

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

AGENDA ITEM 13 (a)

<p style="margin: 0;"><b>CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL</b> <b>PROGRESS REPORT</b></p>
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**28 April 2015**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the work of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel.

**BACKGROUND**

**Safeguarding and Looked After Children**

2. On 4 February, the scrutiny panel was advised that Middlesbrough has a significantly higher rate of Looked After Children than its regional, national and statistical neighbour comparators. At the meeting, it was highlighted that Peopletoo had undertaken work to explore the reasons for this.
3. At the meeting held on 25 February, Richenda Broad (Executive Director for Wellbeing, Care and Learning) provided the scrutiny panel with an overview of the work undertaken by Peopletoo, including:
  - Why the rates of Looked After Children are high and what is likely to happen in future to these rates.
  - Current trends in Middlesbrough's Looked After Children population.
  - Weaknesses in the current children's care system which may prevent or hinder a reduction in rates of Looked After Children.
4. The scrutiny panel also received an outline of the strategic recommendations, proposed by Peopletoo, that will reduce the numbers of Looked After Children in Middlesbrough.
5. At the last meeting, held on 19 March 2015, the scrutiny panel considered, discussed and agreed the content of an interim report on this topic. The report is elsewhere on the Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda.

**Employability Skills, From Care2Work Pathways for Children in Care – Update**

6. At the last meeting, held on 19 March 2015, representatives from the Pathways Team and the 0-19 Service provided the scrutiny panel with an update on the progress made with the implementation of the agreed actions, since the panel's report was approved by The Executive on 12 August 2015.
7. At the meeting, the scrutiny panel acknowledged that good progress has been made and it was explained that the Local Authority has, once again, been awarded the From Care2Work Quality Mark. The Quality Mark recognises best practice in building the employability skills of children in care and care leavers.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

8. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the progress of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel.

**COUNCILLOR JEANETTE WALKER**

**CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

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