

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL **September 2018**

Children's Care

Performance Information

As of 10th August 2018:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC):	507	(Rate = 156.5)
Current Child Protection (CP):	224	(Rate = 69.1)
Current Children in Need (CIN):	1015	(Rate = 313.3)

The rate per 10,000 is now being calculated using the mid 2017 population estimate of 32,396.

Restructure of Children's Care

The restructure of Children's Care to improve service delivery continues. Phase 1 of the restructure is now complete with the implementation of Assessment Teams. Phase 2, realignment of CIN and CP Teams, LAC Teams and Resource Workers will now commence.

Assessment and Care Planning

The Assessment and Care Planning teams have recruited to all vacancies and newest starters are in post. There is a rolling recruitment campaign in order to recruit to the new teams that are within the new structure; this is scheduled to take place in August.

Performance reporting has improved, as has social workers evidencing the work that they were completing within performance reporting. We are now working on the improvement plan to improve the evidencing within case notes of the direct work completed with children. SMART planning training has been completed and we are implementing this within the written plans for children and ensuring that managers review these plans.

Resource Team

The work of the wider team continues to focus significantly on edge of care support, with the aim of reducing the numbers of looked after children.

Children's Homes

We are continuing to drive practice and quality care in our residential units, with the aim of all four homes achieving an 'outstanding' Ofsted rating.

The 'Childrens Homes Project' is progressing as a strand of the Believe in Families Programme to consider existing and new provisions. This project is informed by the work undertaken as part of the 'Sufficiency Strategy'. The focus of additional provision will be edge of care support, with the aim of reducing the numbers of looked after children and additional in-house resources for those children who need to become looked after.

Work is underway in respect of unit costs, with the overall aim to reduce the unit costings per bed.

First Contact/MAST

The MAST Development Project continues to progress. Work is underway to engage key partners at a Chief Executive level to move the arrangements forward. There has been a significant increase in demand over the last three months that has affected performance.

Ofsted focussed heavily on First Contact during the recent 'Focused Visit' and the subsequent recommendations have been incorporated into the Team Plan, Service Plan and Improvement Plan.

Principal Social Worker

We are at the start of two exciting practice developments for children's social care;

We have engaged with the Frontline Social Work national graduate programme, developed on behalf of the Department of Education. The Frontline programme is a two-year leadership development programme, which offers graduates and career changers an exciting new route in to Social work. The programme involves hands-on experience through practice-based learning, and participants benefit from intensive practical and academic training.

Following a five-week residential training programme, participants spend two years working in a local authority children's services department, where they start their career in social work. They work directly with children, families, schools, courts and the police, to empower families to achieve positive change. We have a pod of five students starting with us on 3 September, managed by a dedicated consultant Social Worker.

Secondly, we are at the start of our implementation journey for Signs of Safety, an internationally renowned and highly regarded approach to managing risk in children's services with a strong evidence base. This will form a key practice element of our strength-based approach to working with families to help us change the way we are working with families. Signs of safety is a framework that supports practitioners with risk assessment and safety planning.

The approach provides principles and fit-for-purpose tools that equip practitioners and supervisors to build observable everyday wellbeing and safety for children and young people with parents/carers, and their naturally connected networks. This approach is being used across the country and internationally.

There are briefings for partners and members, which started with a successful session on the 15 August led by the Executive Director and attended by over 80 staff and partners in the Town Hall Crypt.



South Tees Youth Offending Service

STYOS has recently secured a small amount of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's office to purchase art related materials. This funding will be utilised over the next year to engage young people in constructive use of their leisure time. The service has already engaged a number of young people in art and photography projects earlier this year on evenings and during school holidays. Young people have provided positive feedback and STYOS were delighted to be runners up at the Middlesbrough Council staff awards in the 'Innovation and Change' category for the Arts project work.

The strategic Youth Justice Plan has now been submitted to the Youth Justice Board. This two-year plan covering the period 2018-2020 sets out the key priority areas for the service, in addition to focusing upon the future areas of development. The plan includes artwork completed by young people open to the service, and direct quotes from young people in relation to their experiences of working with the service.

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member for Children's Services