
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's Improvement Board

2. The Improvement Board took place on the 10 January. Reports giving an overview of the improvements made in Early Help and the multi-agency Offer, together with examples of work completed by children.
3. An update report regarding the audit activity for October and November in Quarter 3 was presented which demonstrated continuing improvements in the quality of assessments. Children's Services are working to improve consistency in practice and ensure positive outcomes for children and young people.
4. The board also received an update on the LSCB and a presentation was shared from work undertaken by the Multi-Agency Internet Safety Partnership.

The Children's Trust

5. The Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board (which also acts as the Children's Trust) met on 26 October. Key agenda items pertinent to children and young people, included information about the Child Health Profile 2017, The Schools Healthy Lifestyle Survey, a report on work in progress on the child Healthy Weight Plan and the Special Educational Needs Strategy 2017-2020.
6. NHS members briefed the Board on work in progress on "Future in Mind", the local plan to promote mental health and provision of mental health services for young people.

Education

Special Educational Need and/or Disability Strategy

7. Cabinet has endorsed the draft Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Strategy (SEND) 2017-2020.
8. Although there is no statutory requirement to produce a Strategy it is considered best practice to produce a strategic plan for delivering improved outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and it is expected as part of the SEND inspection regime.

9. When finalised in early 2018 the strategy will be jointly developed and owned by partners from education, health and social care, along with parents and carers through the Parent Carer Forum and will support the One Darlington Perfectly Placed Sustainable Community Strategy priority of 'the best start in life for every child'.
10. An Equalities Impact Assessment is also being completed as part of the strategy development to consider the impacts of the strategy on disabled children and young people, although no negative impacts are expected as the strategy aims to promote opportunities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools Instrument of Government

11. Cabinet has authorised the Assistant Director Law and Governance to complete and formalise the new Instrument of Government for the Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools (currently Borough Road Nursery School and George Dent Nursery School) in accordance with the requirements set out in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.
12. The Federation of the two nursery schools is considered the most desirable method of retaining maintained nursery provision following national budget cuts and the Governors of each school and the local authority believe it is important for both schools to work together to ensure the continuation of high quality education for nursery children in the Borough.
13. Both schools carried out a consultation exercise on the federation of the two nurseries with parents and stakeholders.

Inspection Outcomes

14. Ofsted has published its report following inspection at Heathfield Primary School on 18 October 2017. The school is graded Requires Improvement by Ofsted. Borough Road Nursery School has also been inspected by Ofsted. The report has not yet been published.
15. Two pre-schools have been inspected. One retained good and one gained outstanding from a previously good position. Two out of school clubs retained good in their recent inspections. Holiday play schemes were inspected and the outcome is that one has retained the good grade and one remains compliant.
16. Four child-minders received Ofsted inspection visits, two retained good; one was good on first inspection and one previously good now Requires Improvement.

Education and Skills

17. Work is underway to coordinate the Darlington input into the TVCA Education, Employment and Skills Board. This includes feeding into the draft TVCA Education, Employment and Skills Strategy 'Inspiring Our Future', working on the

devolution of the Adult Education Budget and the new 'Routes to Work' pilot, which aims to support the most difficult to reach into employment and the new School Improvement Board.

School Forum

18. The Forum met on 21 November 2017. This was a special meeting to consider changes to the Darlington school funding formula for 2018/19 in line with changes introduced in the national funding formula from April 2018.
19. School Forum agreed to transfer 0.5 per cent of the schools block budget into the high needs block budget for 2018/19 to cover increased demand. School Forum also agreed to move to the national funding formula over a phased period from April 2018.

Social Care Early Help

20. The Annual PSHE conference was held on 23 November 2017, showcasing the work of our schools in developing and enabling children to access the quality of PSHE learning. The conference highlighted the work of our children who have formed a Cyber Squad (peer support learning and advice on internet safety). The conference also recognised the work of schools. Five primary schools were awarded a quality mark, there were also awards for primary and secondary PSHE leads, as well as a Good Practice Setting which went to Red Hall Primary School. The feedback from the conference was very positive and well received.

Regional Adoption Agency

21. Cabinet has approved the full Business Case to establish a shared Adoption Service for the Tees Valley and approved the delegated powers to Stockton Borough Council who will host the Service on behalf of the five Local Authorities involved.
22. In June 2015 the Department of Education published 'Regionalising Adoption' and requested all adoption agencies in England to consider how to work much more closely on a regional basis. The Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) is aimed at improving the process for children and adopters leading to improved numbers of children being adopted and an improved experience for adopters and improved timeliness overall.
23. It has also been agreed to set aside £80,000 to cover the potential budget gap in the first year, dependant on support costs and interagency fees (Cabinet Minutes 5 December 2017).

Commissioning and Contracts

24. The supply of 30 Hour places is being monitored and to date no parents have reported difficulty in accessing a place. As of 4 December 2017 a total of 686

Darlington parents have received a 30 Hours HMRC eligibility code. Autumn 2017 Term headcount data shows that 497 three and four year olds are accessing a funded place for over 15 hours a week.

25. The local authority is in the process of applying for Department for Education '30 Hours Delivery Support' funding to assist with 30 Hours delivery in the following areas: local childcare sufficiency mapping; provider business sustainability and partnership working; and supporting children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. The closing date for applications was 15 December 2017 and awards will be announced in February, funding distributed in March and the funding must be spent by 31 August 2018.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

26. The Board met on 24 October and 28 November, 2017. The Independent Chair of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) advised Members that the Children's Services improvement Board (CSIB) are satisfied DSCB has made strong progress on the Ofsted recommendations and no longer requires DSCB to submit an action plan. The Director of Children and Adults Services advised DSCB that the fifth Ofsted monitoring visit had taken place and confirmed that compliance was being achieved.
27. The Board was updated on the Early Help arrangements in Darlington and a draft multi-agency Early Help Strategy was presented to Board for consideration.
28. Board received an assurance report from the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) which highlighted an 18 per cent increase in demand. Case duration is currently 26 weeks which is lower than the national average.
29. The Board endorsed the Darlington Protocol which sets out the key roles of each of the Strategic Partnership Boards in Darlington and how they link with each other.
30. Board received a number of annual reports for consideration which included: Multi-Agency Training Annual report, Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report, Managing Allegations and Concerns against Staff, Carers or Volunteers Annual Report, Private Fostering Annual Report and Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report.
31. A report was presented to Board on the multi-agency approach to neglect in Darlington. A multi-agency Neglect Strategy is currently being developed.
32. Board received the half yearly multi-agency data set which provided members with an understanding of the safeguarding profile in Darlington. The DSCB Quality Assurance and Performance Management Sub Group commissioned a presentation from Public Health to provide an overview of the prevalence of children and young people self-harming in Darlington. It was identified that Darlington has lower admissions for self-harm compared to regional and national statistical comparators.

Meetings

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

- (a) Addressed the borough-wide PSHE Conference;
- (b) Attended the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board;
- (c) Addressed the graduates of the Mindfulness Training course at Longfield Academy;
- (d) Attended the Darlington Partnership Executive;
- (e) Attended Cabinet;
- (f) Met with careers advisors about the TVCA consultation on the Education and Skills Strategy;
- (g) Addressed students and families at the Year 11 and Year 13 Presentation Evenings at Carmel College;
- (h) 1:1 meeting with Interim Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Board;
- (i) Attended weekly briefings with the Director and Assistant Director responsible for Children's Services;
- (j) Attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (k) Attended the Children's Services Improvement Board Meeting;
- (l) Held two Young Persons Surgeries/ Advice Centres at the Dolphin Centre;
- (m) Attended the Darlington Social Work Conference held at the Stadium;
- (n) Attended the Regional Schools North East Conference on Governance held at Hardwick Hall, Sedgefield;
- (o) Met with Jonathan Raiseborough, the young illustrator of the soon to be launched Children and Young People's Plan;
- (p) Met with Youth MP hopefuls to discuss their political priorities;
- (q) Attended a meeting at the DfE with the Regional Commissioner (and her team) to discuss Academy Trusts;
- (r) Attended a meeting to discuss youth unemployment and how this can be effectively addressed in Darlington; and
- (s) Attended a gathering to promote literacy organised by Darlington Building Society.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio