

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

6 December 2017

Performance Information

As of 31st October 2017:-

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| Current Children Looked After (LAC) figures are: | 442 | (137.4 per 10,000) |
| Current Child Protection (CP) figures are: | 237 | (73.6 per 10,000) |
| Current Children in Need (CIN) figures are: | 1372 | (426.4 per 10,000) |

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

Principal Social Worker for children in Middlesbrough

The Chief Social Worker for children visited Redcar on 14 November. Middlesbrough's Principal Social Worker was involved with frontline staff from Middlesbrough, who showcased our good practice.

There was an opportunity for the regional PSWs to meet the Chief Social Worker, and they met in an open session when she discussed many of the changes on the horizon for children's social workers. This included the new Accreditation and Assessment Scheme, best practice and research and consultation on the new Working Together statutory guidance



Middlesbrough staff were commended for their showcase practice on the Graded Care Profile Neglect tool and an innovative Group Supervision Model being applied across Childrens services.

Assessment and Care Planning

All teams continue to be trained in Restorative approaches with families, with training being completed through November, December and January.

All team managers are attending a briefing regarding management training from Front Line – this is in line with upskilling our management team.

Caseloads are high at present; however we are working with managers to reduce these and close / step down cases. Due to the teams being busy, this is taking longer than expected.

Experience levels across the teams continue to cause some concern in relation to the balance of experienced workers and newly qualified workers – we are resurrecting the retention working group to look at any solutions to this.

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 HoS continue to look at the capacity of the unit to offer beds to other Local Authorities as a means of bringing in income.

Adoption and Fostering – The work on the RAA continues. Middlesbrough’s Executive agreed the Full Business Case at the meeting on 21 November. Darlington will be presenting to their executive committee in December, which has slightly delayed progress.

We have 116 foster carers approved to date and this includes ten new foster carers since April, and a further eight connected person carers.

Looked After Children – The celebration event was a great success this year and well attended. We have agreed to review this for next year to try to capture those children who don’t wish to attend such a formal event or who may be unable to attend, so that we ensure that all looked after children are recognised for their achievements. The looked after children’s team have vacancies at present and we will be interviewing for social workers this month.

Pathways – The team have now recruited to vacancies and I am pleased to say that a care leaver has been appointed as a personal advisor. Work is underway to look at accommodation for care leavers who require higher levels of support and we are working closely with colleagues from the housing sector. We have eleven young people in higher education.

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.

Following an interim review regarding service delivery and proposals drafted in line with the vision ‘Believe in Families’, a proposed structure is being job evaluated. 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. Feedback regarding the early stages of the 'Edge of Care Support Service' (currently the Returning to Middlesbrough Project) is very positive, including feedback from the judiciary, who have requested that we give the Family Justice Board a briefing.

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 is ongoing to strengthen the skills and resilience of staff teams, to provide care to our most complex young people. The aim is for their needs to be met in Middlesbrough if at all possible, 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 Edge of Care Support Team (Returning to Middlesbrough Project), there is a greater chance of successfully returning young people home. The three homes continue to provide care to young people with increasingly high level of needs.

South Tees Youth Offending Service

STYOS has recently been successful in securing some one-off funding to train staff to identify speech, language and communication difficulties. The project is a collaboration across three CCGs and Youth Offending teams – Stockton and Hartlepool, Darlington, Middlesbrough and Redcar and two acute providers – North and South Tees. The project also has the support of the Cleveland Police Crime Commissioner.

Research has shown that an estimated 60% of offenders in the youth justice system have a communication difficulty. Improving the communication skills of young offenders can significantly reduce the risk of reoffending, increase access to rehabilitation, treatment programmes and can improve an individual's chances of gaining employment. Training will assist staff to understand the presentations and behaviours of young people with speech language and communication needs, improve engagement and participation, improve assessments, and provide tools and resources to deliver interventions to this cohort.

Risk and Resilience

The Risk and Resilience Coordinator arranged and coordinated the attendance of ten children and young people and two teachers from Unity City Academy to undertake training under the Diana Award 'Be Strong Online Ambassadors' scheme.

Sponsored by Vodaphone and delivered through the national Diana Award, this type of training relates to the recommendations made by the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel in their recent report on 'Sexting'. UCA was the first school in Middlesbrough to train Digital Leaders, and Middlesbrough are one the first areas in the UK to undertake this national training programme. Aimed at young people aged 13 to 19, the training is described as follows:

"an all-day training event which accredits the ambassadors to run online safety campaigns, sessions and assemblies in their respective school(s), to help their peers increase their digital resilience".

This type of programme is a key recommendation in reports from the Children's Commissioner and the House of Lords Report "Growing up with the Internet";

The topics covered included:

- *understanding the issues affecting young people online*
- *how to train peers to be digitally resilient*
- *overview of the topics covered by the programme – cyberbullying and digital footprint to sexting, digital detox and more*
- *the positives and negatives of the online world*
- *how Be Strong Online Ambassadors can raise awareness of various online topics in their schools*
- *a networking session with students from other schools to share ideas*
- *an assessed "mini teach" session*
- *an action planning session – helping students to think of a plan to take back to school and set targets and aims for their Be Strong Online work.*

The feedback from children and staff described the training as:

- *creating a huge buzz amongst teachers and young people,*
- *they would recommend every Middlesbrough School, if not every school in Teesside, to attend*
- *the young people from UCA were outstanding*
- *the event provided a great opportunity for the young people to meet and share ideas with industry professionals and young people from other UK schools.*

Councillor Michael Carr

Executive Member, Children's Care