

**Impact of Early Help within Stronger Families**

In Stronger Families, the Family Casework team works at an early intervention level with children and families to strengthen families to make sustained change, improve outcomes for children with the aim to preventing families escalating or re referring into Childrens Social Care. The team are trained in a number evidence based approaches including Solihull, Achieving Sustainable Change and Restorative Practice and use these approaches with a range of tools to work with a whole family approach.

The families are referred into the Family Casework team from the Multi Agency Screening Team (MAST) where decisions are made that the case does not meet the threshold for Social Work intervention, however there are complex issues present which the family needs support with including domestic violence, adult mental health and substance misuse.

Analysis of cases closed in April 2017 demonstrates that in April 2018, **87.7% of cases closed from Stronger Families 12 months previous, did not result in a subsequent referral to Children’s Social Care. 73% closed did not result in a re-referral within 12 months to Early Help.** This demonstrates the majority of children we work with at an Early Help intervention are successfully supported and outcomes are being met as the interventions are having a favourable impact on gatekeeping families from entering Social Care.

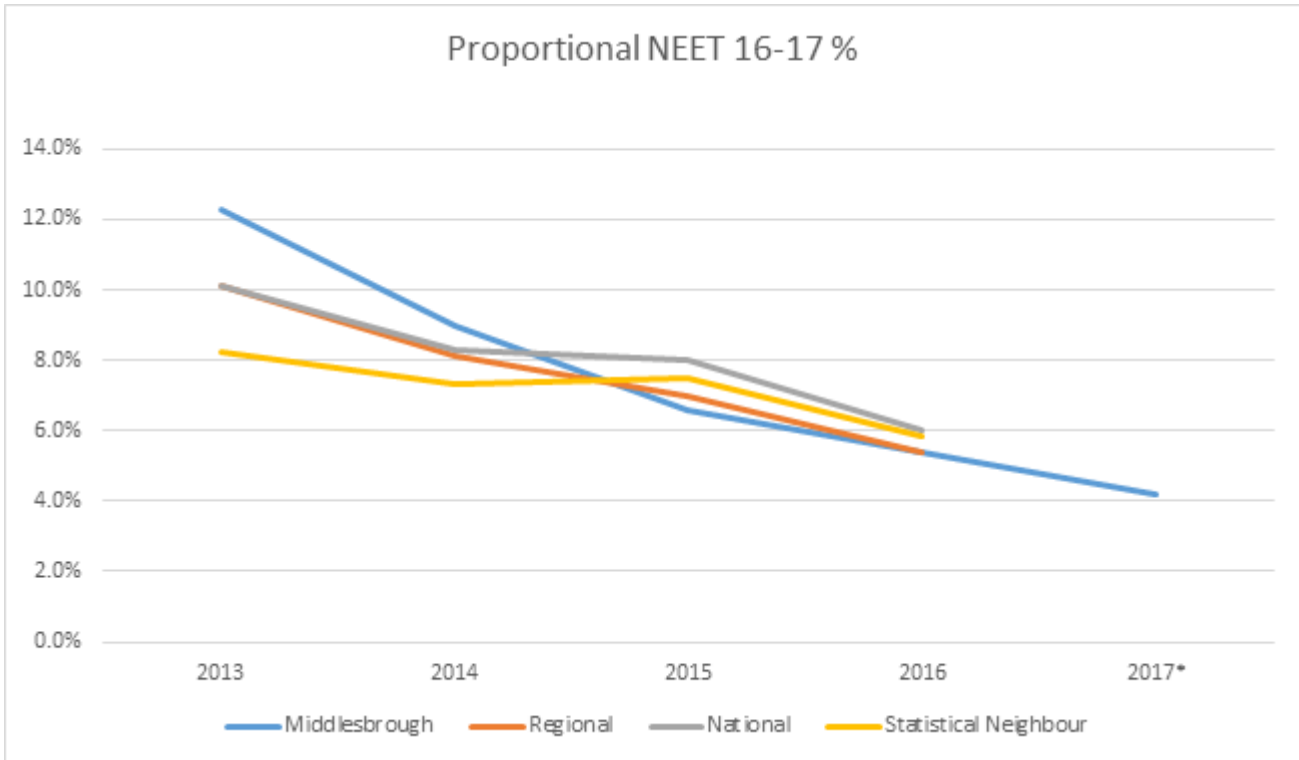
However, a high proportion of cases in Social Care demonstrates further work is required to support the identification of families at an Early Help threshold for targeted support before issues escalate. The Adverse Childhood Experience Project supports innovative practice to support the development of this work stream. As has the creation of the Family Partnership Team and reconfiguration of a single front door to Children’s Services.

**Work Readiness**

Middlesbrough’s NEET performance data shows that Middlesbrough is performing better than the national, regional, tees valley and statistical neighbour averages for the stretch target Dec 2017-Feb 2018. The Work Readiness Team have focussed on tracking and following up the Year 12 and Year 13 cohort which Childrens Services report to the Department of Education.

Once a young person’s destination had been established, the team targeted support to those who were not in education, employment or training to progress into learning. This was by offering impartial careers advice and guidance and where required, staff took young people on visits to providers and to interviews. They continue to support young people once in learning to prevent drop out. The Work Readiness team have recently been contacted by other Local Authorities to share our good practice.

	<b>Proportional NEET 2017-2018</b>	<b>NEET</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
<b>Middlesbrough</b>	4.2%	3.4%	0.8%
<b>National</b>	6.0%	2.7%	3.3%
<b>Regional</b>	6.2%	4.0%	2.2%
<b>Tees Valley</b>	4.4%	3.8%	0.6%
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	5.7%	4.3%	1.4%



**Special Educational Needs**

The SEND Assessment Team has successfully completed the work relating to the transfers from statements to Education Health and Care Plans by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 as required within the Special Needs Code of Practice. Statements were transferred to EHCPs by the Middlesbrough team working within the department for SEND and Vulnerable learners. Although national data has not yet been released, it is believed that many LAs were not successful in achieving this by the deadline. In addition, the team has achieved further improvement with regard to completion of new Education Health and Care Assessments within the 20 week statutory timescale. Early in the implementation phase of the reforms, in calendar year 2015, the team completed only 15% of assessments within 20 weeks but this was followed by sustained improvements to 52% in 2016 and over 94% in 2017. This has been possible due to growing experience and expertise as well as implementation of new working practices within the team. This has included the establishment of age 0-13 and age 14-25 sub-teams to deal with the associated complex casework and preparation of Education Health & Care Plans.”

This letter was received by Helen Watson, Executive Director of Children’s Services, this month from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi MP:

Dear Helen,

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND): COMPLETING THE TRANSFER OF STATEMENTS OF SEN TO EHC PLANS**

As you know, the Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the biggest changes to special educational needs and disability (SEND) support in a generation, putting children and young people with SEND at the heart of the process and ensuring that they are supported all the way through from 0-25 if needed.

Completing the transfer of Statements of SEN to quality Education Health and Care (EHC) plans is an important milestone and I am pleased that your April data return to the Department shows you have successfully completed all your transfer reviews by the statutory deadline.

I want to thank you, your colleagues and partners for the commitment and hard work you have shown to completing the transfers on schedule, and to the families who have worked with you on this journey. Moving across to EHC plans should have enabled those children, young people and their families to feel the benefit of the reforms and to receive a more joined-up approach to meeting their needs and improving their outcomes.

The end of the transition period marks the beginning of a new phase for the SEND reforms, focussed on continuing to improve the quality of EHC plans through annual reviews, the quality of provision, and the joining up of services. I look forward to working with you further so that together we achieve our shared vision of improved outcomes for children and young people with SEN and disability.

I am copying this letter to the leader of the council and to the MP for Middlesbrough.

In addition to this an email was received from Cath Hitchen, our DfE monitoring officer for our SEND inspection written statement of action which states:

“Just wanted to pass on congratulations and thanks from the Dpt at the increased figure reported for 20 weeks (processing of Education, Health and Care Plans). To achieve an improvement of 42.6% to a stunning 95% at a time when you were also transferring a large number of Statements to Plans is fantastic and your performance is now significantly above the national average. I am well aware of the amount of effort that has gone into this improvement and how much staff have needed to commit to achieve it. Please pass on best wishes and thanks to them”.

*Regards*

Cath Hitchen

SEN and Disability Professional Adviser

Department for Education

## **ACKLAM GRANGE**

Acklam Grange has been recognised for its excellent results in 2017 by the Schools, Students and Teachers network (SSAT). It was found to be among the best performing secondary schools in the country, receiving two awards for being in the top 20% of non-selective schools nationally for attainment and the top 10% for progress. This year is the second year on the trot the school has been honoured by the awards, based on data from the Department of Education and Ofsted.

Acklam Grange head teacher Michael Laidler said: “These awards are testament to the dedication and commitment of our students and staff working together and closely with parents to secure the best outcomes for our youngsters. We are very proud of our students and all that they achieve!”

The SSAT Educational Outcomes database compares all state-funded schools in England, with the highest performing for a range of key measures presented with SSAT Educational Outcomes Awards. Acklam Grange School will be presented with their awards in the summer terms at a ceremony attended by winners from across region.

SSAT chief executive Sue Williamson said: “I am delighted that Acklam Grange School has won two Educational Outcomes Awards. This recognises an important aspect of the school’s work, but, as we know, there is much more to recognise in a good school like Acklam Grange School.”

## **DEVELOPING SCHOOLS UPDATE**

Supporting individual schools to improve is a key aim of Learning Middlesbrough's School Improvement partnership; Middlesbrough Council's Achievement Team are leading on the Developing Schools strand of this strategy. Schools are considered as developing where outcomes are below expected norms, data is indicating a possible decline in standards, Ofsted have judged the school to be less than good or if there is a concern with regards to leadership capacity.

Funding of up to £10,000 is available to enable Developing Schools to access appropriate support, implement effective school improvement strategies and provide specific professional development and training. The Achievement Team have worked closely with schools who qualify for this additional funding, identifying needs and acting as a partner in the brokering process to ensure those with the most need receive the level of support required. Out of the eighteen schools identified as Developing Schools by the Achievement Team through data analysis, eleven have already been awarded funding and bids are being developed with a further four. A further four schools have self-referred and have also been subsequently awarded funding. An evaluation report from York St John University in the autumn term will give a first indication of the value of the work being undertaken.

## **CONTROLLING MIGRATION FUND EDUCATION PROJECT**

The over-arching aim of the Controlling Migration Fund Education Project is to alleviate pressures on Middlesbrough schools currently felt due to the high level of migration into the town, allowing school leaders and teachers to ensure that the teaching of resident children is not impacted by the constant challenge of integrating new children into classrooms. By supporting a fluid and smooth transition into schools for International New Arrivals (INAs), we hope to achieve a stronger level of attainment for resident children than currently evidenced in our catchment areas and ensure a prompt start to learning for newcomers. We need to develop the understanding of our local community, build tolerance and celebrate diversity in order to support better community cohesion. By improving the overall attainment of all schools we hope to strengthen school reputation, making for better communities.

We have done this by creating Learning hubs to develop best practice in settling and teaching new arrivals, training and upskilling staff and providing holistic, integrated, multi-agency early support to International New Arrivals (INA). We also aim to support the more established population with English as an Additional Language (EAL) to enable them to access education quickly; employing specialist teaching assistants, family support workers, a health worker and teaching staff to support families in accessing education, health and signposting to appropriate welfare/support agencies.

Examples of some innovative working within schools includes: North Ormesby Primary School implementing a Young Interpreter scheme involving five pupils from Yr. 5 with extremely positive results, emphasising a community cohesion element with families; Breckon Hill and Abingdon Primary Schools have found an extremely positive impact from collaborative working between schools resulting in removing barriers between communities and multi-cultural friendship groups forming. A celebrative event has taken place to promote and recognise this. Abingdon Primary School is also involved with some cooperative work in EAL teaching with a school in Perth Australia and a visit from Australian teaching staff is planned for later this year. Half of Ayresome

Primary School's roll is Romanian/Czech and one of the teaching methods they have adopted is developing and supporting 17 bi-lingual 'peace pals' who act as an INA's interpreter, social and emotional friend to help negotiate school.

Delivering more time and attention to enabling families to settle quickly and effectively whilst supporting their needs for learning, health and well-being, enables new arrivals to feel a part of Middlesbrough. Raising aspirations to match the expectations which already exist for those in the local community will ensure that less social isolation exists and by celebrating diversity we hope to facilitate a sense of pride in our multicultural community.

**Councillor Janice Brunton Dobson**  
**Executive Member for Education & Skills**