

Cabinet

16 December 2015

Children's Services Update



Report of Corporate Management Team

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Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Cabinet on the national and local developments in relation to Children's Services.

Background

- 2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 15 April 2015 providing information on the national and local developments which support early intervention and prevention for effective and rigorous protection of children and young people.
- 3 The report provided Cabinet with an overview of the Children's inspection regime and an update on the transformation journey that has been undertaken in Children's Services in Durham.

National Context

- 4 **Single Inspection Framework (SIF):** In late 2013, Ofsted introduced a new SIF for Children's Services, which covers children in need of help and protection, services for looked after children and care leavers, and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- 5 The SIF operates on a three-yearly cycle and the 'overall effectiveness' is judged as either outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate, as will each of the following judgements this is derived from:
 - The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection
 - The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence, including two graded judgements:
 - Adoption
 - The experiences and progress of care leavers
 - Leadership, management and governance.
- 6 Benchmarking and learning from other Local Authorities who have already been subject to inspection by Ofsted under this framework continues in the service.

To date, 69 Local Authorities have been inspected and had reports published. Of these, 16 (23%) have received an overall effectiveness judgement of 'good'. Over three-quarters are rated below Ofsted's benchmark of 'good', with 36 (52%) judged to 'require improvement' and 17 (25%) as 'inadequate'. No local authorities have been judged as 'outstanding' under the SIF.

- 7 With regard to reviews of the LSCBs in 69 of the local authorities inspected under SIF, 20 have been judged to be 'good' (29%), 36 (52%) as 'requires improvement' and 13 (19%) as 'inadequate'. No LSCBs have been judged to be 'outstanding' under the SIF.
- 8 The overall effectiveness judgement has decreased in 25 (36%) of all Local Authorities inspected and remained the same in 29 (42%). The overall judgement has improved in 15 (22%) of all Local Authorities inspected.
- 9 Ofsted announced on 26 February 2015, that the proposed integrated inspection framework would not be implemented from April 2015, instead 'joint' inspections of Children's Services will begin in the autumn. The inspections will have a tight focus on how well agencies work together to protect children and address specific areas of concern, such as sexual exploitation of children and young people. It is anticipated that six inspections will take place before March 2016.
- 10 [Ofsted](#), the [Care Quality Commission](#) as well as [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary](#) and [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation](#) released a consultation on the framework for joint area inspections on 15 July 2015; the outcome of the consultation is awaited.

Children's Centre inspections

- 11 The Minister for Childcare and Education announced in July 2015 a consultation on the future of children's centres. This included a discussion of what accountability framework is needed to best demonstrate their effect. In light of this, the Department for Education (DfE) has agreed with Ofsted to pause the children's centre inspection cycle, pending the outcome of the consultation.
- 12 This means that any children's centre inspections due in the 2015/2016 academic year as prescribed by the Children's Centre (Inspections) Regulations 2010 will not now take place until after the consultation.
- 13 Children's centres are expected to continue their work as usual during this pause, including collecting and monitoring of data in preparation for inspection. Ofsted will continue inspection of early years provision on the site of children's centres as part of the new common inspection framework implemented from September 2015. Ofsted will also continue to respond swiftly to any complaints or safeguarding concerns in children's centres.

Child Protection Taskforce

- 14 In June 2015 the Prime Minister announced a new taskforce to drive forward fundamental reforms to transform child protection.

- 15 Chaired by the Secretary of State for Education the taskforce will focus on transforming social work and children's services, improving inspection and tackling child sexual exploitation. It will join the 10 other implementation taskforces, including the [digital taskforce](#), already established across government to monitor and drive delivery of the government's cross-cutting priorities.
- 16 The taskforce's terms of reference are to drive improvements in the protection of vulnerable children by extending and accelerating reforms to the quality of children's social work practice and leadership; promoting innovative models of delivery; and overhauling the way that police, social services and other agencies work together locally.

Youth Justice

- 17 The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice announced the national review of the Youth Justice System, on 11 September 2015. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has welcomed the review.
- 18 Led by Charlie Taylor, the former Chief Executive of the National College of Teaching and Leadership, the review will look at evidence, current practice and governance arrangements in preventing youth crime and rehabilitating young people who offend and explore how the youth justice system can most effectively interact with wider partner services for children and young people. The results of the review will be reported in summer 2016.
- 19 Following an announcement by the Secretary of State for Justice, the YJB issued a consultation in August 2015 in respect of the proposed 10.6% in year cut to the Youth Justice grant to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs). The County Durham Youth Offending Service Management Board and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ACDS) responded and the outcome is due in mid-November 2015.

Regional Context

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 20 The region continues its commitment to addressing CSE and has established a North East Tackling Exploitation Board which includes senior representatives from local authorities, the three police forces in the region, NHS England and a local academic. The Board seeks to progress actions from a regional workshop held on 4th September 2015 on Lessons Learnt from Operation Sanctuary around tackling the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.

Training

- 21 A regional website is also being developed to bring together all the new workforce initiatives within the region including participation in Frontline, Step Up to Social Work, Think Ahead and to promote our regional masterclass programme.

- 22 In September 2015 The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) commenced recruitment to Cohort 1 of the North East Aspirant DCS programme in partnership with the Virtual Staff College, this involved 25 participants from local authorities across the region currently working at second and third tier level (Assistant Director / Head of Service).
- 23 Discussions are underway with all 12 local authorities and the universities in the region (plus York University) about the future of social work training within the region in the context of the Teaching Partnerships paper published by the Department for Education. The Chief Executive of the Virtual Staff College will facilitate a session later in 2015 between all parties around scenario planning of the different models possible within the region.

Regional Adoption agencies

- 24 In June, 2015 the Department of Education (DfE) set out proposals to move to regional adoption agencies to help speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children; improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reduce costs.
- 25 The Government are providing £4.5m of support to early adopters of regional adoption agencies to accelerate their development and early implementation in 2015-16. The overall aim of this funding is to stimulate initial change in the sector. Therefore, the Government are looking to work with local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and other organisations who wish to redesign radically their approach to adoption in 2015/16. Decisions on funding for 2016-17 and beyond will be subject to the Spending Review.
- 26 Two bids covering Tees, Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and Gateshead have been submitted in the first round to the DfE.
- 27 DfE has made clear their expectations that regional proposals will proceed although Durham currently sits outside these bids, the regional ACDS group has agreed to establish a task and finish group to develop a regional response in a future round.

Local Context

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 28 The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has prioritised work on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since 2011. Child Sexual Exploitation was identified as a strategic policing requirement in March 2015. CSE is also a community safety priority as outlined in Louise Casey's inspection report of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

29 The LSCB Missing and Exploited Sub-Group (MEG) carried out an analysis of Child Sexual Exploitation in County Durham in 2014 and this has recently been updated to cover the period April 2014 to March 2015. The analysis found that:

- Online CSE continues as the most common model of sexual exploitation. The prevalence of this has increased (from 25% to 37%).
- There were 230 young people identified as at risk of CSE.
- Little community intelligence is being gathered or submitted.
- The online model of CSE continues to be the most common.
- Most victims are female with the most common age being between 13-16 years.
- Most common nationality of perpetrators is British, people from the Middle East make up only 3%.
- Perpetrators of online CSE can reside anywhere in the world and can be difficult to identify and convict. Online vigilantes are an emerging trend identified in the data.

30 The majority of young people identified as “at risk of sexual exploitation” will not have been the victim of actual abuse. Each of these young people has been referred to the First Contact Service, where an initial risk assessment has been undertaken, using a CSE risk matrix, to ascertain whether the child was at low, medium or high risk. For those assessed at low risk, the referral has been passed to the One Point service for early help. Medium and high risk cases are allocated to the locality team manager of the Children’s Services Assessment and Intervention teams to coordinate multi-agency support for each young person.

31 Seen in historical operations into CSE, ‘Position of Trust’ is a newly considered model which was not presented in previous profiles. This involves a perpetrator employed or volunteering in a position where the young person would be expected to trust that person who then goes on to sexually exploit the victim.

32 There are strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. LSCB audits for both CSE and missing children incidents have highlighted a range of risks associated with those young people who go missing including sexual exploitation, mental health, alcohol or drugs. The offender profile is one of ‘street grooming’ and use of social media to exploit children.

33 The LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and action plan 2014-2017 outlines the key actions to be progressed to achieve the strategic aims of:

- Prevent – making it more difficult to exploit children
- Protect – identifying and safeguarding children who are at risk
- Pursue – the offenders, disrupt and where possible prosecute their activity

34 Progress against actions over the last six months includes:

- Intervene to Protect a Child’ (IPC) training - a new and proactive training tactic to identify and disrupt offenders.

- Developing stronger relationships with communities through Area Action Partnerships (AAP), raising awareness of CSE and how to report concerns or intelligence of CSE.
- Working with primary and secondary schools to advise on internet eSafety, utilising Sexual Relationships Education (SRE) to deliver messages on consent and healthy relationships and through the ChildLine Schools Service using workshops and assemblies delivered by specialist trained volunteers, to educate primary school children, aged nine to 11 years old to understand abuse and help them stay safe.
- Widening our CSE training and awareness to those services not traditionally associated with safeguarding.

35 This has led to a programme of voluntary training for taxi drivers with over 600 taxi drivers trained and further sessions planned for later in the year. The sessions have been delivered by police and LSCB trainers with a CSE expert on hand at each session. The sessions have been coordinated by the LSCB Business Unit and Environment Health and Consumer Protection (EHCP). The sessions have also enabled police to gain intelligence from taxi drivers prompted by the training received.

36 The MEG plan to continue the training in 2016 and to widen the invitation to other external services such as Hotels, Take Away outlets, Off-licence trade and internally to staff such as Waste and Recycle Teams, Environmental Services, and Neighbourhood Wardens.

37 The 'ERASE' brand (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) has been created to tackle child sexual exploitation (ERASE offers parents and carers advice on how to communicate with their children about who they speak to on-line and off-line)

38 A dedicated multi-agency ERASE team was launched in August 2015 focusing on early identification of young people at risk and suspected offenders to prevent further missing / absent episodes and further improve our response to child sexual exploitation.

39 The ERASE website was launched in November 2015. The front page has links for younger children, older children, parents/carers and professionals and also links to the LSCB website.

40 A CSE Disruption Toolkit has also been developed to enable practitioners to highlight to the police risk factor behaviour around potential perpetrators. The use of this toolkit continues to be promoted in presentations and awareness raising events.

41 Durham County Council has undertaken and completed an internal review of CSE to provide assurance on the activity and governance in place the findings of which were considered by Corporate Management Team on 14th October.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

42 Launched on 2nd March 2015 the MASH consists of a multi-disciplinary team which works together as part of the First Contact Service to screen, gather, analyse and share information relating to concerns about children in County Durham who may be at risk of harm, or who need support services. The team also has access to information via single point of access (SPOC) across a range of organisations who specialise in mental health (Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust) and drugs and alcohol (through the new provider, Lifeline).

43 The MASH team is made up of a MASH Co-ordinator, Social Workers and School Attendance Enforcement Officer (from Children's Services), a Detective Sergeant and Detective Constable, a Senior Safeguarding Nurse and a Harbour Domestic Abuse Service Co-coordinator. Single points of contact are in place for children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), assessment and intervention, the substance misuse service and the community rehabilitation company.

44 Since their launch the MASH has dealt with 3,623 concerns about children and young people. Further achievements include:

- Information shared at the point of referral has led to quicker and better informed decisions about risk.
- Information is more easily accessible and has resulted in more timely referrals to the right services
- A collective understanding of thresholds has improved consistency of families referred to the appropriate service.

Serious Case Reviews

43 The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has initiated six serious case reviews since 2014 where a child has been seriously harmed and/or there are concerns about how organisations or professionals worked together to protect the child. Two serious case reviews have been published and action plans put in place to ensure lessons learnt are put into practice.

Local Inspection activity

44 Inspected annually, the overall position at 1 October 2015 with regard to Durham County Council (DCC) children's homes is shown below

Name	Full inspection date	Full inspection overall judgement	Interim inspection date	Interim inspection overall outcome
Blackgate East	11.08.14	Good	21.10.14	Sustained effectiveness
Aycliffe Secure	17.09.14	Good	27.01.14	Good progress
Park House	07.10.14	Good	05.03.15	Improved effectiveness
Cedar Drive	17.11.14	Good	25.03.15	Improved effectiveness

Attlee Estate	25.11.14	Adequate	27.03.15	Improved effectiveness
New Lea House	25.11.14	Good	10.02.15	Sustained effectiveness
12 Brough Close*	02.12.14	Adequate	26.03.15	Improved effectiveness
Moorside	02.12.14	Good	10.03.15	Improved effectiveness
Newton Drive	05.01.15	Good	25.03.15	Improved effectiveness
West Rainton	09.01.15	Good	04.08.15	Improved effectiveness
High Etherley	21.07.15	Outstanding	28.01.15	Improved effectiveness

* 12 Brough Close closed on 31 August 2015.

Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

45 Durham was successful in two bids to the Children's Social Care Innovation Fund.

46 The first was for £496,000 for a therapeutic support programme at Aycliffe secure centre for children that have been sexually exploited. This offers targeted support in helping young people deal with trauma and in making the transition from the secure setting into more independent living. The Durham Unit team became operational from 18 May 2015 and the service is being delivered in partnership with Barnardos and Odysseus Mentoring Project.

47 The funding allows for a three pronged approach:

- Therapeutic and mentoring services are being offered within a secure unit for a minimum of 3 months and then up to 3 months as part of resettlement into the community (up to 18 months for the mentoring services). A step down facility is available as part of the transition.
- New training programme for Aycliffe staff in CSE and trauma to prioritise more effective interventions.
- Clinical supervision for staff to embed the training and provide increased awareness and learning so that a therapeutic culture is developed on the unit.

48 The Durham Unit is 6 months into its support programme and is awaiting its midway evaluation report, which will be carried out by Oxford University in November 2015.

49 The second successful bid was for £3.26 million to deliver on a large scale a new approach to social work and to work with families, building on the learning from past initiatives in Durham and elsewhere.

50 Progress on the main innovative elements of Durham's programme are as follows:

- Creation of Families First Teams** - all three first stage integrated early help and social work teams achieved 'go-live' week commencing 20th July 2015, with the teams adopting flexible ways of working.
- Third sector alliances have been strengthened** with positive regional interest in Durham's developments. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been finalised, which underpins the voluntary community

sector (VCS) Alliance Model, the model provides long-term and sustainable help and support for children, young people and families.

- (c) **An intensive workforce development programme has commenced** - all staff in stage 1 teams received induction training prior to go-live with further staff events held in September and November 2015. The pilot reflective practice model which promotes integrated working has been agreed and commenced in November 2015.
- (d) **Enhanced service user engagement** is a key feature of the Innovations Programme and ongoing staff and partner engagement and briefings held regularly. Stage 1 Go Live area was launched on 29th September 2015 at Shotton Hall Conference Centre. The event was opened by Councillor Tracie Smith, Cabinet Support Member for Children and Young People's Services and was well attended with over 180 participants from across all partnership agencies.

- 51 The evaluation of the programme is ongoing and an interim report has been produced and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE). A Service User Survey and Staff Survey took place during October to November 2015 and the results are awaited. Dedicated research staff have been appointed and trained to progress future evaluation of the programme
- 52 Work is on target with phased implementation of the remaining seven Families First teams between January and February 2016.

Stronger Families

- 53 Durham successfully implemented and delivered Phase 1 and met its full target of 'turning around' 1,320 families by March 2015.
- 54 Following Durham's invitation in August 2014 to be one of the of the Troubled Families programme's Early Starters Durham will work with 4,330 families and deliver Phase 2 over a 5 year time period.
- 55 This new phase includes much broader eligibility criteria enabling the majority of families worked with by social care services to be part of the programme and to achieve results payments. There is a very clear need to shift our focus to ensuring families are worked with in such a way that supports significant and sustained change.
- 56 All programmes are required to develop a local Family Outcome Framework (FOF), describing the programme's identification criteria and outcomes.
- 57 The key actions for phase 2 include:
- Embedding the use of the FOF and development of outcome-focused care plans.
 - Coordination of the workforce development with the Service Transformation and Innovations Programme and LSCB.

- A range of ICT developments to help manage the information requirements of the expanded programme, including Family Progress Data and outcomes evidence collection for payment-by-results.
- Revise the payment-by-result methodology and grant terms of reference with our Internal Audit service.
- Carry out a 'refresh' of the cost saving calculator data once data is available and investigate the cases where there is a particular increase in the costs associated with fostering and residential care.

58 The Stronger Families programme has informed the development of the Children's Services Innovations programme. Stronger Families will cease to be identifiable as a separate programme, and will become the core of new Families First teams. This will make best use of the learning and expertise built during the programme, but also the resources generated through the programme, in order to achieve improved outcomes for all vulnerable families in County Durham.

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

59 A peer review of County Durham (CDYOS) took place in October 2015 following a request by the Senior Leadership Team and approval by the Chair of the Management Board in late 2014.

60 Youth Justice Peer Reviews are part of the sector-led improvement process and are designed to be collaborative an opportunity at no cost for CDYOS and the Management Board to gain a fresh perspective on the service from critical friends.

61 The scope of the peer review and specific key lines of enquiry (KLOE) were agreed at a scoping meeting in August 2015. The focus of the review was to examine how CDYOS, with its partners, is delivering youth justice services. The overarching aim was to review the developments put in place since the Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspection (July 2014) and the effectiveness of the restructure (February 2014). Specific KLOEs included reviewing restorative justice practice and the young person's pathway through the service.

62 Initial findings of the review have been shared on 16 November 2015 with the Management Board and CDYOS Management Team and the report has been received. The review found a high partnering service, but has made some recommendations for further focus and improvement which will form the basis of an improvement action plan.

63 Additionally CDYOS gave evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties on 19 October 2015. The CDYOS presentation showcased the progress and key learning from the Service's Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Strategy, which commenced in March 2014.

Performance

- 64 Improvement in performance is shown across a range of key indicators. As at the end of September 2015 reductions and favourable benchmarking comparison are shown in the number and rate of children in need (339.8 per 10,000) and the number and rate of children whose needs are met through a Child Protection Plan (33.9 per 10,000).
- 65 The rate of children in need re-referrals is also reducing, with 21.8% referred again within 12 months of a previous referral, and with 9.7% of children requiring a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the last one (April – September 2015).
- 66 As at end of September 2015, a high proportion of our looked after children are in foster care, (82.3%) with only 8.5% in residential care. Provisional data as at 31st March 2015 shows 90.6% of our children are placed within 20 miles of home; 78.6% within the boundaries of County Durham, a much better rate than national levels.
- 67 There has been improvement in the timescales for the average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (for those who have been adopted) from 533 days in 2013/14 to 449 days for 2014/15. For quarter 1 2015/16 Durham's average continues to improve (433 days) and shows a favourable position when compared to the national average of 523 days.
- 68 The work and performance outlined above has been achieved through continued budgetary pressures, the demands of possible inspection and whilst austerity measures continue. There is a continuing difficulty in recruiting social work middle managers. Additionally caseloads remain high in some teams although actions have been taken to reduce this pressure, which are beginning to have an impact Children's Services has embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation whilst ensuring existing services continue to deliver good services to children and their families.

Recommendations

- 69 Cabinet is recommended to:
- Note the contents of this report.
 - Agree to receive further updates in relation to the transformation of Children's Services on a six monthly basis.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – Substantial efficiencies have already been delivered through this approach as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Further efficiencies are planned. The successful bid to the Children’s Innovation Fund will result in funding of £3.26m coming in to the authority to be used to develop new approaches to children’s social care. As part of the Children’s Innovation Fund an additional £496,000 bid was successful for a therapeutic support programme at Aycliffe secure centre for children that have been sexually exploited. Plans are in place for the ending of this additional support.

Staffing – Workforce development will benefit staff and will help to challenge thinking and introduce new ways of working into practice. Roles and responsibilities are being amended in line with revised requirements. Embedding culture change is dependent on staff working effectively and understanding service aims, supported by managers.

Risk – Changes need to be carefully managed to ensure the protection of children remains robust and the system is not de-stabilised during transition.
Risk to the safety of children and young people of failure to prevent CSE.
Major reputational risk to the Council of failure to prevent and address CSE.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The needs of vulnerable children and families will be better met through implementation of these changes

Accommodation – The innovation programme will require relocation and co-location of staff teams across the county, which will be managed within existing resources.

Crime and Disorder – Effective partnership working through the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights - None

Consultation – Any changes to workforce will be subject to consultation with affected staff.

Procurement – None at this stage

Disability Issues – None at this stage

Legal Implications – There are a number of key policy developments/initiatives that have led the way and contributed to the Children’s Services Transformation agenda in County Durham. All changes must be compliant with legal requirements