

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 6 September 2017

Children's Trust

Following recent Ofsted inspections including the SEND and Safeguarding (SIF) Inspections, it was highlighted that the delivery of our responsibilities to children and families can be improved by greater strategic governance via a mature partnership, integrated business intelligence and improved joint commissioning.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed the need to change the current delivery arrangements for children and families and recognised that joint working across partners in Middlesbrough could be strengthened by the creation of a strategic Children's Trust Board. In addition discussions have also taken place with a range of partner organisations who are in agreement that this represents a positive development. The Council's Executive will consider the proposal at its meeting on 5 September 2017.

Partners have indicated support for the proposal as an opportunity for better integration and collaborative working, recognising that the proposed Trust would be part of a wider system of agencies and partners which would share the aim of securing better outcomes for children and families.

It is proposed that the current children and families governance framework is reviewed and a Children's Trust Board is established. The new Trust would act as an executive group to oversee the delivery of better outcomes for children and families and as a result would be responsible for:

- providing strategic leadership and direction;
- driving change, and developing and consolidating changes and improvements already underway;
- developing multi-agency teams and integrated services;
- supporting best practice across all agencies working with children's and families in Middlesbrough;
- strengthening the voice of the child; and
- shared responsibility for achieving better outcomes for all children and families, and for reducing inequalities between the most disadvantaged children and their peers.

The Board's remit will be to:

- develop an agreed integrated vision, strategy and set of common priorities;
- provide inter-agency governance with regard to its implementation;
- oversee the commissioning of integrated services for children, young people and their families on behalf of the Council, NHS, voluntary and community sector, police and other key stakeholders.

The Board will be chaired by the Executive Member for Children's Services, and board membership will be drawn from senior leaders from the following agencies:

- Middlesbrough Council
- Cleveland Police
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- James Cook Hospital
- Public Health
- Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency
- School representatives

Assessment and Care Planning

Social work interviews are to take place again later this month, with some vacancies remaining across the Assessment & Care Planning Teams. In order to reduce the number of agency social workers used across the service, the appointment of four peripatetic social workers has been approved; however, to date, there have been insufficient candidates to allow for the additional posts to be filled.

The ACP Teams remain very busy, but committed and excited about the Transformation Agenda.

Specialist Services

Gleneagles Short Break Unit – retains its 'outstanding' Ofsted grade and each subsequent Regulation 44 visit has recognised the efforts of the Manager and Staff to continue its improvement and development. The Manager and H o S are currently looking at the capacity of the unit to offer beds to other Local Authorities as a means of bringing in some income.

Adoption – the work on the RAA continues – a sticking point has been the 'harmonisation' of proposed model with the available funding. The Tees Valley is not alone in the problems it is encountering, as a recent learning event has shown that all RAAs at all stages of development have had the same issues.

Middlesbrough's Adoption recruitment has slowed down in recent months, as has that of our partner LAs, so we are working together on a Tees Valley mini-campaign to give recruitment a boost. Though this is not yet in place, we have seen an upturn in interest in the last few weeks and now have a group commencing in September with nine potential adopters.

Looked After Children – we will be celebrating achievement on 22nd September and we are expecting a very good turn-out, as last year. A 'Little Mix' tribute band will be helping the proceedings along.

Transformation Support, Children's Homes and Resources

Resource Team

The Resource Team currently consists of a Contact Service, Home Support Service (parenting support 0-11 and 11-18), Returning to Middlesbrough Project (edge of care support) and Home Support for Children with Disabilities. An interim review has been undertaken regarding service delivery and proposals are drafted regarding the potential reconfiguration of the service in line with the vision 'Believe in Families'. The redesign will ensure that the needs of children with disabilities continue to be met to the high standard already set; however there will be a significant shift to an edge of care service, to support more children to either stay at home or return home, and other lower level support more appropriately aligned to non-statutory services.

Children's Homes

The three children's homes continue to be fully utilised, however there are children being supported to independence and supported to return home regularly. Work has commenced to strengthen the skills and resilience of staff teams, to provide care to our most complex young people. Our view is that their needs are best met in Middlesbrough, where a joined up approach to their care can be offered by professionals they know and professionals who can remain involved should they return home. In addition, with very close links with 'The Returning to Middlesbrough Project' (edge of care support), there is a greater chance of successfully returning young people home.

Transformation

The Programme Manager and Project Managers posts have been advertised with interviews scheduled for September 2017. There is work underway to sequence the projects and a communications strategy is in the process of being implemented.

The first wave of Restorative Practice Training for the management team is underway, with consistently positive feedback having been received to date.

Training and staff development

We currently have 23 social workers near the end of their Assessed and Supported Year in Practice (ASYE). There are a further two due to complete in September, two in December and the remainder in May 2018. We have a wide ASYE workshop plan for the year, with eleven newly qualified social workers at the start of the programme. They receive a range of training workshops and skills sessions to support their practice and confidence. It includes training in completing Single Assessments, CIN Reviews, Core Group meetings, CIN Plans, using approved social worker tools and SMART Outcomes. We currently carry out monthly reflective group supervisions, covering, to date – challenging teenagers, risks involved with CSE, neglect, absent males, family conflict, domestic abuse, and use of Family Group Conferences.

We are currently working with the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board to review our Neglect Strategy and how we work with families where this is an issue. We are undertaking audits with our partners to understand how well we are doing in this area and what we need to do differently. Alongside this we have commissioned, in partnership with our colleagues, an evidence based tool developed by the NSPCC – the Graded Care Profile. This will support our work in this area and aims to improve outcomes for children. This will start in September and an implementation plan is being developed with partners in the delivery and training of this tool.

Further to this we are working collaboratively with our partners in health in the facilitation of group supervision training which will support effective practice through the use of reflection and learning.

There are a number of developments regionally being taken forward through the Departments of Education and Health Teaching Partnership. This aims to improve the quality of education received by social work students and to develop innovative high quality training for social work students and qualified practitioners. This forms part of the wider government social work reform agenda.

Partnerships

Youth Offending Service

The Youth Justice Board published their annual report in July 2017. The report contains information in relation to finance, performance and future plans. It also highlights the national reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system in recent years, the reduced numbers of young people in custody and in re-offending rates. The full report can be found on the Ministry of Justice website.

The way in which Youth Offending Teams are inspected is being revised by HMIP and a number of consultation events are being held throughout September and October to ascertain views on changes to the structure, timing and regularity of inspections. A representative from South Tees will be attending one of the consultation events.

Troubled Families

A decision has been reached to retain the current Payments-by-Results (PbR) model for the remainder of the programme (with a revised and updated financial framework). To improve the current PbR model, the DCLG want to work closely with Troubled Families teams to jointly review the financial framework to make sure it's up to date and reflective of the excellent work being carried out across the country. The DCLG plan to write to Chief Executives to provide updates on the developments.

Performance Information

As of 24th August 2017:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC) figures are: 467 (145.1 per 10,000)

Current Child Protection (CP) figures are: 263 (81.7 per 10,000)

Current Children in Need (CIN) figures are: 1246 (387.2 per 10,000)

The rate per 10,000 is now being calculated using the mid 2016 population estimate of 32,180.

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member, Children's Social Care

