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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 main areas of work, undertaken by the Children and Young People's Portfolio.

**The Children's Trust**

2. The Health and Wellbeing Board (which acts as the Children's Trust) met on 15 March. Representatives from education settings were in attendance and participated in discussion about the Health and Wellbeing Plan, and particularly the priorities in relation to establishing the best start in life for children and young people.

**Children's Social Care**

**Ofsted Re-Inspection**

3. Ofsted carried out its re-inspection of Children's Services commencing on 26 February 2018 for a four week period under the Single Inspection Framework. This framework focuses on:
  - (a) Children who need Help and Protection;
  - (b) Children Looked After and Achieving Permanence
    - (i) Adoption performance; and
    - (ii) Experiences and Progress of Care Leavers; and
  - (c) Leadership, Management and Governance.
4. The final Ofsted Report will be published on 21 May 2018.

**Early Help Services**

5. Early Help Staff supported the Bump and Baby Fair at the Library and provided information advice and guidance to new parents. There are a number of new initiatives being rolled out by the Children's Centres:-

'You and your Baby' which is a direct delivery one to one for pre and post-natal for families in need of support;

'Being me' is a program aimed to support young people reflect on their own personal development; and

The PSHE Co-ordinator has delivered LGBT Inclusivity to schools.

6. The Box staff are continuing delivery of Cyber Squad at Hurworth and Wyvern Academies which is a new development aimed at ensuring that young people are aware of on-line dangers.

## **Social Care**

7. The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan is 116. The numbers have increased slightly and are more in line with statistical neighbours offering reassurance that our practices to protect children from harm are robust.
8. Darlington has 221 Children Looked After. Monitoring is in place by senior managers to ratify the rationale for each child entering care.

## **Education Services**

### **Children Services Capital Programme**

9. The release of School Condition grant funding has been agreed, to the sum of £110,000 for the 2018/19 academic year, which will support a range of projects and initiatives across maintained Darlington Schools. In addition, an under-spend of £168,145 from the 2017/18 capital programme will be available to support this year's projects.
10. The Director of Children and Adult Services has been given delegated authority to manage the authorisation of this funding against the prioritised capital investment programme for maintained schools.
11. The Council has also been allocated Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £85,289 for the 2018/19 academic year. This funding is a formula based grant, provided to all maintained schools, to help support the capital needs for their building.

## **School Forum**

12. The Forum met on 6 March and a financial report was submitted which highlighted pressures in relation to High Needs funding.
13. Forum also confirmed the Early Year's Nursery Payment rates for 2018/19.
14. In addition, a paper was presented providing information on Children and Young People's mental health provision.

## **30 Hour Child Care**

15. In early March 2018, the local authority was awarded a grant of £40,760 by the Department for Education from its' 30 Hours Delivery Support' fund. This was to assist with 30 Hours delivery in the following areas:
  - (a) to conduct a ward level parental demand and provider supply survey and a local employer survey;
  - (b) to fund provider business sustainability advice and partnership working support; and
  - (c) to enable an increase in take-up of places by children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities.
16. The quotation for the 30 Hours Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was submitted on the North Eastern Purchasing Organisation Portal, however, there were no submissions due to lack of capacity amongst the Tees Valley providers. The procurement team are currently providing support and the tender has been rolled out to national childcare research consultancies.
17. Following advice from the Council's Procurement Team, two childcare business consultants have been contacted. Action plans and costings have been requested, with a view to the business sustainability work starting with settings and schools in mid May 2018.
18. One Early Years setting and one childminder were inspected by Ofsted and both retained the grade of Good.
19. There are currently five people accessing the Initial Darlington Childminder Training. Three of the five have also recently completed Initial Darlington Childminder Training.

## **Commissioning and Contracts**

20. The Tees Valley Framework contract for the provision of residential care for Looked After Children (LAC) has entered into the first year of optional extension. In the first month of the optional extension the contract has been reopened to the market for new suppliers to bid, in order to maximise placement accessibility and choice.
21. The potential for wider collaborative approaches for Independent Foster Agency (IFA) service provision are presently being explored by all Tees Valley Councils, with consideration being given to participate in a future Regional contract with all 12 Councils in the North East Region.

## Meetings

22. Since the last meeting of Council, I have :-

- (a) visited Theatre Hullabaloo;
- (b) attended a meeting of partners to discuss Youth Unemployment and what we in Darlington can do to address it;
- (c) attended the launch of the new Children and Young People's Plan;
- (d) attended a meeting to prepare for the 100 Years of Suffrage celebration;
- (e) met with Francis Humble, Darlington's Youth MP;
- (f) attended a meeting to discuss the use of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey results;
- (g) met with officers from Department for Education (DfE);
- (h) held Young People Surgeries at the Dolphin Centre (third Saturdays of each month);
- (i) met with and was interviewed by visiting Ofsted inspectors;
- (j) attended briefings with the Director of Adult and Children's Services and various other officers; and
- (k) attended the Health and Wellbeing Board

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