

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 28th March 2018

Performance Information

As of 28th February 2018:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC):	454 (141.1 per 10,000)
Current Child Protection (CP):	285 (88.6 per 10,000)
Current Children in Need (CIN):	1391 (432.2 per 10,000)

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

Children's Trust Board

The Children's Trust Board, made up of representatives from all partner agencies is making good progress in developing an Early Help strategy.

Vision

A common ethos has been developed to shape the way the partnership supports families:

- promoting a **strength-based approach**;
- recognising family **goals and priorities**;
- ensuring that families are **active participants** in shaping services;
- focusing on helping families to **build resilience and problem-solving capacity**, as this should reduce their reliance on services over time.

What do we mean by Early Help?

1. Universal – low risk, available for all
2. Prevention – preventing problems from arising
3. Early Intervention – problems dealt with early, so they do not escalate.
4. Targeted – medium risk and complex intervention required

Five guiding principles:

A strong universal offer

We want all children to get the best start in life. Our universal services start by supporting all Middlesbrough families from before the birth of their children.

Clear pathways to support

We want all families to have easy access to support when it's needed. We will clearly explain the support available and make it easy for families to contact services and professionals themselves. We aim to deliver consistent, joined up support across the age range, focusing on times of vulnerability such as the primary to secondary school transition. We will listen to children and families to ensure we have the right services available and they are meeting their needs.

Joining-up how we work

We want all families to experience an integrated approach to assessment, planning and support. Using a single process across Middlesbrough's partnership will reduce the danger of duplicating effort and avoid conflicting targets. We will also join-up our work with families and work in partnership with them.

Supporting the whole family

We want to provide support that responds to the needs of the whole family. Support will recognise the strengths of families and work alongside them to build resilience. Families will be engaged at every stage and their experiences will help shape and improve our services.

Measuring the difference we make

We want families to receive support that meets their needs and makes a difference. We will measure the impact of our services seeking the views of families about what works well or what could be improved to incorporate this in to our future planning across the partnership.

Agencies across the partnership will be responsible for delivering different elements of this offer, according to their role.

Imperative 1 – Increase the number of families we work with at an Early Intervention threshold for which adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) feature in the household:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse and neglect
- Domestic violence
- Household substance misuse
- Household mental illness
- Parental separation / divorce
- Bereavement of a key adult
- Incarceration of a household member

Imperative 2 – Strengthen families to reduce the number of children who are looked after.

EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2018 - 2022				FAIRER, SAFER, STRONGER			
Challenges	Vision	Priorities	Impact	The voice of Children and Families will be integrated into all of our business			
			Measurable outcomes	Short (January - April 2018)	Medium (May - Sept 2018)	Long-term (Oct 18 - Aug 2019)	
Ensure Thresholds are understood across the Partnership	We will work together with you, so that you can make the most out of your family life, to be healthier, to achieve, to work, stronger and enjoy your lives together.	Strengthen the Strategic Partnership's commitment and response to Early Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of My Family Plans (MFP) completed by the Partnership. Increase number of MFPs completed for children who fall into Middlesbrough's key vulnerability groups. Increase number of MFPs initiated for children at pre-birth and aged 0-18. Increase % MFP closed due to needs met. Increase % of CIs and CAs with a MFP plan to step up. Reduce % contacts and referrals resulting in RFA. Reduce % of re-referrals. Monitor the number of Professional Escalation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-circulate the Threshold Guidance to the Partnership via the LSCB. Focus on conversations and sharing information. Strategise the remit of CAs in LSCB Business Plan. Develop an EH and Prevention Partnership Sub-group which reports to the LSCB and Children's Trust. Stronger EH accessible process through which practitioners can discuss decisions made. Develop an EH Partnership contract and co-ordination work stream. To include a realignment of the Family Casework team. Review the EH Process and services the Commission for CYP identified as at risk of CSE or Missing from Home. Integrate the EH Hub into the Front Door. Review the role of the MROA in the Early Help Hub. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a transformation programme which will support an integrated local working model. Integrate Early Help into the MAST. Develop the written national feedback process. Provide further training and access to support for all staff to support the identification of Early Help. Develop Targeted resource for children in years 5-15. Develop the Profiles of all the Children we work with to support our strategic approach to improvement and Joint Commissioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Multi-agency pool of expertise to support decision making in Local by Teams. Launch the MAST 	
Strengthen ownership of risk across the Partnership			(Developing multi-agency decision making with a pool of expertise and a shared approach to risk management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of Specialist Service cases for which the ACDs are a feature have reduced. The proportion of Early Help cases for which the Toxic Trio are a feature have increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a profile of these families with information gathered from the Partnership Revise and share the information sharing process to support the early sharing of information. Map and explore current services available and their impact. Mapping to also identify services available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an effective analytical model / process of the intelligence to support a proactive approach to supporting families. Develop a multi-agency shared, iterative pilot for East Middlesbrough. Develop a Whole Family Assessment and One Team Approach. Deliver initial team Topic Trio training about the Partnership, including Adult Services. Agree a partnership, joint-commissioned approach to targeting identified families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate findings from the East Middlesbrough pilot into the Strategic Partnership approach and commissioning of Early Help across the town.
Strengthen the Front Door		Increase the number of families we work with with an Early Intervention threshold, for which the Adverse Childhood Experiences feature in the household	Strengthen families to reduce the number of children becoming Looked After.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the rate of LAC. The proportion of Early Help cases (L2 / Q) have increased compared to Specialist Service cases (LAC). Children and Families feedback that Early Help Services are effective and are meeting their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Quality of CIs and step down to CAs. Review the support and services available to support Edge of Care. Integrate the use of Restorative Practice and Family Group Conferences in Early Help. Increase Social Workers' uptake in the Family Casework teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission the EH Module on Liquid Logic to support a seamless journey for the child's needs and transitions. Pilot targeted support / resource for Pre-LAC profile. Pilot the Resilient support for a range of care. Integrate Signs of Safety in My Family Planning and Review Processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Multi-agency pool of expertise to support decision making in Local by Teams
Adverse Childhood Experiences				Re-aligning Performance Data and Quality Assurance at the heart of Early Help Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of monthly audits completed by Team Managers. Increase the number of multi-agency audits. Increase the number of cases audited judged as Good. Reduction in the number of cases audited judged as Inadequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the QA Framework, integrate multi-agency audits and shadowing. Launch a Good Practice Portal. Finalise the Service Dashboards and Performance governance processes. Develop a Voice of the Child strategy which supports participation and strengthens advocacy. Secure there are clear Participation performance measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Policies and Procedures. Integrate the Voice of the Child into QA processes. Develop the role of the Stronger Family team to support reflective practice and supervision in the Partnership. Embed ongoing national learning - action set learning in Team Plans. Develop an Early Help Practice Framework.
Quality of CYP Practice		Demand on Services	Support to CYP with particular vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of monthly audits completed by Team Managers. Increase the number of cases audited judged as Good. Reduction in the number of cases audited judged as Inadequate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Quality of CIs and step down to CAs. Review the support and services available to support Edge of Care. Integrate the use of Restorative Practice and Family Group Conferences in Early Help. Increase Social Workers' uptake in the Family Casework teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission the EH Module on Liquid Logic to support a seamless journey for the child's needs and transitions. Pilot targeted support / resource for Pre-LAC profile. Pilot the Resilient support for a range of care. Integrate Signs of Safety in My Family Planning and Review Processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Multi-agency pool of expertise to support decision making in Local by Teams
Performance data and QA				Delivering Good Consistent practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Quality of CIs and step down to CAs. Review the support and services available to support Edge of Care. Integrate the use of Restorative Practice and Family Group Conferences in Early Help. Increase Social Workers' uptake in the Family Casework teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission the EH Module on Liquid Logic to support a seamless journey for the child's needs and transitions. Pilot targeted support / resource for Pre-LAC profile. Pilot the Resilient support for a range of care. Integrate Signs of Safety in My Family Planning and Review Processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Multi-agency pool of expertise to support decision making in Local by Teams

Assessment and Care Planning

Caseloads are being managed, though some individual caseloads are particularly high due to sickness and complexity of work. The high caseloads are being individually reviewed between the Head of Service and Team Managers and actions plans put in place to reduce them through transfer to other teams and the employment of agency social workers to meet demand

There continues to be a rolling advert for social workers and Assistant Team Managers and this has led to successful recruitment.

We are proactively reviewing and improving our recruitment and retention policy for social work staff. This has included reinstating the recruitment and retention task group and consideration of a recruitment and retention allowance for social workers.

Assessment and care planning social workers and team managers have consistently been nominated for star of the month awards and this has been good for morale and feeling valued.

The news in relation to the increased capacity of social workers and the Recruitment and Retention paper being presented has received very good feedback from social workers who are welcoming the support.

Resource Team

The redesign of the current Resource Team (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) is underway. Completion of the redesign will coincide with the implementation of a Family Group Conference Team in

June 2018. The work of the team will focus significantly on edge of care support, reducing the numbers of looked after children.

Children's Homes

We now have a Children's Homes Operations Manager in post, appointed as 'responsible individual of all four homes. The manager will drive quality practice and quality care, with the aim of all four homes achieving an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating. Work continues to strengthen the skills and resilience of staff teams, to provide care to our most complex young people, with the view that their needs are best met in Middlesbrough. There has been significant progress made regarding links to our communities, through engagement with residents and as a result there have been no issues raised for a number of months, such as reports of low level disturbance or anti-social behaviour. Restorative Practice is becoming embedded into the homes, positively impacting on relationships with young people and their behaviour; there has been a significant reduction in sanctions, damage to property and police involvement.

There is a review of children's home provision underway to consider existing provision and what is needed in the future. The focus of additional provision will be edge of care support, with the aim of reducing the numbers of looked after children and strengthening families. The very close links with the Edge of Care Support Team (Returning to Middlesbrough Project) continues and will be strengthened as a consequence of the review process, improving the chances of children remaining at home or successfully returning home from care.

Gleneagles short breaks provision was inspected by Ofsted in February 2018 and received an overall 'Outstanding' rating.

South Tees Youth Offending Service

Recent communication from the Youth Justice Board outlined the intention for our secure estate colleagues to join youth offending teams (YOTs) in having full use of the Asset Plus assessment tool for assessment and planning purposes. This means that for the first time both parties will share a common framework. There will be a phased roll out commencing in February 2018 (subject to local establishment plans).

STYOS has been working with the newly appointed Voice of the Child Participation Co-ordinator within Middlesbrough Council to increase ways in which we listen to and capture the voice of young people subject to YOS supervision. As a result, a group of young people open to the service will be enhancing the contact rooms by creating a 'What is YOS' wall, focusing on 5 key areas, namely Consequences, Reparation, Restorative Justice/Victims, Attendance Centre and Successes. The young people will complete this project through February half term and the Easter holidays as part of targeted constructive use of leisure sessions.

Troubled Families

The Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government (DHCLG) has recently introduced a new financial framework for the Troubled Families programme. Amongst the changes are how claims are made for progress against the school attendance

indicator. Although the financial framework has introduced some minor changes, the way in which the programme runs locally will be unaffected.

Looked after children

A refreshed sufficiency strategy is being written which aims to meet each of the recommendations within the market position statement and need assessments. It is to be presented to the Children's Director in March 2018.

The Fostering Marketing Strategy will look to increase the numbers of foster carers in Middlesbrough through new and innovative marketing approaches. This will be finalised in late March 2018, with a first review date of October 2018. It will be a three year strategy.

We have entered into a new contract with Cambian following publication of a Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency notice which was approved by Executive. This has allowed us to carry on the contract for a further 5 years for 7 beds at a fixed rate of £2,800. The placements in this provision have been settled for some time and we will continue to review the provision in line with our developing strategies that will feed through the Market Position Statement and Sufficiency Assessment.

The Independent Fostering Agency contract has just been awarded and commenced in January which focuses on a wider delivery model encompassing specific need groups.

This contract will run for a year, during which time a decision regarding wider regional commissioning through the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) will be made.

It is anticipated that, for proof of concept for the new commissioning model to be evidenced, the contract will continue for a further year, anticipating any regional contract to commence in 2020.

Quality and Standards

Improvements to our front door arrangements are underway. We have established a single front door for all of children's services which aims to improve our response times and access to the right level of support for our families. We have welcomed in the past two weeks two new senior social workers to support this work.

There has been the first joint staff seminar with Early Help and Social Care building collaborative working across Children's Services.

We are really pleased that three of our Team Managers have been successful in their application for the Firstline Management Programme which is endorsed by the DfE.

We continue to support social work students and are leading regionally on the development of our student pod. The model underpins our group supervision and is being researched by the university as a best practice model. Four of our newly qualified social workers have successfully completed their first year in practice in January.

Councillor Mike Carr
Executive Member for Children's Services

