
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

School Term Dates 2020/21

2. The school term date arrangements have been agreed for Darlington's maintained schools for the academic years 2020/2021 and were published at the end of July 2018.
3. A consultation exercise with 42 schools in Darlington, inclusive of their relevant Governing Bodies was undertaken, with 28 responses from Governing Bodies and Head teachers received.
4. 25 Schools/Governing Bodies out of the 42 schools have expressed their preference for the dates in the model calendar and three schools, namely Carmel College, St. Teresa's and Polam Hall will be adopting the same term dates as the other schools in their respective academy trusts.
5. The majority of Academies and Voluntary Aided schools in Darlington have continued to follow the local authority published dates, despite having the freedom to set their own dates.

Corporate Parenting Panel

6. The Panel met on 26 June 2018. Members were updated on the activities of the Children in Care Council and the Darlington Foster Care Association.
7. Discussions also took place regarding the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Children's Social Care and the end of year performance indicators for 2017/18.
8. The six monthly Fostering and Adoption service report was also presented and discussed, and the first annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel was presented.

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

9. The Board met on 7 August 2018 and were advised of the new Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance that was published in July. The new guidance sets out the arrangements for how key safeguarding partners will work together with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area. The Director of Children and Adult Services advised that discussions between

responsible statutory agencies have begun and will be picking up pace over the coming months, with a lead in time of September 2019.

10. The Board received two presentations from the Assistant Director of Children's Services, the first one on the learning identified through Operation Vista. Operation Vista was undertaken due to allegations of sexual abuse by a number of perpetrators. There were a number of lessons to be learned across the partnership following the operation, in particular, it was identified that the current procedure and practice guidance for multiple and complex abuse and notifiable incident reporting processes should be revised. The second presentation was around the learning identified through a recent DSCB Learning Lessons Review for Child D. This review again highlighted that the notifiable incident process should be revised as well as the current Learning Improvement Framework, which should also take into account the revised Working Together guidance.
11. The Board endorsed the multi-agency Neglect Strategy, action plan and practice guidance which sets out the strategic aims and objectives for tackling neglect in Darlington. Board was also provided with an overview of the Checkpoint project and the offence of Child Neglect. This is a deferred prosecution scheme for low and medium risk offenders with an aim of reducing arrests and preventing re-offending.

School Forum

12. The Forum met on 10 July. This meeting was an additional meeting outside of the schedule to present to Forum members the proposed amendments to mainstream SEND funding from September 2018.

Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics – Quarter 1

14. As at 30 June 2018 the following figures were reported on Child Protection and Looked After Children:
 - (a) 112 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan; and
 - (b) 227 children were in care.

Commissioning and Contracts

15. The Tees Valley contract for the provision of Residential Care for Children and Young People has been reopened to new providers. Tender evaluations have taken place and three of the four participating Tees Valley Councils were involved. The reopening of the contract will support an increase in the number of providers and the range of contracted placement options available for Children and Young People in Darlington.
16. Work at a regional level has continued to progress surrounding the feasibility of a regional contract for the provision of Independent Foster Agencies (IFA) placements. A series of workshops have been held with the IFA's exploring the potential advantages of a wider regional solution, the findings of which are being

closely analysed by the individual Councils to ascertain the potential benefit for each Council from a wider regional procurement solution.

Meetings

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

- (a) Briefings with the Director of Adults and Children's Services and various members of that directorate;
- (b) Met with a secondary school teacher re: E-Sports National Competition;
- (c) Darlington Pride event at the Marketplace;
- (d) The Corporate Parenting Panel;
- (e) Carmel College on A-level results day;
- (f) Convened a meeting with chief officers to discuss a student architect's ideas for conversion of derelict land into community space;
- (g) Site visit at a town centre play area;
- (h) Darlington for Culture's volunteer celebration at Theatre Hullabaloo;
- (i) Tees Valley-wide meeting of Lead Members for Children and Young People to discuss our adoption agency;
- (j) The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (k) Chaired the Local Authority Governor Appointment Panel;
- (l) The Darlington Partnership Executive meeting;
- (m) Met with Mark Riddell MBE to discuss our Leaving Care Services;
- (n) The Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (o) Held a surgery for Young People at the Dolphin Centre; and
- (p) A meeting of the North East Child Poverty Commission.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio