



Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 27 September 2021

Time 9.30 am

Venue Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham

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 Meeting held on 23 July 2021 (Pages 3 - 18)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Overview of Child Protection Process
 - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services (Pages 19 - 28)
 - b) Presentation by the Strategic Manager for Safeguarding and Professional Practice (Pages 29 - 38)
7. Relationship Based Social Work Practice
 - a) Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services (Pages 39 - 44)
 - b) Presentation by the Strategic Manager for Safeguarding and Professional Practice (Pages 45 - 56)
8. Developing a New County Durham SEND Strategy - Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services (Pages 57 - 62)
9. Quarter 4 2020/2021 Budget and Revenue Outturn and Budget and Revenue Forecast Quarter 1 2021/2022 - Report of the Corporate Director of Resources (Interim) (Pages 63 - 92)

10. 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
17 September 2021

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

Councillor C Hood (Chair)
Councillor J Cosslett (Vice-Chair)

Councillors C Bell, R Charlton-Lainé, M Currah, J Griffiths, O Gunn,
C Hunt, L Kennedy, C Lines, L Maddison, C Martin, L Mavin,
D Mulholland, A Reed, K Rooney, S Townsend, C Varty, E Waldock
and M Walton

Faith Communities Representatives:
Mrs C Johnston and Mrs J Bruton

Parent Governor Representatives:

Co-opted Members:
Ms R Evans and Mrs P Parkins

Contact: Kirsty Charlton Tel: 03000 269705

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 **County Hall, Durham - County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 23 July 2021** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Hood (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Cosslett, C Bell, R Charlton-Lainé, O Gunn, C Hunt, C Martin, L Mavin, J Miller (substitute for S Townsend), D Mulholland, A Reed, K Rooney, C Varty, E Waldock and M Walton

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Currah, J Griffiths and S Townsend and Mrs J Bruton (Faith Rep) and Ms R Evans.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor J Miller substituted for Councillor S Townsend.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 12 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

6 Introduction to Children and Young People's Services - Overview

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which provided an introduction to the Children and Young People's Service and an overview presentation (for copies see file of minutes).

The Chair welcomed the Head of Children's Social Care, Helen Fergusson, the Head of Education and Skills, Jim Murray, and the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People, Martyn Stenton and asked each to give an overview of the work within their areas.

The Head of Education and Skills noted areas of responsibility within his part of the service included providing services to secure standards and improvement in schools and other places of learning, including adult learning. He added that key support services also include school and governor support, school admissions and transport, school capital programme, as well as DurhamWorks. He noted challenges included: mobility, with some children having moved school up to seven times; an increase in home schooling as a consequence of the pandemic; and education moving into recovery, with pupils in County Durham having grades around two-thirds of a grade lower at Key Stage 4, impacted further by the pandemic. He explained as regards Ofsted ratings for schools in the county, with primary schools performing very well with a number greater than the national average with a good or outstanding rating, however, the number of secondary schools with a good or outstanding rating was below the national average. The Head of Education and Skills noted that there had been recent improvements with recent Section 5 inspections being very good. He noted other issues including: Academy Status; difficulty recruiting teachers for some subjects, for example mathematics; Safeguarding; school sustainability; elective home education, including links to colleges to support; and the Virtual School, for Looked After Children.

The Head of Children's Social Care noted areas of responsibility within her part of the service included to support and safeguard children in need of care and protection, as well as those children who were looked after with residential, fostering, adoption and supported living services. She added there was also the provision of services to children with a disability and young people who leave care. She noted that at any one time around 3,800 children in County Durham would have a social worker, with the primary aim being to work to provide support so they could remain safe at home. The Head of Children's Social Care explained as regards the work of Families First Teams within communities, the robust process in terms of Child Protection Plans, the small number of cases that lead to care proceedings, and the Care Leavers' Service. She noted the safeguarding and professional practice, including the Social Work Academy to support newly qualified social workers and noted the responsibility in terms of reviewing all social work plans.

She explained as regards: the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); the regional adoption agency, Adopt Coast to Coast; and the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. The Head of Children's Social Care noted that there were around 400 new referrals to County Durham social workers each month and noted the partnership arrangements in place and working with the families to build positive relationships. The Head of Children's Social Care explained as regards the inspecting Local Authority services for children (ILACS), with Ofsted as regulator, with full inspections being on a three year cycle. She noted in addition there were focussed visits, annual conversations with Ofsted and joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) from time-to-time.

The Head of Children's Social Care noted priorities included: high quality relationships between social workers and families; embedding the 'Signs of Safety' model across services; an ambition to be the best employer for social workers in the region, in part to help with recruitment; continued support via the Social Work Academy; and development of a Leadership Academy, based on the Social Work Academy to support front-line and middle managers. She noted new innovative services, including working with the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) in relation to complex mental health to help prevent hospitalisations and the new Adolescent Safeguarding and Exploitation Team (ASET).

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People explained areas of responsibility within his part of the service included: to ensure early help for children and families; helping to tackle child poverty and supporting programmes such as 'Fun with Food'; support for young people who have offended and victims of crime; educational psychology; special educational needs services (SEND) and Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit. He added that the service had four main groupings: Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit, which was also linked to the Corporate Parenting Panel; the County Durham Youth Justice Service, which included links with partners from Police, Health and Probation, and scrutiny via the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and SEND / Inclusion, noting one in seven pupils having SEND, and with around 3,800 having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). He noted the work in terms of early help, including the One Point service, the Stronger Families Programme and tackling child poverty.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People explained as regards the inspection frameworks in place, noting for Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit that was by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with the Unit having retained its 'outstanding' rating at the latest inspection. He noted in respect of the Youth Justice Service, inspections were carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and for SEND services they were carried out by Ofsted and the CQC, with the last being carried out in 2020, with a new framework expected. He noted that the Early Help work fell under the ILACS inspections, with annual meetings with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government as part of the Supporting Families Programme and annual conversation with Ofsted.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People explained as regards the work services did in partnership, with county and regional partners, with each service having a dedicated strategic partnership, and he noted work with the community and voluntary sector, colleges, health, probation, Government Departments, and other national agencies, such as the Youth Justice Board. He noted service highlights included Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit's 'outstanding' rating following a recent Ofsted inspection and the Youth Justice Service winning a CYP NOW Family Justice award for its parenting support work. He added that Early Help was one of 14 such services nationally that had obtained 'earned autonomy', enabling more flexibility with funding, including supporting adults into employment. He explained as regards: the adoption of 'signs of safety'; 'Fun with food' providing healthy food and activities and supporting parents over what can be a difficult holiday period for families and in preparing for school in September in terms of the cost of uniform; and significant progress with the partnership work to support children and young people with SEND, strengthened since the last Ofsted/CQC inspection, with a multi-agency action plan. He noted there were concrete plans to address the challenges with funding through the Higher Needs Block.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People noted that challenges included: how to recover from COVID-19, including poverty within families; supporting children to be safe, happy, and settled in their education, noting the disruption over the last 18 months of the pandemic, with further potential for disruption; and the ongoing challenge with SEND and funding through the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated School Grants.

The Chair thanked the Heads of Service and asked Members of the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor O Gunn thanked all the officers and staff that worked in Children and Young People's Services and asked as regards the flexibility in the timings of Ofsted school inspections as a consequence of the pandemic. The Head of Education and Skills explained that in terms of the inspection schedule, HMI had noted they were around five terms behind. He added that a number of schools were in a difficult position, carrying an 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' rating and explained that inspections would be welcomed by those schools as they had moved forward since those ratings had been given. He noted secondary schools had struggled with the new framework around Progress 8, particularly across the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. He noted that more recent inspections had been more curriculum than progress driven, and he felt that was a fairer playing field for schools to be successful. He explained that with primary schools there had been a number of focussed reports nationally as regards subjects such as history and geography, and some schools were struggling with that curriculum knowledge and planning. He noted the service was well equipped to support the primary schools in the county, however, some schools with mixed year group classes may find it a challenge.

In response to a question from Councillor O Gunn relating to the challenges for Children's Social Care as a consequence of the pandemic, the Head of Children's Social Care explained that there had been a huge amount of contingency planning, in terms of staff potentially become ill or requiring to isolate, which had been working well. She noted last year as a result of lockdown virtual visits had been carried out with all children in care, with a flexible model being in place. She noted that the last six weeks had been a particular challenge in terms of staff absence due to self-isolation, and while it was hoped to be able to move back to delivering services face-to-face, if that was not possible then some could be delivered virtually. In respect of residential care, Head of Children's Social Care noted that area had the most challenge in terms of workforce, and work was ongoing with the Cabinet Member and Legal Services in terms of potential critical worker exemptions and daily testing regimes.

Following a question from Councillor O Gunn in relation to funding for the Youth Justice Service, nationally and locally, the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People noted he could share the Youth Justice Plan, which showed an increased grant this year from the Youth Justice Board. He added that the Council had added funding, with the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC) and Health providing staffing and support and noted that it was fortunate that in Durham there were strong partners and funding.

Councillor C Bell noted she was surprised at the number of parents that had chosen to educate their children at home asked as regards the support for those parents. The Head of Education and Skills noted that the pandemic had impacted upon the number of parents wishing to educate their children at home and added that a number were now reintegrating, with around 65 over the last six weeks. He noted there was support from colleges in terms of curriculum and the service would look to support and follow-up with parents as regards issues, including safeguarding. He added legislation in terms of a register for those children where parents had elected to home educate would make the process more robust with further information in the coming months. In response to Councillor C Bell, the Head of Education and Skills noted that when speaking with those parents, officers were not allowed to make judgement in terms of quality.

Following a question from Councillor C Bell relating to North Durham Academy, the Head of Education and Skills noted as an Academy it was not a Local Authority maintained school. He added that there was a good relationship with the Academy, and he understood that North Durham Academy had appointed a new management team, from a previously successful school, and the new Head Teacher was making a positive difference.

Councillor M Walton thanked the officers for all the work carried out by their teams, made more difficult by the pandemic on top of existing challenges. She asked as regards the number of children being educated at home and whether there was any statutory inspection in terms of their home schooling.

The Head of Education and Skills explained there were around 930 children being educated at home, noting the 65 that had recently reintegrated, adding there was no statutory inspection. Councillor M Walton asked as regards the challenges for those children that had, as previously mentioned, moved school up to seven times, and whether there were any common themes. The Head of Education and Skills noted there were various issues, and one was where families moved between Local Authority areas, with issues such as Local Authority housing provision. He noted the impact that could be made on picking up on speech and language issues and noted there was a team in place in terms of school transfers for secondary, however, primaries remained the priority as they had the higher number of pupil movements.

In response to a question from Councillor M Walton relating to the number of social workers and caseloads, the Head of Children's Social Care explained that Council policy was for caseloads of around 22 at any one time, not only to be manageable for each social worker, but to also be a manageable level for teams and Team Managers in addition. She noted demand over the last 8-12 weeks had increased, with referrals back to pre-pandemic levels, and also children were staying in the system longer. She added that the situation was monitored very carefully, with the aim being for 60 percent of social workers to have a caseload of 20 or fewer, currently at around 50 percent, and she would provide details as regards the number of social workers. Councillor M Walton noted the importance of retaining social workers and was pleased to hear as regards the Social Work Academy, she asked how long newly qualified social workers (NQSW) could access the academy. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that NQSW would be placed within a team, as well as be in the Social Work Academy, alongside the national scheme of 'assisted and supported year of employment'. She added that they would be within the Academy for one year, have monthly meetings with their Team Manager, as well as monthly meetings via the Academy, effectively fortnightly supervision. She explained that NQSW would have protected caseloads when joining the Authority working up to eight cases, following an induction period, then increasing to 12, and after the year moving to a more standard caseload. She explained that over the year a NQSW would need to produce a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate they met the required competencies.

Councillor M Walton asked as regards ILACS gradings and commended the service and Cabinet Member, T Henderson for the recent briefing note that had been circulated to Councillors relating to children in poverty. The Head of Children's Social Care noted last ILACS assessment was September 2019, and the overall grading was 'requires improvement' with the individual elements being: Children in Care, 'good'; children requiring help and protection, 'requires improvement'; and leadership and management, 'requires improvement'. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People thanked Councillor M Walton and noted feedback was always welcome and helpful as regards the balance of information or any topics that Councillor may find useful for future briefings.

Councillor L Mavin asked as regards the Ofsted ratings for all the schools and information year on year, and whether an annual report could be provided to the Committee. The Head of Education and Skills noted he would work on an appropriately detailed dashboard for Members, to include a number of the key figures discussed, such as the number electively home educated children.

Councillor A Reed noted her thanks to the officers for their presentation and that it was clear there were very high standards, as evidenced by Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit's 'outstanding' rating. She noted the reference to some children moving schools up to seven times and asked what work was being undertaken in that regard. The Head of Education and Skills noted that Headteachers had bought into the process and were looking at interventions where they were concerned about a child moving. He reminded Members that disadvantaged children were on average two-thirds of a grade behind the national average and noted that those children that moved school five times or more were on average two grades behind the national average. He added that accordingly it was a priority and officers were looking at how to support those transfer meetings.

Councillor A Reed noted the 400 referrals to social workers and asked as regards the impact of the pandemic and how the service would be able to cope. The Head of Children's Social Care noted that 400 referrals for social work assessments did not necessarily generate 400 cases, rather some were signposted to other services as appropriate. She added that referrals were a priority and were assessed as soon as possible to determine the level of risk to that child and what course of action would be required. She noted that agency social workers were utilised during busy periods, though other Local Authorities were also looking to do the same. The Head of Children's Social Care noted that currently there were 302 full-time equivalent social workers and team management on the establishment, across all areas, including the Fostering Service and frontline social workers. Councillor A Reed asked if the average caseload of 22 per social worker was for full-time equivalent, the Head of Children's Social Care confirmed it was, with an accordingly reduced caseload for those working part-time.

Councillor A Reed explained she had previously visited the Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit and had been impressed by the Centre Manager, Selwyn Morgans, and the positive engagement with the young people. She noted the Unit received children from different parts of the country and asked what impact that restrictions due to the pandemic had in terms of when children were ready to move on from the Unit. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable People noted that the pandemic was an ongoing challenge for the Aycliffe Secure Children's Unit and other residential children's homes with young people having to isolate for 10 days upon admission. He added that wellness packs had been produced and provided for the young people and the operation of the school within the Unit was carefully managed with 'bubbles', the only school in the county that had remained open throughout the pandemic.

He noted that there was careful management in terms of when children were ready to leave and move on and added that challenges included visits from social workers, youth offending team and families, with some having to be conducted virtually. He noted that the Unit was working at a reduced capacity in order to be able to operate safely.

Councillor J Miller asked a question on behalf of Councillor S Townsend who had been unable to attend the meeting. He noted that the Government had announced the second round of 50 school building projects and Councillor S Townsend had expressed her frustration that the Shildon Greenfield School site was in a state of disrepair and not been included in that second round for much needed funding. He explained Councillor S Townsend had previously asked officers as regards the schools rebuilding project and it had been confirmed that it was a decision made by Government in terms of which schools were included and that Local Authorities had no say in where the funding was directed. He noted that the question from Councillor S Townsend was whether this was still the case for the second round of funding and if the Local Authority had been involved in choosing schools, how was that determination made. The Head of Education and Skills noted it was still the case that it was a Government decision, with condition surveys having been carried out by the Department for Education in 2015. He reiterated that Local Authorities had no influence over which schools the Government would include.

In response to a question from Councillor R Charlton-Lainé, the Head of Education and Skills noted that teachers within maintained schools were supported by a range of networks across subjects and explained that one of the priorities across all was mental health support. He added that this included sessions for Headteachers and leadership teams, as well as for School Governors. He noted there was a great deal of change in the area of support and development, with an increase in customer driven focus. He noted engagement with Trusts, in particular those with Behaviour Hubs, as those could be a source of stress and mental health, being one of the more challenging areas. The Head of Education and Skills noted there were attempts to influence Ofsted in terms of timings, noting he felt some Section 5 Inspections at the end of the year were at a time when schools had been facing additional constraints. He added that he felt the new inspection schedules were going to be stressful for staff, including languages, and the future of inspections was going to be tough and therefore the network of subject support needed to be strong to help give teachers confidence.

Councillor C Hunt noted the information as regards the impact on children when moving school and asked what provision was made when placing children in short-term foster care in respect of keeping the children in their existing school. The Head of Children's Social Care noted there was a clear policy, and those children would stay in their existing school if feasible, adding that in the vast majority of cases it was feasible. She added that while that may require a period when there is additional travel, it was felt that maintaining relationships with friends and teachers was important.

She noted that when children had a plan of permanence then a careful decision on whether a change of school was appropriate would be made. She added that if children were in an exam-year they would not move school, transport would be provided to ensure the continuity of education provision. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that all of that activity was organised through the Virtual School, with all children in care going to school in addition they had a Virtual Headteacher, working within the Education and Skills Service, who had responsibility for all children in care including looking at which schools were most appropriate for those children.

The Chair noted the number of full-time equivalent social workers and how caseloads may fluctuate, and he noted the aim to be the best Local Authority for social workers to work at in the North East. He asked what was being done in terms of retention and also agency social workers, given the key was to establish relationships with the young people. The Head of Children's Social Care noted that agency social workers were used to cover maternity leave, long term sick, or to temporarily fill a post, and therefore they would be employed for a number of months rather than weeks and accordingly there would be that level of continuity. She noted that there were around 30 agency staff currently and it was a situation that was monitored very carefully. She added that in terms of retention, there had been a significant reduction in the turnover of staff, with incentives including targeted support/interventions and she could provide more details at a future meeting, however the headline was that the situation was very positive.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

7 Children, Young People and Families Partnership Overview

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Children, Young People and Families Partnership (for copies see file of minutes). The Chair welcomed the Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning and Deputy Chair of the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board, Sarah Burns who was in attendance to give Members an overview presentation.

The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning thanked the Chair and Members of the Committee and explained that her post was jointly appointed by the NHS and Durham County Council, and that she was responsible for commissioning health and care for children, adults, older people, and those with mental health conditions or learning disabilities. She explained she worked very closely with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services as part of his Extended Management Team.

The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning explained nothing in County Durham was done in isolation with many children and families being in receipt of a multiple services and referred Members to the partnership arrangements in place and structure diagram. She noted she was Deputy Chair, with the Corporate Director of Children and Young People, John Pearce being the Chair. She noted that while the organisations involved had their own statutory responsibilities and governance, the partnership worked together to remove barriers and worked together where budgets were impacted upon to work best for children, young people, and their families. She referred to the Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board and links to the other wider partnership boards and noted the sub-groups included: Growing up in County Durham; Integration; Prevention and Early Help; Best Start in Life; and Supporting Young People into Adulthood (14-25).

The Committee noted the Board sat alongside the Acute Care Partnership Board, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Partnership Board and the Primary, Community and Social Care Partnership Board. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted the strategic priorities were looked at by each of the sub-groups and that in terms of 'Growing up in County Durham' progress included: rapid review on impacts of Covid-19 on Children and Young People informed work of group, the review found that Covid-19 was exacerbating and creating new inequalities; working across all priorities to provide a population health management perspective; the Growing up in County Durham approach was using SEND as a pilot theme to utilise integrated data, understand service performance and 3/4/5-year trends; and statistical work of the group had been included in a regional bid for Children and Young People's Wellbeing funding which was successful.

In relation to Integration, Members were asked to note progress included: to develop a vision for integration across services for children and young People; engagement, co-production journey with children, young people and Families; a 0-6 system redesign workshop; and development of multiagency respiratory pathway. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning explained that in relation to 'Best Start if Life', there was work relating to Health Impact Assessment on inequalities to inform CYPS, and on continuity of carer in respect of maternity care.

In relation to 'Early Help and Prevention' progress included: a self-assessment to identify key priorities to progress had been completed; a dedicated early help telephone number; and additional priorities for unborn children and babies under one year old included in the action plan. Members noted that for 'Supporting Young People into Adulthood (14-25) progress included: development of 14-25 Navigation Team; supporting the work through TEWV, development of the community mental health framework focusing on young people and transition; development of the Adolescent Safeguarding and Exploitation Team (ASET).

Councillor O Gunn left the meeting at 11.30am

The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning explained that cross-cutting issues included: Think Family; co-production, ensuring we listen to the voice of the child / family; empowerment; early intervention / signposting; support for people who need it the most; seamless; workforce; and resources.

The Committee were asked to note an example of service change, continuity of carer through maternity. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning explained that the current model of maternity care in County Durham was traditional with acute/community split and with around 4,500 deliveries a year and 6,000 community bookings. She added that across the system there was recognition that number of health outcomes could be improved such as smoking at time of delivery and encouraging breastfeeding. It was noted the aim was to support women and partners to have the experience that they want, with personalised care. It was added that continuity of care meant women would have the same very small group of Midwives who care for them from booking in appointment, birth and the Post-natal period, with an aim to improve outcomes for women and babies. Members noted a pilot scheme in the Stanley area had shown positive impacts, including: an increased number of women that breastfeed, a reduction in babies with low birth weight; a reduction in the number of surgical interventions; and a significant reduction in the number of women who smoked while pregnant. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning explained that the continuity of carer for maternity would be followed by roll out across 18 teams in County Durham. She noted that in terms of integration and partnerships, it may be possible to build upon the transition from Midwives to Health Visitors and to also possible to look at colocation and greater links with GPs.

The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted in relation to the Children and Young People's Strategy 2022-2025 that the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25 had been agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting in March 2021. She noted it was supported by the County Durham Place Based Commissioning Plan 2020-25 which had all partners contributing and working together. She reiterated as regards the five priority themes of Children, Young People and Families Partnership Board and noted alignment with the County Durham Vision 2035. She noted that it would reflect existing performance management arrangements, however, with focus on how integration and partnership working could make a difference. She concluded by explaining that the new strategy would be developed in the autumn, to be ready for consultation in the new year.

The Chair thanked the Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning and asked the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor R Charlton-Lainé noted her experience in relation to breastfeeding support and asked as regards out-of-hours provision and how that could be more joined up. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted it was a challenge and while there were a number of priorities, there was a finite amount of funding. She added that in some areas the community and voluntary sector was able to provide support where services were not as broad and comprehensive as one would like. She noted it was looking at creative solutions to try to help and she noted that those lived experiences were important and she would take away that information. Councillor R Charlton-Lainé added that she recalled very good support offered by the Sure Start service, when it had been in place.

Councillor J Miller asked if the ASET Team was replicating the work undertaken in Newcastle and Operation Sanctuary or would work alongside it. The Head of Children's Social Care noted it was an integrated service with Police colleagues with a lot of integrated information sharing, noting of cross-border issues and acknowledging the need to sometimes work regionally and nationally. She added that there were good relationships through Police colleagues with other forces across the country and while it was not replicating that specific project referred to, best practice nationally was being taken on board to make a local model to meet the needs of young people in County Durham.

Councillor C Varty noted the positive impact of social workers in County Durham and added she had worked with many wonderful social workers in various previous roles. She asked as regards the frequency of visits by Midwives and Health Visitors and agreed with Councillor R Charlton-Lainé as regards the previous Sure Start support.

Councillor C Hunt also asked as regards the continuity of carer for those opting for home birth if the woman then needed to attend hospital for delivery, and whether it would be the same. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted that was the case and she noted that had helped in demonstrating the improved outcomes. She noted she would speak to Councillor C Varty as regards the issues she had referred to in terms of ante-natal period, though noting demands and being able to look at a situation with the person being at the centre of the process.

Councillor M Walton noted the shortage in terms of Health Visitors and asked if there were any overarching reasons in terms of recruitment. The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted that there was not one single issue, with one factor being the amount of time it takes in terms of the training. She added that there would be a look to see why the role was no longer seen as attractive, and also to look at in which ways other roles and professionals could help. She noted it was an issue Health Education England was looking at in terms of attracting more people to the profession. Councillor M Walton noted it may be beneficial to look what attracts and encourages people to consider other nursing specialties.

The Joint Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning noted the work of colleagues from Public Health and added that there was also the issue of retention as well as recruitment.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Quarter 4 2020/2021 - Performance Management Report

The Chair asked the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager, Tom Gorman to provide the Committee with an update in relation to the Quarter Four, 2020/21 Performance Management Report (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager thanked the Chair and referred Members to the information as set out within the report pack. He explained as regards the reporting process in terms of Cabinet, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and each of the thematic Overview and Scrutiny Committees. He added that as the report related to Quarter Four it also represented a year-end position which would include any impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted the performance was in the context of the County Durham Vision and that in relation to the first ambition, 'more and better jobs' the proxy measure for child poverty, the number of those eligible for free-school meals was around 20,000, around 28 percent of all pupils in spring 2021. He added that was an increase of around 2,700 pupils, from 24 percent the previous year and also that only around 75 percent of those eligible did access free-school meals.

Councillor J Miller left the meeting at 11.57am

Councillors were asked to note the average education 'Attainment 8' score was 48.8 for County Durham, behind a national average of 53.1 at key stage four and it was explained as regards the 14.4 percent gap for those disadvantaged children, with studies showing that disadvantaged young people had been impacted greater as a result of the pandemic. It was noted that the average A-Level score for pupils from the county was higher than the national average.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager referred to those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and explained that the level had increased from 4.1 to 5.6 percent, albeit with a reduced number of 'not knowns' of only 0/7 percent, less than the national average of 2 percent. He noted issues included the difficulty in engaging with young people during the pandemic and that Job Centre Plus had not mandated job search activity over the pandemic period.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager noted as regards performance in respect of behaviour, exclusions, managed moves and noted that was an area included within the Work Programme. He noted an increase in the number of applications for SEND support and highlighted positive schemes including provision of laptops and wifi routers to children and the 'Fun with Food' programme previously mentioned.

Members noted that 730 families were supported through the Stronger Families programme, that there were a number of schemes to support young people in respect of mental health. It was noted there had been delays in terms of producing EHCPs, however this had improved from 50 percent being produced on time at the year end to now 95 percent being produced on time. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager noted that while the number of referrals to social workers had reduced through the pandemic, possible as a result of many referrals being via schools, however, those numbers had returned to previous levels. He added that while caseloads were high, timescales in respect of initial assessment and other matters were much improved. Members noted that in respect of Looked after Children for County Durham there was 950, however the rate per 10,000 was in line with the region and nearest statistical neighbours. He reiterated the previous comments as regards the impact of the pandemic on how long children remained in care and Ofsted inspection activity. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager concluded by noting a protocol as regards information sharing in respect of pupil movements between Local Authority areas.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor C Hunt asked as regards whether the Council offered any incentives in terms of businesses taking on apprentices, including taking on young people with SEND. The Head of Education and Skills noted that was an aim of the DurhamEnable Project Board, to engage with employers and further education colleges, and that further feedback on the topic would be given to the Committee via the previously mentioned dashboard.

The Chair asked as regards the success of NEETs and DurhamWorks and asked as regards the future funding for DurhamWorks and if the scheme was continuing and what the cohort size would be. The Head of Education and Skill noted a successful bid from the Council had secured funding for a further two years, with staff and capacity to remain at the current level. He added that it had been noted that some young people had attended and benefited more from online, however, for some face-to-face contact was more beneficial to help with their confidence. He noted that therefore capacity would be the same, however, there were more techniques in the blend in order to engage with young people.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

9 Refresh of the Work Programme

The Chairman asked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Ann Whitton to speak to Members in relation to the refresh of the Work Programme 2021/22 for the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that the report highlighted that the Work Programme was informed by the County Vision, Council Plan, and other key documents. She explained that the proposed Work Programme included areas to be prioritised and areas that had been included in the previous Work Programme. It was noted that there was a need for the Work Programme to be flexible to ensure it can accommodate any emerging issues throughout its term.

Members were asked to note the Work Programme set out those items prioritised by the Chair and the Vice-Chair in terms of items to come to formal Committee and offered flexibility in terms of other items to be delivered as briefing reports, to be circulated electronically to Members of the Committee for comment. It was explained that the Committee had been allocated five meeting dates for the period September 2021 to May 2022.

The Chair thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and noted Members of the Committee agreed the Work Programme as set out within the report.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the Work Programme 2021/22 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues.

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

27 September 2021



**Overview of Child Protection
Process**

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

Purpose

- 1 The purpose of this report and accompanying presentation is to provide members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Child Protection Process in County Durham.

Executive Summary

- 2 The report sets out the key stages of the child protection process and provides a summary of the process in Durham and identifies key strengths and challenges.
- 3 Key strengths identified are: Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences and Reviews of Child Protection Plans; Strong multi-agency support; Response to Covid-19 and maintaining timeliness of reviews; Development of Mind of My Own.
- 4 Key challenges identified are: Recovery from Covid-19 to ensure children and families remain central to the Child Protection Process; Maintaining a strength based, relational approach throughout the Child Protection Process.

Recommendation

- 5 That members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny committee receive the report and comment accordingly.

Background

Strategy Discussion

- 6 The child protection process is set out in Working Together 2018. Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm there should be a strategy discussion involving local authority children's social care, the police, health and other bodies such as the referring agency. The discussion should take place within 2 working days of concerns being identified and where risks are high on the same day. Parents would be informed of this meeting but not take part in it. The purpose of the strategy discussion is to establish whether there is a need to conduct a criminal investigation and whether further enquires are required under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Section 47 Investigation (Children Act 1989)

- 7 The s47 investigation is a multi-agency investigation led by the local authority social worker. The purpose of the investigation is to decide whether any action should be taken to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of the child. It should be undertaken in consultation with the family and their network.
- 8 If this investigation finds evidence that the original concerns are substantiated and that the child is likely to suffer significant harm an Initial Child Protection Conference will be convened within 15 days of the Strategy Discussion.

Initial Child Protection Conference

- 9 An Initial Child Protection Conference brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), with the supporters, advocates and practitioners most involved with the child and family, to make decisions about the child's future safety, health and development. It is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer who is independent of the social work team. It provides a forum to share and analyse all relevant information from all partner agencies.
- 10 If the attendees at the initial child protection conference believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm then the child will be made subject to a Child Protection Plan and the primary category of abuse is recorded.

Core Group

- 11 A multi-agency Core Group within the family and their network at the centre will be established and will work together to implement the Child Protection Plan, carry out agreed tasks, monitor progress and outcomes and refine the plan as needed. The Core Group will meet 10 days after the Child Protection Conference and monthly thereafter.

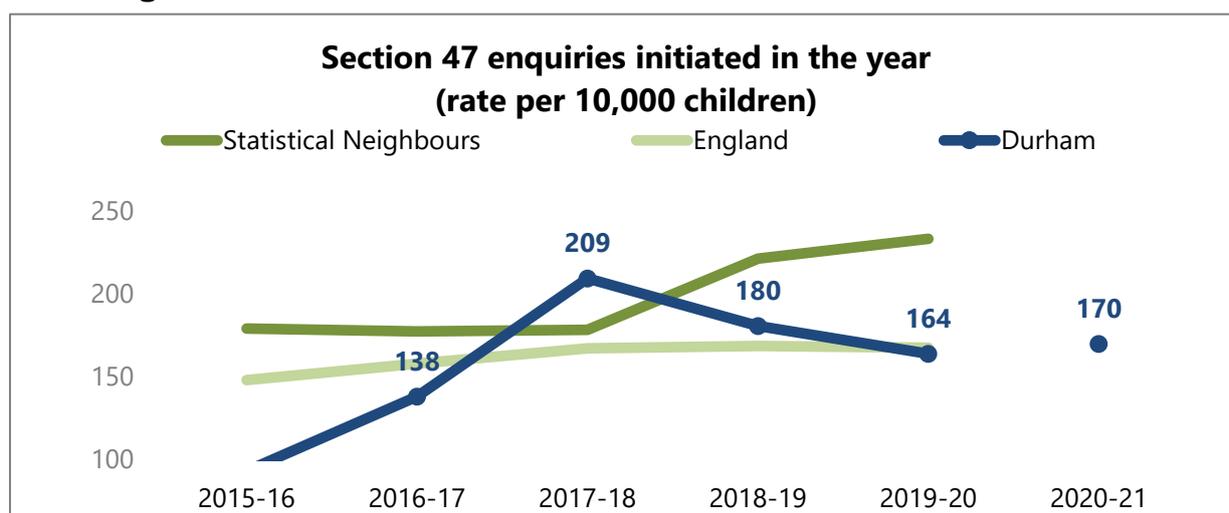
Child Protection Review Conference

- 12 A Child Protection Review Conference is held within 3 months to review whether the child is continuing to suffer or is likely to suffer significant harm, review developmental progress against planned outcomes, and considered whether it should continue. Subsequent Child Protection Review Conferences are held within 3 months and 6 monthly thereafter. When a Child Protection Plan ends there should be a clear Child in Need plan to ensure that change is sustained.

Durham Context

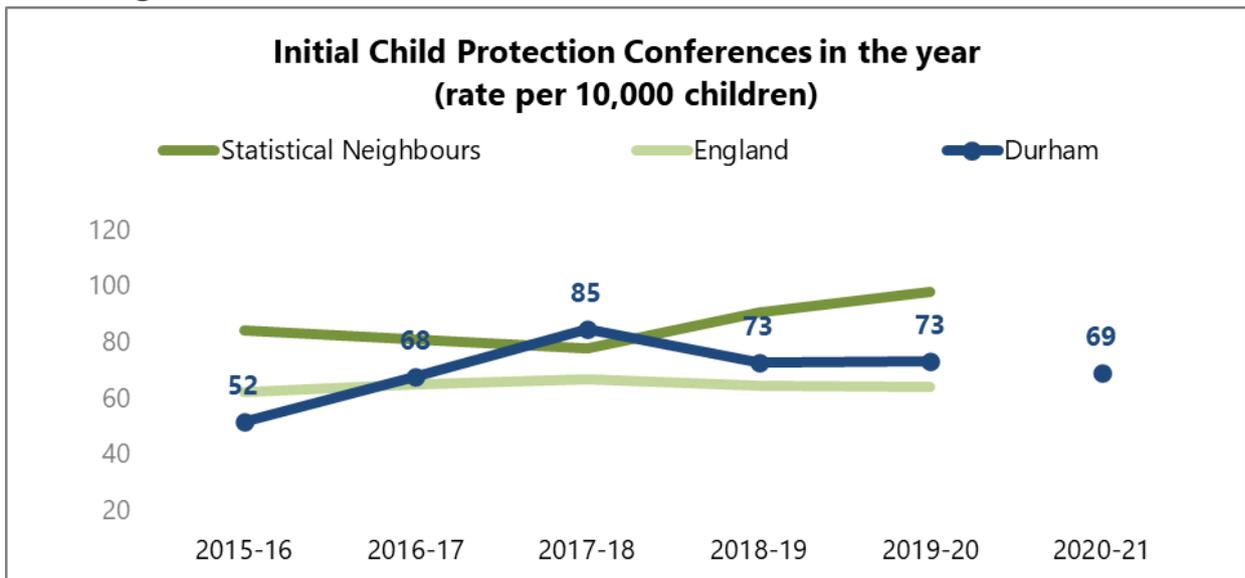
- 13 At the time of writing this report there were 499 children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Durham. During 2020 – 2021 1721 s47 investigations were undertaken and 702 Initial Child Protection Conferences were held.
- 14 Figure 1 shows the rate of s47 investigations undertaken each year since 2015-16 in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 1



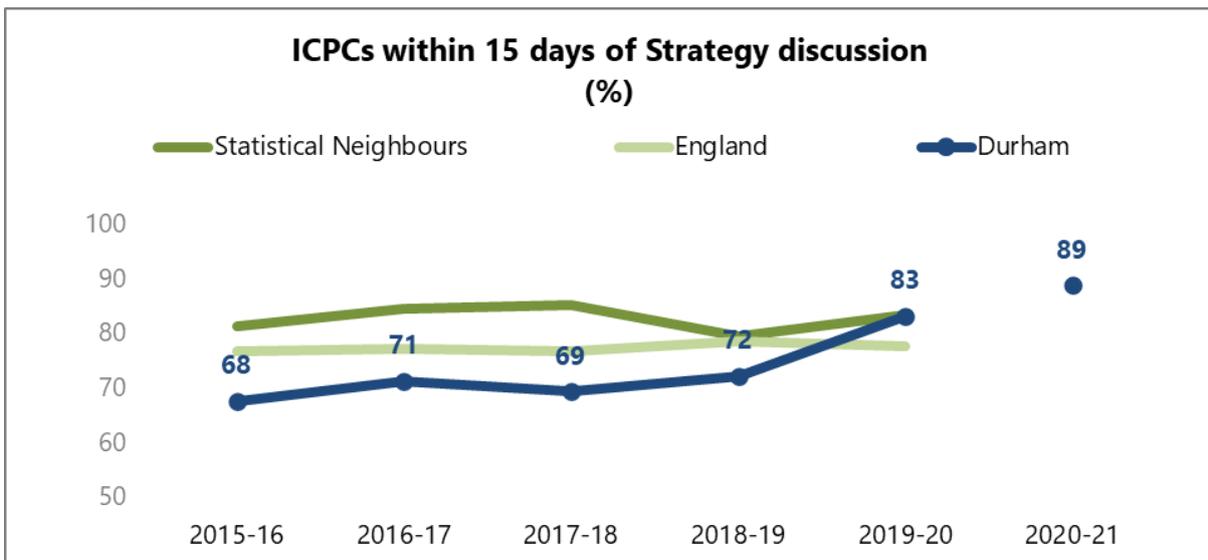
- 15 Figure 2 shows the rate of Initial Child Protection Conferences each year since 2015-16 in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 2



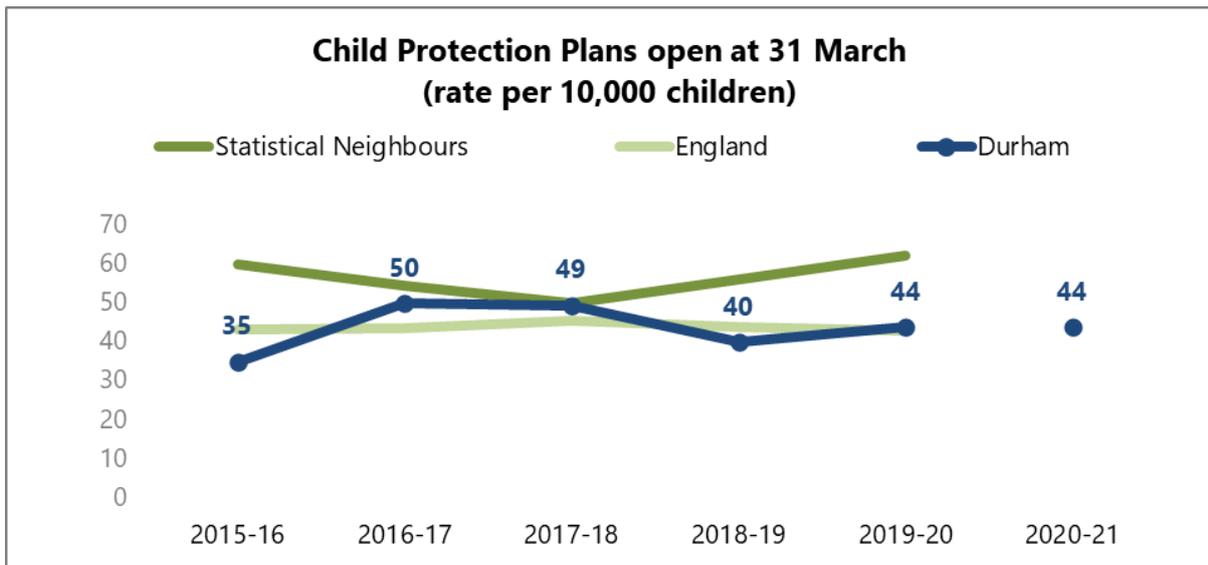
16 Figure 3 shows the timeliness of our Initial Child Protection conferences.

Figure 3



17 Figure 4 shows the rate of Child Protection Plans in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 4



18 Figure 5 shows the primary category of abuse that is recorded when a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 5

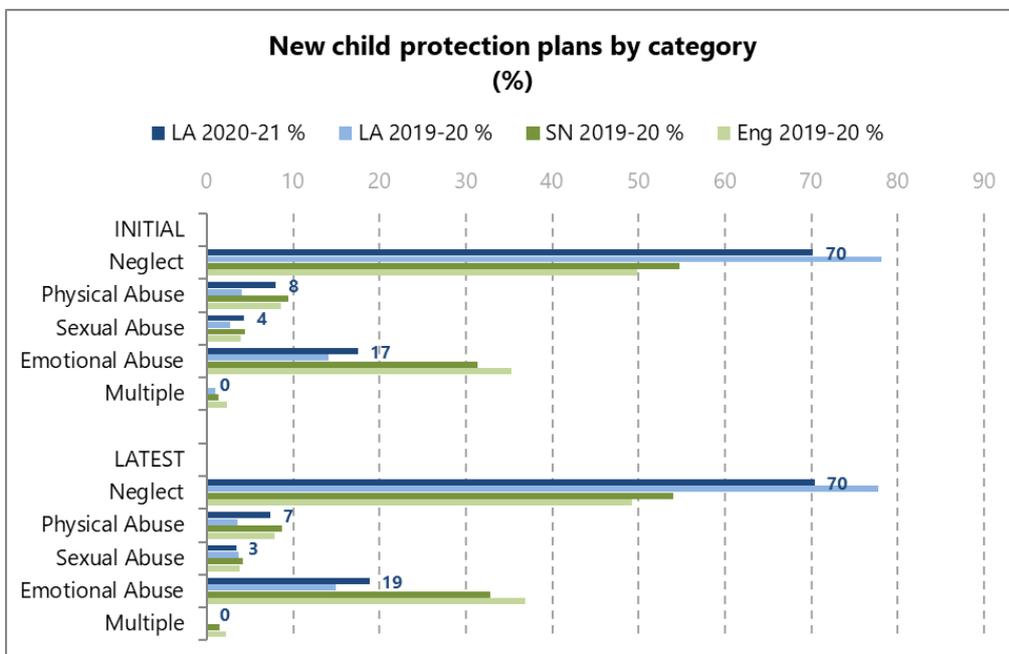
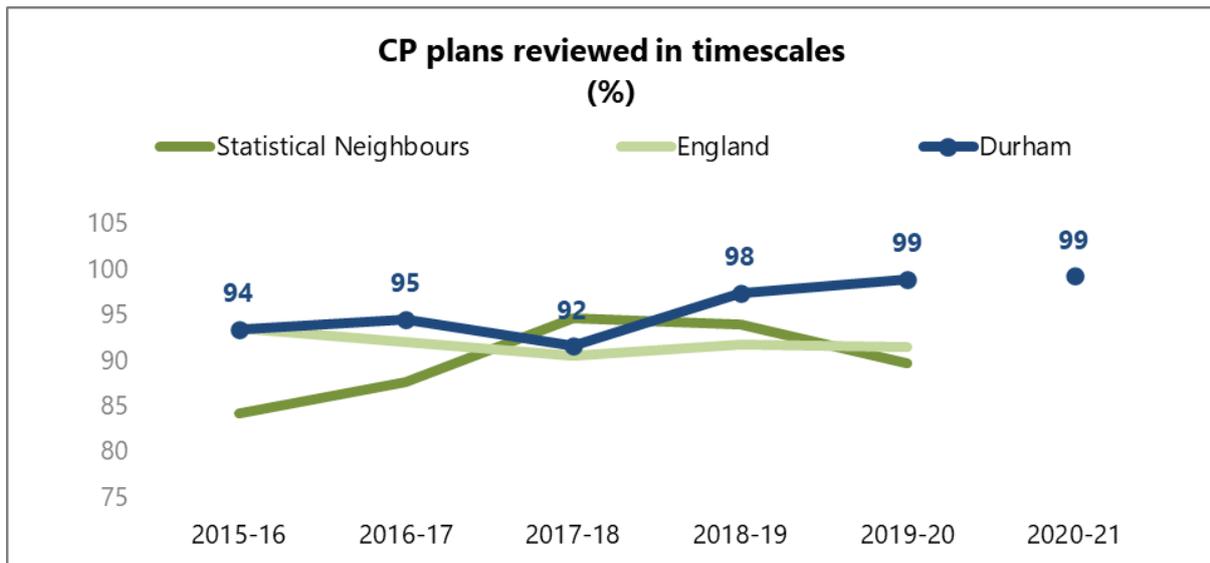


Figure 6

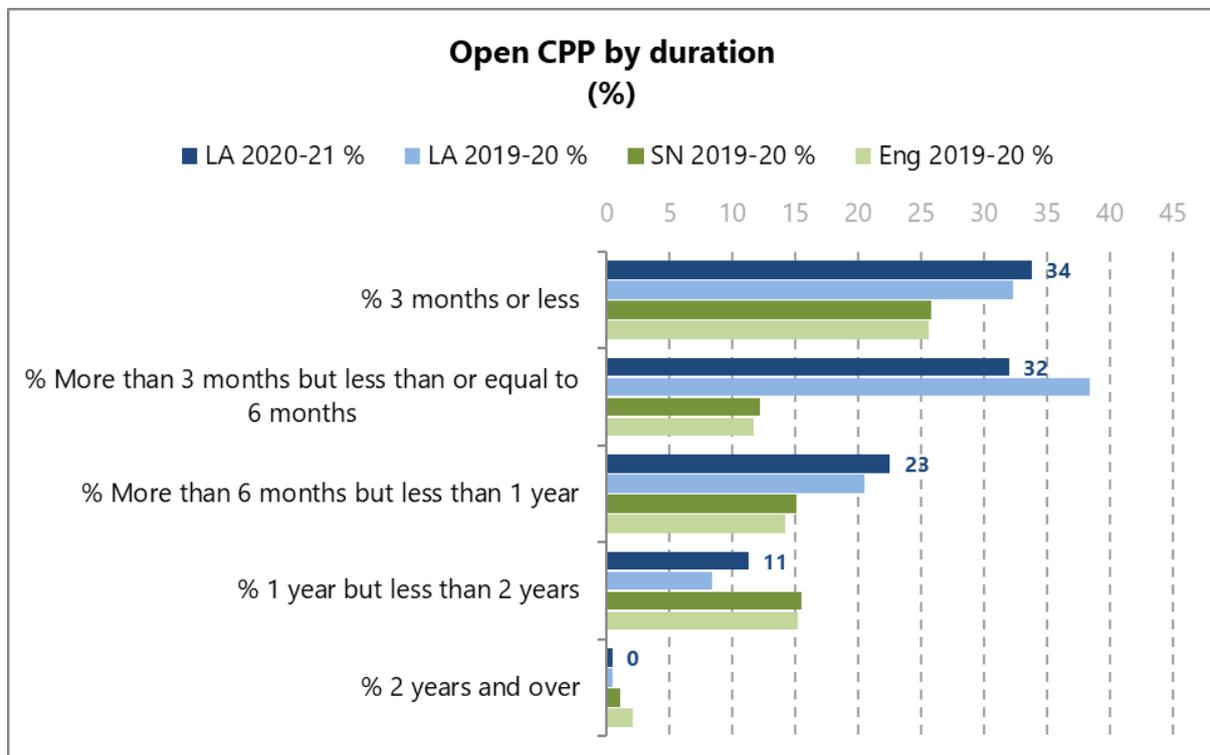
19 Figure 6 shows the timeliness of Review Child Protection Conferences in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 6



20 Figure 7 shows the duration of Child Protection Plans in comparison to England and our statistical neighbours.

Figure 7



Conclusion

Key strengths

- 21 We continue to maintain strong performance in relation to the timeliness of our Initial Child Protection Conference and our Review Child Protection Conferences. This is critical to ensure that the risks to children and young people are being managed effectively and that the plans to promote their safety and wellbeing are progressing.
- 22 We have quickly adapted to the challenges of Covid-19 by embracing the use of technology and have maintained the timeliness of our reviews throughout this period.
- 23 There is strong multi-agency representation and support throughout the child protection process.
- 24 The continued implementation of the Mind of My Own app which provides children and young people with a way of providing their views within the child protection process is a significant and positive development.

Key Challenges

- 25 Whilst we have responded rapidly and well to the challenges of Covid-19 we are continuing to work hard to ensure that children and families remain central to all multi-agency meetings as we move towards more face-to-face meetings.
- 26 It is always a challenge to implement and maintain a strength-based relational approach when assessing and managing risk within the child protection process. The implementation of Signs of Safety is the primary method of achieving this ambition.

Feedback

- 27 Two examples of high-quality relationship-based practice are shown below in feedback from a young person and from parents who have experienced a Child Protection Conference:

“I didn’t want to be part of the meeting and the IRO spoke to me beforehand and arranged for me to come via video call to the beginning of the meeting so that I could say what I thought it was like at home, including what was good and what I was worried about. I was then able to listen to what everyone else said from the other side.”

“Your presence and demeanour on the day was really helpful. You seemed kind, calm and supportive. Personally, I also appreciated your understated authority – you seemed very much in charge and I respond well to that sort of thin.

Background Papers

None

Contact: Chris Ring

Tel: 03000 268657

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Children Act 1989 provides a legislative framework for child protection in England and is strengthened by the Children Act 2004, which encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability.

Finance

No implications.

Consultation

No implications

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications

Climate Change

No implications

Human Rights

No implications

Crime and Disorder

No implications

Staffing

No implications

Accommodation

No implications

Risk

No implications

Procurement

No implications

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An overview of the Child Protection Process

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee
27 September 2021

Chris Ring, Strategic Manager, Safeguarding and Professional Practice



- Overview of the key parts of Child Protection Process
- Durham Context
 - Key Strengths
 - Key Challenges

Strategy discussion

- Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm
- Local authority children's social care, the police, health and other bodies such as the referring agency.
- Within 2 working days of concerns being identified and where risks are high on the same day.
- The purpose of the strategy discussion is to establish whether there is a need to conduct a criminal investigation and whether further enquires are required under **section 47** of the Children Act 1989.
- Parents would be informed but not part of the meeting

s 47 Investigation

- Multi-agency investigation led by local authority social worker
- Purpose – to decide whether any action should be taken to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of the child
- Consultation with the family and network
- Outcome – if concerns or significant harm are substantiated and the child is judged to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm an **Initial Child Protection Conference** should be convened within 15 days of Strategy Discussion

Initial Child Protection Conference

- Multi-agency – chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer.
- Brings together child, young person and family
- Provides a forum to share and analyse all relevant information and analyse from all partner agencies
- Decision in relation to future safety, health and development
- If a child is likely to suffer significant harm a Child Protection Plan will be created?
- The primary category of abuse is recorded if threshold is met for a Child Protection Plan

Core Group

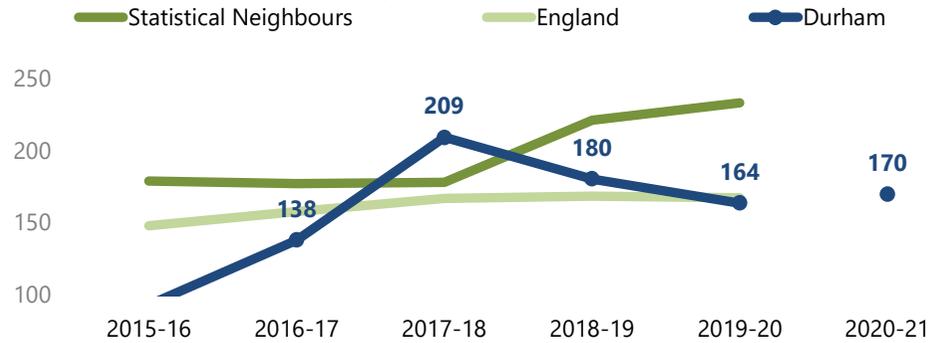
- Formulation and implementation of the Child Protection Plan
- Multi-agency with family and network at the centre
- Within 10 days of Initial Child Protection Conference and monthly thereafter

Review Child Protection Conference

- Review whether the child is continuing to suffer, or is likely to suffer, significant harm
- Review progress against Child Protection Plan and consider whether it should continue or needs to be changed
- Within 3 months and 6-monthly thereafter
- When a Plan ends there should be a clear Child in Need plan to ensure that change is sustained

Durham Context

**Section 47 enquiries initiated in the year
(rate per 10,000 children)**



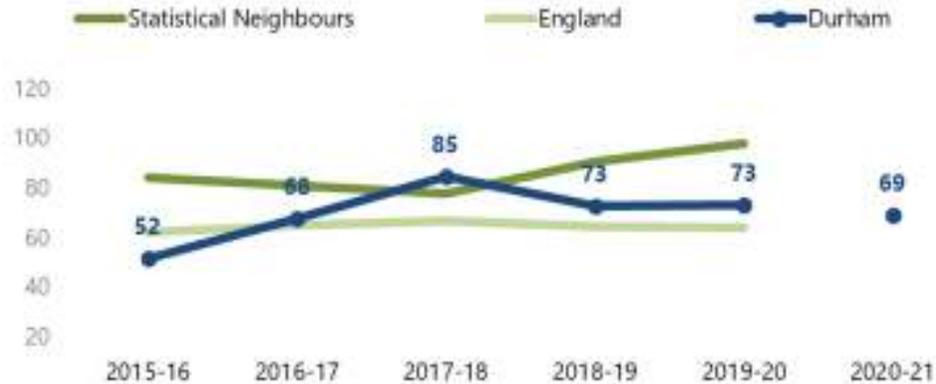
2020 – 2021

1721 s47 Investigations

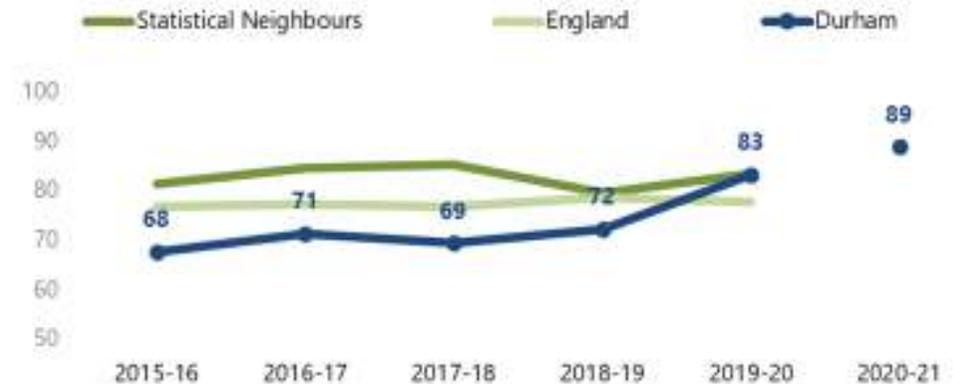
702 Initial Child Protection Conferences

499 Children currently subject to a Child Protection Plan

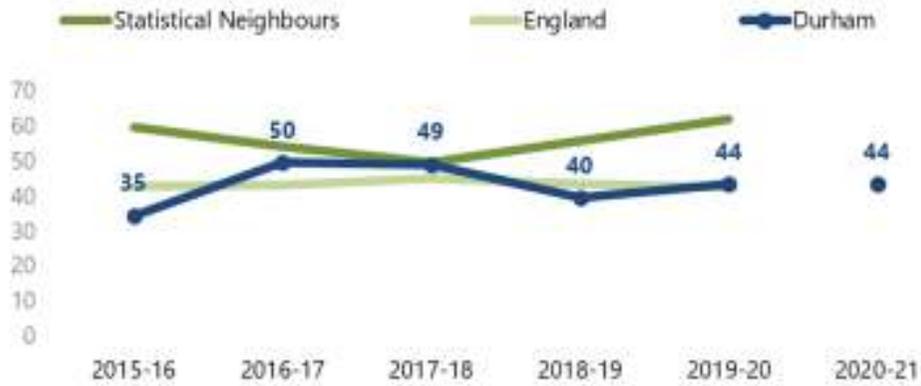
**Initial Child Protection Conferences in the year
(rate per 10,000 children)**



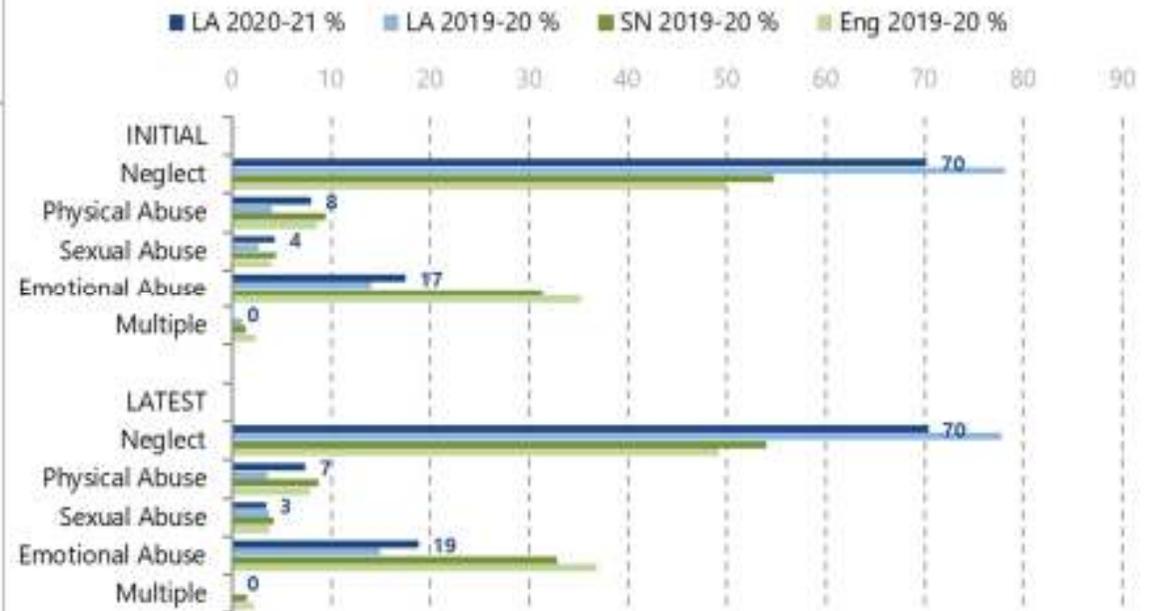
**ICPCs within 15 days of Strategy discussion
(%)**

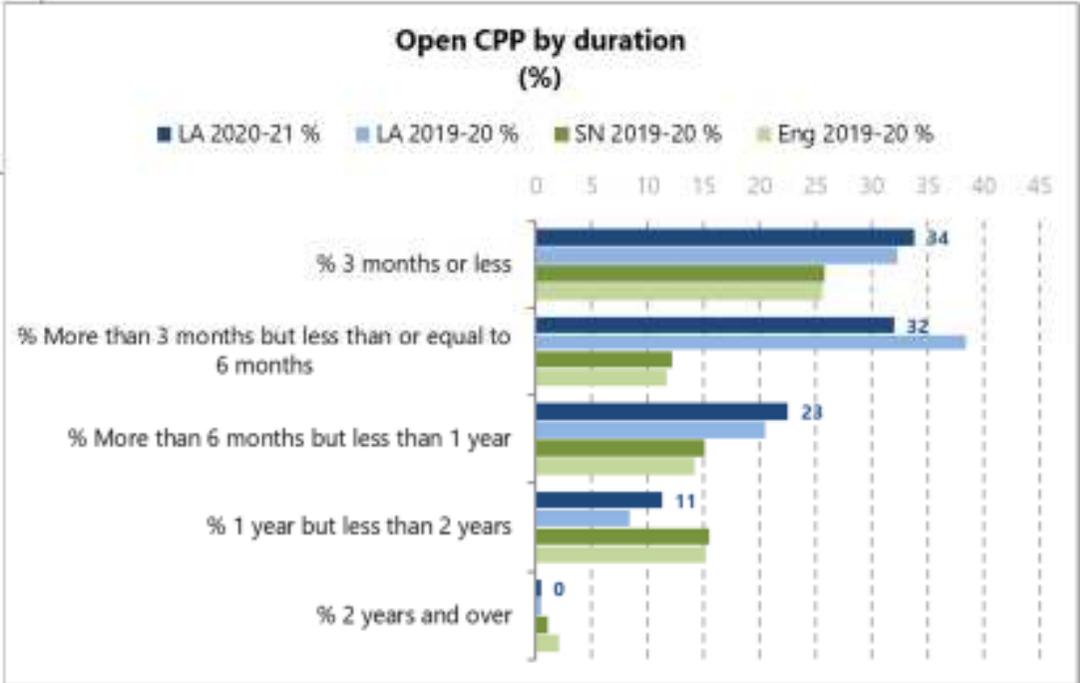
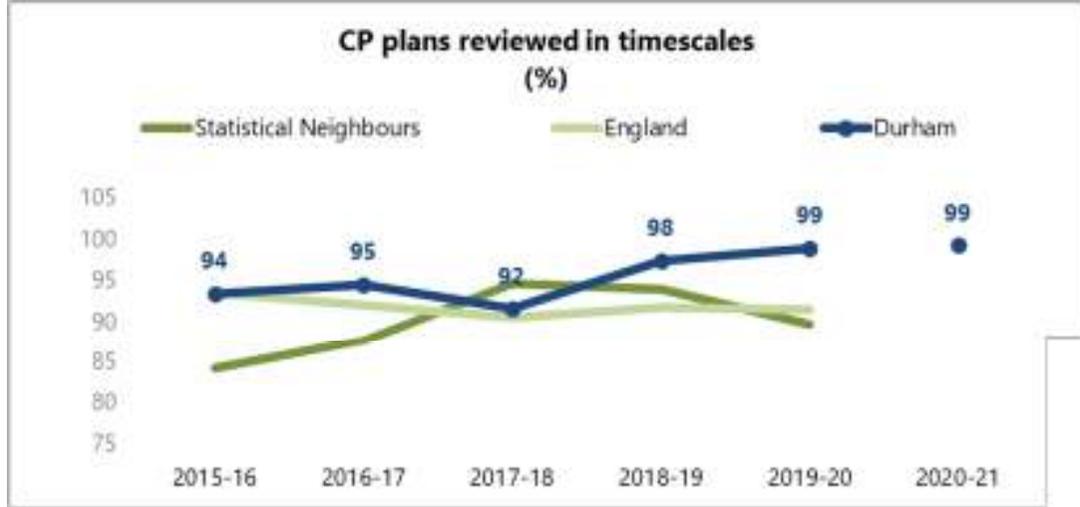


**Child Protection Plans open at 31 March
(rate per 10,000 children)**



**New child protection plans by category
(%)**





Key strengths

- Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences and Reviews of Child Protection Plans
- Strong multi-agency support
- Response to Covid-19 and maintaining timeliness of reviews
- Development of Mind of My Own

Feedback from a young person to the IRO about their child protection conference:

I didn't want to be part of the whole meeting and the IRO spoke to be beforehand and arranged for me to come via video call to the beginning of the meeting so that I could say what I thought it was like at home, including what was good and what I was worried about. I was then able to listen to what everyone else said from the other side

Feedback from parents to the IRO following a child protection conference:

Your presence and demeanour on the day was really helpful. You seemed kind, calm and supportive. Personally, I also appreciated your understated authority - you seemed very much in charge and I respond well to that sort of thing.

Key challenges

- Recovery from Covid-19 to ensure children and families remain central to the Child Protection Process
- Maintaining a strength based, relational approach throughout the Child Protection Process

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

27 September 2021



**Relationship based social
work practice**

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

Purpose

- 1 The purpose of this report and accompanying presentation is to provide members with an overview of the progress being made within Children's Social Care to embed high quality relationship based social work practice.

Executive Summary

- 2 Durham Children's Social Care are committed to embedding relationship-based practice across all services, ensuring that the relationship between the child, young person, parent or carer and the practitioners who work with them is central to our practice.
- 3 The quality of the relationship has a significant impact on the ability to achieve good outcomes for children and young people. We know from the feedback we get from children and young people how important the relationship is with their social worker.
- 4 This report provides a summary of three key factors in achieving our ambition: a strong workforce strategy; manageable caseloads; a Practice Framework – Signs of Safety.
- 5 It demonstrates that the progress being made in each area and the emerging evidence of impact on children and families.

Recommendation

- 6 Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the content of the report and presentation and comment accordingly.

Background

A strong workforce strategy

- 7 In order to provide an environment where relationship-based practice can flourish there has been continued investment in our workforce strategy. Key elements of this include:

Recruitment

- Invested additional funding of £2.716 million in front line social work between 2019-20 and 2021-22
- Development of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) academy for newly qualified social workers
- Over recruitment of ASYEs
- Creation of new roles – Enhanced Practitioners
- Different routes into social work – Frontline, Step-Up, Apprenticeship, Return to Social Work

Retention

- Enhanced emotional wellbeing offer
- Clear practice framework – Signs of Safety
- Investment in electronic recording system – Liquid Logic
- Development of Leadership Academy
- Recruitment and retention allowance for “hard to fill posts”
- Creation of new specialist teams
- Aspiring Managers programme

- 8 The impact of this strategy can be seen in the following measures:

- Our average vacancy rate over 12-month period reduced from 14.22% (Aug 2019) to 8.04% (Aug 21).
- Our current agency rate of 7.64% is lower than both the regional average (10.2%) and the national average (15.4%).
- Our leavers have increased slightly between 2019 – 2021. There were 46 leavers in year ending 2021.
- Staff survey (68% response rate) found 76% were satisfied with their employment deal and 85% would recommend their employer to a friend.
- 80% of respondents felt cared about by their manager.

Manageable caseloads

- 9 Manageable caseloads are key to ensuring that social workers have the time to build effective relationships with children and young people. The impact of the workforce strategy upon social work caseloads needs to be seen in the context of increasing demand upon services. Figure 1

shows the increasing trend in the number of children and young people open to children’s social care since July 2019. Figure 2 shows the growth in the number of children in care which has grown by 25% between the start of 2018 and the end of 2020.

Figure 1 – Children open to Children’s Social Care

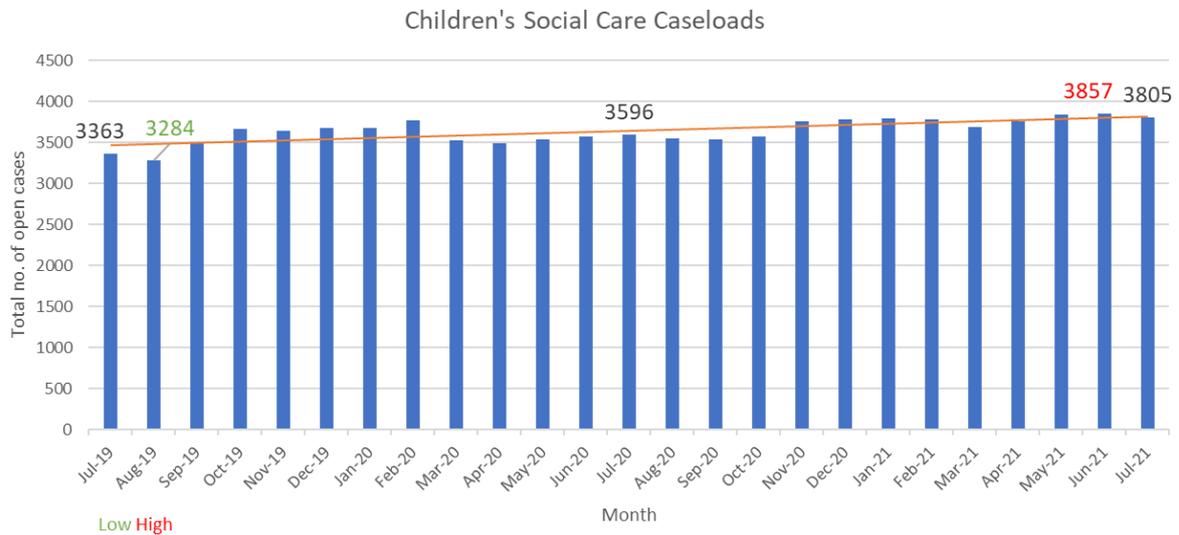
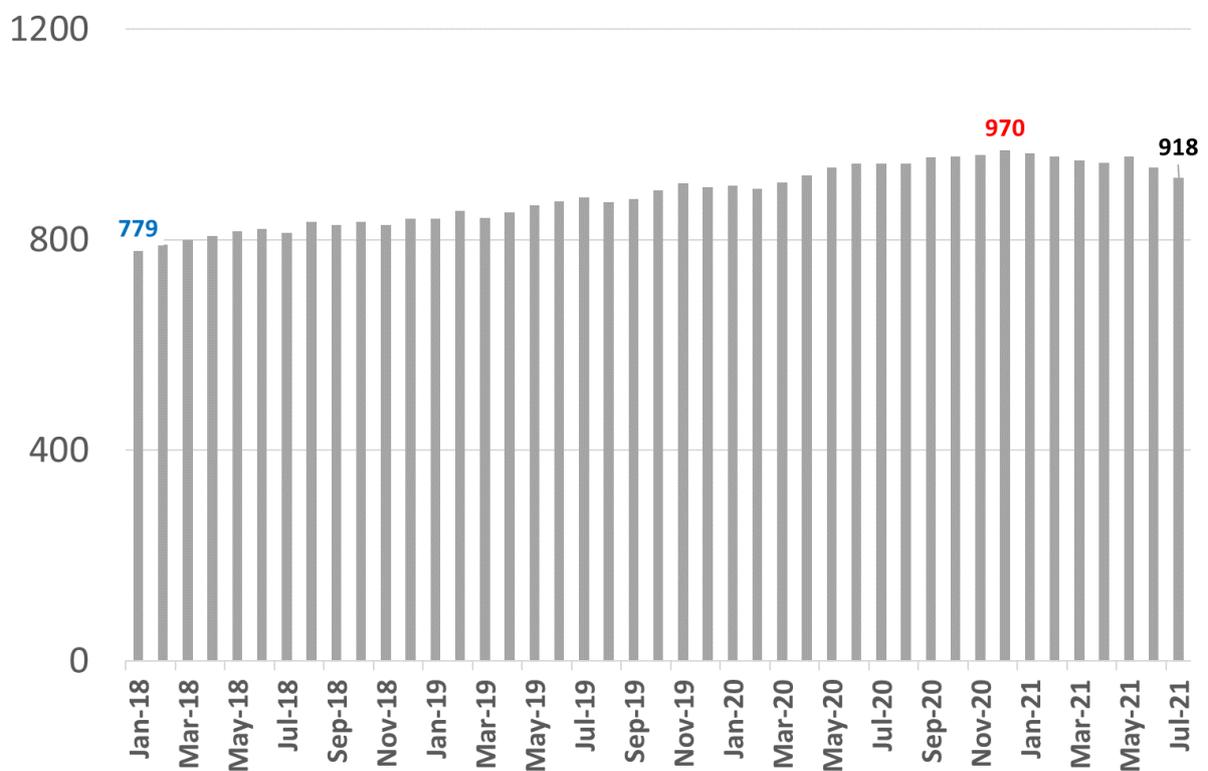


Figure 2 – Number of Children in Care



- 10 At the time of writing this report 85% of Social Workers had less than 25 cases and the average social worker caseload is 19.

Practice Framework

- 11 In 2018 we began to implement our Practice Framework, Signs of Safety, which provides a method and suite of tools to give as much responsibility as possible to families and their network for the safety of their children. It is a strength-based approach, balancing what we are worried about against strengths and safety within a family.
- 12 In 2020 we developed a Trauma Informed Care strategy to strengthen our relationship-based approach by ensuring that practitioners and managers are supported to work in a way that acknowledges the trauma and ensures subsequent interventions and care respond to this.

Impact

- 13 We have seen a continued reduction in our re-referral rate which suggests that our practice is achieving more sustainable change with children, young people and families.
- 14 Relationship based practice is the strongest feature in our collaborative evaluation programme and is highlighted in the two quotes below:

“The social worker has worked with her perfectly, they have worked together and done everything they can ... they talk about everything and they have open discussions. She says she has felt involved in agreeing the plan and everything has gone well since the initial conference.”

“They are lovely, has followed up on any issues and ensures they are involved with meetings. Mother feels as though they take everything which they say into account and are truthful about concerns. Mother said she feels comfortable to say if something is going wrong now, can ring up and ask anything.”

- 15 Our complaints have continued to be at a much lower level than pre-covid and our compliments have begun to increase over the same period. Two are highlighted below:

“We want to sincerely thank you for your support, professionalism and commitment to supporting us as a family through the most challenging times. You have always remained so composed and guided us through the most difficult process and remained vigilant and impartial to respond to the needs of our children. As a social worker you have renewed our trust in services with your professional conduct, thorough assessments and responses to matters that have arisen always

*keeping us informed and the children at the heart of it.” **Parent to CLS FF***

*“Thank you for all your time and effort you have put into me for 6 years. It’s been a pleasure to work with you and have some good laughs 😊 I hope all is well in the future for you. I’ll see you for family time with Take care of yourself and stay safe. Goodbye it’s going to be hard to see you leave me after 6 years, but thank you once again.” **Young Person to CLA 1***

Conclusion

16 The report provides evidence of a strong workforce strategy that has included significant investment in frontline staff and is having a positive impact on our vacancy rate and reducing our reliance on agency staff. The impact on social work caseloads is evident, although continues to be challenging in the context of increasing demand. Both these factors combine with our implementation of Signs of Safety and a Trauma Informed approach to progress our ambition to embed high quality relationship based social work practice.

17 Our most recent Ofsted Inspection in 2021 provides further evidence of the impact that we are having:

*“Social workers are positive about working for Durham. They report good management support and supervision which enables them to discuss issues and make appropriate decisions for children. **A strong workforce development strategy has ensured workforce stability. This is helping workers to consistently support children and they have developed positive and informed relationships.**”*

Background Papers

None

Contact: Chris Ring

Tel: 03000 268657

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Implementation of the Relationship Based Practice Framework will ensure consistency of practice in carrying out the Council's statutory functions under the Children Act 1989 to support children in need and to carry out safeguarding investigations and where necessary, issue care proceedings to ensure that children are protected from harm.

Finance

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Relationship based social work practice

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2021

Chris Ring, Strategic Manager, Safeguarding and Professional Practice



Relationship based social work practice

- We are committed to embedding relationship-based practice across all services, ensuring that the relationship between the child, young person, parent or carer and the practitioners who work with them is central to our practice.
- The quality of the relationship has a significant impact on the ability to achieve good outcomes for children and young people.
- We know from the feedback we get from children and young people how important the relationship is with their social worker.
- Key factors in achieving our ambition:
 - Strong workforce strategy
 - Manageable caseloads
 - Practice Framework – Signs of Safety

Key elements of the workforce strategy

- **Recruitment**

- Invested additional funding of **£2.716** million in front line social work between 2019-20 and 2021-22
- Development of ASYE academy
- Over recruitment of ASYEs
- Creation of new roles – Enhanced Practitioners
- Different routes into social work – Frontline, Step-Up, Apprenticeship, Return to Social Work

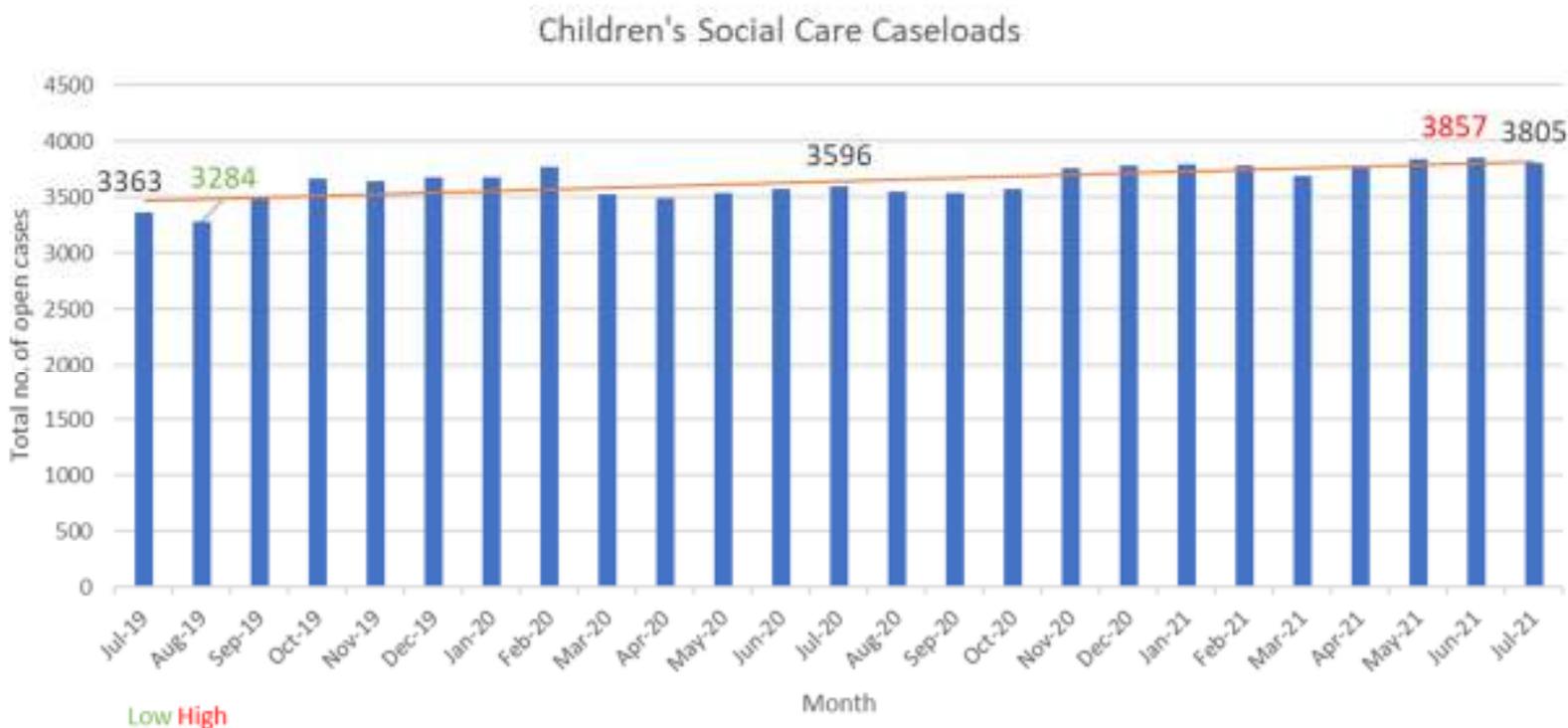
- **Retention**

- Emotional wellbeing offer
- Clear practice framework
- Investment in electronic recording system – Liquid Logic
- Development of Leadership Academy
- Recruitment and retention allowance for “hard to fill posts”
- Creation of new specialist teams – Pre-Birth and ASET
- Aspiring Managers programme

Impact of workforce strategy

- Average vacancy rate over 12-month period reduced from **14.22% (Aug 2019) to 8.04% (Aug 21)**.
- Our current agency rate of **7.64%** is lower than both the regional average (**10.2%**) and the national average (**15.4%**).
- Our leavers have increased slightly between 2019 – 2021. There were **46** leavers in year ending 2021.
- Staff survey (68% response rate) found **76%** were satisfied with their employment deal and **85%** would recommend their employer to a friend.
- **80%** of respondents felt cared about by their manager.

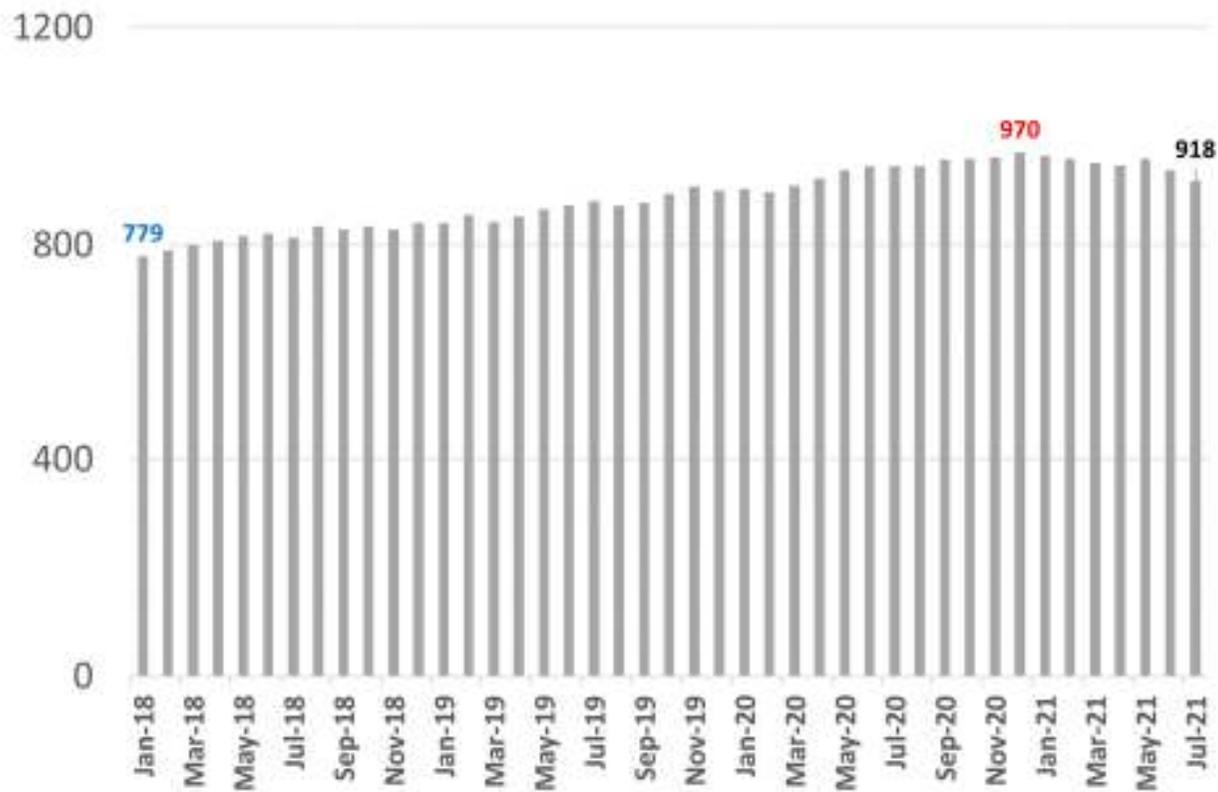
Context of increasing demand



- Chart shows the total no. of children and young people open to Children's Social Care as a snapshot each month over the last 2 years
- This highlights an increasing trend
- The high and low points are highlighted as well as July of each year
- In comparison to July 2019, there has been a **13% increase (+442 CYP)** – This is equivalent to 2.5 additional Social Work Teams (at a caseload of 175 each)
- And a **6% increase** from July 2020 (**+209 CYP**), which is equivalent to 1.2 additional SW Teams



Children Looked After



- The number of children in care has **grown by 25%** between start of 2018 and end of 2020
- This is the equivalent to almost **200 additional children in care.**
- Since then numbers have fallen back but remain high compared to historical standards.
- These trends are a combination of long term growth and short term impacts from covid

Caseload data in the context of increasing demand

- Different social work role have different caseloads:

Social Worker role	Caseload
Social Worker	22
Enhanced Practitioner	15
ASYE	8 – 18

- **85%** of Social Workers have less than 25 cases
- Average Social Worker caseload is **19** at Sept 2021

Practice Framework

- 2018 – Signs of Safety
 - Provides a method and suite of tools to give as much responsibility as possible to families and their network for the safety of their children
 - Strength based approach, balancing what we are worried about against strengths and safety within a family
- 2020 – Trauma Informed Care
 - Strengthened are relationship based approach by ensuring that practitioners and managers are supported to work in a way that acknowledges the trauma and ensures subsequent interventions and care respond to this

Impact

- Continued reduction in re-referral rate suggesting more sustainable change being achieved
- Relationship based practice is strongest feature in our collaborative evaluation programme:

“The social worker has worked with her perfectly, they have worked together and done everything they can ... they talk about everything and they have open discussions. She says she has felt involved in agreeing the plan and everything has gone well since the initial conference.”

“They are lovely, has followed up on any issues and ensures they are involved with meetings. Mother feels as though they take everything which they say into account and are truthful about concerns. Mother said she feels comfortable to say if something is going wrong now, can ring up and ask anything.”

Compliments and complaints

- Complaints continue to be at much lower levels than pre-covid
- Compliments have begun to increase over same time period:

“We want to sincerely thank you for your support, professionalism and commitment to supporting us as a family through the most challenging times. You have always remained so composed and guided us through the most difficult process and remained vigilant and impartial to respond to the needs of our children. As a social worker you have renewed our trust in services with your professional conduct, thorough assessments and responses to matters that have arisen always keeping us informed and the children at the heart of it.” Parent to CLS FF

“Thank you for all your time and effort you have put into me for 6 years. Its been a pleasure to work with you and have some good laughs 😊 I hope all is well in the future for you. I’ll see you for family time with Take care of yourself and stay safe. Goodbye its going to be hard to see you leave me after 6 years, but thank you once again.” Young Person to CLA 1

Ofsted Focused Visit – 2021

*“Social workers are positive about working for Durham. They report good management support and supervision which enables them to discuss issues and make appropriate decisions for children. **A strong workforce development strategy has ensured workforce stability. This is helping workers to consistently support children and they have developed positive and informed relationships.**”*



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Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2021



Developing a new County Durham SEND Strategy

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

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Overview and Scrutiny an update on the development of the new County Durham Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy.
2. To invite the committee to make comment and provide a contribution to the new County Durham SEND Strategy Vision and Aims.

Executive Summary

3. County Durham currently has a SEND strategy which is aligned to the wider children and young people's strategy. The strategy is prepared jointly by public services and representatives of parents and young people with SEND.
4. Development of the new strategy commenced in 2021 and engagement has taken place with a wide range of key stakeholders and service users. The new strategy is scheduled to be considered by Durham County Council's Cabinet and Clinical Commissioning Groups in January 2022.
5. A draft vision and aims statement has been developed referencing a range of sources and has been promoted by leaders of the SEND Partnership by asking service users and stakeholders a range of questions. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee today are being asked the same questions as a key stakeholder.

Recommendations

6. That Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) Note the development of the new SEND strategy and provide views about its development, implementation and review
- b) Respond collectively as a key stakeholder to the questions set out in paragraph 13

Background

7. County Durham currently has a SEND strategy for children, young people and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disability SEND in County Durham, with the aim of providing focus and clarity on the priorities for improving services and opportunities. This strategy is aligned with our wider children and young people strategy.
8. The strategy is prepared jointly by public services including the council and local health services and parents of young people with SEND represented by the Parent Carer Forum Making Changes Together (MCT) who work together to improve outcomes for people with SEND.
9. During 2021 we have embarked on developing a new strategy and have engaged with a wide range of key stakeholders and service users as we have developed the strategy ensuring it is relevant and purposeful.
10. It is planned that a draft new strategy will be presented to Cabinet in January 2022 and with the management bodies of the Clinical Commissioning Groups at or around the same time for approval.

Progress to date

11. The SEND Strategic Partnership have committed to developing a strategy that makes sense for children and young people with SEND and their families, schools and settings, services, teams and individual practitioners. The strategic intention is:
 - to inform and support our activity, and in turn is informed and supported by what we do,
 - enable an understanding of when progress is being made and
 - helps to identify what else needs to be done
12. A draft vision and aims statement has been developed through referencing a range of sources including the legislative framework, local strategies, consultations and reviews including that of Ofsted and CQC in their revisit to Durham in January 2020

The vision

Our Vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as it is for all children and young people in County Durham: That they are safe and part of their community, have the best start in life, have good physical and mental health, and gain the education, skills and experiences to prepare them for adulthood

This strategy should be built on a foundation of understanding and positive communication

The aims

- Where possible, for all children and young people to attend their local school which understands them and is able to meet their needs
- To work closely with families to develop resilience and feel confident that needs are understood and met
- To listen to what children and young people are telling us when supporting them and to develop their resilience and independence
- To identify needs in a timely way and have the right support available to meet needs at the right time
- For all education settings and their workforce to be confident in identifying and meeting needs and to promote inclusion
- To have a joined-up offer of support available proportionate to assessed needs

13. Leaders from across the SEND partnership have promoted the vision and aims to service users and key stakeholders across County Durham. Asking of Service Users and stakeholders a range of questions including

- Are the statements understandable?
- Do you agree on the vision and aims?
- What outcomes would we notice for children and young people if these aims and priorities are being achieved?
- What would I, my family, or my team do to support this?
- How do we promote confidence in children and young people, their families, and professionals that these will happen?
- How do we hold ourselves* to account? (* this includes accountability of schools)

14. A summary of responses so far include:

- Universal support or strong support for the Vision and Aims.
- A desire for more inclusion/less exclusion, settled schooling, positive view of neurodiversity, confidence in families and professionals, improved transitions and better mental health and understanding of health needs
- A breadth of far-reaching actions but much of the parent and SENCO response centred on positive relationships and communication and joint working/reviewing of progress, sharing good practice
- A desire to improve professional awareness of SEND, develop a greater consistency of offer between settings, promote positive communication, shared planning and solutions for transitions

An opportunity to engage school governance, making clear the SEND offer to families in each provision, peer to peer review, challenge and support

15. Emerging Headlines from specific groups of service users and stakeholders includes

- **Children and Young People** want more opportunity to be heard when choices are made for them, want more opportunity to be included in their local community
- **Parents and Carers** are focused on well-being and Mental health, Provision at SEND Support and improving Transitions, positive value for neurodiversity
- **SENCOs and Parents and Carers** consider improved communication as the key to raising confidence in provision
- **Health stakeholder** feedback is positive with an acknowledgement that the action sets which underpin the strategy ought to be a blend of health specific and joint / pooled solutions
- **Care stakeholder feedback**, strong support from Early Help Services. Keenness to improve the transition into adult services and community support.

Overview and Scrutiny as Key Stakeholders

16. We would like views from Overview and Scrutiny about the development, implementation and review of the new strategy and to engage the Committee as key stakeholders in the development of the strategy asking the same questions asked of all service users and stakeholders:

- Are the statements understandable?
- Do you agree on the vision and aims?
- What outcomes would we notice for children and young people if these aims and priorities are being achieved?
- What would I, my family, or my team do to support this?
- How do we promote confidence in children and young people, their families, and professionals that these will happen?
- How do we hold ourselves* to account? (* this includes accountability of schools)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

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

27 September 2021



**Children and Young People’s Services –
Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21**

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the outturn budget position for Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS), highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget for the year.

Executive summary

- 2 Children and Young People’s Services is reporting a cash limit overspend of £1.576 million against a revised budget of £125.942 million which represents a 1.25% overspend.
- 3 In arriving at the cash limit position, Covid-19 related expenditure of £7.271 million, offset by Covid-19 related savings of £2.204 million within CYPS have been excluded from the outturn position. Covid-19 related costs are being treated corporately and offset by Government funding.
- 4 There was an overall net contribution to earmarked reserves including DSG and School reserves of £12.651 million, leading to a revised balance of £38.922 million at the year-end of which £31.174m is schools related.
- 5 The capital outturn is an underspend of £5.619 million against a revised budget of £22.977 million

Recommendation(s)

- 6 Members of Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny committee are requested to:
 - (a) Note the Children and Young People’s Services overall revenue outturn position.

Background

7 The County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2020/21 at its meeting on 26 February 2020. These budgets have subsequently been revised to take account of transfers to and from reserves, grant additions/reductions, budget transfers between service groupings and budget reprofiling between years. This report covers the financial position for:

- (a) Children and Young People's Services Revenue Budget - £125.942 million (original £123.876 million);
- (b) CYPS – Capital programme - £22.977 million (original £31.945 million).

8 The original Children and Young People's Services revenue budget has been revised to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as summarised in the table below:

Reason For Adjustment	£000s
Original Budget	123,876
Reason For Adjustment	
Transfer from Contingencies	1,125
Use of (+)/contribution to Children and Young People's Services reserves (-)	455
Use of (+)/contribution to Corporate reserves (-)	392
Use of (+)/contribution to Other Service reserves (-)	100
Transfer from Other Services	-
Transfer to Other Services	(6)
REVISED BUDGET	125,942

9 The use of / contribution to Children and Young People's Services reserves are detailed in the following table – of particular note is the use of the 'Schools Reserve' accessed to facilitate the transfer to academy status five schools with a deficit retained balance as detailed in Paragraph 27 of this report.:

Reserve	£000s
Tackling Troubled Families Reserve	67
Extended Personal Advisor Reserve	58
Emotional Well Being Reserve	(113)
Mental Health Counselling Reserve	(46)
Movement Difficulties Reserve	(8)
Secure Services Reserve	(856)
YOS Development Reserve	13
Early Years Sustainability Reserve	27
Durham Learning Resources Reserve	(51)
School Reserve	4,712
Adult Learning Reserve	(259)
Durham Enable Reserve	(837)
Engaging Young People Reserve	(61)
Winter Pressures EDT Reserve	50
MTFP Investment Full Circle Reserve	(67)
MTFP Investment Pause Reserve	(91)
MTFP Investment Children and Young People Reserve	(75)
MTFP Investment Supporting Solutions Reserve	(79)
MTFP Investment Supporting Vulnerable Learners Reserve	(61)
Holiday Activities and Food Reserve	(72)
Swimming Reserve	(268)
CPD Reserve	42
Music Service Reserve	(363)
Progression & Learning 18-21 Reserve	(434)
Easington Sports Partnership Reserve	(9)
Durham Sports Partnership Reserve	(48)
PFI Lifecycle Reserve	(515)
MTFP Investment - Liquid Logic Enhance Performance Reserve	(7)
MTFP Investment - Liquid Logic Additional Modules Reserve	(32)
MTFP Investment - Liquid Logic Increase Internal Capacity Reserve	(40)
MTFP Investment - Supporting Vulnerable Learners Reserve (Education) Reserve	(25)
Durham Directions Reserve	(105)
NET POSITION	455

- 10 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2020/21 and show:
- (a) the approved annual budget;
 - (b) the actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
 - (c) the variance between the annual budget and the outturn;

- (d) for the Children and Young People's Services revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Revenue Outturn (£000)

- 11 The Children and Young People's Services service is reporting a cash limit overspend of £1.576 million against a revised budget of £125.942 million which represents a 1.25% overspend.
- 12 The tables below show the revised annual budget, actual expenditure and the variance at year end. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense) and shows the combined position for Children and Young People's Services, and the second table is by Head of Service.

Subjective Analysis (Type of Expenditure)

	Revised Annual Budget	Actual	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Covid 19 related Costs	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	72,917	73,617	700	3,143	602	(3,045)
Premises	3,968	4,037	69	145	4	(80)
Transport	20,683	19,266	(1,417)	8	(2,092)	667
Supplies and Services	10,211	15,279	5,068	(155)	(75)	5,298
Third Party Payments	32,730	41,747	9,017	-	1,984	7,033
Transfer Payments	1,569	1,874	305	-	8	297
Capital Charges	24,460	27,459	2,999	(6,420)	-	9,419
Central Support and Other Recharges	27,803	25,247	(2,556)	340	-	(2,896)
DRF	-	148	148	-	-	148
Income	(68,399)	(78,905)	(10,506)	123	4,636	(15,265)
TOTAL	125,942	129,769	3,827	(2,816)	5,067	1,576

Analysis by Head of Service Area

	Revised Annual Budget	Actual	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Covid 19 related Costs	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Youth Justice Service	1,299	898	(401)	5	-21	(385)
One Point & Think Family Service	2,604	1,933	(671)	(242)	-31	(398)
Head of Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children	408	324	(84)	1	-	(85)
Aycliffe Site and Price Training	686	(26)	(712)	(712)	-	-
Secure Services	(2,621)	523	3,144	539	2,605	-
Children's and Central Support Recharges	-	149	149	106	-	43
SEND Strategy & Assessment & Provision EHVC	1,485	1,406	(79)	(7)	-	(72)
SEND Inclusion Support EHVC	1,318	1,077	(241)	5	69	(315)
Head of Early Help Inclusion & Vulnerable Children.	5,179	6,284	1,105	(305)	2,622	(1,212)
CYPS Operational Support Service	1,447	1,674	227	185	-	42
Children's Services Operational Support	1,447	1,674	227	185	-	42
Looked After Children and Permanence	8,130	7,069	(1,061)	12	(17)	(1,056)
Looked After Children Resources	34,897	41,713	6,816	196	2084	4,536
Families First North	5,534	5,129	(405)	1	112	(518)
Families First East	3,771	4,048	277	8	113	156
First Contact and Specialist Services	3,937	3,665	(272)	10	-24	(258)
Strategic Manager Families First South	4,275	4,222	(53)	6	201	(260)
Head of Children's Services	7,618	13,719	6,101	6,293	-	(192)
Safeguarding and Professional Practice	1,768	1,777	9	15	-2	(4)
Head of Children's Social Care	69,930	81,342	11,412	6,541	2,467	2,404
Other Services	8,103	5,068	(3,035)	(3,013)	-	(22)
Central Charges (CYPS)	8,103	5,068	(3,035)	(3,013)	-	(22)
Build Schools For The Future	(1,574)	(1,342)	232	232	-	0
Support and Development	(347)	295	642	123	779	(260)
Progression and Learning	(859)	(620)	239	-	239	-
School Places and Admissions	43,546	37,496	(6,050)	(6,587)	(1,212)	1,749
Head of Education	(185)	(1,101)	(916)	(2)	-	(914)
Performance and Standards	701	672	(29)	10	172	(211)
Head of Education & Skills	41,282	35,400	(5,883)	(6,224)	(22)	364
TOTAL	125,942	129,769	3,827	(2,816)	5,067	1,576

Explanation of Reported Variance

- 13 The table below provides a more detailed commentary of the cash limit variances against the revised budget, analysed by Head of Service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. central repairs and maintenance) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Early Help Inclusion & Vulnerable Children.		
Youth Justice Service	The underspend in CDYJS relates to a saving on remand bed nights (£0.262 million) occupied in 20-21 and the balance of the saving (£0.123 million) primarily relates to savings on staff travelling and supplies and services.	(385)
One Point & Think Family Service	The One Point Service reported an underspend of (£0.153 million) on employees principally from savings on vacant posts. There were also underspends on building costs (c£75,000) including minor improvements and utilities, savings on transportation (c£93,000) mainly related to car allowances and a saving of (c£77,000) as a result of less activities in 20-21.	(398)
Head of Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children	The underspend mainly relates to savings on employees (c£22,000). There were also underspends of (c£6,000) on staff travel, (c£15,000) on minor building improvements and (c£42,000) from early savings identified to meet budget pressures in 21-22.	(85)
Aycliffe Site and Price Training	No variance	-
Secure Services	Secure Services showed a breakeven position at the yearend following a transfer of c£0.856 million (primarily because of savings from vacant posts) to the earmarked reserve. The shortfall in income (£2.506 million) from the sale of beds to other local authorities and delays in opening the new Transition Unit (£87,500) were classed as outside the cash limit and Covid 19 related in 20-21.	-
Children's and Central Support Recharges	The overspend relates to the movement in the provision for bad debt in Children's Services.	43
SEND Strategy & Assessment & Provision EHIVC	The underspend relates to savings on supplies and services.	(72)
SEND Inclusion Support EHIVC	The forecast underspend mainly relates to savings on employee costs (£0.113 million) because of vacancies in the Psychology Team, savings on premises costs, staff travelling and supplies and services (c £0.136 million) and additional income (c£66,000)	(315)
		(1,212)
Children's Services Operational Support	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
CYPS Operational Support Service	The forecast net underspend principally relates to a £50,000 Direct Revenue Funding contribution, a £15,000 overspend relating to	42

	Visiting Lecturers /Tuition fees partially offset by -£20,000 additional training income.	
		42
Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Children's Social Care		
Looked After Children and Permanence	The primary reasons for the net underspend relate to an underspend of (c£76,000) from vacant posts, a saving of (c£0.340 million) on children and staff transportation costs and (c£1.040 million) on inter agency adoption fees offset by an overspend of £0.400 million on supported lodging costs for young people not looked after.	(1,056)
Looked After Children Resources	<p>The overspend in LAC Resources principally relates to an overspend of £5.480 million on LAC placements net of Covid 19 expenditure.</p> <p>In addition, there was an overspend of £0.603 million on care and support for children and young people who are already in placements and need some additional support or for children and young people on the edge of care whose families require outreach support during the day.</p> <p>The overspends above are being offset by savings from vacant posts (£0.174 million) and (£0.535 million) from a reduced contract with an external provider for the provision of solo placement children's homes as well as savings (£0.434 million) on children placed under Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders.</p> <p>The balance (c£0.404 million) is attributable to additional grant for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and savings on premises and transportation costs.</p>	4,536
Families First North	The underspend mainly relates to savings on Direct Payments (£0.280 million) and transportation costs (£0.172 million) for staff, children, and young people. The balance of the saving (c£66,000) mostly relates to savings on supplies and services.	(518)
Families First East	The overspend primarily relates to a net overspend on employees including agency staff in the east of the County.	156
First Contact and Specialist Services	The underspend attributable to savings on vacant posts (c£70,000) and savings on premises (c£5,000), transportation costs (c£0.106 million) for staff, children and young people and supplies and services (c£42,000). The balance of the underspend (c£35,000) is from surplus income in the Full Circle team	(258)
Strategic Manager Families First South	The underspend principally relates to savings on car allowances and transportation costs for children and young people.	(260)
Head of Children's Services	The saving is mainly as a result of an underspend on recruitment and retention payments for social workers.	(192)
Safeguarding and Professional Practice	The forecast underspend relates to savings on staff travelling.	(4)
		2,404
Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Central Charges (CYPS)		

Other Services	This underspend is largely attributable to an underspend on staff recharges and a small amount of additional LEA Initiatives income	(22)
		(22)
Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Education and Skills		
Build Schools For The Future-Summ	There is no forecast under or overspend attributable to Building Schools for the Future.	-
Support and Development	The underspend mainly relates to savings of c £469,000 for Early Years Sustainability budget particularly on the sustainability fund and conferences / expert fees / school support partially reduced by the shortfall on SLA/Contributions from Schools income.	(260)
Progression and Learning	There is no forecast connected to Progression and Learning.	-
School Places and Admissions	This overspend is principally relates to an overspend on Home to School Transport and minor overspends on utilities, professional/legal fees, and consultancy fees.	1,749
Head of Education	This forecast underspend is primarily related to the early achievement of 2021/22 MTFP savings (c£880,000), £46,000 additional DSG income partially offset by £12,000 overspend on disposable medical supplies.	(914)
Performance and Standards DG2850	This underspend relates mainly to a shortfall in SLA & school income of £0.244m, offset with savings from travel, subsistence, and supplies of (£0.130m), savings from vacant posts of (£0.140m), (£0.102m) underspend relating to staff recharges, £85,000 underspend on activity expenses / materials and a £33,000 underspend on car allowances.	(211)
		364
Total		1,576

- 14 The council has faced significant additional costs in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak and significant loss of income. All additional costs and loss of income, net of Covid-19 related underspending, is being treated corporately and is therefore excluded from the cash limit.
- 15 The areas of additional cost and loss of income in respect of CYPS are as follows:
- (a) Secure Services – there was a shortfall in income of £2.593 million from the sale of bed nights to other local authorities and from delays in developing and opening the new Step-Down facility. In addition, the Secure Centre has incurred additional staffing and cleaning costs of c£12,000 directly related to COVID;
 - (b) additional staffing costs £0.599 million in Children’s Social Care to recruit newly qualified social workers earlier than planned (due to the early closure of universities where they studied) plus the cost of additional social work staff to assist with caseloads and the extra

costs of cover arrangements for absences in residential children's homes;

- (c) additional care costs £1.992 million in Children's Social Care because of a slowing down in legal proceedings and delays in children leaving placements, additional care costs relating to specific children and an increase in the number of children in care;
- (d) shortfall in income of £69,000 from delays in programmes and the sale of courses provided to schools by the Educational Psychology Service;
- (e) additional costs associated with the printing of COVID-19 related leaflets amounting to £3,000;
- (f) Home to School Transport – there is a shortfall in income of £0.613 million relating to DCC Concessionary Fare income and School Scheme Concessionary Fare income and additional swimming transport costs to be borne by the authority of £30,000;
- (g) DCC Daycare Nurseries – there was a shortfall in income of £0.414 million as a result of less parental income due to parents working from home etc during the pandemic;
- (h) Durham Leadership Centre – there is a shortfall of £0.306 million in lettings, course and catering income at DLC due to employees / other organisations working from home during the pandemic;
- (i) Stanley Teachers Centre – there is a shortfall of £25,000 in lettings income at Stanley Teachers Centre due to employees / other organisations working from home during the pandemic;
- (j) Curriculum and Professional Development –there is a shortfall of £0.199 million in courses and lettings income due to face-to-face courses not taking place during the pandemic;
- (k) Adult Learning Income – there is a shortfall of income relating to adult learning of £0.200 million due to the programme not going ahead during the pandemic;
- (l) Work Related Learning Income – there is a shortfall of income relating to work related learning of £39,000 due to the programme not going ahead during the pandemic;
- (m) Fixed Penalty Notices – there is a shortfall in parental fine income of £80,000 as the Government has prohibited fining parents for pupil's non-attendance at school;

- (n) School Meeting Income – there is a shortfall of income relating to additional school meeting income for the School Governor Support Service of £12,000;
 - (o) Training Course Income – there is a shortfall of income of £85,000 relating to training courses and reduced support provided to schools.
- 16 The major areas of forecast Covid-19 related savings in respect of CYPS are as follows:
- (a) £0.266 million in respect of staff travelling;
 - (b) Home to School Transport – there is a saving of £1.855 million on the provision of Home to School Transport due to little or no provision of transport during the first term of the financial year where supplier relief was granted to transport providers at a reduced rate;
 - (c) savings relating to catering costs of £42,000 for Durham Leadership Centre due to reduced lettings and associated hospitality taking place during the pandemic;
 - (d) additional savings of c. £41,000 relating to savings on advertising of staff, stationery, postage and printing.
- 17 In summary the Children and Young People’s Services service is reporting a cash limit overspend of £1.576 million against a revised budget of £125.942 million which represents a 1.25% overspend.
- 18 The outturn position incorporates the MTFP savings built into the 2020-21 budgets, which for Children and Young People’s Services in total amounted to £50,000.

Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools

- 19 The council currently maintains 197 schools, including nursery, primary, secondary, special schools, and a single Alternative Provision (AP) school. The AP school is for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- 20 The original budget for 2020/21 for these 197 maintained schools was £278 million, funded by income of £71 million, formula funding budget shares of £200 million (from central government funding), and a budgeted £8 million use of accumulated schools’ reserves. The table below summarises the schools’ initial budgets.

	Nursery (£ million)	Alternative Provision (£ million)	Primary (£ million)	Secondary (£ million)	Special (£ million)	Original Annual Budget (£ million)
Employees	4.463	3.387	153.744	34.230	25.824	221.648
Premises	0.275	0.169	9.583	2.515	1.077	13.619
Transport	0.002	0.843	0.413	0.430	0.297	1.984
Supplies and Services	0.525	2.051	29.459	5.938	2.830	40.803
Income	(3.862)	(0.673)	(47.240)	(14.054)	(4.911)	(70.739)
Net expenditure	1.404	5.776	145.958	29.059	25.118	207.315
Budget share	(1.064)	(5.776)	(140.885)	(29.084)	(22.848)	(199.658)
Contribution to/(from) reserves	(0.339)	-	(5.138)	(0.062)	(2.267)	(7.806)
Balance at 31 Mar 20	0.937	-	17.498	(2.426)	2.772	18.780
Balance at 31 Mar 21	0.598	-	12.360	(2.488)	0.505	10.974

- 21 The table below summarises the forecast outturn for these schools at Quarter 3.

	Nursery (£ million)	Alternative Provision (£ million)	Primary (£ million)	Secondary (£ million)	Special (£ million)	Forecast Outturn (£ million)
Employees	4.491	3.102	155.288	34.207	24.978	222.065
Premises	0.337	0.199	10.112	2.600	1.032	14.280
Transport	0.001	0.706	0.322	0.373	0.253	1.655
Supplies and Services	0.416	2.497	27.862	5.856	2.613	39.244
Income	(3.954)	(0.675)	(51.211)	(14.891)	(4.504)	(75.236)
Net expenditure	1.291	5.828	142.373	28.145	24.372	202.009
Budget share	(1.064)	(5.776)	(141.009)	(29.108)	(22.848)	(199.806)
Contribution to/(from) reserves	0.227	0.052	1.364	(0.964)	1.524	2.203
Balance at 31 Mar 20	(0.937)	-	(17.498)	2.426	(2.772)	(18.780)
Balance at 31 Mar 21	(0.710)	0.052	(16.134)	1.462	(1.248)	(16.577)

- 22 The forecasts at Quarter 3 indicated a use of £2.203 million of accumulated schools' reserves in 2020-21. This is significantly less than the budgeted use of balances, which is consistent with the cautious approach adopted by schools over recent years.
- 23 Quarter 3 forecasts were mainly prepared in the autumn term, prior to the unexpected winter lockdown, at a time when there was still uncertainty over a number of areas of income and expenditure, following the summer term lockdown, including school meal contractor costs, home to school transport and future demand for catering and childcare provision. Additionally, schools were not fully aware of the support that would be provided from the DfE and the council in respect of the costs incurred as a result of the

pandemic. Subsequently schools went into a further lockdown for the spring term. Schools central funding remained unaffected through the COVID disruption although the school have cautious in their approach to spending and unanticipated savings in 2020/21. This combined with recently announced additional Covid-related income, has reduced net expenditure to the point where schools have increased their reserves by around £12 million. The table below provides details of the final outturn:

	Nursery (£ million)	Alternative Provision (£ million)	Primary (£ million)	Secondary (£ million)	Special (£ million)	Outturn (£ million)
Employees	4.428	3.506	153.657	33.745	25.336	220.672
Premises	0.274	0.113	9.303	2.321	0.786	12.798
Transport	0.002	0.809	0.143	0.291	0.162	1.406
Supplies and Services	0.389	2.151	24.758	5.605	2.504	35.406
Income	(4.118)	(0.803)	(54.605)	(16.485)	(6.385)	(82.395)
Net expenditure	0.974	5.776	133.256	25.476	22.403	187.886
Budget share	(1.072)	(5.776)	(140.969)	(29.130)	(22.848)	(199.795)
Contribution (to)/from reserves	(0.098)	-	(7.713)	(3.654)	(0.444)	(11.909)
Balance at 31 Mar 20	(0.937)	-	(17.498)	2.426	(2.772)	(18.780)
Balance at 31 Mar 21	(1.034)	-	(25.211)	(1.228)	(3.216)	(30.689)

- 24 The council's S.151 officer gave approval to eight schools to set deficit budgets where planned expenditure during 2020/21 would result in a deficit balance at 31 March 2021 (known as a licensed deficit). Three of these schools have converted to academies during the course of 2020/21 and are excluded from the figures provided. The remaining five schools budgeted positions are summarised in the table below.

School Name	Phase	Balance at 31 March 2020 (£ million)	Planned in-year use of reserves (£ million)	Licensed deficit at 31 March 2021 (£ million)	Actual (Use) Contribution of Reserves (£ million)	Actual 31 March 2021 (£ million)
Ferryhill Station	Primary	(0.023)	(0.009)	(0.032)	(0.022)	(0.045)
St. Thomas More RC	Primary	(0.025)	(0.078)	(0.103)	(0.021)	(0.047)
Wellfield	Secondary	(3.406)	0.222	(3.184)	0.268	(3.139)
The Durham Federation	Secondary	(0.414)	(0.381)	(0.795)	(0.090)	(0.504)
Windlestone	Special	0.326	(0.628)	(0.302)	0.059	0.385

- 25 All but one of these schools have complied with their licensed deficit. The council will continue to support and work with schools causing concern to resolve their financial concerns, and the S.151 officer will consider requests for a licensed deficit for 2021/22.

- 26 During 2020/21 the council wrote-off £4.712 million of accumulated deficits for sponsored academies and other schools where it had agreed to write-off accumulated deficits to assist where deficit balances were a barrier to conversion:

	(£ million)
Bluebell Meadow Primary	0.263
Tanfield School	1.019
Wolsingham School	1.747
Peterlee St Bede's	1.635
The Sacriston Primary	0.048
TOTAL	4.712

Dedicated Schools Grant Centrally Retained Block

- 27 The 2020/21 outturn for centrally retained DSG budgets is an overspend of £2.221 million against a total budget of £61.766 million to year end, which represents a 3.6% overspend.

DSG Block	Budget £ million	Outturn £ million	Over / (Under) Spend £ million
Schools de-delegated	0.562	0.465	(0.097)
High Needs	27.006	29.327	2.321
Early Years	31.489	31.488	(0.001)
Central Schools Services	2.709	2.708	(0.001)
TOTAL	61.766	63.987	2.221

- 28 The overspend position principally relates to spending against the High Needs Block (HNB), which is forecast to overspend by £2.221 million.
- 29 There has been a significant increase in requests for top up funding across all education phases and the data relating to support plans beginning in September 2020 has been reflected in the SEND management system.
- 30 The impact of the outturn on the DSG reserves position is shown in the following table:

DSG Reserves	High Needs Block £ million	Early Years Block £ million	Schools Block £ million	Total DSG £ million
Balance as at 1 April 2019	(2.728)	1.370	1.009	(0.348)
Use [-] / Contribution [+] in 2019/20	(8.598)	(0.095)	(0.365)	(9.058)
Contribution from general reserves	5.600	-	-	5.600
Balance as at 1 April 2020	(5.726)	1.275	0.644	(3.806)
Early Years adjustment 2019/20	-	0.097	-	0.097
Use [-] / Contribution [+] in 2020/21	(2.321)	0.001	0.001	(2.318)
Balance as at 31 March 2021	(8.047)	1.373	0.645	(6.028)

- 31 The overall DSG reserve was in deficit of £3.806 million at the start of the financial year as a result of the accumulated deficit position in relation to the high needs block and the deficit has increased further this year to £6 million.
- 32 A five-year plan for high needs block funding and expenditure, including recovery of the accumulated deficit by the end of the five-year period, was approved by Cabinet in January 2020. An updated version of the plan was reported to Cabinet in July 2020 and April 2021.

Capital Programme

- 33 The capital programme has been revised to consider budget reprofiled from 2019-20 following the final accounts for that year and to take account of any revisions in 2020-21.
- 34 The revised budget is presented below together with actual expenditure in 2020-21.
- 35 Summary financial performance at the end of the financial year is shown below:

CYPS	Original Budget 2020/21 £000	Revised Annual Budget 2020/21 £000	Outturn 2020/21 £000	Variance 2020/21 £000
Education-SCP - LEP	692	229	158	(72)
Children's Services- Children's Care	1,141	761	778	17
Planning & Service Strategy	1,908	2,213	1,031	(1,182)
Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children-One Point	-	90	69	(21)
Early Intervention & Involvement	-	-	-	-
Education-Early Years	110	668	626	(42)
Education-School Devolved Capital	4,277	3,304	2,312	(991)
Education-School Related	23,713	13,221	11,855	(1,366)
Special Provision Capital Fund	-	2,387	338	(2,049)
Children's Services-Secure Services	104	104	190	86
TOTAL	31,945	22,977	17,358	(5,619)

Background Papers

- a) County Council Report (26 February 2020) – Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21.
- b) Cabinet Report (16 September 2020) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21 – Period to 30 June 2020.
- c) Cabinet Report (18 November 2020) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2020/21 – Period to 30 September 2020.
- d) Cabinet Report (17 March 2021) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 202/21 – Period to 30 December 2020.
- e) Cabinet Report (7 July 2021) – 2020/21 Final Outturn for the General Fund and Collection Fund.

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no implications associated with this report.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position.

Consultation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications associated with this report.

Climate Change

There are no implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications associated with this report.

Staffing

There are no implications associated with this report. Any over or under spending against the employee budgets are disclosed within the report.

Accommodation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Risk

The management of risk is intrinsic to good budgetary control. This report forms an important part of the governance arrangements within Children and Young People's Services. Through routine / regular monitoring of budgets and continual re-forecasting to year end the service grouping can ensure that it manages its finances within the cash envelope allocated to it.

Procurement

There are no implications associated with this report.

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2021



Children and Young People's Services – Quarter 1: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22

Report of Paul Darby Corporate Director of Resources (Interim)

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the forecast outturn budget position for Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget for the year, based on the position at the end of June.

Executive summary

- 2 Children and Young People's Services is reporting a cash limit overspend of £4.754 million against a revised budget of £134.112 million which represents a 3.54% overspend.
- 3 In arriving at the cash limit position, Covid-19 related expenditure of £2.061 million, offset by Covid-19 related savings of £0.610 million within CYPS have been excluded from the forecasts. Covid-19 related costs are being treated corporately and offset by Government funding so far as is possible.
- 4 There is an overall anticipated net use of earmarked reserves including DSG and School reserves of c£0.440 million, leading to a revised balance of £41.591 million at the year end, of which £30.087 million are schools related.
- 5 The projected capital outturn is nil variance against a revised budget of £29.376 million

Recommendation(s)

- 6 Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny committee are requested to be requested to:
 - (a) note the Children and Young People's Services overall revenue position.

Background

7 The County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2021/22 at its meeting on 24 February 2021. These budgets have subsequently been revised to take account of transfers to and from reserves, grant additions/reductions, budget transfers between service groupings and budget reprofiling between years. This report covers the financial position for:

- (a) Children and Young People's Services Revenue Budget - £134.112 million (original £133.876 million);
- (b) CYPS – Capital Programme - £29.376 million (original £27.376 million).

8 The original Children and Young People's Services revenue budget has been revised to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as summarised in the table below:

Reason For Adjustment	£000s
Original Budget	133,876
Reason For Adjustment	
Transfer from Contingencies	10
Use of (+)/contribution to Children and Young People's Services reserves (-)	44
Use of (+)/contribution to Corporate reserves (ERVR) (-)	-
Use of (+)/contribution to Other Service reserves (ERVR) (-)	-
Transfer from Other Services	210
Transfer to Other Services	(28)
REVISED BUDGET	134,112

9 The use of / contribution to Children and Young People's Services reserves consists of:

Reserve	£000s
Durham Music Service Reserve	26
Durham Learning Resources Reserve	18
Total	44

10 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2021-22 and show:

- (a) the approved annual budget;

- (b) the actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- (c) the variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- (d) for the Children and Young People's Services revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Revenue Outturn

- 11 The Children and Young People's Services service is reporting a cash limit overspend of £4.754 million against a revised budget of £134.112 million which represents a 3.54% overspend.
- 12 The tables below show the revised annual budget, actual expenditure to 30 June 2021 and the updated forecast of outturn to the year end, including the variance forecast at year end. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense) and shows the combined position for Children and Young People's Services, and the second table is by Head of Service.

Subjective Analysis (Type of Expenditure)

	Revised Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Covid 19 related Costs	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Employees	76,216	18,183	74,480	(1,736)	-	(384)	(1,352)
Premises	4,244	1,040	4,246	2	-	-	2
Transport	22,373	4,754	25,323	2,950	-	-	2,950
Supplies and Services	11,156	3,749	10,451	(705)	-	(24)	(681)
Third Party Payments	38,716	8,079	40,941	2,225	-	-	2,225
Transfer Payments	1,515	379	1,268	(247)	-	-	(247)
Capital	23,579	-	23,579	-	-	-	-
Central Support and Other Recharges	29,633	484	29,534	(99)	-	-	(99)
DRF	311	-	311	-	-	-	-
Income	(73,631)	(25,389)	(69,816)	3,815	0	1,859	1,956
TOTAL	134,112	11,279	140,317	6,205	-	1,451	4,754

Analysis by Head of Service Area

	Revised Annual Budget	YTD Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance	Items Outside Cash Limit	Covid 19 related Costs	Cash Limit Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Youth Justice Service	1,066	236	1,066	-	-	-	-
One Point & Think Family Service	2,039	(7,179)	1,910	(129)	-	-	(129)
Head of Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children	624	53	644	20	-	-	20
Redundant Early Help and Children's Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aycliffe Site & Price Training	689	27	698	9	-	-	9
Secure Services	(1,765)	589	(1,143)	622	-	622	-
Children's and Central Support Recharges	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SEND Strategy & Assessment & Provision EHIVC	1,869	83	1,615	(254)	-	13	(267)
SEND Inclusion Support EHIVC	1,634	29	1,496	(138)	-	12	(150)
Head of Early Help Inclusion & Vulnerable Children.	6,156	(6,162)	6,286	130	-	647	(517)
CYPS Operational Support Service	1,698	385	1,701	3	-	-	3
Children's Services Operational Support	1,698	385	1,701	3	-	-	3
Looked After Children & Permanence	8,107	1,707	7,337	(770)	-	-	(770)
Looked After Children Resources	40,202	10,188	43,797	3,595	-	-	3,595
Families First North	5,654	248	5,122	(532)	-	60	(592)
Families First East	3,852	972	4,115	263	-	60	203
First Contact & Specialist Services	4,046	501	4,010	(36)	-	-	(36)
Strategic Manager Families First South	4,377	1,039	4,417	40	-	80	(40)
Head of Children's Services	17,759	262	17,263	(496)	-	-	(496)
Safeguarding and Professional Practice	1,883	531	1,960	77	-	-	77
Head of Children's Social Care	85,880	15,448	88,021	2,141	-	200	1,941
Redundant Centres CYPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Services	1,031	(1,943)	1,031	-	-	-	-
Central Charges (CYPS)	1,031	(1,943)	1,031	-	-	-	-
Build Schools For The Future-	(1,215)	(1,857)	(1,215)	-	-	-	-
Support and Development	265	(1,086)	1,004	739	-	433	306
Progression and Learning	919	1,610	1,000	81	-	81	-
School Places & Admissions	39,376	5,212	42,353	2,977	-	-	2,977
Head of Education	(819)	103	(825)	(6)	-	-	(6)
Performance and Standards	821	(431)	961	140	-	90	50
Head of Education & Skills	39,347	3,551	43,278	3,931	-	604	3,327
TOTAL	134,112	11,279	140,317	6,205	-	1,451	4,754

13 The table below provides a more detailed commentary of the forecast cash limit variances against the revised budget, analysed by Head of Service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and

excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. central repairs and maintenance) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Early Help Inclusion & Vulnerable Children.		
Youth Justice Service	There is a net nil forecast variance in the Youth Justice Service	-
One Point & Think Family Service	The forecast underspend mainly relates to savings from vacant posts (£54,000) and additional income (£75,000) from the Winter Fund Grant and Teenage Parent Programme	(129)
Head of Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children	The forecast overspend mainly relates to a forecast overspend £55,000 pending confirmation of the allocation of outstanding budget savings offset by savings (£35,000) on staff travelling and support recharges.	20
Redundant Early Help and Children's Services	There is a net nil forecast variance in this area.	-
Aycliffe Site and Price Training	The minor forecast overspend relates to building utility charges.	9
Secure Services	Secure Services are forecasting to breakeven at Q1. The forecast at Q1 assumes the estimated shortfall in income (£1.122 million) from the sale of beds to other local authorities and delays in opening the new Transition Unit (£87,500) will be classed as outside the cash limit as Covid 19 related. The forecast savings on employees etc. (£0.586 million) are being classed as a Covid related underspend in the current financial year.	-
Children's and Central Support Recharges	There is a net nil forecast variance in this area.	-
SEND Strategy & Assessment & Provision EHIVC	The forecast underspend mainly relates to savings from vacant posts in the first 5 months of the financial year following an increase in the budget for additional staffing in this service.	(267)
SEND Inclusion Support EHIVC	The forecast underspend mainly relates to savings from vacant posts in the Education Psychology Team pending appointments following an increase in the budget for additional staffing in this service.	(150)
		(517)
Children's Services Operational Support	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
CYPS Operational Support Service	The minor forecast overspend relates to employees.	3
		3

Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Children's Social Care		
Looked After Children and Permanence	The forecast underspend relates to a forecast saving (£0.690 million) on inter agency adoption fees and the balance of the saving (£80,000) is mainly from savings on staff and young people travel costs.	(770)
Looked After Children Resources	<p>The forecast overspend mainly relates to an overspend of £5.294 million on LAC placements which includes a forecast overspend of £3.941 million on external residential care following an increase in the number of young people with complex needs being placed in this type of provision.</p> <p>The forecast overspend on LAC is being offset by savings (£1.008 million) on children placed under Special Guardianship and Child Arrangement Orders. The balance (£691,000) is mainly from savings on the new Edge of Care home which it is assumed will not open in the current financial year.</p>	3,595
Families First North	The forecast underspend mainly relates to forecast savings on vacant posts (£0.180 million) including newly created posts in the Disability Team, a forecast saving (£0.271 million) on Direct Payments and additional income (£0.341 million) from the CCG for joint funded placements offset by a net overspend of £0.200 million on short breaks.	(592)
Families First East	The forecast overspend mainly relates to the use of agency social work staff.	203
First Contact and Specialist Services	The forecast underspend mainly relates to savings on staff travel costs.	(36)
Strategic Manager Families First South	The forecast saving mainly relates to savings on car allowances and transportation costs for children and young people.	(40)
Head of Children's Services	The forecast savings relate to savings on recruitment and retention allowances (£0.266 million) and savings on agency staff costs (£0.230 million), the budget for agency staff is held at this level but the actual expenditure is currently charged to individual social work teams.	(496)
Safeguarding and Professional Practice	The forecast overspend mainly relates to the costs £93,000 of additional Independent Reviewing Officers and maternity leave cover and training costs £16,000 in the Social Work Academy offset by additional grant income (£32,000) for newly qualified social workers.	77
		1,941
Central Charges (CYPS)	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Other Services	There is no forecast under or overspend attributable to this service.	-

Service Area	Description	Cash Limit Variance £000
Head of Education and Skills		
Build Schools For The Future-Summ	There is no forecast under or overspend attributable to this service.	-
Support and Development	The forecast overspend mainly relates to £0.386 million shortfall in SLA income. There is also a forecast underspend of (£81,000) on employees from savings on vacant posts and other pay budgets.	306
Progression and Learning	There is no forecast under or overspend attributable to this service.	-
School Places and Admissions	The forecast overspend is mainly attributable to a projected overspend of £2.953 million on Home to School Transport, £11,000 of staff compensation costs and a £12,000 overspend which is due to the inability to achieve staff turnover savings.	2,977
Head of Education	The minor forecast underspend relates to employees.	(6)
Performance and Standards	This forecast overspend mainly relates to a £0.314 million shortfall in SLA income. There are also forecast underspends of (£0.137) million on employees from savings on vacant posts and other pay budgets; a (£80,000) underspend relating to staff recharges, a (£22,000) underspend relating to savings on printing and postages budgets and greater than budgeted fees and charges income of (£25,000).	50
		3,327
TOTAL		4,754

- 14 The council has faced significant additional costs in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak and significant loss of income. In many areas the costs and loss of income for the first quarter is known although the likely impact over the remainder of the year is much more uncertain. All additional costs and loss of income, net of Covid-19 related underspending, is being funded corporately and is therefore excluded from the cash limit.
- 15 The areas of forecast additional cost and loss of income in respect of CYPS are as follows:
- (a) Secure Services – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall in income of £1.209 million from the sale of bed nights to other local authorities and from delays in opening the new Step Down facility;
 - (b) additional experienced agency staffing costs £0.200 million in Children’s Social Care in order to meet increase in demand;

- (c) shortfall in income of £10,000 from delays in programmes and the sale of courses provided to schools by the Educational Psychology Service;
- (d) shortfall in income of £12,950 from schools between April and July for advice and guidance from SEND Advisory Officers;
- (e) Daycare Nurseries – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall in income of £0.195m as a result of less parental income due to parents working from home etc during the pandemic;
- (f) Durham Leadership Centre (DLC)– it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of £0.156m in lettings income at DLC due to employees / other organisations continuing working from home during the pandemic;
- (g) Curriculum and Professional Development – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of £0.102m in courses and lettings income due to face to face courses continuing not to take place during the pandemic;
- (h) Fixed Penalty Notices – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall in parental fine income of £48,000 as the Government has prohibited fining parents for pupils’ non-attendance at school;
- (i) Training Course Income – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of income of £42,000 relating to training courses and reduced support provided to schools;
- (j) Adult Learning Income – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of income of £81,000 relating to grant income received for adult learners;
- (k) Education Lettings income at Stanley Teachers Centre – it is forecast that there will be a shortfall of £4,167 relating to room lettings income.

16 The major areas of forecast Covid-19 related savings in respect of CYPS are as follows:

- (a) savings relating to catering costs of £24,000 for Durham Leadership Centre due to less/no lettings taking place during the pandemic;
- (b) £0.586 million from staff vacancies in the Secure Centre.

17 In summary the Children and Young People’s Services service is reporting a cash limit overspend of £4.754 million against a revised budget of £134.112 million which represents a 3.54% overspend.

- 18 The outturn position incorporates the MTFP savings built into the 2021/22 budgets, which for Children and Young People's Services in total amount to £1.265 million.

Dedicated Schools Grant and Schools

- 19 The council currently maintains 192 schools, including nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and a single Alternative Provision (AP) school. The AP school is for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools, or who are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- 20 The original budget for 2021/22 for these 192 maintained schools was £281 million, funded by income of £65 million, budget shares of £208 million (from central government funding), and a budgeted £8 million use of accumulated schools' reserves. The table below summarises the schools' initial budgets.

	Nursery (£ million)	Alternative Provision (£ million)	Primary (£ million)	Secondary (£ million)	Special (£ million)	Original Annual Budget (£ million)
Employees	4.384	3.565	153.042	34.732	26.644	222.368
Premises	0.272	0.167	10.200	2.595	1.127	14.361
Transport	0.001	0.843	0.369	0.450	0.299	1.961
Supplies and Services	0.432	2.054	29.911	6.469	2.833	41.699
Income	(3.804)	(0.853)	(41.814)	(13.209)	(5.020)	(64.700)
Net expenditure	1.285	5.776	151.709	31.037	25.884	215.690
Budget share	(1.072)	(5.776)	(145.670)	(30.672)	(24.74 8)	(207.938)
Contribution to/(from) reserves	(0.213)	-	(6.039)	(0.365)	(1.135)	(7.752)
Balance at 31 Mar 21	(1.034)	-	(24.608)	(1.228)	(3.216)	(30.087)
Balance at 31 Mar 22	(0.822)	-	(18.569)	(0.863)	(2.081)	(22.335)

- 21 Four schools have been given approval to set deficit budgets where planned expenditure during 2021/22 would result in a deficit balance at 31 March 2022 (known as a licensed deficit). The budgets for these schools are summarised in the table below.

School Name	Phase	Deficit at 31 March 2021 (£ million)	Planned in-year use of reserves (£ million)	Planned deficit at 31 March 2022 (£ million)	Licensed deficit (i.e. balance at 31 March 2022) (£ million)
Ferryhill Station	Primary	0.045	0.026	0.019	(0.019)
St. Thomas More RC	Primary	0.047	(0.025)	0.072	(0.065)
Wellfield	Secondary	3.114	0.200	2.914	(2.914)
The Durham Federation	Secondary	0.504	(0.310)	0.814	(0.814)

- 22 St Thomas More is expected to convert to an academy in September and the licensed deficit takes account of the fact that it will not be a maintained school for the whole of the financial year. To facilitate the conversion of this school the council has agreed to write-off the deficit balance at the point of conversion. This will limit the council's exposure to having to write-off a larger deficit in the future if the school was to convert as a sponsored academy.
- 23 The School funding Team will monitor the budget position for these schools and will work with them to identify further savings.

Dedicated Schools Grant Centrally Retained Block

- 24 The quarter one financial forecasts for the centrally retained DSG budgets show an underspend of £1.080 million against a total expenditure budget of £101.056 million to year end, which represents a 1% underspend.

DSG Block	Budgeted Expenditure £ million	Budgeted Income £ million	Forecast Expenditure £ million	Forecast Income £ million	Forecast Over / (Under) Spend £ million
Schools de-delegated	0.352	(0.352)	0.352	(0.352)	-
High Needs	65.743	(65.743)	64.666	(65.743)	(1.080)
Early Years	31.935	(31.935)	31.935	(31.935)	-
Central Schools Services	3.026	(3.026)	3.026	(3.026)	-
TOTAL	101.056	(101.056)	99.976	(101.056)	(1.080)

- 25 The forecast under spend position relates to forecast savings against the High Needs Block (HNB), which is forecast to underspend by £1.080 million.

- 26 This forecast underspend largely relates to placements for post-16 students across the FE and Independent sector.
- 27 All areas of HNB expenditure will be kept under close review in light of continuing COVID-19 issues, with particular attention on the impact of schools returning where it is possible, we will see an upward trend in the volume of requests for additional support for high needs pupils.
- 28 The impact of the current forecast on the DSG reserves position is shown in the following table:

DSG Reserves	High Needs Block (Unusable Reserve) £ million	Early Years Block £ million	Schools Block £ million	Total DSG £ million
Balance as at 1 April 2020	(5.726)	1.275	0.644	(3.806)
Early Years adjustment 2019/20	-	0.097	-	0.097
Use [-] / Contribution [+] in 2020/21	(2.321)	0.003	2.105	(0.213)
Balance as at 1 April 2021	(8.047)	1.375	2.749	(3.923)
Use [-] / Contribution [+] in 2021/22	1.080	-	-	1.080
Forecast balance as at 1 April 2022	(6.967)	1.375	2.749	(2.843)

- 29 The overall DSG reserve was in deficit of £3.923 million at the start of the financial year as a result of the accumulated deficit position in relation to the high needs block. The High Needs deficit is set to reduce this financial year.
- 30 A five-year plan for high needs block funding and expenditure, including recovery of the accumulated deficit by the end of the five-year period, was approved by Cabinet in January 2020. An updated version of the plan was reported to Cabinet in July 2020.
- 31 Following a funding announcement from Government on 21 July 2021, further information is now available about HNB funding levels in 2022/23. The provisional position for Durham is better than forecast in the previous version of the five-year plan and the process of updating the plan to reflect this change, as well as the revised forecast outturn position for 21/22, is underway.

Capital Programme

- 32 The capital programme has been revised to take into account budget reprofiled from 2020-21 following the final accounts for that year and to take account of any revisions in the current year.

- 33 The revised budget is presented below together with actual expenditure to date and the forecast outturn. The budget may be subsequently amended with approval from MOWG.

Summary financial performance to the end of Qtr 1 is shown below

CYPS - Summary Point	Original 2021-22 Budget	Revised 2021-22 Budget	Actual	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CYPS - Education-SCP - LEP	47	47	2	47	-
CYPS – Children’s Services- Children’s Care	1,340	1,340	6	1,340	-
CYPS – Children’s Services - Planning & Service Strategy DUZ0053	1,616	1,616	207	1,616	-
CYPS - Education-Early Years	115	115	32	115	-
CYPS - Education-School Devolved Capital	3,944	3,944	378	3,944	-
CYPS - Education-School Related	17,768	17,768	1,232	17,768	-
CYPS – Children’s Services- Secure Services	121	121	15	121	-
Early Help Inclusion and Vulnerable Children – One Point	21	21	30	21	-
CYPS - SEN Capital	4,404	4,404	457	4,404	-
	29,376	29,376	2,359	29,376	-

Background Papers

- a) Cabinet report 15 September 2021 – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/2022 – period to 30 June 2021.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

There are no implications associated with this report.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital projected outturn position.

Consultation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no implications associated with this report.

Climate Change

There are no implications associated with this report.

Human Rights

There are no implications associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

There are no implications associated with this report.

Staffing

There are no implications associated with this report. Any over or under spending against the employee budgets are disclosed within the report.

Accommodation

There are no implications associated with this report.

Risk

The management of risk is intrinsic to good budgetary control. This report forms an important part of the governance arrangements within Children and Young People's Services. Through routine / regular monitoring of budgets and continual re-forecasting to year end the service grouping can ensure that it manages its finances within the cash envelope allocated to it.

Procurement

There are no implications associated with this report

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