

**Children's Services Executive Member Report to Council**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> December 2019**

**DECISIONS**

**Executive/Delegated decisions made since last Council**

- Agreement to support the creation of a free school at Middlehaven.

**Executive/Delegated decisions planned before next Council**

- Sign off for the Pupil Placement Strategy.

**STRATEGIC**

- Sue Butcher was appointed as Interim Director of Children's Care and started her role on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November.

**Key national policy matters and potential issues/impact on Middlesbrough**

- Continued pressure on school places, particularly at secondary level, which is likely to continue for the next 5 years and is exacerbated by a lack of clarity on national funding arrangements.
- Social work England is the new regulatory body for social workers and went live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December. There have been a number of national updates and consultations and staff have been briefed. We have a regional engagement lead who has made contact with the Executive Director and with the Principal Social worker via the Regional PSW networks. There are changes to the social work professional standards and the requirements that social workers are expected to meet. These are specialist to the social work profession and are underpinned by guidance. All current registered social workers will be automatically transferred to the new regulator and there is no action that staff need to take regarding their current registration.
- We are pleased to become part of Phase 2, of the DfE National Assessment and Accreditation of Social workers (NAAS). This has secured investment in the learning and development of our workforce supporting their knowledge and skills and ensuring independent evaluation against the Chief Social Worker's standards (KSS) for our more experienced staff. The NAAS is currently a voluntary scheme and sign up is growing with senior leaders modelling and taking the NAAS. The Principal Social Worker successfully undertook the assessment day in May and has met the requirements. We now have a local assessment centre; currently have 19 staff endorsed and ready to take to assessment.

**PERFORMANCE**

- Progress against Strategic Plan and Directorate priorities  
All objectives set by Corporate Parenting Board for the Virtual School have been achieved or on track to be achieved.
- Ofsted 'readiness' across all teams is well developed.
- Progress against approved savings plans  
Some pressure on the Alternative Provision budget, though this was expected and is being monitored and managed.
- Key activity states (need to be determined) e.g., Children Looked after, Residential care placements, reablement hours, Inward Investment enquiries, etc.
- The innovative use of research in the School Improvement Project
  - A key aspect of the School Improvement Project has been the use of research to support school improvement. In the first year, schools were awarded funding to carry out their own research projects, which would develop and identify best practice, which could be shared with

other schools. This was supported by York St John University and the schools and teachers were able to begin to understand research methodologies and effective evaluation. In order to build on this successful practice, the Head of Achievement began to work with Evidence Based Education in order to enter into a Research Support Partnership (RSP) with the aim of upskilling more practitioners in the use of research and evidence based practice. A further aim of the RSP was to add capacity for school improvement to the system and to enable the effective evaluation of the work carried out across the project. From March to July 2019, a five-day training programme involving seventeen practitioners was delivered. Practitioners came from a range of settings including the local authority, primary and secondary schools, alternative provision and a special school; they also varied in their experience and levels of seniority. The programme trained them to be research leads in their organisation and as part of this training; they researched, designed and implemented a rigorous research trial that evaluated an intervention in their organisations. Research was also carried out into the impacts on the practitioners themselves and the evidence shows that there have been far reaching benefits not only in terms of their own practice but also at an organisational level. Additionally, the group have developed into a collaborative Research Lead Network who are working together to drive the use of evidence based practice across Middlesbrough schools. The work carried out in Middlesbrough has attracted regional recognition; the Head of Achievement was invited to speak at the Northern Festival of Education and Professor Rob Coe, a nationally renowned educationalist is supporting the use of research in Middlesbrough alongside the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The Head of Achievement has also been named the first Regional Influencer for EdNorth, the research arm of Schools North East. A Tees Valley Research Forum, organised by the local authority takes place on 6<sup>th</sup> November; leading educational researchers, school leaders and the Research Lead Network will come together to identify key challenges facing us in education in the Tees Valley and plan further use of research for supporting school improvement in the region.

## INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

### Public engagements/events

- Looked After Children Awards took place on 31.10.19
- Launch of the Sky's the Limit attendance initiative with schools autumn 2019
- We are delighted to welcome ten students into our two Frontline units in September. Frontline is a national initiative that recruits, trains and support people to become social workers with an intensive academic and practice based programme. This is a unique opportunity for high potential graduates and career changers to make a real difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable children. It forms part of our workforce strategy to recruit and retain high calibre social workers into our workforce. We have been able to attract and recruit two experienced managers as Consultant social workers to lead these units to Middlesbrough.
- We have lots to celebrate with eight Newly Qualified social workers successfully completing their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) in the last two months. We continue to attract a high number of newly qualified social workers and are thrilled to have attracted and recruited experienced managers to lead and develop this programme. This programme forms the foundations of our learning and development programme and supports our staff at the start of their social work journey.
- **Practice week** Building on the success of last year Children's Services Practice week we are joining with our Adult Social Care colleagues to celebrate practice across adult and children's services during the **11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019**. Our overarching theme is **Trauma informed practice** and we have range of **innovative and interactive learning workshops** with subject experts during the week. The week will culminate in a day of opportunity to **observe and share best practice across adult and children's services** on the 15<sup>th</sup> November to celebrate our strengths-based relational practice framework, share skills and learning with colleagues and senior managers.

- We are excited to share our keynote speakers for the **two conference sessions on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November** - **David Shemmings OBE PHD**, author, expert on attachment and trauma also speaking will be **Luke Rogers BEM** ex care leaver and inspirational speaker sharing his personal story into adulthood. We will also be launching the trailblazer initiative No Wrong Door

## 50 Futures

50 Futures and Routes to Work are having an amazing impact on the lives of our residents. Please read Tracey Bradley's story.



**Tracey swaps bakery for classroom and finds her Route to Work**

Former bakery worker Tracey Bradley has found the route to new work as a teaching assistant with the help of an innovative placement scheme.

Routes to Work offers one to one advice in overcoming individual barriers to employment and the 50 Futures programme provides high quality placements for those people who can often find it most difficult to find a job.

This includes people like Tracey, 54, who have been unemployed for some time or may not have the required qualifications or experience.

Tracey had worked for nine years in a local bakery, rising to a managerial position, but had to leave because personal changes meant she could no longer work the weekend and evening hours required.

For three years she tried to find work without success. After mentioning that she had once enjoyed working as a dinner lady, a Routes to Work advisor suggested she consider a complete career change.

The 50 Futures programme offered her the chance to sample teacher support at Lingfield, a local alternative provision school for 14 - 16 year old children.

Kevin Sedgewick, Business development Officer, said: "Tracey had never had any experience

in this line of work, however, her natural qualities, nurturing nature and transferable skills were visible from the outset and so a possible classroom career was discussed."

"The placement started with Tracey working alongside an experienced tutor and then gradually taking on responsibility to support a student with challenging needs.

"Initially the student was reluctant to engage, Tracey was persistent and through her calming nature and gentle persuasion the student fully engaged and was eager to finish the tasks they started," said Kevin.

"Tracey has been described by the student as the best teacher they have ever had and this breakthrough has demonstrated to her that she can do it."



Tracey is now working at Lingfield voluntarily for two days a week as part of her studies for Teaching Assistant qualifications after which she intends to apply for Teaching Assistant jobs.

She said: "Talking to Routes to Work has changed my life. I felt worthless, that I was too old and of no use - now I have a new career.

"Working with the children, seeing the difference I can make has given me purpose and brought back my confidence. To anyone out there in a similar position my advice is to go for it."

Kevin added: "This case is an example of Routes to Work ability to think creatively, regardless of an individual's previous occupation. We can look at their qualities, aims and aspirations to the point of supporting the individual through a transition into a totally different vocation which had previously never been considered."

To find out more about Routes To Work or 50 Futures programmes please call 01642 811409, email [routestowork@maes.ac.uk](mailto:routestowork@maes.ac.uk) or visit [mcls.ac.uk](http://mcls.ac.uk) and search courses.



## Apprenticeships

### Big Award for Apprentice Who Goes the Extra Mile

A Middlesbrough Council apprentice has been crowned the first winner in a new category at the Tees Valley BME Achievement Awards 2019.

Arooj Amjad has been involved in some of the biggest events in Middlesbrough - including the BBC Radio 1 Big Weekend - and always "goes the extra mile" to support others.

Her work has led to her winning the first ever Apprenticeship Category at the annual BME awards event, aimed at awarding a person who had excelled in their company and demonstrated passion and commitment in



their work, promoting diversity.

### **Middlesbrough Council Apprentices Set the Standard**

Career-minded young people in Middlesbrough have praised an apprenticeship scheme, which has allowed them to go ahead on their chosen path.

Middlesbrough Council's Community Learning Service has seen its first cohort achieve the new Apprenticeship Standards designed to meet the needs of employers and comprise the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice will need to prove they can carry out all aspects of their job role.



### **Consultation updates**

- Annual consultation on Admission Arrangements will start in mid-November.

### **PROGRESS AGAINST SAVINGS PLANS**

- As part of the Change Programme, Berwick Hills Children's Centre Consultation has now commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 and will run for 13 weeks closing on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The Children's Centre has been open since 2005, initially sited within the TAD Centre, then moving to Berwick Hills Primary school in 2011. It ran there until 2018, when the school could no longer accommodate the Children's Centre, and the site was closed with the intention of finding a similar site in the area. The consultation is to seek views of residents, families, and partner agencies on the decision to permanently close the facility, and views on the alternative model that was put in place. Ideas on alternative ways of delivering Children's Centre services in East Middlesbrough are also welcomed.

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