

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 25 November 2015

Performance Information

1. As of end October 2015:

Current Children Looked After figures are: 371 116.66 per 10000

Current Child Protection figures are: 188 59.12 per 10000

Current Children in Need figures are: 1313 412.88 per 10000

Operation Encompass

2. Operation Encompass is a recently introduced process whereby Police inform key adults in schools and colleges that a child attending their establishments may have been affected by a domestic abuse incident the previous day. It was launched on 1 October 2015 after a successful trial in Hartlepool. Police Officers have been embedded in the Wellbeing Care and Learning's First Contact team and aim to provide the schools with information about the incident as close to 9.00 am the following day, as possible. This helps the school provide the necessary and appropriate support and guidance to the child and family.

Interface with Adults and Children Protocol

3. A task and finish group is to be established on behalf of the Tees Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedure group and Children's MSCB Procedures group, to look at protocols aimed at helping the transition of vulnerable groups between adults and children's services. This will consider young people who go missing and are possibly at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Children Looked After Achievement Night

4. The Children Looked After Achievement night was held on 5 October at Middlesbrough Riverside Stadium. It was attended by 85 looked after young people who were aged between 3 and 16 years. Their Foster Carers, Children's Home carers, Social Workers and members of the Forum for Looked After Children were also there to support this celebration of some of the great things our children have done, ranging from volunteering to showing sporting prowess to getting fantastic GSCE results.

5. The winner of the Joshua Brudenell award for special achievement went to a young person who, despite great adversity, has managed to become a volunteer in school, learn to horse ride and to secure a place in college. She spoke about her award the next morning, live on BBC Tees –this required tremendous courage.
6. The children were presented with their awards by X Factor's Kerriane Covell. It was a fun evening with a lively disco, face paints, photo booth and (too much!) candy floss. A member of the Children in Care Council (CiCC), which had helped to arrange the night, hosted the event.

Youth Offending Service

7. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales have closed the consultation on midyear budget cuts to Youth Offending Services. The proposal of a 10.6% cut is now being considered by ministers, in light of the comments received, and a decision is likely early in November. The Youth Justice Board have offered no further information on what a midyear cut in 2015/16 cut will mean for the 2016/17 budget allocation.
8. Training has begun in earnest for the staff of South Tees Youth Offending Service in preparation for the introduction of AssetPlus. AssetPlus is a new assessment and planning interventions framework developed by the Youth Justice Board to replace Asset and its associated tools. AssetPlus has been designed to provide a holistic end-to-end assessment and intervention plan, allowing one record to follow a child or young person throughout their time in the youth justice system. AssetPlus focuses on professional judgement of practitioners and will enable better-focused intervention plans to improve outcomes for children and young people. This new framework builds on previous assessment tools used in youth justice settings (for example Asset, Onset, SQIFA, SIFA) incorporating both the lessons learned from their use since 2000 and new insights from research and the academic literature. It is also designed to reflect the changing context for practice in which greater emphasis is now being placed on flexibility and the importance of professional discretion (Munro, 2011).

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

9. Over the past year Stockton and Hartlepool Councils have been developing a joint multi agency safeguarding hub. At the time Middlesbrough Council and Redcar and Cleveland Council chose to observe and learn from the development process. Subsequently both of the councils have opened a dialogue with a view to developing a multi-agency safeguarding hub south of the river. Whilst it is in its early stages of development, work has been undertaken to develop common procedures and thresholds.

Tees-wide Adoption Agency

10. The five Tees authorities are currently waiting for the Department for Education to approve their submission to develop a Tees-wide Adoption agency. The proposed arrangement will provide a wider choice of placements for children and speed up the adoption process.

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member, Children's Social Care