

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL **17th OCTOBER 2018**

Children's Care

Performance Information

As of 25th September 2018:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC):	505	(155.9 per 10,000)
Current Child Protection (CP):	220	(67.9 per 10,000)
Current Children in Need (CIN):	926	(285.8 per 10,000)

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 for children and families continues. Phase 1 and Phase 2a of the restructure are now complete with the implementation of Assessment Teams, CP and CIN Teams and 3 x LAC Teams going live in September. Phase 2b, realignment of Resource Workers to service areas to be completed by the end of October.

An exercise has taken place over the last month to ensure that cases are all in the correct teams ready for the new structure. There are some gaps in the teams moving into the new structure due to vacancies, sick leave and awaiting successful candidate checks to clear so that they can commence in post. Some agency social workers are supporting the service moving into the new structure. A rolling recruitment campaign is in place in order to recruit to the new teams continues.

Referral, Assessment and Intervention

Ofsted undertook a focused visit of the front door in August. The outcome letter has been published and an Improvement plan is being delivered. Work continues in relation to improving the quality of social work practice with the aim of children receiving the right support at the right time.

Statutory Safeguarding Partners, led by the Chief Executive are currently considering plans for a joint Children's hub with Redcar and Cleveland.

The two new Assessment Teams are now in place and fully staffed. Performance systems are in place and demonstrate a high level of compliance. Work is underway to develop the service and improve quality, commencing with the quality of assessments and the voice of the child.

Children in Need and Child Protection

The Assessment and Care Planning teams have now changed to six Child Protection and Children In Need Teams.

Performance timeliness continues to improve, as has social workers evidencing the work that they were completing within performance reporting. Plans are in place to improve evidence within case notes of direct work completed with children. SMART planning training is complete with all social workers and is being implemented within the written plans for children and ensuring that managers review these plans. There are plans to improve assessments and management oversight of planning through supervision.

Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting

The numbers of Looked after children continue to rise; this is a national increase, which is creating pressure for Children's Services across the country. Gateway Panels, Chaired by the Director of Children's Care are in place to ensure only those children who need to become looked after do so and alternative methods of supporting families to keep their children safe are explored.

The Care Leaver offer has been developed with care leavers, approved by the Corporate Parenting Board and published.

Resources and Review

The new Head of Service for Resource and Reviewing is now in post and is responsible for the Reviewing and Development Service, Residential Children's Homes and our Fostering Service.

Plans are in place to review the in house placement offer and open an Edge of Care Service. The aim of this service is to work intensely with children on the Edge of Care. The service will provide an in-house and outreach service to the whole family focusing on strengths and building on concerns to enable the family to staff together as a collective unit. The service will offer respite care to the named child or young person, however the aim of this work will be to create family change and work towards the family being better able to resolve any future emerging issues. The service will also provide outreach support to children who are in foster care and where the placement may be experiencing some difficulties that could result in placement breakdown. The service will be flexible in its approach in order that we can maximise its use set against its registration with Ofsted.

Within this plan, work is underway to develop a semi-independent service for 16 to 18 year olds where it is assessed that they can move on from either a children's home or a foster placement. This provision will also enable Children's social Care to provide a closer geographical service, which will enable closer scrutiny of the quality of services. We are aiming to develop a wraparound service as part of the edge of care service that will include specialist support services including therapeutic interventions. The service will be able to respond to a number of referrals both from our existing residential provisions alongside our fostering service. This will result in Children and Families social care being less reliant upon the commissioning of external services.

A Project is also being progressed in terms of the fostering service; its aim to increase staffing that will enable the service to be effective in recruiting in house foster carers and reduce the reliance on external IFA agencies. The long-term benefit are twofold, it is cost effective and in will reduce the need for children to be placed externally.

Principal Social Worker

In September, we have welcomed our first five Frontline social work students. This is a national graduate programme, developed on behalf of the Department of Education. They are currently on observational adult placements and are starting to pick up Childrens cases under the guidance of their consultant Social worker.

We are also pleased to have four Managers accepted on the national Firstline leadership programme targeted at operational social work managers; two managers have started this programme from across children's services.

Training the workforce in Signs of Safety, our strength-based approach, continues with senior leaders and Managers supported by our Consultant to be practice leaders and support this in their day-to-day practice. Staff are enthusiastic and engaged in the approach and using it in their everyday practice in meetings and with families. A significant number of the workforce will receive training over the next 6-8 weeks and we are working with our partners and key stakeholders to share the model with them.

South Tees Youth Offending Service

The service were pleased to receive a visit from Middlesbrough Council's Chief Executive, Tony Parkinson this week. Tony had the opportunity to observe an appointment with a young person who had multiple and complex issues, and also spent time talking to the Middlesbrough operational team to find out more about the service and how it operates. The visit was well received and a positive experience for those involved.

The strategic Youth Justice Plan for 2018-2020 has now been approved by the Youth Justice Board. The YJB commented that the plan was detailed, thorough and engaging. The plan has been shared with all key partners and relevant partnership groups, and the service will now concentrate on delivery.

HMIP have now conducted a number of inspections using the new inspection framework for Youth Offending Services. STYOS has been closely monitoring the outcomes and recommendations, and key learning points have already been shared with the YOS management board.

Troubled Families

The team are currently focussing on increasing the number of 'turned around' families. There are two dedicated case managers who now have an established caseload, and they are working closely with partners to improve outcomes for the families they are working with.

Strategic Services

Following the inspection, Strategic Services has been working with Children's Care to support the development of the inspection action plans and co-ordinating the on-going challenge around the key findings via performance clinics. We are in the process of developing an improved Audit process to support consistent, quality challenge to the quality of practice in case work.

The 'Believe in Families' Children's Services transformation programme continues to progress well and deliver against key milestones. We have refocussed the programme and are clear what areas require focussed plans to tackle key issues in Children Services to support the Improvement Journey and ensure there is delivery against the performance targets and savings profile set against the programme.

Over the past month some particular highlights that the BIF programme team have supported include:

- Signs of safety implementation and training. Over 90 staff (including Practice Leaders) have attended (including providing positive feedback about their training experience with the independent consultant trainer) the two day introductory Signs of Safety Training (By the end of 2018 this will be 210 staff). Two Focus Groups have taken place with the workforce to engage them in the strength based approaches journey and one Partner Briefing has been undertaken and well attended.
- The new Fostering website went live and already we have seen an excellent response. Since the new website launch and the focused marketing campaign performance has improved significantly. There are currently 80 active enquiries (August 2018) in comparison to 24 in July. 11 are in stage one in August as opposed to 8 in July.
- Tri-x new on-line procedures manual went live and website hits increased from 151 in July to 309 in August.

Our Voice of the Child lead is focussed on delivering the Participation Strategy. This includes the role out of the Bright's Spots survey within which we gain feedback from Children in Care. In addition, this is facilitating the development of the 7-13 year old arm

of the Children in Care Council and developing a Young Commissioners' Panel with leads in Redcar to support the child's voice in the development of our Services.

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member for Children's Services