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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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

**Children's Trust Arrangements**

2. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) required all Local Authorities to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board in order to support joint working on health and wellbeing issues. The Darlington Board governance and terms of reference have been reviewed and in the context of Ofsted recommendations Children's Trust 'arrangements' have been strengthened, this was confirmed at the April 2017 meeting of the Board.
3. The children's agenda is now explicitly within the remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Membership of the Board has been reviewed to make sure the Education sector is represented.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

4. The Panel met on 27 June 2017. The Darlo Care Crew were in attendance and presented a report which outlined their recent involvement in the interviews for the post of Service Manager Adoption and Placements. Two young people from the Darlo Care Crew attended the Regional Children in Care Council Residential at Hawkhurst Scout Camp in Kielder between 19 and 21 April and some young people also attended the Regional Children in Care Council Cooking Project held at Billingham Community Centre and learnt how to cook healthy food on a budget. The young people have also outlined the items that the Darlo Care Crew would like regular updates on including apprenticeships and work experiences opportunities for care leavers, free leisure passes for all looked after children and care leavers, for all children in care to keep their social worker until 18 years. They have also been involved with the Graffiti Project and attended the Hands Head Heart Development Day held on 26 April and have met with Blue Cabin to look at how the Graffiti Project can be taken forward. The young people also attended the Vibe Awards held on 20 June.
5. The Panel received information on the provision of accommodation services for the 61 care leavers currently receiving support which will increase to the age of 25 years following the implementation of The Children and Social Work Act 2017, and a report on performance on placement stability and ways to improve stability going forward. Challenges were made by Members of the Panel as to the reasons behind the differences with our regional and statistical neighbours. Additional work is underway on this and updates will be presented at future meetings.

6. The Panel also received reports on the Regulation 44 visits to Children's homes in Darlington; an update on the progress of the Regionalisation Agenda of Adoption in the Tees Valley; feedback on some questions that were raised at the last meeting regarding Therapeutic Services for Looked After Children, Children in Need and Those on the Edge of Care; and training opportunities approved by this authority that are provided to prospective and current foster carers.

### **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)**

7. The Board met on 16 May 2017 where Simon Hart Independent Chair, presented on progress relating to the LSCB/Ofsted recommendations in July 2017. He also provided feedback from a second multi-agency 'practitioner event' aimed at gathering views from practitioners on the Safeguarding Agenda. Simon intends on hosting these events on a quarterly basis with feedback given to Board members.
8. Two reports were presented to the Board; access to Children and Adults Mental Health services (CAMHS) including commissioning intentions, and on the accommodation for Care Leavers. Both reports gave assurance to the Board on current provision for children and their families.
9. There have been two updated child protection procedures since the last Council meeting; Continuum of Need and Multi-agency Referral Form, launched on the 1 June and the Learning and Improvement Framework including Notifiable Incident Procedure is available from the [safeguarding boards' website](#).

### **School Forum**

10. The School's Forum met on 16 May 2017 and the agenda included regular reports concerning the budget and commissioned school services. The Forum was notified that the final budget position for 2016/17 showed an underspend of £238,000 which was agreed to be carried forward into 2017/18 to be used against pressures arising in year.

### **Education**

#### **11. Early years team achievements 1 February 2017 and 31 May 2017 Ofsted inspections**

All Early Year's settings and child minders are currently graded good or better.

Private and Voluntary	4 inspections, 1 Outstanding, 3 Good
Out of school clubs	2 inspections, 2 Good
Child minders	10 Inspections, 1 Outstanding, 9 Good

<b>Private and Voluntary</b>	<b>Previous grade</b>	<b>Current grade</b>
Serendipity	Good	Outstanding
Rosedene	R.I	Good

All Saints	Good	Good
Danesmoor	Good	Good
<b>Out of School Clubs</b>		
Cockerton OoSC	N/A	Good
West Park OoSC	Good	Good
<b>Childminders</b>		
Caroline Kyle	Good	Outstanding
Tracey Waters	Satisfactory	Good
Laura McGraw	Inadequate	Good
Jeanette Ritchie	Inadequate	Good
Margaret Ann Stoddard	Good	Good
Cheryl Sutcliffe	N/A	Good
Alicia Brown	N/A	Good
Carol Firmin	N/A	Good
Debbie Johnson	N/A	Good
Andrea Charles	N/A	Good

### **Extended Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds**

12. We supported two successful bids for capital funding from the Department for Education to extend child care places for 30 hours.

### **Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF)**

13. The £140 million Strategic School Improvement Fund is a grant to support primary, secondary, middle, all-through, pupil referral units, alternative provision and special academies and maintained schools. The grant is to support schools most in need to improve school performance and pupil attainment.
14. The funding is intended to further build a school-led system, and aims to target resources at the schools most in need to improve school performance and pupil attainment; to help them use their resources most effectively, and to deliver more 'good' school places.
15. Teaching schools, multi-academy trusts and local authorities will be required to submit applications for funding to the Department for Education, on behalf of the sector to address local improvement priorities across groups of schools.
16. Darlington is actively involved as a partner in the Tees Valley Plus sub region, in drafting a bid in partnership with Teaching Schools, Multi Academy Trusts, Dioceses and local authorities. The Department for Education has provided criteria for identifying schools that are eligible for school to school support.
17. In order for schools to receive school to school support they must meet at least one or more of the Department for Education eligibility criteria.
18. The first round of the Strategic School Improvement Fund closed on 23 June 2017.

## **Locality Teams**

19. The 21st Annual Vibe Awards were held on 21 June. They continue to be supported by local businesses and community groups and since commencing in 2013 over 1,100 young people have received Awards. This year there were 100 children nominated for awards in four categories.
- (a) Achievement against the odds in Life – 12 individual nominations
  - (b) Contribution to the Community – 4 group nominations and 9 individual nominations
  - (c) Contribution to the Arts – 5 group nominations and 1 individual nomination
  - (d) Achievement against the odds in Learning – 13 individual nominations
20. The evening was well attended and all were entertained by outstanding young entertainers.

## **Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics**

### **Staffing update**

21. There have been a number of permanent employees taking up post in June 2017. The Service Manager for Adoption and Fostering commenced on 1 June and the Head of Assessment, Care Planning and Looked after through Care (LATC) started on 5 June. The Safeguarding, Assessment and Looked After teams have been successful in recruiting permanent Social Workers to a number of their vacant posts. A number of these are converters from agencies who will remain in their current teams; ensuring disruption for children is kept to a minimum. It is expected that many will be permanent posts on 1 July.
22. The overall staff vacancy rate has reduced to 11.5 per cent.

### **Performance**

23. There has been continued progress in children's social care with regard to the completion of assessments within 45 days which reached 97 per cent in March 2017 and 99 per cent of Child Protection Review Conferences were held within timescale. In addition, progress is being made on statutory visits to Looked after Children which reached 94 per cent for March 2017, the highest percentage for the year, against a target of 90 per cent.
24. A Placement Stability Strategy has been developed to help reduce the number of placement moves for children who are looked after, enabling the target to be more in line with the national figure.

## **Children's Commissioning and Contracts**

25. A 30 Hours Childcare places supply audit was conducted during the Spring 2017 term. From September 2017 there will be an estimated 865 30 Hours places

available in the Borough with private day nurseries, pre-schools, nursery schools and units, child minders and out of school clubs. The Department for Education's estimate of the number of three and four year old children who will be eligible is 820. The supply of places will be continuously monitored to ensure a sufficiency of high quality places which provide choice and diversity for working parents.

## **Meetings**

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

- Attended the Best of Darlington Awards Ceremony;
- Attended a sixth form leavers event;
- Met with Durham Constabulary's Safeguarding Lead to discuss children being educated at home;
- Attended weekly briefings with the Director of Children's and Adults' Services and Assistant Director;
- Chaired a borough-wide meeting with governors from schools;
- Took part on the judging panel of "The Big Project" (an engineering opportunity for school children);
- Attended the official opening of the Carmel College 3G pitch;
- Chaired the LEA Governors Appointments Panel;
- Attended Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee;
- Attended a Trustee Meeting re: Crown Street Library;
- Attended and addressed the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Vibe Awards Event;
- Attended the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Attended Proms in South Park;
- Attended the Corporate Parenting Panel;
- Attended and addressed the Department for Education's review meeting re: Children's Services;
- Attended a musical evening at the Sage hosted by the North East Catholic Partnership;
- Took part in the recruitment process re: Head of Education;
- Met with young people competing for the Head Boy and Head Girl position at their school;
- Visited George Dent Nursery on the occasion of their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary;
- Attended and took part in a panel presentation at the National Schools Commissioner's conference in Sheffield;
- Attended the Darlington Partnership Board; and
- Attended a meeting of the Improvement Board.

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