

**Children's Services Executive Member Report to Council**  
**9<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Performance

Children in Need @ 26/09/19	1891
Children subject to a Child Protection Plan @ 26/09/19	306
Children Looked After @ 26/09/19	555
Care Leavers in receipt of Leaving Care Services @ 26/09/19	164

There has been a 16% increase in the number of children placed in local authority family placements i.e. foster carers employed by Middlesbrough Council. This exceeds the internal target identified in our Children's Services savings plan.

Middlesbrough's NEET ( Not in Education, Employment or Training) and Not Known figures for year 12 and year 13 young people remain below the national and regional average, as a result Manchester City Council have requested a visit to look at best practice. This will be a great opportunity to showcase the work of the Work Readiness team, whilst also learning from colleagues from another local authority.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Middlesbrough	12.3%	9.0%	6.6%	5.4%	4.2%	5.0%
Regional	10.1%	8.1%	7.0%	5.4%	6.2%	6.5%
National	10.1%	8.3%	8.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.5%
Statistical Neighbour	8.3%	7.3%	7.5%	5.9%	5.7%	Not available yet

Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) Performance:

The introduction of the SEND Reforms brought with it a new joint inspection framework undertaken by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. This framework was designed to ensure services across Education, Health and Social Care were jointly meeting the needs and improving outcomes for children and young people 0-25 with SEND.

Since the start of this new framework the first 50 inspections found 21 (42 per cent) authorities failed to meet the required standard for supporting children and young people with SEND, the next 50 had a failure rate of 60 per cent. Two-thirds of the inspections carried out so far this year and more than half of the first 100 inspections have resulted in local areas being told to produce a written statement of action on how areas intend to improve.

To date, inspection teams have returned to 11 of the areas that had been told to address significant weaknesses in their SEND provision. Of these 11, six areas have been told that they have not made sufficient progress.

In March 2017 Middlesbrough was subject to a SEND local area inspection. The inspection team found a number of areas of significant weakness and as a result the local area was required to submit a written statement of action. This was approved by Ofsted in September 2017.

Between 8 and 10 July 2019, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) revisited Middlesbrough to decide whether the local area had made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness detailed in the written statement of action. As a result of this revisit the inspection team found that the local area has made sufficient progress to improve each of the serious weaknesses identified during the initial inspection.

Considering the national picture this is a very positive outcome for all stakeholders, children, young people and their families within the local area.

### Progress against Strategic Plan and Directorate priorities

Improve the quality of social work practice, to improve outcomes for children and families:

The quality assurance and performance frameworks continue to be delivered. The processes are supporting improvements to practice our identification of issues for future focus. The audit process has recently focused on the quality of permanency planning for looked after children i.e. ensuring we have good plans in place to support Looked After Children in long term stable placements. This work has identified a number of improvements which we are putting in place, such as improvements to the way we track these cases and ensure continuous robust management oversight.

The 'Missing' Service has been brought in-house to improve service delivery and achieve efficiencies in practice. As a result the service is now at the forefront of improving systems and procedures to manage and tackle the issue of vulnerable children and young people going missing from their home or placement. Middlesbrough is a pilot site for a 'real time' reporting process from the police which aims to reduce delays in the Local Authority being informed of a missing child or young person and increase the number of return home interviews within the first 72 hours of a child going missing.

This pilot has enabled the Missing Service to undertake daily analysis and circulate a daily list to relevant Social Workers and Team Managers informing them of children who are currently missing, to reduce missing episodes and reduce the associated risks to individual children and young person. Performance for the return home interviews being completed within 72 hours is currently at 58% and increasing monthly.

Deliver edge of care, increased residential and in-house fostering provision in Middlesbrough to meet the needs of children and families:

Work continues at pace on Middlesbrough's role as a trailblazer for the 'No Wrong Door' model. A detailed project plan was submitted by the end of August to the Department for Education setting milestones for progress and detailed estimates for resource requirements. There has been progress on identifying appropriate premises. Representatives of North Yorkshire County Council attended Corporate Parenting Board on 11<sup>th</sup> September to provide further information about the model and the benefits of its implementation in Middlesbrough, the representation was enthusiastically received by Elected Members. The senior management team took part in a workshop on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September with the Innovation Unit and Salford City Council who have successfully implemented the model.

The workshop was aimed at supporting the leadership strategy to enable cultural change in the Children's Services workforce.

Develop and deliver a new South Tees Local Safeguarding Arrangement with statutory partners:

The new South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership commences on 29th September 2019. The strategic group of statutory partners is already in place.

Progress against approved savings plans:

While some progress has been made on these actions, fully delivering the required transformation within Children's Care is taking longer than initially anticipated due to difficulties in maintaining a stable workforce as a result of national and regional issues with social worker recruitment, which has impacted on skills and capacity available to drive forward improvement and savings initiatives. Key appointments have now been made and it is expected that the planned savings will be achieved in 2020/21.

Involvement and Promotion:

The Looked After Children Celebration Event has been scheduled for the 31<sup>st</sup> October. Children and young people's achievements are celebrated at the event and a party for the children is provided.

**Councillor Barrie Cooper**  
**Executive Member for Children's Services**