

Health & Wellbeing Board

21 January 2016

Children's Services Update



Report of Carole Payne, Head of Children's Services, Children and Adults Services, Durham County Council

Purpose of the Report

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

Background

- 2 A report was presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board on 14 May 2015 providing information on the national and local developments which support early intervention and prevention for effective and rigorous protection of children and young people.
- 3 The report provided the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the Children's inspection regime, significant areas of focus and an update on the transformation journey that has been undertaken in Children's Services in Durham.

National Context

Single Inspection Framework (SIF)

- 4 In late 2013, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) introduced a new Single Inspection Framework (SIF) for Children's Services, which covers children in need of help and protection, services for looked after children and care leavers, and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- 5 The SIF operates on a three-yearly cycle and the 'overall effectiveness' is judged as either outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate, as will each of the following judgements this is derived from:
 - The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection.
 - The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence, including two graded judgements.
 - Adoption
 - The experiences and progress of care leavers
 - Leadership, management and governance.

- 6 Benchmarking and learning from other Local Authorities who have already been subject to inspection by Ofsted under this framework continues in the service. To date, 74 Local Authorities have been inspected and had reports published. Of these, 17 (23%) have received an overall effectiveness judgement of 'good'. Over three-quarters are rated below Ofsted's benchmark of 'good', with 38 (51%) judged to 'require improvement' and 19 (26%) as 'inadequate'. No local authorities have been judged as 'outstanding' under the SIF.
- 7 With regard to reviews of the LSCBs in 74 of the local authorities inspected under SIF, 22 have been judged to be 'good' (30%), 39 (53%) as 'requires improvement' and 13 (17%) as 'inadequate'. No LSCBs have been judged to be 'outstanding' under the SIF.
- 8 Ofsted announced on 26 February 2015, that the proposed integrated inspection framework would not be implemented from April 2015, instead 'joint' inspections of Children's Services will begin in the autumn. The inspections will have a tight focus on how well agencies work together to protect children and address specific areas of concern, such as sexual exploitation of children and young people. It is anticipated that six inspections will take place before March 2016.
- 9 [Ofsted](#), the [Care Quality Commission](#) as well as [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary](#) and [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation](#) released a consultation on the framework for joint area inspections on 15 July 2015; the outcome of the consultation is awaited.

Children's Centre inspections

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

Child Protection Taskforce

- 13 In June 2015 the Prime Minister announced a new taskforce to drive forward fundamental reforms to transform child protection.
- 14 Chaired by the Secretary of State for Education the taskforce will focus on transforming social work and children's services, improving inspection and tackling child sexual exploitation. It will join the 10 other implementation taskforces, including the [digital taskforce](#), already established across government to monitor and drive delivery of the government's cross-cutting priorities.
- 15 The taskforce's terms of reference are to drive improvements in the protection of vulnerable children by extending and accelerating reforms to the quality of children's social work practice and leadership; promoting innovative models of delivery; and overhauling the way that police, social services and other agencies work together locally.

Failing Children's Services in local authorities

- 16 In December 2015 the Prime Minister announced reforms which will mean poorly performing children's services will be subject to a new service leader if they do not improve.
- 17 In a formalised academy-style system, sharper triggers will be put in place so an emergency Ofsted inspection can be ordered where there are concerns about an authority's performance. If a local authority's children's service fails to improve within six months of their Ofsted inspection, a new service leader (Commissioner) will be put in place. High-performing local authorities, experts in child protection and charities will be brought in to turn the children's service around.

Youth Justice

- 18 The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice announced the national review of the Youth Justice System, on 11 September 2015. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has welcomed the review.
- 19 The review will look at evidence, current practice and governance arrangements in preventing youth crime and rehabilitating young people who offend and explore how the youth justice system can most effectively interact with wider partner services for children and young people. The results of the review will be reported in summer 2016.
- 20 Following an announcement by the Secretary of State for Justice, the YJB issued a 10.6% in year cut to the Youth Justice grant to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) was confirmed in November.

Regional Context

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

22 Training

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

24 Discussions are underway with all 12 local authorities and the universities in the region (plus York University) about the future of social work training within the region in the context of the Teaching Partnerships paper published by the Department for Education. Durham County Council is heavily involved in the development of new models for accreditation of social workers.

Regional Adoption agencies

25 In June, 2015 the Department of Education set out proposals to move to regional adoption agencies to help speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children; improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reduce costs.

26 The Government are providing £4.5m of support to early adopters of regional adoption agencies to accelerate their development and early implementation in 2015-16. The overall aim of this funding is to stimulate initial change in the sector. Therefore, the Government are looking to work with local authorities, voluntary adoption agencies and other organisations who wish to redesign radically their approach to adoption in 2015/16. Decisions on funding for 2016-17 and beyond will be subject to the Spending Review.

27 A Regional Adoption Board chaired by the Stockton Director of Children's Services is leading this work.

Local Context

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 28 The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has prioritised work on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since 2011. Child Sexual Exploitation was identified as a strategic policing requirement in March 2015. CSE is also a community safety priority as outlined in Louise Casey's inspection report of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
- 29 The LSCB Missing and Exploited Sub-Group (MEG) carried out an analysis of Child Sexual Exploitation in County Durham in 2014 and this has recently been updated to cover the period April 2014 to March 2015. The analysis found that:
- Online CSE continues as the most common model of sexual exploitation. The prevalence of this has increased (from 25% to 37%).
 - There were 230 young people identified as at risk of CSE.
 - Little community intelligence is being gathered or submitted.
 - The online model of CSE continues to be the most common.
 - Most victims are female with the most common age being between 13-16 years.
 - Most common nationality of perpetrators is British, people from the Middle East make up only 3%.
 - Perpetrators of online CSE can reside anywhere in the world and can be difficult to identify and convict. Online vigilantes are an emerging trend identified in the data.
- 30 Seen in historical operations into CSE, 'Position of Trust' is a newly considered model which was not presented in previous profiles. This involves a perpetrator employed or volunteering in a position where the young person would be expected to trust that person who then goes on to sexually exploit the victim.
- 31 There are strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. LSCB audits for both CSE and missing children incidents have highlighted a range of risks associated with those young people who go missing including sexual exploitation, mental health, alcohol or drugs. The offender profile is one of 'street grooming' and use of social media to exploit children.
- 32 The LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and action plan 2014-2017 outlines the key actions to be progressed to achieve the strategic aims of:
- Prevent – making it more difficult to exploit children
 - Protect – identifying and safeguarding children who are at risk
 - Pursue – the offenders, disrupt and where possible prosecute their activity

- 33 Progress against actions since the last report includes:
- Intervene to Protect a Child' (IPC) training - a new and proactive training tactic to identify and disrupt offenders.
 - Developing stronger relationships with communities through Area Action Partnerships (AAP), raising awareness of CSE and how to report concerns or intelligence of CSE.
 - Working with primary and secondary schools to advise on internet eSafety, utilising Sexual Relationships Education (SRE) to deliver messages on consent and healthy relationships and through the ChildLine Schools Service using workshops and assemblies delivered by specialist trained volunteers, to educate primary school children, aged nine to 11 years old to understand abuse and help them stay safe.
 - Widening our CSE training and awareness to those services not traditionally associated with safeguarding.
- 34 This has led to a programme of voluntary training for taxi drivers with over 600 taxi drivers trained and further sessions planned for later in the year. The sessions have been delivered by police and LSCB trainers with a CSE expert on hand at each session. The sessions have been coordinated by the LSCB Business Unit and Environment Health and Consumer Protection (EHCP). The sessions have also enabled police to gain intelligence from taxi drivers prompted by the training received.
- 35 The MEG plan to continue the training in 2016 and to widen the invitation to other external services such as Hotels, Take Away outlets, Off-licence trade and internally to staff such as Waste and Recycle Teams, Environmental Services, and Neighbourhood Wardens.
- 36 The 'ERASE' brand (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) has been created to tackle child sexual exploitation (ERASE offers parents and carers advice on how to communicate with their children about who they speak to on-line and off-line)
- 37 A dedicated multi-agency ERASE team was launched in August 2015 focusing on early identification of young people at risk and suspected offenders to prevent further missing / absent episodes and further improve our response to child sexual exploitation.
- 38 The ERASE website was launched in November 2015. The front page has links for younger children, older children, parents/carers and professionals and also links to the LSCB website.
- 39 A CSE Disruption Toolkit has also been developed to enable practitioners to highlight to the police risk factor behaviour around potential perpetrators. The use of this toolkit continues to be promoted in presentations and awareness raising events.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 40 Launched on 2nd March 2015 the MASH consists of a multi-disciplinary team which works together as part of the First Contact Service to screen, gather, analyse and share information relating to concerns about children in County Durham who may be at risk of harm, or who need support services. The team also has access to information via single point of access (SPOC) across a range of organisations who specialise in mental health (Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust) and drugs and alcohol (through the new provider, Lifeline).
- 41 The MASH team is made up of a MASH Co-ordinator, Social Workers and School Attendance Enforcement Officer (from Children's Services), a Detective Sergeant and Detective Constable, a Senior Safeguarding Nurse and a Harbour Domestic Abuse Service Co-coordinator.
- 42 Since their launch the MASH has dealt with 3,623 concerns about children and young people. Further achievements include:
- Information shared at the point of referral has led to quicker and better informed decisions about risk.
 - Information is more easily accessible and has resulted in more timely referrals to the right services
 - A collective understanding of thresholds has improved consistency of families referred to the appropriate service.

Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

- 43 Durham was successful in two bids to the Children's Social Care Innovation Fund.
- 44 The first was for £496,000 for a therapeutic support programme at Aycliffe secure centre for children that have been sexually exploited. This offers targeted support in helping young people deal with trauma and in making the transition from the secure setting into more independent living. The Durham Unit team became operational from 18 May 2015 and the service is being delivered in partnership with Barnardos and Odysseus Mentoring Project.
- 45 The funding allows for a three pronged approach:
- Therapeutic and mentoring services are being offered within a secure unit for a minimum of 3 months and then up to 3 months as part of resettlement into the community (up to 18 months for the mentoring services). A step down facility is available as part of the transition.
 - New training programme for Aycliffe staff in CSE and trauma to prioritise more effective interventions.
 - Clinical supervision for staff to embed the training and provide increased awareness and learning so that a therapeutic culture is developed on the unit.

- 46 The Durham Unit is 6 months into its support programme and is awaiting its midway evaluation report, which will be carried out by Oxford University in November 2015.
- 47 The second successful bid was for £3.26 million to deliver on a large scale a new approach to social work and to work with families, building on the learning from past initiatives in Durham and elsewhere.
- 48 Progress on the main innovative elements of Durham's programme are as follows:
- **Creation of Families First Teams** - all three first stage integrated early help and social work teams achieved 'go-live' week commencing 20th July 2015, with the teams adopting flexible ways of working.
 - **Third sector alliances have been strengthened** with positive regional interest in Durham's developments. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been finalised, which underpins the voluntary community sector (VCS) Alliance Model, the model provides long-term and sustainable help and support for children, young people and families.
 - **An intensive workforce development programme has commenced** - all staff in stage 1 teams received induction training prior to go-live with further staff events held in September and November 2015. The pilot reflective practice model which promotes integrated working has been agreed and commenced in November 2015.
 - **Enhanced service user engagement** is a key feature of the Innovations Programme and ongoing staff and partner engagement and briefings held regularly. Stage 1 Go Live area was launched on 29th September 2015 at Shotton Hall Conference Centre. The event was opened by Councillor Tracie Smith, Cabinet Support Member for Children and Young People's Services and was well attended with over 180 participants from across all partnership agencies.
- 49 The evaluation of the programme is ongoing and an interim report has been produced and submitted to the Department for Education (DfE). A Service User Survey and Staff Survey took place during October to November 2015 and the results are awaited. Dedicated research staff have been appointed and trained to progress future evaluation of the programme
- 50 Work is on target with phased implementation of the remaining seven Families First teams between January and February 2016.

Stronger Families

- 51 Durham successfully implemented and delivered Phase 1 and met its full target of 'turning around' 1,320 families by March 2015.
- 52 Following Durham's invitation in August 2014 to be one of the of the Troubled Families programme's Early Starters Durham will work with 4,330 families and deliver Phase 2 over a 5 year time period.

- 53 This new phase includes much broader eligibility criteria enabling the majority of families worked with by social care services to be part of the programme and to achieve results payments. There is a very clear need to shift our focus to ensuring families are worked with in such a way that supports significant and sustained change.
- 54 All programmes are required to develop a local Family Outcome Framework (FOF), describing the programme's identification criteria and outcomes.
- 55 The key actions for phase 2 include:
- Embedding the use of the FOF and development of outcome-focused care plans.
 - Coordination of the workforce development with the Service Transformation and Innovations Programme and LSCB.
 - A range of ICT developments to help manage the information requirements of the expanded programme, including Family Progress Data and outcomes evidence collection for payment-by-results.
 - Revise the payment-by-result methodology and grant terms of reference with our Internal Audit service.
 - Carry out a 'refresh' of the cost saving calculator data once data is available and investigate the cases where there is a particular increase in the costs associated with fostering and residential care.
- 56 The Stronger Families programme has informed the development of the Children's Services Innovations programme. Stronger Families will cease to be identifiable as a separate programme, and will become the core of new Families First teams. This will make best use of the learning and expertise built during the programme, but also the resources generated through the programme, in order to achieve improved outcomes for all vulnerable families in County Durham.

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

- 57 A peer review of County Durham (CDYOS) took place in October 2015 following a request by the Senior Leadership Team and approval by the Chair of the Management Board in late 2014.
- 58 Youth Justice Peer Reviews are part of the sector-led improvement process and are designed to be collaborative an opportunity at no cost for CDYOS and the Management Board to gain a fresh perspective on the service from critical friends.

- 59 The scope of the peer review and specific key lines of enquiry (KLOE) were agreed at a scoping meeting in August 2015. The focus of the review was to examine how CDYOS, with its partners, is delivering youth justice services. The overarching aim was to review the developments put in place since the Short Quality Screening (SQS) inspection (July 2014) and the effectiveness of the restructure (February 2014). Specific KLOEs included reviewing restorative justice practice and the young person's pathway through the service.
- 60 The findings of the review are positive and the Management Board will oversee an action plan as part of the Service Improvement Plan.
- 61 Additionally CDYOS gave evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Speech and Language Difficulties on 19 October 2015. The CDYOS presentation showcased the progress and key learning from the Service's Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Strategy, which commenced in March 2014.

Performance

- 62 Improvement in performance is shown across a range of key indicators. As at the end of September 2015 reductions and favourable benchmarking comparison are shown in the number and rate of children in need (339.8 per 10,000) and the number and rate of children whose needs are met through a Child Protection Plan (33.9 per 10,000).
- 63 The rate of children in need re-referrals is also reducing, with 21.8% referred again within 12 months of a previous referral, and with 9.7% of children requiring a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the last one (April – September 2015).
- 64 As at end of September 2015, a high proportion of our looked after children are in foster care, (82.3%) with only 8.5% in residential care. Provisional data as at 31st March 2015 shows 90.6% of our children are placed within 20 miles of home; 78.6% within the boundaries of County Durham, a much better rate than national levels.
- 65 There has been improvement in the timescales for the average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (for those who have been adopted) from 533 days in 2013/14 to 449 days for 2014/15. 100% of children are placed for adoption in 9 months, compared to the national average of 17 months.
- 66 The work and performance outlined above has been achieved through continued budgetary pressures, the demands of possible inspection and whilst austerity measures continue. Children's Services has embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation whilst ensuring existing services continue to deliver good services to children and their families.

Recommendations

67 The Health & Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

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

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

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

Staffing

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

Risk

Changes need to be carefully managed to ensure the protection of children remains robust and the system is not de-stabilised during transition.

Risk to the safety of children and young people of failure to prevent CSE.

Major reputational risk to the Council of failure to prevent and address CSE.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

The needs of vulnerable children and families will be better met through implementation of these changes

Accommodation

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

Crime and Disorder

Effective partnership working through the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human Rights

None

Consultation

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

Procurement

None at this stage

Disability Issues

None at this stage

Legal Implications

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