

Report of:	The Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Public Health - Andy Preston Director of Children's Care - Rachel Farnham
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Submitted to:	Executive - 5 October 2021
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Subject:	Youth Service: Overview of Progress, April 2021 – June 2021 (Quarter One)
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Summary

Proposed decision
That Executive notes the overview of progress made by the new Youth Service which was given approval to be established by Executive in June 2020.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
Information and discussion	Yes, as all wards are affected by the need to provide services to young people.	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
We will contribute to promote the welfare of our children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm, abuse and neglect. We will transform children's services to allow more families to stay together where it is safe for them to do so and reduce the need for children to be looked after.	We will work with our partners to help create a safer environment for families to live in, by supporting young people who are meeting in areas where there are concerns involving vulnerable young people, exploitation or anti-social behaviour.	

Ward(s) affected
All wards are affected as the need to deliver Youth Services for children and young people

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

1. What is the purpose of this report?

This update report was requested by Executive members, following six months of the commencement of the new youth Service. This report is to provide an overview of the actions undertaken, following approval in June 2020 to develop a Youth Service.

The report sets out the context in which these actions have been carried out as this is a key priority within the Children's Services Improvement Plan 2020/23 and the Early Help Strategy 2021–2024. The overall aim is to improve outcomes for Middlesbrough's vulnerable children and young people by providing effective Early Help through Youth Services.

2. Why does this report require a Member decision?

This report does not require a member decision. The report provides Executive members with an overview of the new Youth Service delivery.

3. Report Background

- a. A commissioning process commenced in July 2020, following approval from Executive in June 2020, and this invited bids from key voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver Youth Services in partnership with the Council. Bids were identified and prioritised on the basis of match funding, tangible community benefits, youth work quality and outcomes with a specific focus on supporting young people through Early Help, with key transition points and positive activities.
- b. This required a number of Youth Centres being identified across Middlesbrough through utilising existing Council buildings. This includes community hubs and community centres and allocated space has now been identified for young people to access youth club activities. In addition, spaces within buildings operated by the voluntary and community sector organisations have also been identified.
- c. There are three key elements to the Middlesbrough Youth Service model including universal, targeted and transition youth work.

4. Universal Youth Work – delivered by The Linx Youth Project

	April	May	June	Total
Total number of attendees	111	151	266	528
Total number of sessions	27	26	34	87

- a. Three open access youth clubs have commenced during quarter one with limited capacity, due to Covid-19 restrictions and the implementation of Covid-19 risk assessments. The areas of indoor delivery include Breckon Hill Community Centre, Newport Community Hub and Coulby Newham at The Beacon, Langdon Square which is a church facility
- b. In the localities where there has been no indoor access to youth clubs due to Covid-19 restrictions, groups have been able to engage in outdoor sports activities. The areas of outdoor delivery include the following wards; Ayresome, Hemlington and Grove Hill.

- c. In addition, detached sessions have been delivered to engage with those young people who could not attend the sessions due to Covid-19 restrictions placed on the number of people able to access the building at any one time.
- d. Young people have been involved in community and social action projects, such as a community litter pick and gardening. Within the youth clubs, outdoor and detached sessions, the young people have been educated around different subjects including refugee awareness, climate change, LGBTQ+, racism and anti-social behaviour. These subjects and activities are all influenced by the young people who are empowered to have their voices heard as they are invited to co-design the sessions based on their interests and current affairs.
- e. There have been some challenges in delivery as some young people have been refused entry for not adhering to Covid-19 rules because they did not want to wear a mask inside the centres. In addition, some delivery venues' risk assessments meant that not as many young people were allowed into the centres. Small groups have been trialled but these were not always well attended as the young people preferred to be in larger groups. Therefore outdoor based sessions have been delivered, weather dependable.
- f. The factors linked to Covid-19 have meant that service delivery has not yet reached its full potential and with the lifting of restrictions the services will expand.

5. Targeted Youth Work – delivered by The Junction Foundation

	April	May	June	Total
Total number of attendees <i>Note: The totals are not based on individuals as a young person may access more than one session</i>	62	694	363	1119
Total number of sessions delivered	3	30	62	95

- a. This involves detached and outreach delivery of Youth Services within all wards of Middlesbrough. This model can be utilised to move around different wards according to the level of need and targeted at identified hot spot areas, working in partnership with Community Safety Teams. A representative from The Junction attends the multi-agency Active Intelligence Mapping (AIM) meetings in order to focus on those areas where young people are meeting, where there are concerns about risk taking behaviour and exploitation or there is identified anti-social behaviour.
- a. Detached Youth Work has been delivered in order to build relationships with young people and communities to enable a tailored response to needs and presenting issues, involving project work and social action within communities. This is delivered four evenings a week to those communities with the highest level of identified need, which are currently Trimdon, Newport, Thorntree and Grove Hill. The number of attendees for detached youth work were less during June when compared to May due to a number of factors. There were fewer young people on the streets due to European Football matches and the detached team were starting to identify groups with the highest need and develop project-based work with them.

- b. **Trimdon** – There is regular attendance from young people within this area and diversionary activities delivered are well attended. Project work is being explored with young people such as social action projects focussed on the environment e.g. litter picks and self-image. In addition, young people are also supporting the development of the Salvation Army's future neighbourhood youth club/space.
- c. **Newport** – The street based youth boxing project is addressing physical activity, confidence, self-esteem, health and wellbeing and anger management. It aims to reduce community tensions and improve community cohesion. The young people regularly attend each week and are looking to submit a funding application with a view to grow the session.
- d. **Thorntree and Brambles Farm** – There is regular weekly attendance from young people within these sessions and they are becoming more involved in diversionary activities. Young people are exploring project work such as social action projects around the environment e.g. why do young people set fires. The team are also supporting the Brambles Farm Social Club to create a junior youth club for young people aged 8 – 10 years, with a possible extension to older age groups.
- e. **Grovehill** – Currently within this community the team are developing relationships with the young people and are not in a position as yet to discuss development work with them, as there is no consistency of young people attending as the young people in this area are quite transient. It has been observed that young people in this area are harder to engage, possibly due to the level of enforcement which has taken place over the years within the neighbourhood. However, each week more young people are engaging in diversionary activities and relationships are beginning to grow.
- f. One to one support is available for young people if they would benefit from goal-based action planning through the development of trusted relationships through Early Help where the threshold falls below specialist Social Work intervention. During quarter one (April to June) one to one support was offered to 25 young people referred from Middlesbrough Multi Agency Childrens Hub. The average intervention length is a three-month period of personalised one to one support.
- g. Small structured group work has been delivered with young people based on identified needs and emergent issues within these groups. Needs and issues are identified by the young people themselves through community-based provision, partner agencies discussions with the targeted team, or through emerging needs of the one to one caseload. Average programmes last 6 – 8 weeks.
- h. Structured group work has commenced within a secondary school in Middlesbrough with groups taking place consisting of 18 Key Stage 4 students. This was at the request of the school via Middlesbrough Childrens Services Risk and Resilience Team. The group sessions deliver healthy relationships covering a wide range of topics including; respectful friendships, appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, harassment, sexting and relationship abuse. These sessions are being well received with regular attendance from all young people who engage well and say they would recommend the sessions to their friends.

6. Targeted Transition Youth Work – delivered by Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation

	April	May	June	Total
Total number of referral received	5	19	52	76
Total number of interventions delivered	5	57	236	298

- a. The teenage years are a critical period of growth and an important time for making significant life choices and decisions. This can lead to changes in the nature of the relationship between young people and their parents or carers, often making it more difficult. These difficulties are for most, the normal pressures of growing up and do not lead to detrimental outcomes and most young people make the transition successfully to adulthood. However, some children and young people struggle at key transition points where there is significant change in their lives which is why there is a focus in the Youth Service model on these transitions. This can include changing schools, or moving from primary to secondary school, as well as the transition from school to next steps in education or employment following year 11.
- b. If a child or young person struggles with transition it can have a negative impact on their wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, academic achievement and future life chances. Research shows that the transition from primary to secondary school in particular can result in the widening of academic gaps between vulnerable children and their peers. Access to trusted adults via targeted transition programmes can support children both pastorally and academically, this involves identifying those children and young people who are most likely to need support. This is most effective when strong relationships are fostered and support is given through the transition period and beyond.
- c. The targeted transition programme delivered by MFC Foundation is known as **‘Switch It’** and has been flexible in terms of delivery models to enable a variety of sessions to suit each individual, including 1-1 intervention, small group work and detached sessions across a number of locations such as schools, homes, Riverside Stadium, sports clubs, youth centres and even a tour around Middlesbrough.
- d. Curriculum followed has varied from academic KS3 support within a classroom setting, covering aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) whilst preparing young people for their transition to secondary school, and also linking self-regulation techniques and strategies.
- e. Communication and engagement with schools and other education settings has varied, but positively all eight secondary schools have engaged.
- f. Young people have been signposted to evening and community provision such as Premier League Kicks, National Citizenship Service, Tees Valley Mohawks and The Linx Youth Project. Home visits have been completed alongside partners to enable staff to gain a better insight into the safety and environments of young people.
- g. There have been challenges as a result of Covid-19 which have resulted in meaningful encounters during interventions being missed and time being lost. Staff self-isolating internally and external staff and colleagues has also impacted delivery. The referrals have been growing due to high demand, popularity and positive feedback from partners.

7. Quality and Performance

Youth Services in Middlesbrough are underpinned by qualified, motivated, and enthusiastic youth workers, working to professional standards and each service provider is expected to provide the following within the contract specifications:

- a. Representation on the Partnership and Prevention Board and provision of quarterly performance reports to this Board to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.
- b. Receive announced and unannounced visits from Middlesbrough Council.
- c. Record sessions/interventions on Middlesbrough Council's case management system (Liquid Logic's Children's System/Early Help Module).
- d. Provide feedback from service users (via satisfaction surveys) resulting in service development where applicable.
- e. Be quality assessed by children and young people, young assessors and the Council's Commissioning Team.
- f. Adhere to standards of service provision, performance indicators and monitoring criteria as outlined in the service specification and contract. These may be subject to continuing negotiation during the course of the service development and delivery with the service provider.

8. Governance and Partnerships

- a. The three Youth Service providers are members of the Partnership and Prevention Board and support delivery of the Early Help Strategy. This board reports progress and ongoing delivery of the Youth Service on a quarterly basis to the Children's Trust.
- b. All three providers are collaborating regularly and effectively with each other to co-ordinate delivery plans and referral criteria to ensure there is no duplication of services and that the youth offer is comprehensive. A key activity moving forwards is to promote the full youth service offer across Middlesbrough and for this to be available and publicised on the Middlesbrough Children Matter website for young people to access.

9. What decision is being asked for?

That Executive notes the overview of progress made by the new Youth Service which was given approval to be established by Executive in June 2020.

10. Why is this being recommended?

It is important that members of the Executive have a line of sight into the strategic and operational work being undertaken in line with the Multi Agency Children's Services Improvement Action Plan 2020/21.

11. Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

No other potential decisions at this time.

12. Impact of recommended decision

a. Legal

This report does not ask for a decision but is to provide members of the executive an overview of the work undertaken in the development and delivery of Middlesbrough Youth Service. There is no additional directly related legal implications. The decision of the Executive to provide a new youth service model (June 2020) relates to the Statutory Guidance for Providing Youth Services 2012 (Section 507B, Education Act 1996).

b. Financial

As this report does not ask for a decision but is to provide members of the Executive an overview of the work of Middlesbrough Youth Service over quarter one, there are no additional directly related financial implications.

c. Policy Framework

This decision does not have any impact of the Council's Policy Framework.

d. Equality and diversity

The Youth Service will not result in policies and practices that impact inequitably on individual or groups because they hold one or more protected characteristics. Ensuring that Youth Services to children and young people are effective and appropriate for all including those who hold one or more protected characteristics is a key responsibility for the service and will be monitored at all times.

e. Risk

Provision of effective Youth Services will ensure that the Council is not at risk of failing to meet its statutory duties to provide Youth Services. Children and young people will receive support through the Youth Service and vulnerable children and young people will have risks identified and be provided with Early Help to prevent escalation to Children's Social Care.

13. Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

None.

14. Appendices

None.

15. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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