

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL
16TH JANUARY 2019

Children's Care

Performance Information

As of 21st December 2018:-

Current Children Looked After (LAC):	500	(154.3 per 10,000)
Current Child Protection (CP):	226	(69.8 per 10,000)
Current Children in Need (CIN):	1022	(315.5 per 10,000)

The rate per 10,000 is now being calculated using the mid 2017 population estimate of 32,396. It is to be noted that the number of looked after children has stabilised and is reducing.

Referral and Assessment

Plans for a South Tees Multi Agency Childrens Hub are progressing. Recruitment of a Service Manager is underway with interviews taking place in early January. Assessment Teams (introduced in the restructure in July 2108) are showing significant impact on the timelessness of assessments of families being referred into Children's Care. This is good for families as it ensure that needs are identified and plans in place to meet those needs, and manage the risks, at the earliest opportunity.

Children in need of help and Protection

Audits and performance data continue to show positive improvement in practice in terms of timelessness of assessments, visits to children (and children seen alone) and management oversight. Team Managers, supported by the Head of Service, continue to focus on practice improvement.

Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting

Pathways Care Leavers Service held their annual celebration of achievement in December. The event was very well attended by our care leavers, many with their own children. Achievements celebrated ranged from small steps to independence to outstanding academic attainment.

Resource and Review

The Director of Children's Services and Director of Children's Care met with group of Middlesbrough foster carers in December to talk about their experiences of fostering for Middlesbrough. The meeting, intended to be the first of regular meetings between Senior Managers and our Foster Carers, was very productive and actions have been taken to swiftly resolve some of the concerns raised regarding communication. Foster carers felt very well supported by their supervising Social Workers.

We launched Middlesbrough's Christmas foster carer recruitment campaign Alfie's Story in December. This can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/FXXMV6cUSN0>

The response to Alfie's has been immediate, with an increase in enquiries to become foster carers and a raft of Christmas presents arriving at the Civic Centre for Alfie.

Social Work Practice Week

The feedback from Social Work Practice Week, which ran between 19th and 23rd November, has been collated. Feedback from those in attendance was positive, visits to practice from Senior Managers (both Children's Services and wider Council Senior Managers) proved popular with staff and families alike who took the opportunity to share their views of services. The feedback is being used to plan for next years event.

Signs of Safety; update

File Audits show that that Signs of Safety is beginning to be embedded across Childrens Services. Training in Signs of Safety, an evidence based approach and framework for managing risk, continues with an increasing focus on practice leaders as the drivers for embracing and embedding the methodology. The language of Signs of Safety is clear and focused on what matters, ensuring the families we are working with are clear on what's working well, what we are worried about and what needs to change.

Sector led improvement in Children's Services

The regional peer challenge took place in December with Directors of Childrens Service from Middlesbrough, Stockton and Northumberland Councils challenging each other in reflective sessions to support improvement. The sessions proved interesting in terms of the shared experiences (workforce stability and placement choice) and the variances across the region. Next steps a regional event in March 2019.

First Line National Programme

Three of our Children's Social Care Team Managers were invited to London to present their learning and 'journey travelled' having successfully completed this national programme for Children's Services Managers. They will be presenting to a wider group of Team Managers and Heads of Service in Middlesbrough in the New Year to share their learning and encourage more Middlesbrough Managers to apply to undertake the programme

South Tees Youth Offending Service

Over the last three years the Youth Justice Board's priorities have been to;

- develop and champion a child-centered and distinct youth justice system
- develop a 'centre of excellence approach' in youth justice
- drive continuous improvements in youth justice services

The YJB Strategic Plan 2018-2021 has a 'child first, offender second' value base which states young people should be given 'every opportunity to make positive changes'. The YJB also has an aspiration to 'encourage, facilitate and engage in partnership working to help meet the needs of children, their victims and their communities'. From January 2019 STYOS will move towards a new structure that reflects the values and aspirations of the YJB, along with delivering the priorities set out in the STYOS youth justice plan 2018-2020.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with support from partner agencies has been successful in securing funds from the Early Intervention Fund set across four key theme areas, these being; prevention, early intervention, targeted intervention and those at risk of entering the CJS as young adults (18-24). This will allow a varied approach to be adopted to ensure a response targeted to the differing needs of those likely to be involved in / or at risk of being involved in serious violence. STYOS, along with Hartlepool and Stockton Youth Offending Services will receive some funding under the 'targeted Intervention' theme to offer a targeted approach to deliver coaching, counselling and restorative services to young people / families with the aim of restoring relationships and empowering participants to take control of their lives. This consistent whole family approach across Cleveland will help form trust and provide a reference point for each individual young person, building that trusted relationship at a key point in time.

Young people open to the YOS recently took part in the 'In out of the cold event' that took place at the Town Hall in December. Young people were involved in a variety of activities including; wrapping and filling boxes, sorting donated clothing in to correct sizes and distributing items on the day itself. This piece of work was led by the YOS Restorative Justice Specialist who reported the event to be a success.

Performance against National Standards remains an area of strength for the service, with over 94% of young people being seen within timescales and at the expected frequency.

Troubled Families

Troubled Families via DWP has been successful in securing £45,000 to deliver a programme to reduce parental conflict. This will include training for staff, raising awareness of the issue and practical tools and skills in how to engage parents at risk of or involved in conflict in the family. The Operational Manager for the Troubled Families programme aims to deliver presentations to the Children's Trust Board and other senior leaders in the New Year to outline the programme in further detail.

Strategic Services

We have had a number of successes in Strategic Services which has supported Middlesbrough's Children's Services improvement journey. The new audit process has been in place for 3 months and has considerably strengthened a collective ownership across the Service to improve the quality of practice. As a result, we identified key actions to support our workforce working with families and improvements to the way we work. We have also identified some creative and outstanding practice carried out by our practitioners which we are sharing with colleagues, and will share with Inspectors and external assessors when required.

Our voice of the child work stream has met a number of key milestones:

- Implementing Mind of My Own (MOMO). MOMO has been launched, 48 young people and 51 workers have their own MOMO account. The second batch of training is to be rolled out on the 24th January and we are going to use the 'train the trainer' method going forward. We have 3 young people who have been trained to use MOMO who are keen to train staff members.
- Launch a Junior Children in Care Council – The 'Have your Say' council is to launch on Wednesday 23rd January at Easterside Hub. This group will be for

looked after children between the ages of 7-13. They will work in partnership with the Children in Care Council and their work will feed into the MALAP group & the Corporate Parenting Board.

- Using Social Media to engage Children, young people and families – Following a consultation with young people and parents. It has now been approved for us to use Facebook to engage with children, young people and families. A lead will be identified for key areas such as Pathways, the Local Offer and the Children with Disabilities team to manage the Facebook pages & a clear communications plan will be drawn up.
- Coram Voice – Bright spots survey – in October 2018 we ran a survey across Children’s services. The ‘Your life, Your care’ survey was circulated to all Looked after Children and the ‘Your Life Beyond Care’ survey was circulated to all Care Leavers. Coram Voice are now collating the feedback for January 2019 and will present their findings at the Voice and Influence conference in February 2019.
- The Care Leavers celebration event – 21 young people attended at Newport Hub. We consulted with them about how best to engage, ran a digital resilience work shop and had visitors from lots of services such as MIND, Harbour, Hart Gables, Thirteen and the Army.
- DFE Written Statement of Action Participation/Local Offer work stream progress-working in partnership with Beverly School to develop an annual consultation pack for all schools in Middlesbrough with themed consultation sessions about topics such as preparing for adulthood; transitions; health; safe in the community; the local offer; work experience; supported internships and independent living. The first draft has been sent for comments and we are hoping to pilot this with Beverly in January.
- Voice and Influence conference - Monday 18th February is the confirmed date for the conference. Young people are going to plan and run the conference with support from our Participation led. This conference will raise awareness of the importance of the Voice and Influence of children and young people.
- Launching a youth forum for children with additional needs: 2 young people from Priory Woods have agreed to be the reps for the youth forum. A meeting is scheduled for January 28th to meet with an organisation called KIDS. They are going to work with our young people on how to develop a Youth Forum for children and young people with additional needs.

- Young commissioners – Working in partnership with Redcar and Cleveland to create a young commissioners panel. The young people will be involved in all areas of the commissioning cycle and they will be trained and supported to be confident in the process.
- Young recruiters – HR have updated their policies and procedures to highlight the importance of young people's involvement within the recruitment process. Plans to build and train a young recruiter's panel to be involved in the recruitment process across Children's Services.
- Training and development of staff - E-learning has been created and is being piloted with a social work team. This e-learning once signed off will be part of the mandatory training requirements on MBC Learns for all staff. We are working with NYAS the Children's advocacy service to raise awareness with young people, parents and workers about the service and the importance of a young person's advocate.

The 'Believe in Families' Children's Services transformation programme continues to progress well. Over the past month some particular highlights that the programme team have been involved in include:

- The Early Help Module project went live on 18th December 2018. Early Help Teams and Children's Care Teams are now using the same system when working with the same children/families, improve the journey of the child, easing the step up and step down processes, improving decision making timescales and rationale for decisions.
- The Parenting Strategy project is on target to be complete by January 2019. The partnership working across the South Tees to move this forward has been excellent.

Councillor Michael Carr
Executive Member for Children's Services