

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 7 JULY 2021

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Ofsted Focused Visit

- Ofsted notified Children's Services of their intention to carry out a focused visit on 26th and 27th May. Although the preparation period was intense it went smoothly. The team undertaking the 'virtual' visit consisted of the lead inspector who was also the lead for our previous monitoring visit and our original ILACS inspection, three social care HMIs and one education HMI. Focused visits look across the whole service with particular regard to performance during the pandemic and supporting vulnerable children. Initial feedback was broadly positive and areas for improvement had already been identified in our self-evaluation document. The letter will be published on 15th July.

2. Commissioner's Visit

- Our Commissioner, Peter Dwyer will make his third visit to Children's Services in the week beginning 12th July 2021. He will assess progress by looking at performance information, carrying out interviews with senior managers and holding focus groups with front line managers and staff. As usual Pete's report will be presented to the Minister for Children and Families. Pete will be joined in the focus groups by Stuart Smith our Improvement Adviser.

3. Early Help Strategy (2021 – 24)

- This strategy and the accompanying action plan were signed off at the Partnership and Prevention Board in May. The board will oversee the implementation and delivery of the strategy reporting on progress to the Children's Trust Board.

4. South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (STSCP) Vulnerable Adolescent Strategy

- This strategy was launched on 15th June. Its purpose is to provide guidelines for the recognition, assessment and response to neglect for staff working with adolescents across South Tees.

5. Supervision Policy

- This policy sets out the importance of supervision in achieving our mission, upholding Middlesbrough's Council's values and embedding our practice model. It is a commitment to Middlesbrough's children, as good supervision will lead to improved outcomes for children and families. In addition staff professional development will be promoted and their wellbeing supported.

6. Pathways to Success Learning and Development Plan: (Pathways - Care Leavers Service)

- This plan was developed in conjunction with partner agencies. It focuses on supporting staff to reconnect with their values, why they want to work in Children's Services, and what 'good' looks like for Care Leavers. Progress will be evaluated by our practice leads.

7. Corporate Reference Group (CRG)

- This cross departmental group is now chaired by the Chief Executive. He has revised its approach and it has now planned out the contributions that all other directorates can make to the Children's Services improvement agenda.

8. School Attendance of Vulnerable Children: (Children allocated to social workers)

- The impact of the new Attendance Project is still anecdotal but schools are broadly positive and awareness of attendance issues has improved. An Attendance Officer now works to resolve attendance issues relating to children subject to child protection plans and children in need. A working group involving Head Teachers and Attendance Leads has been established as has a task and finish group involving key Local Authority stakeholders.

9. Learning and Development Offer

- This covers a wide range of training opportunities to support employees to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the demands of their roles. It is aligned with our Practice Model and Practice standards and is for staff in all roles and at all levels in Children's Services.

10. Recruitment

- Children's Services is working hard to recruit permanent social workers as part of our Workforce Development Strategy.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

1. Vaccine Inequalities

- There are a number of emerging issues influencing the continual adaptation of our vaccine inequalities approach. Currently these include:

- Further to the recent confirmation of increased transmissibility of variant B.1.617.2 (Delta, or Indian variant).
 - Emerging evidence showing likelihood of strong protection by vaccination from all known variants though reduced protection from a single dose.
 - The likelihood of further variants and associated modelling suggesting that with current vaccination coverage outbreaks of highly transmissible variants will still lead to significant levels of hospitalisation.
 - Receipt of regular data on vaccine uptake locally which show significant variation at ward level and based on socioeconomic status and ethnicity.
 - Feedback from communities on the difficulties and barriers associated with booking and securing appointment through the NHS website.
- Based on this a number of further approaches are being taken to increase uptake in Middlesbrough, in partnership with Primary Care Networks:
 - Use of contact tracers to undertake follow up calls to unvaccinated people, targeting specific areas of low uptake, and offer assistance in removal of barriers to vaccination.
 - Provision of “drop-in” access alongside appointment access through Mellissa bus (1,029 vaccines were delivered over 5 days with plans to offer more remote sessions in the future and a trial of drop in provision through North Ormesby Health Clinic).
 - Taking “a making every contact count” approach across the health social care and VCS workforce, in particular those engaged with those groups where vaccine uptake is low. All frontline workers should aim to undertake a brief intervention on vaccine uptake during interaction whenever appropriate including.
 - Engagement of churches in particular to support engagement of the younger black communities.
 - GP follow up visits for care home workers not currently vaccinated.
 - Development of systems to “call up” individuals at short notice to reduce vaccine wastage.

2. Long COVID Programme (Re-Start)

- Public Health South Tees launched a unique, physical activity-led Long-COVID prevention and recovery programme in May. The ‘Re-Start’ programme is the first of its kind in the region and aims to support the estimated 13.7% (ONS, 2021) of people who continue to suffer adverse physical and/or mental health symptoms for over 4 weeks following a positive COVID test. By combining tailored lifestyle rehabilitation with social and economic support, the programme aims to play a key part in supporting Middlesbrough’s COVID recovery – helping to address inequalities in both the direct and indirect impacts COVID in the Borough.

3. You’ve Got This – Sport England South Tees Local Delivery Pilot Update

- ‘You’ve Got This’ (YGT) is the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot across South Tees, taking a whole system approach to increasing physical activity and with the vision of ‘an active life as a way of life’.

- The pilot is focused on two key themes: Communities of Place and Communities of Interest. Communities of Place cover four focus wards, where work is with the whole community. These are North Ormesby and Brambles & Thorntree in Middlesbrough. The other two wards are Grangetown and South Bank in Redcar and Cleveland. Communities of Interest include groups where increasing physical activity can help improve medical conditions and quality of life. These include:
- As with many areas of work, progress has been impacted by the pandemic. However, two examples of the impact of YGT are within prehabilitation (supporting people to become fitter before surgery), led by James Cook University Hospital and through the pilot beginning to contribute to the Council's locality work in North Ormesby (to identify how physical activity can support tackling issues such as drug use, anti-social behaviour, crime, and environmental problems).

4. North Ormesby Selective Landlord Licensing (SLL) Scheme

- The area of North Ormesby has been re-designated for Selective Landlord Licensing from 14th June 2021. The scheme will continue to improve social and economic conditions of the area. All privately rented properties in the area will need a licence from the Council to operate. The scheme requires licence holders and managers to be "fit and proper persons" and that they have satisfactory management arrangements in place, including for dealing with anti-social behaviour. The licence will be valid for five years. Failing to apply for a licence is an offence punishable on conviction to an unlimited fine.
- Properties in the scheme will be visited by officers from the Public Protection Service to check that licensing conditions are being satisfied and that living conditions meet with national standards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS). A multi-disciplinary team approach will ensure that landlords and tenants are helped and supported with any issues they may be facing such as unemployment; anti-social behaviour; independent living skills; tenancy management; health issues; parenting skills; and substance misuse.

5. Covid19 measures

- The Public Protection Service's Covid Response Team continues to contact Middlesbrough residents who test positive for Covid19 and from 14th June the team's role extended to contacting the close-contacts of people who have tested positive. The aim of this is to provide infection control advice and support during their self-isolation period. Links between cases and workplaces or other places visited continue to be investigated to ensure effective control measures are in place to reduce transmission of the disease.

6. Project ADDER

- Project ADDER is the Government investment programme to tackle issues relating to drugs. It is delivering £4.5m dedicated funding across two and a half years, shared between Middlesbrough's Public Health Team and

Cleveland Police. This will enable dedicated enforcement, diversionary and treatment/recovery activities to be undertaken across the town.

- Lead officers from each organisation are co-ordinating the programme locally, whilst linking with national leads from Public Health England, the Home Office, other government departments and ministers, Police chiefs and the additional ADDER delivery areas. Early successes and outcomes include:
- Operation Endeavour, which started in mid-May with the help of Project ADDER, has helped to tackle serious and organised crime, including arrests, seizures of drugs, cash and weapons, and assisting vulnerable people;
- The development of two exciting capital schemes that will provide high quality accommodation for those in recovery and now abstinent from drugs. These are secondary/move-on premises from our in-house rehab primary accommodation flats at Recovery Connections and Middlesbrough's first Oxford House – an independent, mutually supportive and sober living environment;
- Increasing the number of people engaged into support for drug-related issues.

7. Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Update

- MEAM is a national approach focussed on addressing the support needs of individuals with multiple disadvantage. The approach is formed by a coalition of national charities including Clinks, Homeless Link, Mind and associate member Collective Voice. MEAM supports local areas to coordinate statutory and voluntary agencies to better meet the needs of those experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- MEAM work began in Middlesbrough in December 2021 with the appointment of our MEAM Co-ordinator. Following on from a pre-existing needs assessment the focus of work initially will be to further develop the coordinated multi-agency response to women affected by violence and multiple disadvantage.
- To date we have successfully developed an operational partnership with a range of front line and managerial staff from statutory and third sector organisations. The next step is the launch of the casework element of MEAM. This will be known as the Guiding Light Project and will see our MEAM Co-ordinator and a Social Worker commence one to one work with a small cohort of individuals with particularly complex needs.

8. Rough Sleeper Initiative

- The last bi-monthly rough sleeper count (May 21) identified 2 individuals (a reduction from 11 the previous year), both were offered temporary accommodation but declined, the team continue to work with them and carry out regular welfare checks.
- Middlesbrough Council has secured an allocation of £123,000 for 2021/22 to continue to fund outreach workers and our tenancy sustainment officer, who supports rough sleepers once accommodation has been secured for them.

- We have developed and supported a bid from North Star Housing to purchase and repair six empty properties to accommodate rough sleepers for periods of up to three years with support. Once ready for more independent living they will then be allocated social or private rented sector accommodation. Total award from Homes England/MHCLG is £332,804 capital and revenue. North Star are contributing in excess of £400,000.
- Partnership working with Thirteen Group has resulted in 5 properties being made available for homeless individuals currently in temporary accommodation. Thirteen will provide support to make sure the tenancies are sustained and will help with independent living skills etc. before supporting residents to move into social housing once they are ready.
- The number of people in temporary accommodation is reducing. The COVID period 'everyone in' policy meant that we briefly had just over 100 people in temporary accommodation. Hard work from our homelessness team members has reduced that to 65 currently and the number continues to reduce as more settled accommodation is found for individuals.