

<b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
------------------------------	--

<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Children’s Care
<b>Relevant Executive Member:</b>	Lead Member for Children and Families
<b>Submitted to:</b>	You Matter to Us Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	30 January 2025
<b>Title:</b>	Children in Care Update
<b>Report for:</b>	Information
<b>Status:</b>	Public
<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Safe and resilient communities
<b>Key decision:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Why:</b>	Report is for information only
<b>Subject to call in?:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Why:</b>	Not applicable

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
Report for noting.

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>The report is an outline of current numbers of children in our care and their circumstances in relation to permanence and Education, Training and Employment.</p> <p>The report is intended for information and further discussion by the committee.</p>

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the committee of the current numbers and brief circumstances of children in our care.
- 1.2 To inform the committee of actions being taken to improve the experience and outcomes for children in our care.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Corporate Parenting Board
  - Acknowledges the information presented
  - Makes any recommendations and actions required

## 3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 Not applicable

## 4. Background and relevant information

### 4.1 Update on children in care data/timescales/ numbers of care proceedings currently/PLO;

We currently have 504 children who are cared for, 340 have plans of permanence and are supported by the Children Looked After Teams. 19 have plans of permanence and are supported by social workers in the Children with Disability Service. The remaining children and young people are subject to permanence planning within the Safeguarding and Care Planning Service.

Of those subject to permanence planning a majority are subject to legal processes in order to determine plans of permanence. We have 3 children who are in our care who are currently subject to Deprivation of Liberty Orders under the jurisdiction of the Court of Protection.

We continue to perform well in terms of determination of permanence within the court process in a timely way for our children and young people, although have a small number of proceedings over the 26 week recommended timescale, we are aware of who these children are and why this is the case, and have taken action to mitigate any impact this may have on individual children.

### 4.2 Update overview around children in our care who are NEET and what we are doing to support young people back into education, employment and training;

The personal advisors work with their young people encouraging them and guiding them on how to access education and supporting them to key agencies who can assist them. The key services we use are as follows; the NEET Clinic, the Work Readiness Team, and the Middlesbrough Employability Hub drop in which takes place twice a week.

The NEET clinic provides support from different representatives including SEN, Middlesbrough Employment Hub, Local Colleges, Nacro and Virtual School. Meetings are held monthly to discuss training, education and apprenticeship opportunities. Teams present children and young people to the panel and a discussion is held as to which service would best suit the person based on their needs and wants. They also offer work experiences and supported apprenticeships for children and young people who have an EHCP.

The Middlesbrough Employment Hub which is a one-stop shop to support the people in the area into work. The employment hub offers 1:1 support, small group sessions, support around CV writing, interview preparation and provides access to a DWP Work Coach, a range of Middlesbrough Community Learning courses, academies and training and signposts to other training provisions and support services.

The Work Readiness team is part of Middlesbrough Council and they provide support with CV writing, confidence building and have links with local companies to secure apprenticeships for our YP's

#### **4.3 Update on the DfE work/reunification – how many children have we ended orders for/how many do we have to return to court.**

We were successful in obtaining funding via the DfE to fund an additional 3 social workers; these social workers are working alongside the allocated social workers to review whether children should be returned to their parents or extended families care and their care orders discharged. Two of the DfE social workers have been in post for around 18 weeks and the third for 14 weeks. They are currently assessing 31 children. We are expecting 3 children to return to their parents care during the month of February, applications for discharges of Care Orders will be made on 4 children within the month of February, applications for an additional 2 discharges of Care Orders will be made in March/April, the application for one child's Care Order to be discharged is ready for filing, and 6 applications for Special Guardian Orders will be made by the end of March.

#### **4.4 Care experienced young people updates;**

245 care experienced young people are open to the Pathways service. 217 are aged between 18 and 21, and 28 are aged over 21 and up to age 25. The Pathways service supports 5 young people under the eligibility category of Relevant Child, 347 under the category of Former Relevant Child, 9 under the category of Qualifying Care Leaver and 106 under the category of Eligible Child. There are now 2 Pathways Teams; the Personal Advisors have, on average 18 young people each to support. Since May 2024 changes have been made to ensure the transition pathway is smoother; this includes children and young people from the age of 15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> being heard at the Transitions panel to ensure that Adults Services are aware of any that may need a service post 18 and at housing panel to ensure we have a firm plan around accommodation

#### **5. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended**

Not applicable/report is for information only

#### **6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

Not applicable/report is for information only

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

Not applicable/report is for information only

#### **Appendices**

Not applicable/report is for information only

**Background papers**

Not applicable/report is for information only

**Contact:** Alison Lewis

**Email:** [alison\\_lewis@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:alison_lewis@middlesbrough.gov.uk)