

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Date: Tuesday 17th January, 2023
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Mandela Room, Town Hall

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Children & Young People's Social Care & Services Scrutiny Panel held on 20 December 2022 3 - 6
4. Preparing Young People for Adulthood and Independence - Further Information 7 - 8

The Panel will receive further information in relation to its current scrutiny topic from Middlesbrough's Community Learning Service.
5. Preparing Young People for Adulthood and Independence - Further Information

The Panel will receive a verbal update from Public Health in relation to its current scrutiny topic.
6. Update - Ofsted Monitoring Visit 9 - 20

The Interim Executive Director of Children's Services will be in attendance to provide the Panel with an update in relation to the Ofsted monitoring visit carried out 1-2 November 2022.
7. Overview and Scrutiny Board Update

The Chair will provide a verbal update on the business conducted at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 12 January 2023.
8. Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting - 14 February 2023, 10.00am

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Monday, 9 January 2023

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors D Davison (Chair), T Mawston (Vice-Chair), T Higgins, M Nugent, R Sands, Z Uddin, J Walker and G Wilson

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Joanne Dixon, 01642 729713, joanne_dixon@middlesbrough.gov.uk

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 20 December 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor Davison (Chair); Councillors: Mawston (Vice Chair) and Uddin.

OFFICERS: X Davies, J Dixon, A Hart, L Hunter and K Peacock.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: F and S – 'We Matter' Group.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors Higgins, Nugent, J Walker and Wilson.

**** DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

MINUTES – 14 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel held on 14 November 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

ORDERED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD – FURTHER INFORMATION

K Peacock, Voice and Influence Manager, and L Hunter, Communications and Engagement Officer, were in attendance at the meeting to provide the Panel with further information in relation to its current scrutiny topic. The officers were in attendance to provide information regarding the work of Middlesbrough's Participation Team and were accompanied by four care experienced young people, two of whom currently held apprenticeship positions, and two school-aged young people.

The Panel heard that Middlesbrough's Participation Team facilitated open, safe and inclusive spaces for young people to meet up and express their views regarding the changes they would like to see to improve their own experiences and those of their peers. The Team supported young people to share their views with key decision-makers and professionals, all of whom would act on what had been expressed to positively change services to meet young peoples' needs.

The Participation Team ran several groups that met on a fortnightly basis, and supported them to design and deliver engagement events to capture the wider voice of young people in Middlesbrough:-

- 'We Matter' (Middlesbrough Children in Care Council) – for 10-16 year olds.
- 'Care Leavers Forum' – for 16-25 year olds.
- 'My Voice Matters' – for young people with additional needs.
- 'Youth Council' – for all young people in Middlesbrough.

The 'My Voice Matters' group was currently designing the next Youth Voice Conference 2023 and the 'Youth Council' planned to engage with young people within schools to work on issues identified in their manifesto.

The Officers outlined the current activity taking place with young people, as follows:-

- The Participation Team – had developed a work plan incorporating all of the work it was undertaking with all of the groups. In January 2023, the Team would begin working with all the young people to co-produce the 'Participation Strategy'.
- 'We Matter' – developing its 2023 work plan. This would include regular meetings, holding four engagement events, meeting with the Executive Director of Children's Services, the Director of Children's Care and other key decision-makers. Also meeting directly with Corporate Parents as part of the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel.
- 'Care Leaver's Forum' – developing its 2023 work plan. This would include meeting regularly, supporting the celebration event in April 2023 and developing the Local Offer for care leavers.
- 'My Voice Matters' – developing its 2023 work plan, including meeting regularly and identifying key areas it wished to focus on, and meeting key decision-makers.
- 'Youth Council' – developing its 2023 work plan, including meeting regularly, working on its Manifesto and designing a 'Big Takeover' event.

It was hoped that the impact of all the ongoing activity would be that:-

- More young people in Middlesbrough were offered opportunities to have a voice, to be heard and encourage real potential for services to positively change to meet their needs.
- Young people say being part of these groups made them feel valued and listened to.
- Key decision-makers were able to hear directly from young people to influence their decision-making and work towards co-producing services with them and for them.

The Participation Team, and young people it worked with, wanted Corporate Parents, including the Scrutiny Panel, to hear directly from young people to ensure that services were responsive and meeting young people's needs. It was important that as many people as possible were engaged and heard first-hand the challenges young people faced. In addition, an invitation was extended to all Panel Members to all of the groups outlined above and ongoing engagement opportunities.

The Participation Team had undertaken a piece of work with young people from the 'We Matter' (Children in Care Council) group through a questionnaire that it had developed seeking young people's views on the positives and the challenges in their past, present and future. Eleven young people had completed the questionnaire and four of those young people were in attendance at the meeting to talk about their responses directly. Copies of all the completed questionnaires had been circulated to the Panel Members prior to the meeting.

Past - The young people had been asked to think about how they had been positively impacted by a role model or someone who had encouraged or inspired them and who had also supported them to overcome any challenges.

The young people had identified parents and family members, foster carers, children's home staff; social workers, support staff in employment/training settings, teachers and teaching staff as positive and inspirational role models and people who had encouraged them to overcome challenges such as ensuring their views were heard; consistency in social workers; settling into school; finding something they enjoyed doing; overcoming negative thoughts and feelings.

Present – The young people were asked what they felt was going well for them, how they were working towards independence and what form of education, employment or training they were currently in. They were also asked to think about their current independence status and whether

they were happy with the way things were going, how people around them were helping them and whether they were able to express how they were feeling.

In terms of what was going well for them and how they were working towards independence, the young people identified areas such as making new friends; learning a new language; making progress in school, training or employment; working towards qualifications and learning skills such as cooking, self-care and budgeting their own finances.

Future – The young people were asked what their aspirations were, whether they felt they would succeed, how those around them could support them to achieve their aspirations and whether they felt they would be ready for independence. In terms of future challenges, the young people were asked to think about what challenges they might encounter and who they could turn to for help and support.

The young people identified a range of aspirations which included gaining qualifications they were working towards, achieving employment in various career paths; attending university; learning to drive; owning their own home. Most young people identified teachers, support staff, social workers, personal advisors and foster carers as people they would turn to for help/support to overcome any challenges.

It was noted that one young person expressed concerns about who they could go to for help/support once over the age of 25.

The Panel heard directly from the four young people in attendance and had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the responses they had provided.

One of the young people highlighted that Social Workers were often described in negative terms and that this was sometimes due to young people expressing their views in the heat of the moment when things might not be going their way, with their comments reflecting negatively on the Social Worker. However, in their experience, Social Workers were generally inspirational and good role models for young people and felt it would be good to hear more positives in relation to Social Workers. It was considered that despite the local and national issues in relation to Social Worker recruitment and retention, greater promotion of the positive messages from care experienced young people in relation to Social Workers could potentially help to attract and retain Social Workers.

Members had also considered the other completed questionnaires and a discussion was held in relation to some of the responses provided. The following general issues were raised:-

- In response to a query it was confirmed that every child/young person in care was allocated their own Social Worker.
- The young people present felt that they could talk to their Social Worker about any issues they might have.
- From the responses on the questionnaires, the Panel highlighted that housing appeared to be an issue for some young people moving to independence. One young person commented that there appeared to be a lack of interest from some housing providers in relation to care experienced young people and that this was an area that needed to be improved in terms of the suitability and condition of properties made available to them.
- The Voice and Influence Manager advised that the Participation Team was collaborating with care leavers to redesign the Local Offer which was last updated in 2019. The majority of Care Leavers had stated that they did not read the information given to them and had requested a digital version of the core offer. The Team had linked up with Middlesbrough College to work with students who would work with Middlesbrough's care leavers to produce an animation containing the information around support available, particularly around where you lived, financial support, health, etc. In addition the Team was working with Pathways and partner agencies around the current offer to examine whether it was working well and planned to meet

housing providers. It hoped to hold an event in the spring bringing everyone together to undertake a piece of work and to look at the positives and negatives.

The Panel considered that it was very encouraging to hear, and read, the views of care experienced young people that were making active steps towards independence. The majority of young people who had provided their views appeared to be very positive in terms of their goals and aspirations and those around them helping them to achieve this.

The Chair thanked the Officers and young people for their attendance and valuable contribution and hoped that there would be further opportunities for collaboration in the future.

AGREED that the information provided be noted and considered in the context of the Panel's current scrutiny investigation 'Preparing Young People for Adulthood and Independence'.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update in relation to the business conducted at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13 December 2022, namely:-

- Executive Forward Work Programme
- Executive Member Update – Councillor Polano, Executive Member for Regeneration – provided an update on current and ongoing work within his portfolio.
- Revenue and Capital Budget – Projected Outturn Position as at Quarter two 2022/23.
- Corporate Performance Update – Quarter two 2022/23.
- Scrutiny Chairs' Updates
- Next OSB meeting – Thursday, 12th January 2023 at 10am.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 17 January 2023 at 10.00am, Mandela Room, Town Hall.

Middlesbrough

Community Learning

MCL OFFER

- Programmes for young people including Supported Internships and Study Programme
- Apprenticeships
- 50 Futures
- Youth Hub
- Youth Employment Initiative
- Support for Employers
- Support for Learners
- IAG for Parents, Carers, Social Workers & P A's

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Holistic Approach from initial contact**
 - **Recruitment Centre with signposting**
 - **Full assessment of Need including:**
 - DAST Tests (Full Assessment)
 - Screening (Overlays)
 - Processing Tests (Exam concessions)
 - **Individualised learning Programmes**
 - **Mentor Support:**
 - Learning Strategies
 - Health & Well-being
 - Emotional Support
 - Advocate Support
 - Participate in EHCP meetings
- Continued IAG throughout
- Referrals to & Agencies Signposted to Learners:**
- Impact on Tees Mental Health
 - Hart Gables
 - National Careers Service
 - Welfare Benefits
 - SARC
 - Survivors
 - MIND
 - Stop Smoking Service
 - Thirteen
 - CAHMS

SUCCESS STORIES

- Successful Employment Outcomes for Lingfield Learners: 27% Supported Internships overall 36%
- 7 Care Leavers into Apprenticeships
- 2 Care Leavers achieved 100% DISTINCTION criteria in their external assessments
- Successful transitions for learners into apprenticeship employment via 50 Futures
- Engaged learners to welcome additional support in all areas
- Supported several learners with serious issues to full achievement
- Apprenticeship achievement rate 76% National 52%

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Attendance at monthly NEET clinics:
Jan Earl & Carole Thorpe

Attended Information sessions for
social workers and P A's

IAG for external employers for MBC care
leavers

Open Days at Lingfield Learning Centre
invitations to ALL social workers & PA's

Only an email away for IAG for NEETS &
care leavers

Share all apprenticeship vacancies

Preparation for Apprenticeship
Interviews

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6 December 2022

Sue Butcher
Executive Director of Children's Services
Middlesbrough Council
PO Box 505, 3rd Floor
Civic Centre
Middlesbrough
TS1 9FZ

Dear Sue

Monitoring visit to Middlesbrough children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Middlesbrough children's services on 1 and 2 November 2022. This was the sixth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in January 2020. His Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Jan Edwards and Jo Warburton.

Areas covered by the visit

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the following areas of concern identified at the last inspection:

- Older children leaving care and care leavers.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

Headline findings

Since the last judgement inspection in January 2020, the service for older children in care and care leavers improved from a very low base. The relatively new 'pathway' care leaver service has been impacted by instability in the workforce, including at manager level. Leaders have focused on ensuring compliance with key performance indicators, ensuring that performance is 'owned' by individuals, teams and the whole service. Leaders have also made progress with the development and implementation of the 'non-negotiables' of practice standards. However, leaders acknowledge that there is much more to do, to ensure continued improvements in the quality of practice and to address levels of variability, so that all care leavers receive a consistently good service.

The senior leadership team has been well established and stable across the period of improvement following the judgement inspection. However, the service is losing a number of senior leaders in the next few months, including the director of children's

services (DCS) and the director of children's care. The chief executive has acted quickly to ensure that there is a plan in place to fill these significant leadership roles.

Findings and evaluation of progress

Most older children who are approaching leaving care are supported to develop the necessary independence skills needed to live alone. Care leavers told inspectors that most of them had experienced a positive transition from care, including that they had been well supported by their social workers and their personal advisers. However, for some children the transition planning has not been as effective as it should have been. As a result, a small number of care leavers described: feeling rushed when moving out of care; not having sufficient understanding of their living costs; that they needed more financial support to enable them to buy food and pay their energy bills; and needed help with new deposits and bonds when their housing situation broke down.

Social workers, personal advisers and managers express their pride in children and care leavers, whose achievements are celebrated individually and at annual events and awards. Workers see or maintain contact with most children and care leavers on a regular basis, and care leavers make use of the dedicated social media messenger page to stay in touch. Independent advocates are offered to children and care leavers, and they have been actively involved in supporting them with their issues and concerns.

The needs assessments conducted for children and care leavers and the resultant pathway plans vary in quality. Most plans require tighter target setting, but have been strengthened to clearly explain the different dimensions of the care leaver offer. The better plans and assessments include the clear voice of the child and care leaver and are written to them. This means that children and care leavers are very clear about their rights and entitlements and have most of the documents they would need as they move into independence. Contingency planning is mostly absent or entirely focused on the breakdown of living arrangements, rather than a holistic view of the child and care leavers and their circumstances.

As part of the development of the pathway service, and to introduce a consistent response for children leaving care, leaders have recently introduced a passport to independence. However, it is too early to show the impact this is having on delivering a consistently robust preparation for independence for all children. Those children and care leavers who benefit from the supported living accommodation and the bespoke children's home are well supported to prepare for independent living. Staff provide them with opportunities to develop life skills and promote resilience in preparation for living alone. When the time comes to move on, children and care leavers have a clear voice, and influence decisions on where they will live. It is clear that they have established and trusting relationships with support staff who are attuned to their needs. It is a real positive that those children and care leavers who talked to inspectors, and who live in these homes, are all either in education or are in work.

When moving on, homes are identified, and taster activities are provided to children and care leavers in their homes to provide them with new experiences at their pace and level of readiness, while continuing to receive high levels of support from staff. Young people's progress and vulnerabilities are reviewed and, where necessary, additional support is provided. Care leavers said they love their homes and value the close relationship they have with staff in the children's home.

The pathways team does not always demonstrate sufficient curiosity and challenge about the care leavers' holistic needs. Managers acknowledge this is an area for development. Some of the newer members of the team do not receive the frequency of supervision and type of support that they would benefit from to develop themselves and progress their understanding of the work.

While most personal advisers talk enthusiastically about their care leavers, and describe 'stickability' with them, this is not always translating into direct action that is promoting young people's safeguarding and well-being. Risk for some care leavers is not always recognised in a timely way and workers are not assertively responding to identify and manage risk. In some cases, personal advisers are not proactive in seeing young people when they move accommodation, or when they are unreachable, to check whether these arrangements remain safe. Managers and leaders know, through their own auditing of young people's cases, that visits and contacts do not currently focus sufficiently on risk, need and vulnerability.

Conversely, workers and managers respond effectively to emerging risk for older children in care. Strategy meetings are held with appropriate multi-agency involvement leading to effective safety planning. Return home interviews are undertaken in a timely way and information from the child or care staff provides a helpful insight to understand risk. Children have appropriate safety plans and oversight from the vulnerable exploited missing and trafficked panel. Consequently, children had reduced their missing episodes as well as their risks in the community.

Children and care leavers have experienced too many changes of social worker and personal adviser, which impacts on their ability to form trusting relationships and to have confidence that their worker knows them and their story. Social workers are currently holding some care leavers' cases to support the capacity of the personal advisers. Similarly, workers in the pathway service have also experienced too many changes of manager. This means that staff have repeatedly told children's stories to successive managers, which has meant that supervision focuses on managers getting to know children. This reduces the focus on effectively addressing what is needed to improve the child's circumstances.

Leaders know, through their programme of auditing, that care leavers who are in custody do not always receive a good enough service. This was also seen by inspectors on this visit. As a result, leaders are in the process of developing their partnership working with youth justice and the probation service to provide a timely and seamless support for young people when they leave custody.

Care leavers benefit from the Middlesbrough care leaver offer, including setting up home grants, driving lessons and council tax exemptions. However, council tax exemption is only applicable if care leavers live in Middlesbrough, putting those who live away from their home area at a disadvantage. Leaders are currently engaged in regional discussions with their counterparts to explore more equitable support, no matter where children and young people live. Care leavers told inspectors that the care leaver offer needs to be better publicised and promoted to ensure equity of access, so that all care leavers fully understand their rights and entitlements.

Children and young people are well supported in their readiness for work. Social workers and personal advisers appropriately promote education and employment opportunities, including apprenticeships and funding for further education and university. Opportunities for many children and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) are considered by a range of multi-agency professionals in the NEET panel. This provides a joined-up response promoting children's life chances.

Children and young people have until very recently benefited from effective support with their mental health and emotional well-being from a dedicated pathways child and adolescent mental health worker. This role is currently vacant and services are now being provided, in the interim, through referral to external services or through children and young people accessing online support.

The development of the sufficiency strategy, and the children's forecasting model which underpins this, has lacked the necessary pace to secure sufficiency of local internal placements for children in care. However, most care leavers live in suitable accommodation. In addition, children are encouraged to stay put with their foster carers, which is providing much-needed continuity of support and care at this significant time of transition and to support brothers and sisters to remain together.

Notwithstanding the range of accommodation available for care leavers, there are a small number of children who are living in unregistered children's homes or in supported accommodation. Managers are aware that unregistered homes should not be used and they are ensuring there is a clear assessment of risk and a robust oversight to mitigate any risks for children. Regular searches for homes are undertaken and there are clear plans for children to move to registered provisions when they become available. There is a similar level of scrutiny of children aged 17 years old in supported accommodation to ensure that these providers are able to continue to offer appropriate support, with clear plans in place for when they leave care.

The voice and participation of children and young people is a priority area of focus for the service. Corporate parenting continues to improve from a very low base. The corporate parenting board listens carefully to what children have to say. There is a real sense of the lead member for children's services and the chair of corporate parenting working closely together with a common aim. This is starting to show an

improvement in how children's voices are effectively used to influence service development.

A well-embedded and sophisticated system of performance reporting is contributing to leaders' understanding of performance against key indicators, which demonstrate an improved trajectory. The self-assessment, supported through robust auditing arrangements, demonstrates that leaders have an accurate understanding of the service and outcomes for children. The audit framework is providing leaders with a detailed qualitative understanding of practice. However, while audits show that practice is improving, they are still indicating a fluctuation in quality in this area of the service. Consequently, leaders are also clear about what more is required at pace to secure further improvements for older children in care and care leavers.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Jan Edwards
His Majesty's Inspector

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Report of:	Councillor Mieka Smiles, Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services Sue Myers, Interim Executive Director of Children's Services
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	24 January 2023
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Title:	Children's Services Improvement Programme: Update Report
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Report for:	Information
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Children and young people
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Key decision:	Not applicable
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Why:	Report is for information only
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	
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Executive summary

The most recent Ofsted monitoring visit (report published December 22) focused on older looked after children and the support offered to care leavers. The report was balanced and provided clarity on the areas we need to improve.

We have already acted on some of the issues raised by inspectors and have added several further actions to the improvement plan.

Purpose

1. To brief members of the Executive on the progress made against the Children's Service Improvement Plan with particular reference to the findings of Middlesbrough's Ofsted Monitoring Visit in November 2022.

Background and relevant information

2. Since the last inspection, services for older children in care and care leavers has started to improve. Most older children who are approaching leaving care are supported to develop the necessary independence skills needed to live alone. Care leavers told inspectors that most of them had experienced a positive transition from care, including that they had been well supported by their social workers and their personal advisors.
3. However, for some children the transition planning has not been as effective as it should have been. As a result, a small number of care leavers described: feeling rushed when moving out of care and a small number this has resulted in them remaining CIC, post 18 due to a lack of planning & we've continued to support them in accommodation. Some young people said they needed more financial support to enable them to buy food and pay their energy bills. We have some plans in place to make sure the right level of support is in place.
4. We maintain contact with most children and care leavers on a regular basis, and care leavers make use of the dedicated social media messenger page to stay in touch. Independent advocates are offered to children and care leavers, and they have been actively involved in supporting them with their issues and concerns.
5. Pathway plans vary in quality. Most plans require tighter target setting/ Smarter focus. The better plans and assessments include the clear voice of the child and care leaver and are written to them. This means that children and care leavers are very clear about their rights and entitlements.
6. Contingency planning is mostly absent or entirely focused on the breakdown of living arrangement rather than a holistic view of the child and young person and their circumstances.
7. Those children and care leavers who benefit from the supported living accommodation and the bespoke children's home are well supported to prepare for independent living. Staff provide them with opportunities to develop life skills and promote resilience in preparation for living alone. It is clear that they have established trusting relationships with support staff who are attuned to their needs. It is a real positive that those children and care leavers who talked to inspectors, and who live in these homes, are all either in education or are in work.
8. Return home interviews after children have been missing are undertaken in a timely way and information from the child or care staff provides a helpful insight to understand risk. Children have appropriate safety plans and oversight from the vulnerable exploited missing and trafficked panel. Consequently, children had reduced their missing episodes as well as their risks in the community.

9. The pathways team do not always demonstrate sufficient curiosity and challenge about the care leaver’s holistic needs. Managers acknowledge this is an area for development. Some of the newer members of the team do not receive the frequency of supervision and type of support that they would benefit from to develop themselves and progress their understanding of the work.

While most personal advisors talk enthusiastically about their care leavers, and describe ‘stickability’ with them, this is not always translating into direct action which is promoting young people’s safeguarding and well-being. Risk for some care leavers is not always recognised in a timely.

Next Steps

- As a result of the monitoring visit, we have made the following changes to the improvement plan. A focused audit will take place in March 2023 to check on the progress of the changes.

<p>For some children the transition planning has not been as effective as it should have been. As a result, a small number of care leavers described: feeling rushed when moving out of care; not having sufficient understanding of their living costs; that they needed more financial support to enable them to buy food and pay their energy bills; and help with new deposits and bonds when their housing situation broke down.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot topics to be held in January 2023 on preparing for adulthood including budgeting, housing choices • Gather feedback from young people to understand the impact of their transition plan and how this could be improved from their perspective. (January 23) • Adults Social Care and Housing have agreed to start working with young people who require their support from the age of 17 years to support a seamless transition to adulthood • Review the support we offer to care leavers and look at other ways we can help with the cost of living/ food bills etc. (explore shared tenancies/friends living together etc.) (January 23)
<p>Most plans require tighter target setting.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer audit sessions are being completed with Team Managers, Social Workers, and Personal Advisor’s monthly to review and support the quality of Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans • Training led by the PSW jointly with Team Managers focusing on how to carry out a good quality Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan in January 2023

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit to review the quality of Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans in March 2023
Contingency planning is mostly absent or entirely focused on the breakdown of living arrangement rather than a holistic view of the child and young person and their circumstances.	Ofsted monitoring visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot topics session to be held focusing on contingency planning in January 2023. Undertake an audit to review Pathway Plans to review to ensure contingency planning is effectively considered in March 2023.
We have recently introduced a passport to independence. However, this is too soon to show impact on delivering a consistently robust preparation for independence for all children.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake evaluation of the success of the passport to independence in May 2023. Undertake an audit to review consistent application of the passport to independence. Gather feedback from young people in relation to their experience and usefulness of the passport to independence. If required, make changes to the process to improve the passport to independence.
The development of the sufficiency strategy, and the children's forecasting model which underpins this, has lacked the necessary pace to secure sufficiency of local internal placements for children in care.	Ofsted monitoring visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish working group to focus on sufficiency and forecasting Review current sufficiency strategy and action plan to ensure it is fit for purpose and make amendments informed by local data and intelligence.
Care leavers who are in custody do not always receive a good enough service. This was also seen by inspectors on this visit.	Ofsted monitoring visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review joint working agreement in place with Youth Justice and Children's Care to ensure it is being applied consistently. (January 23) Head of Service/ Service Manager to approach prisons with a view to strengthening relationships and creating some shares outcomes by January 2023. Head of Service for Pathways to work with Head of Service for YOS to review processes in place with probation to ensure care experienced young people leaving custody, who are 18 years and above, are offered appropriate support by February 2023. We are delivering targeted staff development including Awareness Raising on Care Leavers in Custody, Hot Topics (19th Dec) and wider staff training on Young People in Custody. Principle Social Worker to develop Practice Standards for Children in Custody by February 2023. We will re-audit this cohort of young people to evaluate the impact of these improvements in February 2023

<p>Care leavers benefit from the Middlesbrough care leaver offer including council tax exemptions. However, council tax exemption is only applicable if care leavers live in Middlesbrough putting those who live away from their home area at a disadvantage. Additionally, some care leavers told inspectors that they were struggling with the cost of living.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a regional care leaver’s offer to ensure consistent support is provided regardless of a young person’s location within the region. Claire S to take to AD’s group in February 2023. • Service Manager for Care Leavers to explore ideas to offer more support to our care leavers around the cost of living, to commence in January 2023.
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Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

10. The action plan above sets out our response to the letter from Ofsted. The rationale being that we will need to demonstrate that we have taken action following the monitoring.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

11. There are no other potential decisions, we have been guided by Ofsted inspectors on the areas for improvement.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

12. There are no legal implications at this stage.

Strategic priorities and risks

13. The changes will be added to our existing improvement plan

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

14. NA

Financial

15. There are no financial implications at this stage. The plan will focus on improving practice within our current budget.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To implement the action plan	Sue Myers/Claire Sowerby	March 2023

Appendices

1	
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Ofsted	Monitoring visit letter	December 10 2023

Contact: Sue Myers

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