



## **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date      Monday 18 November 2019**

**Time      9.30 am**

**Venue      Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend.  
Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement.**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Meetings held on 26 September and 14 October 2019  
(Pages 3 - 16)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Social Worker Academy Progress - Report of the Corporate Director  
of Children & Young People's Services (Pages 17 - 24)
7. Update on the Progress of the Recommendations of the Role of the  
Social Worker from a Child's Perspective Review - Report of the  
Director of Transformation and Partnerships (Pages 25 - 38)
8. Verbal Update on Review Activity
9. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the  
meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

**Helen Lynch**  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
8 November 2019

To: **The Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor H Smith (Chair)  
Councillor C Potts (Vice-Chair)

Councillors P Atkinson, B Bainbridge, A Batey, D Bell, J Blakey, P Brookes, J Charlton, B Coult, R Crute, S Durham, N Grayson, C Hampson, K Hopper, I Jewell, L Kennedy, L Mavin, M Simmons, A Willis and M Wilson

**Faith Communities Representatives:**

Mrs C Johnston

**Parent Governor Representatives:**

Mrs J Norman and Mr R Patel

**Co-opted Members:**

Ms R Evans and Mrs P Parkins

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**Contact: Kirsty Gray**

**Tel: 03000 269705**

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 26 September 2019 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor H Smith (Chair)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors C Potts, B Bainbridge, A Batey, D Bell, P Brookes, B Coult, R Crute, I Jewell, L Mavin, M Simmons, A Willis and M Wilson

**Co-opted Members:**

Mrs J Norman and Ms R Evans

**Also Present:**

Councillor J Considine

Prior to the commencement of business the Chair informed members of a Special joint meeting of the Children and Young People's, Adults, Wellbeing and Health and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 17 December 2019 to discuss proposals to the extension of fluoridisation.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey, N Grayson and C Hampson, and from Mrs P Parkin.

**2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

**3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

## **4      Declarations of Interest**

Councillor B Coul declared a personal interest in minute numbered 8 regarding the Ofsted Education Framework and took no part in the discussion.

## **5      Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

Ms Evans asked how schools and young people were contributing to reducing their carbon footprint and if this Committee could provide information to members as part of its scrutiny role. The Chair suggested that this be considered at a future meeting, and the Education and Children and Young People's Services be asked what actions were proposed to contribute towards the Council's targets to make the county carbon neutral.

## **6      Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented Members with recent press articles relating to the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Call for review of impact poverty has on Education
- Number of over 16s going into care increases 25% in four years, report finds
- Funding boost to help combat holiday hunger
- Mental health support for young people to increase

### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

## **7      Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2018/19**

The Committee considered the Annual Report of the Independent Chair of County Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for 2018/19 (for copies see file of minutes).

The Independent Chair reported that this was the final report prior to transitioning to the new statutory partnership arrangement known as the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The report described the work undertaken against the LSCB's 2018-2019 priorities and described local governance arrangements and links to other strategic partnerships across County Durham.

Members were also informed of the transitional arrangements to the new Partnership which commenced on 1 April 2019, three months ahead of the national schedule.

Members discussed the Annual Report.

Referring to the Local Safeguarding data for 2018/2019, Councillor Brookes asked why there was a reported reduction in children subject to a Child Protection Plan in the year, when there had been an increase in children in the looked after system. The Independent Chair responded that it was difficult to give precise reasons; children coming into care were in crisis and had increasingly complex needs. The Partnership recognised that since 2016 there had been a sustained increase in children in care, and he assured the member that the Partnership would explore in further the data in respect of both these priority areas.

The member also noted that funding levels had remained the same in 2018/2019 and asked why the annual financial contributions received from partner agencies had not increased to support the work of the Partnership. The Independent Chair explained that a decision was made to maintain existing levels as part of the transition process due to the uncertainty around the funding the new Partnership would need. In accordance with national guidelines funding must be 'proportionate and equitable' and the Partnership was due to meet with key partners in this year's budget round to discuss contribution levels going forward.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the content of the report be noted;
- b) the 2018/2019 Annual Report of Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board be endorsed.

## **8 Ofsted Education Framework 2019**

The Committee considered a report and presentation by the School Leadership Advisor which provided members with information relating to the new Ofsted Education Framework (for copy see file of Minutes).

The School Leadership Advisor reported that the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) came into effect from 2 September 2019 following extensive consultation, and changed the way Ofsted inspected schools, FES institutions and Early Years settings. The presentation addressed:

- The main changes
- Key Threads in the EIF
- Inspector's judgements
- Gradings
- The Ofsted Report

Councillor Crute referred to the funding regime and expressed concern about reducing teacher numbers in schools which were struggling financially and the

increasing workloads of those remaining. He accepted that Ofsted had no involvement in the funding regime, which was the responsibility of the Department for Education but asked if a school's financial circumstances was a consideration in an Ofsted judgement. The School Leadership Advisor stated that the new Framework provided an opportunity for the Ofsted Inspector to engage with schools during inspections to discuss matters such as financial circumstances and teacher numbers.

Following a question from Councillor Kennedy about the use of 'gaming' which she considered was a means to give children with behavioural issues a fresh start, the School Leadership Advisor clarified what was meant by gaming by Ofsted.

Councillor Jewell considered that the inspection process should be supportive and able to identify good practice, helping schools improve performance. The member asked how the Framework would achieve this. The member was informed that the new Framework enabled the Inspectors to engage in quality dialogue with Headteachers about the children in their schools. Good practice guidance for schools would be published.

Mrs Norman referred to the changes to gradings and how this would be communicated to the public. The members were informed that this had not been determined to date but Ofsted recognised the importance of good communication, particularly as fewer providers would be deemed to be outstanding. The barre had been raised with the new gradings.

Councillor Brookes noted that the new inspection regime would not rely on performance data to the same extent. However he considered that parents would look at data when making school choices. The School Leadership Advisor acknowledged that data would be considered by parents but the new Ofsted report would be more accessible and clearer, and would include information that would assist parents to make informed school choices.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be received.

**9      Consultation on High Needs Block funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Support**

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children which outlined the approach and scope of a public consultation that was underway on proposals to help reduce spending pressures on the High Needs Block funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Support (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children gave a presentation to members on the consultation which commenced on 17 July 2019 and ended on 17 October 2019. The presentation included:

- An outline of current challenges
- The consultation approach and proposals
- The Consultation Plan
- The next steps and recommendations

Councillor Jewell asked how many responses had been received and if this was monitored periodically. The member also asked what action was being taken to encourage people to engage in the process. The member was informed that 65 responses had been received when the consultation was initially launched, and following a refresh of figures the latest total had risen to 168. The service was promoting the consultation via social media and leafleting, and there were community events running until the end of the consultation period. The service was targeting community support groups, focus groups, School Governors and the Schools Forum. A short survey had been sent to all schools.

Councillor Brookes referred to the budget deficit and asked if there was any data in relation to forecasted demand, given that demand for the service was increasing. The member was informed that core school funding was expected to increase so the financial position would be improved next year. In terms of the deficit the service had started to make savings and efficiencies, and costs were being reduced without impacting upon service delivery. The situation was monitored on a monthly basis and with improved forecasting this would assist in bringing the deficit into balance in the required 3 years.

Ms Evans stressed the importance of maintaining the trust developed with families which was brought about by changes in 2014 and which had improved the way the service was provided for the better. She hoped that this would not be affected.

Councillor Crute stated that he was concerned that the spending increase had been an announcement not a settlement, and asked if there had been any national lobbying of the Government. The member was informed that lobbying had been carried out by the County Council's network, the Local Government Association, and Cabinet Member Councillor Gunn had written to the Government and met with the Children's Minister. A National Audit Office Report had found shortcomings in the DfE response to financial pressures, much of which was based on resources for reforms. This would feed into the Comprehensive Spending Review. A link to the National Audit Office Report would be sent to members.

Councillor Coulter stressed that top-up funding was vital. The process was extremely stressful and it was important to streamline the system wherever possible. The member was assured that a key aim of the consultation was to work with local

families, community groups and schools to shape how best the needs of children were met within the funding available.

**Resolved:**

That the contents of the report and the consultation proposals, be noted.

## **10 Quarter One 2019/20 Performance Management Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which presented progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework for the Altogether Better for Children and Young People priority theme (for copy see file of Minutes).

Following a question from Councillor Bainbridge, the member was informed that data for kinship carers was being examined with the new Fostering and Adoption Team, with a view to including performance figures in future reports.

Councillor Crute referred to data in respect of free school meals and the percentage take up of 80%. The member asked where the budget for the 20% that was not taken up was re-allocated. The member was informed that the data formed part of a national return and was a 'snapshot' of school meals in one given day. Durham performed well nationally in terms of free school meal take-up.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter one performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance be noted;
- b) data in respect of kinship carers be explored with a view to inclusion in future reports;
- c) officers investigate if the remaining budget was re-allocated when free school meals were not taken up.

## **11 Budget Outturn 2018/2019 Quarter 4**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which provided details of the 2018/2019 revenue and capital outturn for Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) and highlighted major variances in comparison with the budget as at 31 March 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the CYPS revenue and capital outturn for 2018/19 be noted.

## **12      Budget Forecast 2019/2020 Quarter 1**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which provided details of the forecast outturn budget position for the CYPS service grouping, and highlighted major variances in comparison with the budget for the year, based on the position to the end of June 2019 (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the forecast CYPS revenue and capital outturn for 2019/20 be noted.

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## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Monday 14 October 2019 at 9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor H Smith (Chair)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors C Potts, P Atkinson, B Bainbridge, A Batey, D Bell, J Charlton, B Coulthard, R Crute, C Hampson, K Hopper, I Jewell, L Kennedy, M Simmons, A Willis and M Wilson

#### **Parent Governor Representative:**

Ms J Norman

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Ms R Evans

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey, P Brookes and S Durham.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

### **3 Declarations of Interest, if any**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

### **5 West Lane Hospital Update**

The Committee received a report of Dominic Gardner, Director of Operations, Teesside, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust, which provided the Committee with information in relation to the key events leading to the closure of in-

patient services and West Lane Hospital, and subsequent arrangements for Young People requiring in-patient mental health care (for copy see file of minutes).

The Director of Operations, first apologised to the families of the young people affected, the constituents of the areas affected and the staff affected by the issues at West Lane Hospital.

Councillor B Bainbridge asked if the issues which led to the closure of the in patient unit could have been pre-empted. The Director of Operations confirmed that following the incidents in November, improvements had been made, but this had impacted on staff from other wards. In April, following the return of staff who had been suspended, feedback was positive. However, by the end of May/June there were issues relating to an increased level of clinical acuity and increased staff absence, which caused pressure on staff and increased reliance on bank staff.

With no criminal case to answer to, Councillor Jewell asked what the issues were and whether the hospital was operating a service that could not guarantee the safeguarding of patients.

Elizabeth Moody, Director of Nursing confirmed that in hindsight, the patients on the Westwood Ward were far more challenging than what had previously been known, having issues relating to complex trauma and autism. There were much higher levels of violence, aggression and self-harm and there was a lack of coherent disciplinary procedures. The Director of Nursing added the nature of the service was that they did not want to be restrictive, however, on a day to day basis the behaviour was too difficult to manage. The trust have policies in place but the CQC found that there was not always written evidence and staff absence and reliance on agency staff, who were not aware of the needs of the children meant that immediate action had to be taken and there was not the time needed to make the necessary improvements.

Councillor Jewell asked if there were any cultural issues which led to staff not speaking up, or Managers ignoring serious issues. The Director of Nursing confirmed that there were issues which staff felt unable to raise and there were managers who had not worked in the unit for a long time. Following the issues in November, staff returned and were more sensitive, so more Managers were brought in, but staff still felt unable to raise concerns.

Councillor Jewell asked if the Trust was confident that the damage could be repaired and the Director of Nursing confirmed that the immediate answer was for the hospital to remain closed. However there was a need for some in-patient facility and the Trust was working with the NHS to ensure this could be provided.

The Chair commented that there were three serious case reviews and until all of them were concluded, there was no option but for the hospital to remain closed, however she asked what happened in the meantime to young people who required

care. The Director of Operations confirmed that there were other services in the North, in Tyne and Wear (Prudhoe), however there were not always beds available, but the main priority was to ensure young people were placed as close to home as possible. It had been recognised that sometimes young people were placed a significant distance from home and this was under review by NHS England.

The Director of Nursing confirmed that within County Durham and Darlington work was ongoing to prevent admissions by providing an intensive support service, ensuring that children were treated earlier and at home, however it was recognised that there was always a need for in-patient services.

Ms Evans commented on the distressing nature of the business and asked if how the safeguarding of service users could be ensured going forward. She asked whether the Trust had established multiagency links and were seeking to consult with neighbouring authorities. She also asked what role statutory health scrutiny would play in looking at the future model of care.

The Director of Nursing confirmed that Operations confirmed that due to the specialist nature of the services operating from West Lane Hospital there were only another two or three in the country and therefore they were unable to carry out benchmarking. The chronology of events since November had led to this unfortunate situation but throughout that time, they had been working with the Local Authority Designated Officer and police. The hospital was based in Middlesbrough so most of the links were in Teesside but they acknowledged service users were from the wider area. The Director of Operations confirmed that they will work with health scrutiny in Durham, Teesside and North Yorkshire.

The Director of Operations reiterated that this is a specialist service which was not commissioned by Clinical Commissioning Groups but NHS England. In terms of pathways of care for young people, local authority provision covered a number of young people with significant social needs and there was ongoing engagement with the Director of Children's Services and families.

The Director of Nursing confirmed that families were a key consultee and they had held meetings with individuals' families to ensure they were addressing their concerns through the Network of Families Group and staff views were considered through HR development. Ultimately the Trust needed to await the outcomes of reports from inspection and enquiries and would report findings back to the Committee.

Councillor Jewell noted that if the service had been operating at 60-70% capacity at the time of the incidents, what assurances could be given that children were not being placed in services at full capacity and therefore at increased risk. The Director of Operations confirmed that procedures had been inspected by NHS England and cases were managed by the additional Manager who had been retained at West Lane which would ensure appropriate support and safeguarding procedures were adhered to.

Michelle Trainer, Head of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust added that care teams in CAMHS were in contact with families and ensured young people received regular visits.

The Director of Nursing confirmed that although the units were under capacity on paper, the needs of the occupants were high and therefore they were not able to admit additional children. This was the case in all units, assessments would be undertaken to ensure the needs of a young person could be met, without compromising the patients who were already admitted. The system was complex and not based on the number of beds, but the level of care needed or staffing issues.

### **Resolved**

- a) That the report be noted
- b) That arrangements be made for a progress report to be included within the Committee's work programme.

### **6      Liquidlogic**

The Committee received a joint report the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, and a presentation from Keith Forster, CYPS Service Manager - Operational Support, which provided an overview of the first eight months since the implementation of the new case management system in Children's Services (for copies see file of minutes).

Ms Evans commented on the transition into adult services with regards to SEND which was a 0-25 years old service and asked whether there were any issues with the way data was recorded. The CYPS Service Manager confirmed that this was a complex area and whilst there was no single IT system across services, however, there was work ongoing and agreed protocols were in place with both services.

Councillor Jewell said from his experience on Adoption Panels, he had received feedback that there were some issues with embedding certain data into the new system. The CYPS Service Manager confirmed that data was formerly stored on the old Social Services Information Database (SSID), which was a council designed and owned operating system which could be controlled and modified to suit the council's need. Although it was possible for Liquidlogic to operate in the same way, there was a process in order to tailor the programme. A lot of the effort had been put into First Contact Services and there was an ongoing project with regards to Fostering and Adoption.

Councillor Coulthard asked for an update on the mobile working project. The CYPS Service Manager confirmed that it was difficult to provide a timescale because the pilot was to consider which services were able to adapt successfully to mobile working. There were also areas which needed defining but if the pilot was successful, the programme would be rolled out in 12 months.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted and a further update be provided in 12 months.

**7      The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme in County Durham**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Public Health, and a presentation from Michelle Baldwin Public Health Strategic Manager, with regards to the review and re-procurement of the current 0-19 Growing Healthy Service, which included the Health Visiting and School Nursing services (for copy see file of minutes).

The Public Health Strategic Manager invited comment from the Committee on the priority of services provided to which the Chair highlighted the importance of immunisation and vaccination advice.

Councillor Kennedy raised concern about access to the online immunisation consent as some parents may not be able to use this facility. The Public Health Strategic Manager confirmed that this was a separate service but parents were able to opt-out of online services.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be noted
- b) That following the procurement process, arrangements be made for a progress report to be included within the Committee's work programme.

**8      Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2018-19**

The Committee received a report of the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel which presented the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report April 2018-March 2019.

The Chair noted an excellent report and was delighted that the views of young people were being incorporated. Councillor Potts congratulated the Panel on producing an excellent and easy to read report.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

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**Children and Young People's  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

**18 November 2019**



**Social Worker Academy Progress**

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**Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information on the progress and achievements of the Social Worker Academy.

**Executive summary**

- 2 The Social Work Academy, a 'grow your own social workers' initiative, was created in 2016 and continues to provide excellent support and opportunities to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) during their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). The number of ASYE social workers supported by the Social Work Academy and the newly created Enhanced Social Worker Practitioners (ESWP) has grown year by year with at least two cohorts of ASYEs joining each year.
- 3 The ESWP posts were introduced to aid the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers and to allow more ASYE's to be placed in teams, whilst insuring that they continued to receive good support by the Academy practice leads and from within their team. Work is continuing to embed the role of the ESWP within teams.
- 4 In our recent Ofsted Inspection, the Social Work Academy was praised and reported as a strength.
- 5 The turnover of social workers is reducing and therefore the number of vacancies in the service is slowing which, assuming this trajectory continues, means the number of ASYE's needed within the service will also reduce and stabilise. This is reviewed regularly at a meeting between the Strategic Managers for Families First, Human Resources

and the Service Improvement Manager, who has management oversight of the Social Work Academy.

## **Recommendation**

- 6 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to;
  - (a) receive the information contained in the report and presentation and comment accordingly.

## **Background**

- 7 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective recommended that the committee monitor the development and progress of the Social Worker Academy.
- 8 In accordance with that recommendation arrangements have been made for the Strategic Manager Safeguarding Professional Practice and the Service Improvement Manager to attend a meeting of the committee on 18 November 2019 to present this report.

## **History of the Social Work Academy**

- 9 The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (AYSE) was introduced in England in 2012 and is overseen by Skills for Care and assesses social workers against the Knowledge and Skills Statements mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework. In May 2016, Durham Children's Services piloted a Social Work Academy, a 'grow your own' innovation which initially recruited 12 AYSE social workers. Due to the success of the pilot, in 2017 it became a mainstream programme. All NQSW are supported by the Academy programme which currently has two dedicated practice leads. One of these practice lead posts is a permanent post and the other is currently a fixed term post funded from reserves until the end of March 2021. This temporary post is currently vacant and is at the interview stage of recruitment.
- 10 Since 2016, 44 Social Workers have been supported by the Academy with 37 remaining to complete their full AYSE in Children's Social Care, please see Table 1 below. This has enabled them to develop a strong foundation for their practice with children and families focussing on embedding the Knowledge and Skills Statement, developing critical thinking and emotional resilience and ending with a 2–5 year career development plan to aid retention and to develop and shape the workforce for the future.

**Table 1**

Cohort	Cohort Period	Numbers	Remain in CSC	Left after completing ASYE	Left mid ASYE	Retention once ASYE completed %	Reasons for leaving
1	2016 to 2017	<b>12</b>	7	5	0	58%	All 5 left to pursue agency work
2	2017 to 2018 & 2019	<b>19</b>	8	5	5 (+ 1 re-deployed)	42%	4 x left profession 6 x moved to another LA
3	2017 to 2018, & 2019	<b>12</b>	9	2	1	75%	2 x left profession 1 x moved to another LA
4	2018 to 2019	<b>26</b> (25 yet to complete ASYE by end of Feb 2020)	To date 1	To date 0	To date 0	To date 100%	
5	2019 to 2020	<b>14</b> (14 yet to complete ASYE by Autumn 2020)	NA	To date 0	To date 0	Recently Started	
6	2019 to 2010	<b>10</b> (10 yet to complete ASYE by Autumn 2020)	NA	NA	NA	Starting week beginning 7/10/19	

- 11 The number of ASYEs have increased year by year in response to service needs and vacancies. Each year there are at least two main recruitment periods meaning that 2 or more cohorts of new ASYEs overlap. In September 2018, it was proposed that the number of ASYEs increased over establishment as part of the retention strategy to develop an ‘Enhanced Social Work Practitioner’ (ESWP) role. The details of this are contained within Proposals for Recruitment and Agency Staff Cost Pressures Report, dated 24 September 2018.
- 12 Children’s Social Care has 12 ESWP posts, one based in 12 of the 14 Family First Teams. They report to and are supervised by the Team Manager. Currently, 11 of these posts are filled with one being at the interview stage. ESWPs are experienced social workers who hold an often complex but reduced and protected caseload to allow time for them to mentor at least two the ASYEs in their teams and provide them with support, direction and fortnightly case mapping and discussions.

The Academy Practice Leads continue to provide reflective supervision, monthly development and training days, 3, 6 and 12 monthly reviews and one at 9 months if required and remain as the assessors of the ASYE's portfolio. They make a recommendation to approve or not to the Academy Panel who make the final decision about them passing their ASYE. They also provide additional support, learning and reflective supervision to those ASYEs not directly linked to an ESWP.

- 13 There is ongoing work to embed the ESWP role.

### **Current Position**

- 14 From the week beginning 7 October 2019 the Social Work Academy will be supporting 49 NQSW to complete their ASYE. Of these, ten have joined us through the Frontline route (a graduate programme for entry into social work) and are currently temporarily in family worker posts pending formal conformation of them having passed their degree which is due the week beginning 7 October 2019, four are highly likely to complete and pass their ASYE at the October 2019 ASYE Panel and three additional NQSW are due to start shortly. In addition, between October 2019 and January 2020 a further 18 are due to complete their ASYE.
- 15 Recruitment for NQSW is reviewed regularly as the numbers recruited directly relate to service need and capacity within the service to support NQSW. This is reviewed regularly at a meeting between the Strategic Managers for Families First, Human Resources and the Service Improvement Manager, who has management of the Social Work Academy. The next review is due to take place in November 2019 where a decision will be made about potential recruitment in January 2020.
- 16 Most of our ASYE's continue to work in Families First teams but the Academy also support an ASYE social worker in the Children Looked After teams, Young Peoples Service, Fostering and Children with disabilities teams. The key to the programme is to build a strong foundation in child focused reflective and analytical practice and then to continue that support through to progression as these are the experienced social workers, aspiring practice educators and managers of the future.

### **Impact of the Social Work Academy**

- 17 The ASYE academy model has been a key part of the Children's Services Workforce strategy to address the shortage of social workers and subsequently retain them within the service. This strategy has been successful and in September 2019 we reported only 8 social work vacancies which had not progressed fully through the recruitment process. Agency workers located in social work teams made up 5.61%

of the establishment, lower than both the regional average (8.8%) and the national average (15.4%).

- 18 The recruitment of good NQSW is easy and we always have considerably more appointable candidates than vacancies. Overall we have retained 68% of the NQSWs the Academy has supported to complete the ASYE since 2016. Since the commencement of Cohort 4 we have retained 100 %. Where Social Workers have chosen to go elsewhere this usually happened after a few months after completing their ASYE with them often attracted by higher salaries or different types of work. Positively, 9 social workers who have been previously supported by the Academy have since progressed to senior social work posts, and a further 2 are now ESWP.
- 19 Whilst this overall retention is lower than we want it to be, there are some indications to suggest the number of post ASYE social workers from the more recent cohorts (3 and 4) leaving the Service is lessening but this needs further analysis once a longer period of time has passed. One hypothesis is that, as our work around retention of staff, which included better working environments, lower caseloads, retention payment and more support progresses our post ASYE social workers, like our more experienced social workers are more likely to stay. Of course, once social workers have successfully completed their ASYE, they are sort after due to the national shortage of experienced social workers.
- 20 Since November 2017, NQSWs have received an increment to their salaries on completion of the ASYE which improves the attractiveness of remining with Children's Social Care.
- 21 During our recent ILAC Ofsted inspection (September 2019) and number of ASYE's were spoken to by inspectors and some portfolios and reflective supervision files were viewed. The feedback was very positive. ASYE's were also spoken with during the Focused Visit in January 2019 when again, inspectors said that the ASYE's reported feeling very well supported and were given opportunities and had positive experiences of the Academy.
- 22 One of the real strengths of the Academy is the level of support, learning and reflective supervision they receive, which is evidence below in some recent feedback

*"The most important role Shelley [Practice Lead] has played for me has been in reflective supervision. In supervision, Shelley is supportive but also challenges in a constructive and gentle way. She has really supported me to consider different views, which is vital to good practice. Shelley has been a huge emotional support to me throughout the year. She has a way of making people feel at ease and comfortable to show*

*vulnerability. She recognises that sometimes all you need is a listening ear.”* An ASYE 11 months in to the programme.

*Shelley has provided some of the most effective reflective supervision I’ve had throughout my time in Durham County Council. She does this by getting to know her ASYE’s really well and understands our individual strengths and areas of improvement. It is clear that Shelley is passionate about training up effective and compassionate social workers. She encourages us every day to reach out potential.”* An ASYE part way through the programme.

*“Shelley’s reflective and therapeutic approach to supervision is what has driven me to be the social worker I am today and I feel without Shelley this may not have been what has seemed a very steady and smooth transition for me. Although I now a senior social worker whom is 2 years qualified, I have no doubt that Shelley will always be there to guide and support me should I need her and it is always lovely to see her in my office offering words of support to my front line practice.”*

Previous ASYE who is now a Senior Social Worker.

- 23 Shelley Gill, our permanent Practice Lead has recently been shortlisted for the prestigious national Social Worker of the Year 2019 awards, under the category of Practice Educator of the Year.

### **Future need and Developments**

- 24 As part of our recruitment and retention strategy we need to ensure that we continue to provide high quality opportunities for ASYEs and we know that the academy model has been effective in doing this.
- 25 There is a continued need to develop and embed the ESWP role within teams to ensure that it dovetails with the work of the academy and results in all ASYEs receiving a consistently strong offer of support.
- 26 It is difficult to predict the vacancy rate and therefore the number of NQSWs that we will need the Academy to support in the future. We do know, however, that the turnover of social workers within Children’s Social Care is reducing and is now lower than regional and national rates. For Families First, where most of the vacancies are filled by ASYE’s the turnover rate in September 2018 was 17.65% and this dropped to 12.94% in September 2019.
- 27 In March 2019, Skills for Care, ASYE regulators, started an annual programme of visiting local authorities and agencies who provide ASYE for NQSW. In order to assure the continued good practice and support taking place in the Social Work Academy and as preparation for a potential visit, plans to gather feedback from ASYEs and to gain stronger performance and quality reporting to support further improvement is planned and being implemented. This will include using the Skills For Care questionnaire annually, developing our own

feedback opportunities, including a focused discussion group, ensuring that audits include a proportion of children's cases held by ASYE's and that this is reported separately as well as part of overall learning from audits to support specific learning and improvement.

## **Conclusion**

- 28 The Social Work Academy continues to provide high quality learning, excellent support and opportunities to Newly Qualified Social Workers during their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment. Enhanced Social Work Practitioners are becoming part of the Academy and overall support provided to ASYE's and this helps to support the recruitment and retention of social workers and will continue to be required.

## **Background papers**

- None

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**Contact:**    Rachel Harris 03000 265775

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Social Work Academy assists the council to ensure there are sufficient social workers employed to carry out the duties towards children and families living in Durham which are set out in the Children Act 1989.

### **Finance**

There is permanent funding in the Children's Social Care budget to fund NQSW posts and one Academy Practice Lead post. A second Practice Lead post is funded from reserves until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and funding would need to be identified if this post is extended or made permanent.

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Not applicable

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

The Social Work Academy supports the recruitment and retention of staff as does the Enhanced Social Worker Practitioner. Vacancies are filled in consultation with Strategic Managers and Human Resources

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

An increased number of ASYE within Children's Social Care needs to be balanced against the needs of the service to fill vacancies and the ability to ensure they receive high standards of support, guidance and supervision. This is considered prior to any recruitment episode and adverts that include opportunities for NQSW are released only with the agreement of the Strategic Managers for Families First, Human Resources and the Service Improvement Manager.

**Children and Young People's  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

**18 November 2019**



**Update on the Progress of the  
Recommendations of the Role of the  
Social Worker from a Child's Perspective Review**

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**Report of John Pearce, Director of Children and Young People's Services**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to update members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress made against the recommendations from the committee's review – Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective.

**Executive summary**

- 2 A review group was established from members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective.
- 3 The review gathered evidence from December 2017 until June 2018 and a report was taken to Cabinet in December 2018 which presented the review group's key findings and their recommendations.
- 4 Cabinet were asked to report back to the committee on the progress to implement the review group's recommendations and this can be found at appendix two.

**Recommendations**

- 5 Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the progress made on each of the review group's recommendations and comment accordingly.

## **Background**

- 6 At its meeting on 21 November 2017 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the terms of reference to carry out a review on the Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective.
- 7 The aim of the review was to investigate the role of the social worker assessment and in the safeguards of children from a child's perspective to ensure that the views of the child are included and reflected in plans relating to them and how this impacted on the social care work force.
- 8 The review followed six key lines of enquiry:
  - a) How are children's social care cases referred into the service?
  - b) How cases are allocated to social workers including numbers of case files and their complexities.
  - c) How has the new training academy performed in its first year? Are places filled for the following year? What mentoring, support and career development is in place for social workers?
  - d) How robust is the approach in Durham in relation to continuity and stability for the child? How is the voice of the child reflected in casework? How does Durham compare regionally and nationally?
  - e) How are children prepared for care? Are they involved in the decision and how is this communicated to them?
  - f) What do children who have had contact with children's social care in County Durham say about their experiences?
- 9 The review group found that service improvements were helping to provide stability and consistency for children using the service. That there was a wide variety of training and development programmes available to social workers and the Newly Qualified Social Worker academy has allowed Durham County Council to grow its own social workers.
- 10 The review group considered that the emotional wellbeing and mental health of social care staff was as important as their training and development.
- 11 The review group learned of the establishment of two new teams, the pre-birth team and the supporting solutions service that would help to prevent children from entering the care system.
- 12 Members of the review group heard from young people during the review and stressed the importance of stability and consistency of social worker to a child. The communication between children and their social worker is important for the relationship to work and trust to grow.

- 13 The review was presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December 2018 and all seven recommendations were accepted. The review report was also shared with the Children and Families Partnership for information.
- 14 Cabinet were asked to provide a progress update on the review's recommendations and the action plan attached at appendix two details the actions taken to address each of the review's recommendations.

## **Conclusion**

- 15 Members of the committee are reassured that the recommendations they made are addressed and are progressing forward.

## **Background papers**

- Cabinet Report: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Review: Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective 12 December 2018.

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**Contact:** Chris Ring

Tel: 03000 268657

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Not applicable

### **Finance**

Not applicable

### **Consultation**

Not applicable

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening was carried out on the review report. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken by the relevant Service Grouping following agreement of the recommendations contained in the review report.

### **Human Rights**

Not applicable

### **Crime and Disorder**

Not applicable

### **Staffing**

Not applicable

### **Accommodation**

Not applicable

### **Risk**

Not applicable

### **Procurement**

Not applicable

## **Appendix 2**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT – Role of the Social Worker from a Child's Perspective**

#### **REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONSIDERED BY CABINET ON: 12 December 2018**

#### **UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS – 18 November 2019**

<b>Review Recommendation 1</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services continues to monitor via performance information the number of children allocated to each social worker to ensure consistency and stability for County Durham children in contact with Children's Social Care Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Liquid Logic electronic social care system went live on 1<sup>st</sup> February and associated performance dashboards are now live and supporting management oversight of practice in real time.</li><li>• Caseload levels have significantly improved. At the end of September 2019, 54% of Social Workers/ASYEs had a caseload of less than 20, compared to 33% in July 2018. There were 5 WTE Social Workers with a caseload of more than 30 (4 FT and 1 PT).</li></ul>	Keith Foster	Complete

<b>Review Recommendation 2</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>The Director of Children and Young People's Services carries out an evaluation of the new edge of care services and pre-birth services following twelve months in operation to highlight their impact on children, young people and families and on the numbers of children entering into the looked after system.</p>	<p>Our edge of care service, Supporting Solutions, was evaluated in March 2019. In their first year they worked intensively with 79 children on the edge of care aged 10 – 17 of which 73 remained in the care of their parents/carers. By the end of the second quarter of 2019, they have worked with 54 children and 47 have remained with their parents/carers. The outcomes for all these young people are tracked and reported via the Edge of Care Steering Group. The analysis of the outcomes for these young people after 1 year showed that the team are having a significant positive impact on a range of outcomes, not solely preventing their entry to care: Relationships with family members improved; Offending behaviour reduced;</p>	Lisa Wood	Annual report in March 2020

	<p>School attendance improved; Missing episodes reduced; risk of CSE reduced and emotional health of young people improved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Pre-Birth team is having an impact ensuring that children are able to live in their permanent home in a timely way: Since the creation of the team in May 2018 53 children have been identified as meeting the criteria for the team. Of these 21 children have been placed into their permanent home within 3 months of their life (11 home immediately at birth, 2 formal 'foster to adopt' and 8 into care of family members.) Therefore, approx. 40% of children have been living in their permanent home by the age of 3 months old.</li> <li>• Significantly in the first year of the pre-birth team being established the proportion of our Children in Care aged under 1 decreased from</li> </ul>	Jac Tyler	Annual Report in May 2020
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	10% in 2017/18 to 8 % in 2018/2019.		
<b>Review Recommendation 3</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
That all members of Durham County Council as corporate parents visit the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub at least once during their term of office and that as all members are corporate parents the Corporate Director of Resources give consideration to mandatory Corporate Parenting Training for all members of the Council.	<p>Members of the County Council have an invitation to visit the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Members of Corporate Parenting Panel have visited during the year.</p> <p>As part of the member induction programme members of the Council receive mandatory corporate parenting training. This is refreshed at intervals during the term of the Council. Any new members to the Council would receive this training.</p>	HR	Ongoing

<b>Review Recommendation 4</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Durham County Council's Social Worker Academy has made excellent progress within its first year and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is keen to monitor its development and asks that arrangements be made for report to be presented to them with information on progress and achievements.	Report of progress written and will be presented on 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2019.	Chris Ring	18.11.19
<b>Review Recommendation 5</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services together with the Director of Public Health consider the establishment and promotion of mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children's social care staff and for supervision to monitor staff dealing with highly emotional/sensitive cases.	<p>Review of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing of Social Care Staff was undertaken by Public Health in partnership with the Principal Social Worker (PSW) completed in May 2018. Actions have been undertaken as a result:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training offer has been revised and advertised. It includes: Mental Wellbeing in Everyday</li> </ul>	Chris Ring	Remaining actions being monitored by the Raising the Bar Board.

	<p>Practice; Health Advocate; Mental Health for Life; Mental Health First Aid; Mindfulness; Resilience; Stigma and Discrimination – Time to Change Champions; Zero Suicide; Support for your Mental Wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mental health issues are promoted through regular communication with staff</li><li>• Mental health first aid training has been delivered and we now have 28 staff trained across CYPS.</li><li>• Supervision policy has been updated.</li><li>• Signs of Safety group supervisions embedded within teams and 129 staff have been a part of these. These are a critical part of developing a learning culture within teams and embedding the Signs of Safety practice framework in practice.</li></ul>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for supervisions in delivering reflective supervision commissioned – 23 managers have completed this to date.</li> <li>• Funding identified for clinical supervision offer following traumatic events</li> <li>• Promotion of a range of celebratory awards / events including: Inspiring People Awards; Social Worker of the Year Awards; World Social Work Day.</li> <li>• Strengthened links between PSW and Inspire Team to ensure that staff are connected to the change programme and are able to influence it.</li> <li>• Offer of range of activities to support emotional wellbeing has been collated and made available to staff.</li> </ul>		
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<b>Review Recommendation 6</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services with assistance from children and young people, who have experience of children's social care, explore the development of a welcome pack. That would help children and young people first coming into contact with children's social care services what to expect and to include information that will help them to understand their situation.</p>	<p>A project has been established to co-produce with children and young people a range of materials that are accessible for children and young people and that can be used to promote and explain our services.</p> <p>Graphics have been selected by the children and young people which reflect their community. A video explaining Family Group Conferencing has been completed.</p> <p>Social Workers have been identified to use the graphics to produce a video that will become a digital welcome pack.</p>	Lisa Wood    Chris Ring	Completed    March 2020

<b>Review Recommendation 7</b>	<b>Progress report of action taken to implement recommendation</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<p>The Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services establish a communication protocol between social workers and children and young people in their care.</p>	<p>Recruitment of an Engagement and Participation worker to take forward this work.</p> <p>Digital Voice project undertaken to raise awareness amongst all staff of building and maintaining relationships with children and young people and their social workers.</p> <p>Promise (that incorporates communication) co-produced with young people in Bishop Auckland.</p> <p>Plan to launch promise as part of Children's Commissioners Take Over Challenge 2019 and embedded through teams by Dec 2019.</p>	Chris Ring	Completed Completed Dec 2019

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