership team, significant improvements in performance management with a clear scorecard and reporting hierarchy, weekly performance data is provided to allow team managers to understand their workload and caseloads of social workers has reduced and are within target range, improved timeliness of reviews and visits, children's placements are more stable and the focus on the education of Looked After Children ensures that each child has a Personal Education Plan which is regularly monitored with special emphasis on outcomes.
5. Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit on 12/13 October 2016. The third and fourth visits will take place in the first half of 2017 prior to the re-inspection. There will be a second review by the Department for Education and Red Quadrant towards the end of 2016.
6. The Improvement Plan has been re-written to acknowledge what has been achieved so far and to focus on the remaining actions. The revised plan was approved by the Children's Services Improvement Board on 24 August 2016.

Corporate Parenting Panel

7. The Panel met on 6 September 2016. Jenny Young, Co-ordinator from Blue Cabin, attended the meeting as a guest speaker and gave a presentation on the Arts and Culture Project: Head, Heart, Hands. Blue Cabin is leading on the development of Arts and Cultural offer for looked after children and their carers. The presentation gave information to members of the Corporate Parenting Panel about what work

had been done to engage with children, young people and their carers to identify what kind of activities and cultural experiences they would like to be developed as part of this project.

8. The Quarterly Fostering Service Report was presented. Time for Q&A meant that questions that the panel members had were answered by the Team Manager from Family Placement Service.
9. Darlo Care Crew/Participation Officer report was presented by one of the young people who also provided some very positive verbal feedback on one of the Head, Heart, Hands engagement sessions she had attended.
10. Verbal updates were provided by the Virtual School Head on recent examination results for students leaving Year 11 and information shared on the current IHA return figures was given by Service Manager Placements and Adoption.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

11. The Board met on 21 September, 2016. It has a new Interim Chair Simon Hart, who started in early September.
12. The Board agreed to the updated Constitution, Multi-agency Professional Challenge Procedure and signed off the DSCB Annual Report 2015/2016.
13. The Board has agreed in the next period to undertake a multi-agency audit which has a focus on pre-birth assessments, which looks at the compliance against the multi-agency procedures, the views and wishes of both parents and the quality of the pre-birth assessment. The initial headlines from the audit will be reported to Board in November 2016.
14. The Board discussed the communications and engagement work and how to better engage with practitioners and the general public. The Independent Chair will be hosting quarterly forums with practitioners and a working group is being set up with young people to develop a young person's conference based on the success from the conference held in July 2016 by DSCB and Durham Constabulary.
15. The Board has also agreed to switch on their Joint Safeguarding Boards' website www.darlingtonsafeguardingboards.co.uk before October half term, which is another tool to communicate with practitioners, the general public and for them to access timely information such as the multi-agency procedures and training.

School Forum

16. The Forum met on 4 October 2016. The agenda included regular reports concerning the 2016/17 budget position and the work of the School Forum Officer.
17. The Forum received updates on the DfE proposed changes to school and high needs funding which have now been put back until April 18. There are limited changes for the 2017/18 financial year, so the Forum were updated on the budget

planning for school budget shares and the use of DSG budgets in 17/18. The Forum will be updated further at its January 17 meeting.

18. The Forum was briefed on the consultation released by the DfE regarding proposed changes to early years funding. It was notified that this would require a new formula for Darlington from April 17 and would have financial impacts on all providers if the changes are as proposed. The DfE will produce guidance in the Autumn.

Education

19. The academy conversion commercial transfer agreement and leases were completed for four primary schools on 1st October 2016. The trusts became responsible for the control of the schools as academies -
 - (a) Mount Pleasant Primary – now under Heathfield Academy Trust
 - (b) Corporation Road Primary- now under Heathfield Academy Trust
 - (c) St Mary’s Cockerton Primary– now under the Dove Academy Trust
 - (d) High Coniscliffe Primary- now under the Dove Academy Trust
20. A monitoring inspection was conducted, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, at Corporation Road Primary School in September. In accordance with Ofsted’s published procedures for inspecting schools the inspectors reviewed priorities identified for further improvement when the school was inspected in February 2016. The monitoring inspection concluded that the arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
21. Sadberge Pre-School was graded outstanding in their latest Ofsted Inspection report. Three daycare providers, Big Kids Little Kids, Broadway and Play Hut were all judged to be good in their latest Ofsted Inspection report.
22. Of the nine childminders inspected by Ofsted from September to November seven were judged to be good by Ofsted, one was judged to be inadequate and one ‘not-met’.

Locality Teams

23. Consultation work has been undertaken with 76 stakeholders including staff to consider a new delivery model going forward from 2017. Further work is also being undertaken on the delivery of a Children Centre Model for Darlington to ensure delivery is fit for the future.
24. The registrations at the Children’s Centres remain stable with 72 per cent of the 0-5 population across Darlington registered with a Children’s Centre and of those that live in 30 per cent most deprived area 84 per cent of those children 0-5 years are registered with the Centre.

25. The work identifying the families who met the requirements of the Government's Troubled Families continues and the programme is or has worked with over 290 families to date.
26. Darlington is working with the Police to develop an Encompass programme, the purpose of the programme is to share information with schools where domestic abuse has been a feature allowing the school to offer support at the earliest opportunity to pupils that may have been affected.
27. Darlington is to host its first PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) conference on 24 November 2016. Workshops will include sexual violence, British Values and modern technology and sexting. Agencies that have been working toward a PSHE quality mark will be recognised as well awards for Best Practice and PSHE Teacher of the Year.

Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics

28. The number of children who are subject to Child Protection Plans was 121 at the end of September. This is within the 3 per cent reduction on the average number for children this year so far. There are no children who have been on plan for more than 2 years and no children that have become subject to a child protection plan that have been on a plan in the last 2 years. We can conclude that children are having the risk to them reduced in a timely manner and that those interventions are having a long term effect.
29. The number of children who are looked after was 225 at the end of September. This represents an increase of 8 per cent since the beginning of the year. This rise is in the number of younger children that have become looked after through and linked to the rise to the rise in the number of care proceedings.

Children's Commissioning and Contracts

30. Advocacy services for children and young people have been re-commissioned as a collaborative exercise across the Tees Valley, with Stockton Borough Council leading the process on behalf of the five authorities.
31. Darlington was successful in its application to the Health Education England Innovation Fund 2015/16 and has been awarded £111,000 for projects which supported Darlington's Transformation Plan 2015-20. This Plan identified key actions to support the *Future in Mind* themes around improving children and young people's emotional health and well-being. Training projects which are being implemented support the local priorities to promote resilience, prevention and early intervention and by building capacity and capability within schools, social care teams, prospective foster carers, adopters and parents. Successful implementation with 60 staff will provide increased capacity of services to more effectively promote emotional well-being by increasing knowledge, understanding and the development of increased therapeutic skills.

Meetings

32. Since the last meeting of Council, I have:

- (a) Attended a special academies meeting hosted by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle held in Durham;
- (b) Attended the Regional Children in Care Council Conference held in North Shields;
- (c) Attended Schools Forum;
- (d) Attended the “Transforming Tees” Education and Skills Conference held in Middlesbrough;
- (e) Attended the regional “Schools Summit” held in Newcastle;
- (f) Attended the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (g) Recorded a BBC Tees podcast covering a range of issues including those relating to young people;
- (h) Attended an evening celebration with Syrian refugees living in Darlington;
- (i) Held regular briefings with the Director of Adults and Children’s Services and other officers;
- (j) Held two meetings with the newly appointed Independent Chair of the Children’s Safeguarding Board.
- (k) Meetings with the Leader and Chief Executive to discuss changes to governance arrangements relating to children and young people;
- (l) Meetings with the Leader and Chief Executive to discuss unaccompanied asylum seeking children;
- (m) Attended the Improvement Board;
- (n) Attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (o) Attended the National Adult and Children’s Services Conference in Manchester;
- (p) Met with the Darlo Care Crew;
- (q) Attended the Darlington Partnership;
- (r) Chaired a quarterly borough-wide governors’ meeting;
- (s) Addressed two consultation meetings focused on the new Children and Young People’s Plan; and
- (t) Attended the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board meeting.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio