

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 19 October 2016

Performance Information

1. As of 26 September 2016:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC) figures are: 412 (128.89 per 10,000)

Current Child Protection (CP) figures are: 270 (84.47 per 10,000)

Current Children in Need (CiN) figures are: 1267 (396.38 per 10,000)

Assessment & Care Planning

2. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of referrals received into the service during the month of September. Some of this may be attributable to the start of the new school term, with ACPT Team 7 having increased from 115 to 168 cases further to their recent duty week.
3. It is however positive to note that since the writing of the previous briefing, CP numbers have remained stable, with LAC numbers reducing. Planning towards a new operating model for Safeguarding & Children's Care remains very much at the forefront of moving practice forward, with a view to tackling, and more importantly reducing, the high numbers of CP/LAC within Middlesbrough, in order to bring the authority in line with its statistical neighbours.
4. Workforce development remains a priority across the ACP Teams; thirty newly qualified social workers remain on the AYSE programme, with six portfolios to be presented to panel on 21 October, followed by a further six on 17 November.
5. The department also continues to work closely with the University and currently has a number of social work students on placement across the eight teams as well as other specialist areas of the service.

Fostering & Adoption

6. There are two preparation groups running in the next month, responding to an increase in enquiries, particularly around Fostering. The Team has had a consistent, physical presence in various key sites in the town centre promoting Foster Care and meetings with the Marketing Manager will lead to consistent, corporate support to Recruitment Activity. There are nine potential Fostering Families and three proposed Adoptive families.

South Tees Youth Offending Service

7. The STYOS Annual Strategic Plan has now been approved by the YOS management board and signed off by the Youth Justice Board. The plan sets out key achievements from the previous year, outlines performance against key performance indicators and sets out service priorities for the forthcoming year.
8. STYOS has identified seven strategic priorities for 2016/17 which are:
 - ensure effective arrangements for the delivery of out of court disposals and prevention services,
 - develop intervention programmes to reduce re-offending and prevent repeat custodial sentences,
 - reduce the numbers of Looked After Children within the criminal justice system,
 - ensure that the voice of the young person is evidenced in the work of STYOS and that we strive to achieve positive outcomes for young people,
 - investigate alternative models for delivering Youth Justice Services locally to mitigate against further budget changes and reductions,
 - identify opportunities to engage with the communities we serve to promote the work of young people subject to YOS intervention, and
 - ensure the successful introduction of AssetPlus as the primary assessment and planning tool for working with young people.
9. Progress against each priority will be monitored by the STYOS management team on a monthly basis.

Children with Disabilities

10. There has been an increasing demand on the Occupational Therapy service within the team and a resulting back log of assessments and the potential for families to seek higher tariff support for their children. Funding has been secured from the demand budget to appoint one additional Occupational Therapist and arrangements for the interviews have been made.
11. Opportunities for voluntary work will be enhanced for older young people as connections are made between Pathways and Family Placement. This will look to support the Children in Care Council and assist with Foster Care recruitment.
12. Good progress continues to be made in relation to the development of our Resources Services. The South Tees Home Support Service which is our in-house service which provides support to some of our most vulnerable children was recently inspected by the Care Quality Commission and we are pleased to say that they gave it a rating of "Good".

13. The report stated:

Staff were clear about the vision and values of the service which included privacy and dignity for all those using the service, independence, fulfilment and choice... Relatives told us that they had developed good relationships with the service and valued the transparency they had built up with them. One relative told us "The personal bit is good. I know staff very well and they are very approachable. They are very good at getting on with it."

Learning and Development

- 12 A learning event took place on 15 September based on a historic child Sexual Exploitation Case (CSE). It utilised an innovative approach to test the current Procedures on a historic case. The objective was to test multi-agency understanding of current procedure by 'walking through' an historical case using the current procedure as a guideline. This will be used to inform planning for future training needs based on the level of procedural understanding from a range of professionals.
- 13 The outcome of the day was very positive; it supported reflective practice, embedded knowledge of the Procedures and facilitated collaborative working. Middlesbrough MSCB works with Redcar MSCB to deliver Multi Agency Safeguarding Training, this training is well attended by our Social workers and delivers to a high standard. This is an example of how the learning is being developed and linked directly to our practice.,

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member, Children's Social Care