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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.

**Update on Children's Services Improvements and Outcomes of Single Inspection Framework Re-Inspection**

2. Cabinet received an update on the outcome of the Single Inspection Framework re-inspection conducted during February and March 2018. These findings were published in a report on 21 May 2018, which cited considerable improvements since the original inspection in 2015 when the service was found to be inadequate. The report concluded that overall, Children's Services in Darlington are now 'Requires improvement to be good'. Ofsted have made recommendations for the continued improvement of Children's Services and, in response, an improvement plan is now being developed.
3. The Council is now subject to inspection regulation under the Inspection of Local Authority Childrens Services Framework (ILAC), which replaces the Single Inspection Framework (SIF). This is a three year programme designed to be proportionate and more continuous in nature by way of an ongoing dialogue with the Council to assess performance rather than relying on a single inspection in a three-year period. For Council's judged as requires improvement to be good, the programme (over a three-year period) consists of:
  - (a) An annual engagement meeting with Ofsted; this is based on the Council's own self-evaluation, previous inspection findings, the broader issues affecting children's services, and is used to inform themes for subsequent focussed visits. A letter confirming the outcome of the engagement meeting will be sent to the Council but it will not be published.
  - (b) Up to two focused visits, which involve two day visits with Inspectors onsite, looking at one or more aspects of service, themes or cohorts of children. Findings from visits are published but graded judgements are not made.
  - (c) A possible Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), which would replace a focussed visit, which is a multi-agency inspection of a specific themed area, with findings published.
  - (d) One standard two week inspection, which will cover the full range of Childrens Services. Graded judgements are made on the four point scale of inadequate, requires improvement to be good, good and outstanding.

## **The Children's Trust**

4. The Health and Wellbeing Board (which acts as the Children's Trust) met on the 12 July. Representatives from education were in attendance and participated in discussions about actions to promote and improve health. The agenda followed the theme of 'Living Well', which built upon the previous Health and Wellbeing Board meeting with a focus on 'Starting Well', i.e. promoting the 'best start in life'. Areas of particular focus for 'starting well' included promoting a childhood healthy weight and oral health.

## **Corporate Parenting Panel**

5. The Panel met on 24 April 2018. Members were updated on the activities of the Child in Care Council and the Darlington Foster Care Association. Discussions also took place with regard to the range of accommodation available to Care Leavers and the role of the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and Independent Visitors for children looked after. The Panel also received quarter three performance information regarding Children in Care, Care Leavers and the Fostering Service.

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

6. The Board met on 24 April and 5 June. Members held a dedicated session on the findings from the Ofsted Inspection and considered partnership working in relation to addressing the recommendations. Board Members identified actions where they could support delivery against the recommendations either as a single organisation or in partnership, these are being incorporated into the Childrens Services Improvement Plan and will be subject to ongoing monitoring by the Board.
7. Members held a further session on Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI). These have been in place since 2016, and to date have focussed on specific themes. The current theme is a revisit of Child Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Abuse. It was highlighted that Board partners need to have a strong knowledge of strengths and areas of further development with an overall position statement in place to ensure partners are able to respond to any challenges during a JTAI. Partners were asked to contribute to what they felt was currently working well, what isn't working well and what needs to happen next against each of the JTAI themes. The information provided is being collated to inform the development of an improvement action plan which will be monitored by the Board.
8. Members were updated on key themes arising from discussions with the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board at Practitioner Forums. The Forums create opportunity for practitioners to gain a better understanding of the role and function of the Safeguarding Board and for the Independent Chair to hear perspectives from the front line.
9. Members were informed of the findings of the biennial safeguarding audit. The audit was an opportunity for organisations across Darlington to carry out a health check on their safeguarding arrangements to recognise their strengths and weaknesses. Board were advised that the responses to the audit were positive and

the findings of the analysis and moderation reassured the Board that multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Darlington are clear and effective. A challenge was raised regarding the poor return rate for sports and voluntary organisations which also reflected discussions at the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was agreed that further discussions should take place with those organisations to highlight the importance of the audit which will allow them to demonstrate they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. It has been agreed to keep the audit process open throughout the year to allow organisations (including sports and voluntary organisations) to complete audits. Further submissions can therefore be submitted in the forthcoming months.

10. A report was presented to Board advising of the multi-agency strategies to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse in Darlington including the co-ordinated response on prevention, support and protection services. Members were reminded of the Tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Darlington – The Big conversation event held on 6 June which, combined with the report, will define roles and responsibilities of the key strategic partnerships and organisations across Darlington to ensure a coordinated approach.

### **School Forum**

11. The Forum met on 22 May and was presented with regular updates on the budget and high needs. Forum was notified that the high needs pressures for 2017/18 were £1.6 million and it was agreed to roll this forward against the 2018/19 Dedicated Schools Grant allocation.

### **School Governors**

12. A meeting for Darlington School Governors was held on 11 June. A presentation was given regarding training and support for schools with transgender pupils and the potential for schools to gain the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) + Friendly award. Governors were also made aware of the Learning and Skills offer for Family Learning and Parenting courses which can be delivered in schools.
13. Governors had a discussion around the inconsistency regarding penalties for unauthorised absence and the impact of unauthorised absence on both pupils and vulnerable families. Issues regarding the implementation of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in schools was also discussed.

### **School Inspections**

14. The following Ofsted Inspections have taken place:
  - (a) Skerne Park Academy was inspected in May 2018. The school received a grade of 'Requires Improvement' for Overall effectiveness. Personal development, behaviour and welfare and Early Years strands were both graded 'Good'. The report recognises that 'Leaders, including governors, are united in their desire to improve pupils' outcomes'.

- (b) Also in May, Hurworth Primary School was inspected and it was reported that 'The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection'. This was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2014 and was graded as 'Good' again.
- (c) Polam Hall School received its first inspection on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April since becoming a Free School. The school received a grade of 'Requires Improvement' for Overall effectiveness. The Early Years strand was graded 'Good'. The Inspection reported 'The new principal has wasted no time in identifying weaknesses at school and dealing with them. She is tenacious and effective. Aply supported by her senior team, leaders are improving provision at a rapid pace'.
- (d) Rise Carr College and the Home and Hospital Teaching Service were inspected on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 and judged to continue to be 'good'. Inspectors reported that 'The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Members of the management committee (the governors) are ambitious for the pupils and the school, and also that members of the management committee, including two officers from Darlington local authority, oversee the HHTS conscientiously and well.'

## **Early Help**

- 15. During June, Early Help staff alongside Durham Constabulary, Anti-Social Behaviour Teams, and substance misuse services carried out Stay Safe operations in respect of the use of alcohol by young people. During the operation some teenagers were found under the influence of alcohol and taken to a place of safety and directed to support services.
- 16. Early Help along with children's social care, wider council teams and schools were involved in supporting a national social media campaign #purple summer to raise the awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation. The event took place on 15 June in the market square it was well supported by partner agencies and received much traffic on social media.

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

- 17. As at 31 May 2018 the following statistic figures were reported on Child Protection and Looked After Children:
  - (a) 104 Children were registered on a Child Protection Plan.
  - (b) 227 Children were Looked After Children.

18 Comparator data is provided in the table below:

Child Protection Plans 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Rate per 10,000 population aged 0-17yrs				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (provisional)	April 2018	May 2018
Darlington	59.5	30.6	50.8	49.3	46.2
Last year monthly				34.5	35.8
England	43.1	43.3	<i>Not available</i>		
North East	59.5	60.6	<i>Not available</i>		
Stat Neighbour	53.2	53.9	<i>Not available</i>		

Looked After Children 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Rate per 10,000 population aged 0-17yrs				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 (submitted)	April 2018	May 2018
Darlington	90.0	96.8	95.0	100.8	100.8
Last year monthly				95.5	93.3
England	60.0	62.0	<i>Not available</i>		
North East	84.0	92.0	<i>Not available</i>		
Stat Neighbour	83.5	89.4	<i>Not available</i>		

## Children's Commissioning and Contracts

18. A second workshop on partnership and complementary working between the statutory, and voluntary and community sectors took place on 14 June 2018. This workshop focused on how local organisations could work together to develop and deliver innovative and responsive community-based approaches which would support vulnerable families with children living in Darlington. This work will complement the Council's Early Help Offer.
19. The Council has lead responsibility for the management of the new NE12 Residential Care contract for Children and Young People. The first round of contract monitoring has been completed and no issues of contractual compliance were identified.
20. Work is being undertaken regionally to look at the potential benefits of wider collaborative approaches for Independent Foster Agency (IFA) service provision in order to meet current service demands and gaps in provision. A series of engagement events are being undertaken with IFA providers, and following these events, recommendations will be made regarding entering into a future Regional contract with all 12 Councils in the North East Region.

## Meetings

21. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended :

- (a) The Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (b) A Meeting with the Carmel Teaching School;
- (c) The Best of Darlington Awards Ceremony;
- (d) Monthly Advice Centre/ Surgery specifically for young people;
- (e) Darlington Celebration of 100 Years of Women's Votes;
- (f) Darlington Safeguarding Children's Board;
- (g) Weekly briefings with the Director of Adults and Children's Services and various officers (depending on the agenda);
- (h) Domestic Abuse/ Sexual Violence Multi-Agency Discussion;
- (i) Scout taster event at Skerne Park Academy;
- (j) Big Project Finals (Enterprise/ Skills work with Jacobs);
- (k) Student Art Exhibition at Carmel College;
- (l) Met with Bishops from across the region at Longfield Academy to discuss activities for children and young people in Darlington;
- (m) The launch of the Tees Valley Adoption Agency in Stockton;
- (n) The Great Get Together in South Park;
- (o) The 'Fly the Flag' event on Armed Forces Day in the Market Square;
- (p) The Darlington Partnership Executive meeting;
- (q) Corporate Parenting Panel;
- (r) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (s) North East Child Poverty Commission in Gateshead;
- (t) North East Migration Partnership ;
- (u) The Schools Forum;
- (v) Darlington Partnership Board; and
- (w) A Tees Valley Adoption Agency Partners Meeting

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