

**COUNCIL**  
**18 JULY 2019**

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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.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

2. The Panel met on 11 June 2019. This meeting focused on the progress that has been made in developing the new 'promises' for Children in Care. The Panel members were in support of the direction of travel and agreed for the work that is underway to continue.

**Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)**

3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 requires changes in moving from existing Local Safeguarding Boards to create new multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements by September 2019. The new arrangements are to be led collaboratively by three statutory organisations, comprising; Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Police.
4. Although Statutory Guidance is applicable only to children's safeguarding arrangements, Darlington Safeguarding Partners decided to amalgamate both Child and Adult Safeguarding arrangements. The new partnership will be known as 'Darlington Safeguarding Partnership' and will be a joined up approach allowing the best use of resources, enabling the partnership to deliver consistent standards. A shadow Safeguarding Partnership arrangement has been in place since February 2019 and has been driving the transitioning arrangements at pace.
5. The last meeting of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was held on the 2 April 2019, which provided an opportunity for organisations to highlight what they felt had worked well and identify what could be taken forward into the new arrangements. This work enabled focus on the draft plan outlining the new safeguarding arrangements for Darlington.
6. The first meeting of the combined 'Adults and Children Working Partnership Group' was held in 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. An Independent Scrutineer/Chair Ann Baxter was appointed and chairs this newly formed group. Ann will also provide robust scrutiny and challenge across the partnership.
7. This new group is to be supported by four main subgroups designed to take forward the Safeguarding agenda :-
  - Learning and Review Sub Group whose remit will be to identify multi-agency safeguarding learning and practice needs and to oversee Local Learning Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

- Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Group will use data intelligence and audit activity to ensure safeguarding arrangements in Darlington are robust and effective.
  - Child Death Overview Panel
  - Child Exploitation sub group
8. Full details of the arrangements are available in the plan which was published on the [Safeguarding Boards website](#) on 24 May 2019. The arrangements were made live from 1 July 2019. A flexible approach is being taken as arrangements are likely to evolve over the coming months.

### **School Forum**

9. The School Forum met on 17 June. Regular papers were received regarding the budget position.

### **Education**

10. Two maintained schools have been inspected by Ofsted this year. George Dent Nursery School was judged to continue to be an outstanding school. On 3 April Red Hall Primary School was judged to be a 'good' school with 'outstanding' personal development, behaviour and welfare and Early Years provision.
11. On 10 June, Darlington Borough Council hosted a successful Education Conference for all schools and colleges in Darlington. The focus of the conference was inclusion and the value of education to the local economy. Initial feedback from conference participants has been extremely positive.

### **Early Help**

12. The week commencing 3 June 2019 celebrated National Bookstart week across all of the Children Centres, delivering fun and exciting activities to promote speech and language. The main focus was the importance of parents spending quality with their child before bedtime reading stories. Over 100+ families have joined us to celebrate all receiving a copy of 'Car Car Truck Jeep'. Parental feedback was excellent.
13. In June, the Darlington Troubled Families Programme received a spot check on the progress of its work by the Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The programme initially identified 933 families who would benefit from services under this umbrella and to date over 50 per cent of the families have successfully completed the programme. The spot check noted the positive attitude of staff as to the fidelity of the programme and Darlington's commitment to work in partnership with a strong focus on preparing people for work and successfully securing them into employment. There was identification of some innovative work and identified two areas which they wish to share as good practice.

### **DFE visit Care Leavers**

14. On 20 May, during a follow up visit, the DFE National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers Mark Ridell, heard about the rapid progress Darlington has made

on the offer to care leavers since his previous visit in September 2018. A number of good progress outcomes were noted; housing options to care leavers and opportunities within the business sector. He spoke at length with care leavers who were very encouraged by the offer in place.

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

15. As at 31 May 2019 the following figure were reported:

- (a) 132 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan; and
- (b) 282 children were in care

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

16. A new service commenced in early July, which will diversify and modernise the way in which the Voice of Child is obtained. This new service is an app that helps young people communicate their views in a way that suits them. Young people can use the app to say how they are feeling, what support they need and directly influence their support plan with things that are important to them. This will be very a positive development in ensuring that the services are designed and developed around the needs and priorities of young people.
17. Work continues amongst the sub region with regard to the future commissioning arrangements for the delivery of children's residential care post the end of the current Tees Valley residential contract in March 2020.
18. Following joint work between a service provider and the children's commissioning team, remodelled units of self-contained accommodation became available in April for vulnerable young people aged 16 – 24 years who are at risk of homelessness and loneliness and require support in order to live independently. These units of accommodation are now fully occupied, and the shared communal kitchens have been a very successful feature in developing peer support mechanisms. The positive impact of this remodelling is being closely monitored.
19. The Quality Assurance Framework for children's residential care is well embedded with a rigorous system in place for the receipt and screening of Regulation 44 reports. The framework has been further enhanced for the next quarter to focus upon and monitor emerging themes and trends. Information gathered will be used to inform future commissioning intentions.

### **Activities**

20. Since the last council I've been briefed by the Director of Adults and Children's Services and all the senior members of the Children and Young Peoples team. I've subsequently been following a planned set of engagements with our council run facilities which so far have included The One Stop Shop, Learning and Skills, Children's access point, all children's homes, the Looked after Children's Through Care team, Education Partnerships and the Darlington partnership team.
21. The CYP Scrutiny, Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Board and SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) meeting have also been attended in Darlington.

22. Externally I've taken my seat at the NE Lead Members Network with whom I attended a meeting with the Children and Families minister to press for better funding. I also attended the annual report presentation at Adoption Tees Valley.
23. Other events attended were the Best of Darlington Awards, the Polish Schools Celebration Day, Darlington Young Peoples Conference, and Darlington Dance Schools Association Concert.

**Councillor Paul Crudass**  
**Children and Young People Portfolio**