

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1) on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> March , 2018 at 5.30 p.m.**

#### **Membership**

Cllr Bell, Elliott, Foster, Francis (Vice-Chairman), Hunt, Jackson, F. Miller, O'Neil, Scullion, P. Smith (Chairman), Stewart and Tye

Coopted Members – Mrs A Blakey and Mr S Williamson

ITEM		PAGE
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 (copy attached)</b>	1
3.	<b>Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)</b>	-
	<b>Part A – Cabinet Referrals and Responses</b>	
	No Items	
	<b>Part B – Scrutiny Business</b>	
4.	<b>Universal Credit Potential Risks and Mitigations</b>	10
	Report of the Strategic Advice Services Manager (copy attached)	

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Information contained in this agenda can be made available in other languages and formats on request

5.	<b>Together for Children Performance Update</b>	20
	Report of the Director of Children's Services (copy attached)	
6.	<b>Early Help Update</b>	37
	Report of the Director of Children's Services (copy attached)	
7.	<b>Connexions Update</b>	42
	Report of the Director of Children's Services (copy attached)	
8.	<b>Annual Work Programme 2017-18</b>	45
	Report of the Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships (copy attached)	
9.	<b>Notice of Key Decisions</b>	48
	Report of the Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships (copy attached)	

E. WAUGH,  
Head of Law and Governance,  
Civic Centre,  
SUNDERLAND.

21<sup>st</sup> February, 2018

**At a meeting of the CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1 of the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY, 2018 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor P. Smith in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Foster, Francis, Hunt, Jackson, O'Neil, Scullion and Tye

**Also in attendance:-**

Councillor Dianne Snowdon, Vice Chairman, Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

Mrs. Charlotte Burnham, Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships, Sunderland City Council

Mr. Richard Cullen, Support and Intervention Officer – Secondary, Together for Children

Mr. James Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Mr. Luke Hall, Sunderland Youth Parliament

Mrs. Rhiannon Hood, Assistant Head of Law and Governance, Sunderland City Council

Mrs. Irene Lucas CBE, Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council

Mr. Simon Marshall, Director of Education, Together for Children

Ms. Linda Mason, Youth Offending Service, Together for Children

Mr. Thomas Newton, Sunderland Youth Parliament

Ms. Gillian Robinson, Area Coordinator, Sunderland City Council

Ms. Joanne Stewart, Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Elliott, F. Miller, Stewart and N. Wright and on behalf of Ms. A. Blakey and Mr. S. Williamson.

**Together for Children – Update – Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council**

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council to the meeting who was in attendance to discuss any issues or areas of concern Members had raised in relation to the Together for Children Company and the recruitment process for the new Chief Executive following the resignation of Mr. Alex Hopkins.

In relation to questions from Members around their involvement in the recruitment process of the new Chief Executive of Together for Children, Ms. Lucas advised that she had circulated an email to all Councillors on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2017, advising that under the conditions of the contract with Together for Children and agreement with the Department of Education a tripartite recruitment process involving representation from the three organisations would take place. This commenced in January 2018. The advert for the position was due to be published the following week with a closing

date for applications of the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2018, when applicants would be shortlisted and as previously, there would be involvement with a number of stakeholder groups including elected members.

Councillor Bell raised the issue of the social work team and their workloads and commented that upon the roll out of Universal Credit in Sunderland, which was expected in June/July, 2018, this would only see further pressures on their workloads as problems were exacerbated with families. The Chief Executive advised that she had seen a very informative presentation which had been given by Ms. Joan Reed, Strategic Advice Services Manager, on the impact and mitigations of the welfare reform and how the roll out of Universal Credit could impact upon families and children in the city, which was now expected May-July. She commented that it may be beneficial for Ms. Reed to attend a future meeting of the Committee with the presentation so that Members may understand the implications further.

In relation to comments made by Members around the need and importance for more robust scrutiny of the information presented to them from Together for Children, the Chief Executive advised that she had copies of the 'Guide to Governance and Contractual Arrangements between Sunderland City Council and Together for Children' to circulate to Members which was quite a lengthy document setting out the governance and assurance arrangements and showing how the company were held to account through a suite of key performance indicators.

The Chief Executive took the Committee through the political accountability flowchart which showed how the assurance and performance information was shared and scrutinised through a number of key stakeholder groups including this Committee but explained that this was only the first year of the company having been in existence and nothing was cast in stone as to how it was best to report to Members. Members were also reminded that at any point elected Members could raise concerns regarding the transferred functions and services through the Lead Member or with Together for Children through an identified email address.

When asked if the Chief Executive could be confident that Together for Children were protecting the children of Sunderland, the Chief Executive commented that if the Committee were to look at the situation prior to the commencement of the company then it could be seen that there was a clear demonstration of improvement made in sixteen of the twenty key performance indicators. Members were advised that nine of the performance measures which were agreed the company would be measured by were considered regularly by the Operational Commissioning Group and the Performance Clinics and she provided a table which set out the position against those performance measures.

The Chief Executive advised that there had been six independent Ofsted Monitoring Visits between August, 2016 and January, 2018, looking at different elements of the service on each occasion and following each visit feedback had been that improvements were being steadily made in those areas. Overall, the position was improving and the monitoring visits were independent assessments that this was the ongoing trend.

Councillor Francis referred to the many tiers of scrutiny and review that Together for Children faced and asked if this was made clear to the Chief Executive of the company, both in the past and would it be with future applicants. The Chief

Executive advised that it was vitally important that the Chief Executive of Together for Children was experienced in being involved in the scrutiny process and understood the perspective that it could bring to service provision and whether outcomes were inspiring for our children. If lack of involvement with scrutiny was an issue of concern for Members then this could be a key question area for challenge as part of the interview process.

Councillor Tye commented that it was fundamentally key that the new appointment to the Chief Executive position understood the important role that the scrutiny function played as the Committee had found it frustrating in the past when continually asking for information and then items being deferred to come back to the Committee but then never being submitted. As Members they were being advised of how operational matters were working in reality from professionals in their field but when approaching Officers from Together for Children it was felt that they were not being provided with the information they were requesting and this had been one of the fundamental issues from the initial commencement of the Together for Children company and the previous Chief Executive.

The Chief Executive stated that she felt scrutiny and challenge played a key role in continuing to drive forward improvements to services and outcomes in Together for Children. There were good signs of improvements being made and everyone acknowledged that it would not be an easy journey and that it would be a lengthy process but that it was about getting services right for the children of the city and not just finding a quick fix. There were encouraging signs and it was expected that these would continue but it was paramount that the right support was in place.

Councillor Bell advised that there were pressures being placed on all services and the Council could not control some of these due to cuts in benefits for families and people who did not understand welfare rights or the language being used requiring extra help who were then turning to the Council to help support them. He felt that it would be beneficial for all Members of the Council to receive the presentation on the impact of imminent changes to the welfare system and the Chief Executive agreed that it may be appropriate to have a briefing held before a future meeting of the full Council. She advised she would speak with Councillor Bell directly to ensure the presentation covered all of the points that were needed.

Members raised concerns around the provision of youth services within the city and acknowledged that although the Council no longer provided funding for commissioned youth provision, the provision of youth services was still a topic for discussion. Sunderland had a very positive youth service provision and youth and drug and alcohol project (YDAP) and why wasn't the good work around the city being recognised and reported.

The Chief Executive advised that it had not been easy for the Council over recent years due to the extreme budget cuts that had had to be made and ultimately decisions had had to be made which had seen some fantastic services no longer being able to be provided by the Council. The Council continued to strive to produce a balanced budget whilst managing to address some of those problems which were of the biggest concerns to the wider community.

In closing, the Chief Executive thanked the Committee for the opportunity to attend and have discussions with them and it was:-

1. RESOLVED that:-

- i) The information provided within the Together for Children update of the Chief Executive be received and noted; and
- ii) The Strategic Advice Services Manager be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to provide and update on the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit on families in the city;
- iii) Copies of the Governance and Contractual Arrangements document and the Performance Monitoring Information as provided by the Chief Executive be circulated to Members of the Committee;
- iv) The new Chief Executive of Together for Children be advised of the importance of working with the scrutiny function be highlighted during the interview process for candidates and once appointed be introduced to the Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible; and
- v) Arrangements be made for all Members to receive a briefing on the implications of changes to welfare benefits prior to a future meeting of the full Council.

**Minutes of the last ordinary meetings of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 and 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018**

Subject to the references to 'Sir Ennals' being amended to 'Sir Paul Ennals' throughout the minute of 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meetings of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2017 and 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 (copy circulated), be deferred to the next meeting.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**Youth Justice Plan**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought the advice and consideration of the Committee on a report which was considered by Cabinet on 10 January, 2018 on the Youth Justice Plan 2017/2018.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Linda Mason, Youth Offending Service, presented the report outlining the background, purpose and intentions of the Plan. The Committee were advised that Cabinet had agreed at its meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January to note the contents of the report and the Youth Justice Plan 2017/2018 and agreed that it be referred to this Committee for further advice and consideration. In addition, the Cabinet gave delegated authority to the Director of Children's Service, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to accept any amendments to the plan prior to it being referred to Council for final approval.

Councillor Francis referred to paragraph 4.3 of the Cabinet report and asked if the Officer could explain how restorative justice worked and how its performance could

be measured. Ms. Mason advised that it could not be a distinctive measured outcome due to the very nature of restorative justice and explained to the Committee that there were a number of types of actions which could be undertaken; for example it could be that the young offender would contact victims of their offences and offer them the opportunity to engage with themselves using restorative justice interventions which were based on their individual wishes. This could then take the form of a range of actions; for example, it could be offering to meet with the victim to allow them to voice their feelings or having the young offender write a letter of apology to the victim. If the offence was against a corporate business rather than an individual the offender could offer to carry out repairs on any physical damage to assets they may have caused.

The Officer advised that there were very different measures of success in relation to restorative justice; they could ask the victim if they were satisfied following interventions, or they could measure if they felt that the young offender had learned lessons and understood the impact of their actions and the offence. There had been a lot of research undertaken around the subject and it was felt that face to face mediation between the victim and the offender gave victims a feeling of satisfaction which they would measure as being a success.

Councillor Tye noted that since June, 2016 the Chairman of the Youth Offending Service Board had been the Chief Executive of Together for Children and asked how many meetings of the Board he had attended, or if he had missed any of them and was informed by the Officer that she would have to check previous minutes of the meetings, but that from memory she could only remember him missing a single meeting.

Councillor Smith referred to the staff headcount of the YOS having further reduced and asked how the service were managing following these reductions. Ms. Mason explained that a number of staff had left but that the service maintained its core staffing resources in relation to the full-time staff and multi-agency secondees and was therefore compliant with the minimum staffing requirements. She explained that it could be very difficult and very challenging and that resources were tight but that they managed to continue to provide services and drive forward improvements.

In relation to a further question from Councillor Smith as to how partnership working was going with the current team, Ms. Mason advised that the multi-agency board remains an identified significant partnership for the city and partnership working continued to strengthen. She explained that a lot of work had been undertaken over the last five to six months between Early Help, the Council and Northumbria Police to help identify and address young people at the risk of offending earlier, offering a more holistic offer to young people and it was felt overall that partnership working was much better and continuing to improve.

Councillor Hunt referred to the excellent performance of Sunderland YOS and commented that it would be nice in future to have data included within the report so that they could clearly identify and analyse how and where improvements had been made year on year.

Mr Newton referred to the YOS continuing to push ahead with innovative and creative practices and asked for examples of this. Ms. Mason advised that the YOS had to continue to work with partners to try and reduce the numbers of young people who were offending for the first time and entering their service so a lot of the

practices they undertook were about how best to engage with those young people at risk of offending. They were hoping to look to improve practices in relation to offending within other settings, such as schools, very much in a similar way to that which they had done in Children's Homes. The Youth Justice Board continues to promote good practice of what works in Sunderland and to learn from other areas around the country.

In response to a question from Councillor Francis around the newly developed Early Help offer, Ms. Mason advised that the YOS continued to work with a 'whole family' approach. The newly developed joined up approach across Early Help to consider what the appropriate services were to work with young people and families was being received positively. She gave the Committee the example that should Northumbria Police have to make overnight arrangements for a young person, that young person would then be allocated to a YOS member of staff who would look to make contact with the family as soon as possible. The reason would be to talk about doing a brief assessment of any needs the young person or family may have and to date the take up by families had been very good. It was felt that this was down to the quick response times, which was ensuring that initial contact was being made with the family within 24 hours of the young person having been released. As the family were contacted quickly staff had found that they were much more receptive to getting involved and accessing the early intervention services. This was something the YOS and partners were keen to continue.

Members having no further questions and having fully considered the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the Committee welcomed the Youth Justice Plan 2017/2018 and supported it being referred to Council for final approval.

### **Overall School Performance Data for the 2016/2017 Academic Year**

The Director of Education submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated the Committee on the verified overall school performance data for the academic year 2016-2017.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Simon Marshall, Director of Education and Mr. Richard Cullen, Support and Intervention Officer, took Members through the report advising that the key messages from the information provided was that the primary schools in Sunderland continued to do very well and were ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the country, which was testament to the hard work and commitment of the schools and staff. There was still work to be undertaken with secondary partners to continue to try and improve outcomes as could be seen by the Committee through the data set out within the report.

Councillor Tye commented that the content of the report was set out very well for Members and stated that it would be interesting to read the data within this report alongside that of the exclusions report which had been considered at a previous meeting of the Committee to see whether those schools that had good outcomes also had high levels of permanent exclusions. He commented that central government having brought in a completely new revised method of grading GCSE English and Maths and the introduction of the English Baccalaureate was completely unfair on young people and threw their lives into complete turmoil having already set



out on preparing for examinations and grading under a different curriculum. He commended the work the service were doing in trying to improve the current position and outcomes of the secondary schools and academies and hoped that improvements would be made; but commented that permanently excluding pupils should not be used as a way of getting the performance levels up if this was the case.

Mr. Cullen advised that secondary Head Teachers were now working more closely together, holding monthly meetings to information share and advise each other of examples of good practice and performance. Mr. Marshall informed Members that they had worked really hard to get these meetings up and running and now every secondary Head Teacher was attending and happy to share clear performance data from their schools and Officers would continue to support colleagues in this role.

Councillor Tye also commented that they had to try and address top ranked, good teachers leaving schools that may be struggling to take up positions in higher performing schools whilst the outcomes of others may continue to worsen.

Councillor Bell referred to pupil premium payments for schools and commented that he was aware that some schools were not receiving payments for pupils that they should as parents were reluctant to fill in the free school meals applications due to the stigma that may be seen to be attached and therefore the schools ultimately were missing out.

In relation to comments regarding the change in the examinations systems in secondary schools, Mr. Marshall advised that they should always strive for each and every pupil to get the best outcomes from education as they could. He informed Members that there were some unbelievable children and schools in the city, who despite the odds were coming out with some of the best results. There was work to be undertaken to raise the aspiration of pupils and to ensure that pupils and schools could see prospective outcomes and goals. Conversations had to be held with wider partner groups to ensure there were potential opportunities for pupils to aspire too and this was not just the role of schools alone. There were some massive opportunities and investments being made in the city and it was about ensuring that the young people of the city were prepared and shown direct routes into how to access those opportunities that would be available to them in the future.

Councillor Jackson referred to the disparity between the results at Key Stages 2 and 3 and the standard of the monitoring of teaching assessment at those levels and was advised that Key Stage 2 results were sent to be marked externally so there was not a case of teachers possibly being too easy or moderate on pupil assessments. Mr. Marshall also advised that it had been known for assessors to randomly turn up on the day of SATs exams to monitor them being carried out.

Mr. Marshall commented that the good results were more a result of the excellent and talented primary practitioners that they had in the city which may go under the radar by being at smaller schools but who were continuing to perform well over long periods of time. All nursery schools within the city were either ranked as good or outstanding by Ofsted and the primary schools were ranked in performance in the top fifteen of the country and sometimes the city failed to celebrate the good practices that were in the primary schools and learn more from them.

In response to a question from Councillor Francis as to whether there was a shortage of specialist staff, Mr. Marshall advised he would not have exact staff levels information as most of the secondary schools were now academies and responsible for the recruitment of their own staff but as far as he was aware there was no significant shortage of staff in any key subject. The recruitment of staff for English, Maths and Science was always challenging, both locally and nationally, and unfortunately, these were also the subjects which were most scrutinised by external bodies.

Councillor Smith asked what the findings of the Tees Valley partnership report were which was referred to at paragraph 11.2 of the report and the Committee were advised that Officers had looked into the findings of the research that had been carried out and would look to learn from their process and adapt it for schools in Sunderland. The research was around looking to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils by using pupil premiums for those schools with the greatest gap. The concept had been introduced to their schools and it had been up to them if they wished to take advantage of the project. Officers would continue to monitor the impact it had as they continued to move through the academic year.

Members having fully considered the report and having no further questions for Officers, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the information provided regarding school performance data be received and noted.

### **Annual Work Programme 2017/18**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information, the work programme for the Committee's work being undertaken for the 2017/18 municipal year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report advising that there were still a considerable number of items in the remainder of the 2018/2018 work programme and suggested that Members may wish to review the composition and priorities of the work programme for the remainder of the year.

In light of earlier discussions, Members had agreed that an update on information around the thresholds for permanent exclusions be included in the work programme, which would include inviting secondary Headteachers to attend to have discussions with the Committee around particular issues they may have and the strategies they were putting in place to deal with those.

Members discussed the remainder of the work programme and the possibility of providing written updates to Members directly on the new special education school and the university technical colleges or the possibility of having an extraordinary meeting scheduled to ensure that all of the items remaining on the work programme were covered.

Members having discussed the work programme, and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information contained in the work programme be received and noted;
- b) the Scrutiny Officer have discussions with the Chairman to consider the work programme items for the remainder of the municipal year to balance the workload taking into the consideration the comments from the Committee; and
- c) the Scrutiny Officer include the item of the Impact of Universal Credit in the work programme.

### **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from the 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the Notices of Key Decisions be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

(Signed) P. SMITH,  
Chairman.

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**UNIVERSAL CREDIT POTENTIAL RISKS AND MITIGATIONS**

**REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC ADVICE SERVICES MANAGER, PEOPLE  
DIRECTORATE**

**1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Committee, it was agreed to receive an update report in respect of on-going activity to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform and some information specifically around the timeline and issues associated with Universal Credit Full Service rolling out in the city.
- 1.2 Joan Reed Strategic Advice Services Manager will provide the Committee with a presentation on Universal Credit and the potential risks and mitigations.

**2.0 What is Universal Credit (UC)**

- 2.1 UC combines six working age means tested benefits / tax credits into one single payment. (*Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, income related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support.*)
- 2.2 Originally planned for implementation from October 2013 and with full transfer of existing claimants by 2017 it is now running 4-5 years late. The design and implementation has been beset with problems, with many of its features giving rise to significant concerns and although it was intended to 'make work pay' some design aspects of it continue to pose risks for some customer groups:-
  - UC consists of one single monthly payment (including housing costs), paid monthly in arrears with a waiting period ( before any entitlement)
  - Minimum 6 week delay before first payment - including fluctuating payments
  - Everyone who receives Universal Credit will be placed in a conditionality group based on their circumstances and work capability. The group that they are in will determine what is expected of them during their claim. e.g. work preparation
  - Full Service brings with it the requirement to make and, manage claims and other transactions online.

**3.0 Universal Credit (UC) - Recent National Announcements**

- 3.1 In November 2017 Government announced a delay in UC roll out and significant extra support being made available for residents when they are required to claim it – and until they receive their first payment. These concessions were made as a result of concerted pressure and mounting evidence about the negative impacts that UC design and delivery have had so far. As a result the Government has confirmed:

- A slowdown in the roll out UC Full Service (UC FS) for new claims and changes in circumstances. UC FS covers all working age means tested benefits (except Council Tax Support) and Tax Credits – with roll out Sunderland pushed back from May to July 2018 (at this stage).
  - UC Live Service is closing for new claimants from 31 December 2017, so that new claimants will have to claim JSA / Housing Benefit again after that.
- 3.2 Both of these will allow improvements to be made to UC design, systems and importantly to the initial support available to customers, and some additional safeguards for landlords before these are again rolled out more widely. The ending of Live Service while surprising also seems to implicitly recognise the fact that this was not fit for purpose.
- 3.3 At the same time the government addressed two major cross party concerns (delays in making initial payments due to the 7 day waiting period and the 6+ week delay in receiving payment) by scrapping ‘waiting days’ and providing payments by way of full advances for UC claimants from early 2018 onwards. This will mean up to 50% of the first month’s payment – with the following six months’ payments adjusted to account for this.
- 3.4 From January 2018, new Universal Credit claimants will be offered an advance of up to 100%, and all payments of advances recoverable over 12 months. In addition, from spring next year, customers will be able to apply for an advance online – further increasing accessibility for those who need it.
- 3.5 Nearly all of the most vulnerable claimants currently receive Housing Benefit, and changes mean that claimants who were previously receiving Housing Benefit will receive a transitional payment – an extra two weeks support worth on average £233 per claimant – when they move to Universal Credit. This will be unrecoverable, automatic and received early in the first assessment period.
- 3.7 In relation to temporary accommodation, the funding shortage seen by Councils’ when they place people into temporary and emergency accommodation will change. Previously they could only recoup around 50% of the cost from Universal Credit; this housing support will be increased to 80% of their expenditure on temporary accommodation.
- 3.8 Although welcome it is recognised that these improvements do not at this stage address the longer term issues linked to UC. These include reductions in in-work incentives, lower payments / payment rates for many residents, and greater demands for budgeting help / digital support as well as for a range of information / advice. These include support to manage increased conditionality (as evidenced by reported increasing UC sanctions rates even within Live Service).

#### **4.0 Universal Credit – Sunderland Issues and Preparation**

- 4.1 The council and partners have worked together in order to successfully implement UC Live Service from 2015 and will be doing so again for UC FS although it is recognised that this implementation is of a greater magnitude. Initial projections were for 40 -60 new claims per week (and the same number of change of circumstances claims) with at least 30,000 claims in total by 2022.
- 4.2 There are just over 9,000 children living in the 19,000 Working Age Households currently receiving Housing Benefit. This provides a minimum baseline for the number of children in families that will be affected by UC on whom the council holds direct data.

## Issues

- 4.3 Partners report numerous concerns / issues regarding UC, and unfortunately as there are fewer solutions/ options to sort these out we may see people reaching crisis points quite quickly. The obvious impacts are financial but this will link into a wider range of impacts linked to health, wellbeing, relationships and increased crime.
- 4.4 The main issues reported from other areas that have gone live with full service include:-
- Concerns that despite publicity , customers who need help do not know where to go or what is available ; and real issues for individuals and services being able to contact DWP to deal with issues and queries
  - Services being swamped/ having increased workloads
  - Issues around literacy and digital skills/confidence and access to IT including tenants becoming more reliant upon their landlord for support.
  - From a housing perspective private landlords are reported as being reluctant to take on UC claimants and /or moving more quickly to evict tenants.
  - Social housing providers are experiencing higher levels of arrears which may lead to more eviction activity. (The payment structure of UC in arrears means that the UC-Customer is automatically in arrears and the UC paid direct / monthly to them). Rent collection is proving more difficult for some as there is never a set, firm payment date
  - Overall we may see more people at risk of homelessness or presenting to the Council as homeless.
  - Particular concerns around the monthly payment impact on vulnerable people with mental health issues, substance misuse or in abusive relationships
  - Increases in the use of food banks and the number of claimants skipping meals to enable them to feed their children
  - Further financial hardship and debt brought to those who have had an advanced payment as most have been clawed back over three months
  - Issues with applying for APAs if claimants work variable hours which makes the calculation more difficult
- 4.5 Appendix 1 contains more information about the issues and planned responses.
- 4.6 *Wider Welfare Reform programme:* The roll out of Universal credit is part of an on-going programme of reforms for people mainly of working age which have so far included
- Housing Benefit changes / reductions (including Bedroom Tax , LHA Reductions, Benefit Cap – and replacement of Council Tax Benefit by less generous local Council Tax Support schemes
  - 15+ Tax Credit changes / reductions reducing the numbers that qualify and the amount paid
  - On-going changes to or replacement of existing sickness and disability benefits (Employment and Support Allowance , and Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payment respectively)
  - Restricted or frozen benefit / tax credit payment rates

The key reforms were projected to cost Sunderland residents £150 million per year by 2020-2021, with the majority of these also affecting working age families.

## 5.0 Mitigation of Welfare Reform in Sunderland

5.1 Specific and staged responses to welfare reforms are being planned and delivered broadly in relation to the following categories:-

- **Digital inclusion (DI):** provides greater customer choice, increased opportunities and social inclusion.
- **Financial inclusion (FI):** enables better money management, planning for the future and coping more effectively with financial pressures and distress.
- **Crisis Support (CS):** helps residents respond more effectively to changes in their financial circumstances, or unforeseen financial emergencies.

5.2 Appendix 2 provides a brief progress update for these areas.

## 6 Recommendation

6.1 That the Committee consider and comment on the report.

## **Appendix 1 Universal Credit Issues and Preparation**

### **Current Application Information**

*(NB these may be subject to further improvement)*

- Anyone applying will need to do so online. Jobcentre Plus estimate it takes about 30 minutes to apply on average, If unable to apply online, claimants can also ring the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 9344
- As part of the claim process, claimants will also need to verify their identity using Gov.UK Verify. This process can take around 15 minutes the first time it is used. In current full service areas where someone needs help to claim online and go through all of this process, it has taken between 60 and 120 minutes on average, with around 6% of those claiming needing digital support. The claim can be saved part way through and returned to if need be.
- Applicants will need to sign a Claimant Commitment. For those not working, or only working part time, they may be expected to spend up to 35 hours a week doing “work requirements” i.e. looking for work/training. If a person does not fulfil these commitments they will be subject to a sanction.
- UC is paid monthly in arrears and paid directly to the majority of claimants although in a number of circumstances which are being increased, the housing cost element may be paid to landlords. From the date a claim is made, an assessment period of one month commences. The claim is reviewed at the end of each assessment period and payment is made based on the circumstances during the period.
- In general, it currently takes between 6 and 8 weeks before someone will receive a payment although full advance payments will be made available to everyone from January 2018 so will be in place by the time UC FS is implemented in Sunderland
- All the information about their UC claim, including the amount of the award and how it has been calculated, will then *only* be available to claimants using their online account – they will not be sent any letters or documentation about this.
- UC does not cover help with Council Tax. People will therefore still need to claim Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) from the Council and this has been reported as a national issue due to significant under claiming.
- UC is administered and paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). If people have any queries or questions about their claim, they should initially be referred to the DWP. However, the Council still has a significant role to play, in relation to some of the statutory services which may be called on to mitigate the impacts and also in relation to signposting and support services.
- Some of these (Budgeting Support and help to make on- line claims) are currently funded by the DWP but they are currently reviewing requirements and funding - and details for these are not expected until February / March 2018. The current arrangements for these are detailed in the next sections.

### **Preparation and Support**

#### **Implementation Plans and Activity**

The council, Gentoo and DWP worked successfully together to implement UC Live Service from 2015, and have continued to work together. Regular operational meetings are continuing and cover both UC and other welfare reform issues (such as Benefit Cap, DHP and other council schemes). The council and Gentoo have also



shared high level information on UC impacts on residents / tenants for inclusion in wider updates including JSNA.

Given the scale of UC FS the council intends facilitating a series of events In March to bring together stakeholders with an objective of developing a City Implementation Plan. The council will retain an on-going roll in coordinating, mapping and monitoring activity. By that time also future DWP funding intentions should be known and the improvements made to UC FS may be feeding through.

### **Websites**

The Council and Gentoo websites already contain easy to use and user friendly UC information. The council's website has itself been significantly improved with better navigation and improved transactional content – This includes information and links to the online Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support application forms, and also to the councils DHP scheme and Local Welfare Provision Schemes

Where residents are in receipt of UC the current HB / CTS form is intelligently designed to only ask a shortened series of questions

### **IT Support**

- **Customer Service Centres / Libraries:** Residents are currently able to use the free of charge IT facilities in these locations and staff are often on hand to assist if needs be. It is the case though that capacity is more limited than will be needed in UC FS given the nationally reported increase in demand for both access to IT and help needed to manage UC transactions on line.
- **Job Centre plus Offices:** UC claimants that approach the Job Centres are currently assisted by Job Centre staff in situ although they can currently be referred to the councils contracted provider SNCBC also. Again the support currently provided to claim UC is intended to be a 'one off basis ' rather than equipping people with the skills they need to manage all UC transactions on line
- The number of customers receiving digital and budgeting advice through formal local authority support arrangements is lower than anticipated so the DWP are doing further work to examine how customers are being supported
- See Appendix 2 for details of Digital Sunderland which is intended to provide the required and wider response to improving resident's digital skills and confidence

### **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

The proposals are due to be heard by Cabinet 10.1.18, one of which is to treat a notification of Universal Credit as an indication of a claim under the LCTSS. Subject to Cabinet agreeing the amends, they will take effect from 1/4/18.

### **Prevention of homelessness**

Talks are underway with DWP to look at replicating the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer currently being piloted in Newcastle

Some additional capacity will be created within the Councils Housing Options Team linked to the Homeless Reduction Act to offer tenant sustainment support which would cover people transitioning to UC

Information will also be shared with private landlords in the city to help them understand the issues and support available to people to ensure they continue to take on tenants who claim UC and support their tenants with transition issues

### **Making UC claims on line / Personal Budgeting Support**

The council currently contracts with local VSC partners to provide both of these support services –using DWP funding. Access to either / both of these is only via strict DWP gateway criteria so have not resulted in significant numbers of residents receiving support. These criteria and support required are being reviewed nationally by the DWP as part of the planned improvements necessary before wider roll out can recommence

### **Universal Credit and Free School Meals (FSM)**

While all current UC claimants are currently entitled to FSM for their children under what are effectively still pilot arrangements the government intends restricting entitlement. It has just concluded a consultation around the following proposals - due for implementation from April 2018

- Applying a net earnings threshold of £7,400 per annum for a household's eligibility for FSM. It is estimated that under this threshold, an extra 50,000 children nationally will become eligible for FSM, compared to today's number of claimants. The net earnings threshold does not represent a household's total income, as it does not include income from benefits, a typical family earning around £7,400 per annum would, depending on their exact circumstances, have a total household income of £18,000 - £24,000 once benefits are included.
- New FSM claimants earning above this threshold after its introduction would not be eligible however those already receiving them would retain them for a length of time thereafter ( linked to the child's current phase of education)
- While the Children's Society have criticized these proposals and as they estimate 1,000,000 children in poverty will miss out on FSM compared to providing these for all UC claimants , the draft proposals do at least seem to compare reasonably favourably to the current arrangements for FSM for people currently getting other benefits / tax credits.
- Currently people are disentitled if they do not receive Income Support, Income-based JSA. Income related ESA. Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of £16,190 or less, as assessed by HMRC.
- A bigger issue is that the Department for Education have previously advised that anyone who has applied for a benefit but not yet been awarded it is NOT eligible for FSM. This would include UC claimants where they may be waiting 6+ weeks for their entitlement to be confirmed. This will cause a major issue if not resolved by the time UC FS is implemented in Sunderland

### **Housing Advice and Discretionary Housing Payments**

- The new working arrangements in place within the Housing Options Team – including clearer referral pathways from TFC, will ensure housing advice is available when homelessness is a risk. Work is also underway to meet the requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act
- Discretionary Housing Payments also continue to be available where appropriate and although at this stage the number of applicants has reduced the number of successful awards has increased. This includes more one-off payments for removals and storage to support people to move into more affordable housing.

### **Information advice and guidance**

Both the council and Gentoo already provide information advice and guidance by way of in house welfare rights provision or commissioned services

The Gentoo Money Matters Team had been required to increase staff to support tenants to manage UC transitions and issues – including challenging significant UC decision and payment error rates. Despite this the majority of its tenants on UC were in rent arrears, at least initially.

The council have recently reconfigured its own 1<sup>st</sup> tier advice provision to offer more effective open access and more targeted interventions (using external funding wherever appropriate). Its in-house Welfare Rights Service concentrates on more specialised intervention such as representation and complex casework. Two additional posts are being created to support some targeted activity by this team.

The implementation activity will involve looking at joint messages and communications strategies to maximise impact.

## Appendix 2 - Mitigation - Welfare Reform

Specific and staged responses to welfare reforms being planned and delivered as follows

### Digital Inclusion

- **Digital Strategy/Network** formed to ensure that Sunderland residents are digitally capable and connected. Agreed branding and awareness events, to help develop the increased capacity needed from range of partners to support residents
- **Councils Website**– improved navigation and more transactional useful content that also aligns with Community Hub Development. As well as changes detailed in Appendix 1 the Making your Money Go Further content has been improved with content on banking budgeting borrowing and saving
- **Individual Area Committees (Coalfields)** are funding projects to increase digital skills / capacity –including equipping people with skills needed to manage UC claims / transactions
- **Tea and Teach Digital Course** – delivered in partnership with Barclays Bank to deliver with the joint aims of develop online skills and raising awareness around basic budgeting, price comparison /switching, online safety Cyber Crime and Fraud etc.

### Financial Inclusion

Joint activity with the Illegal **Money Lending Team (ILMT)** and the **Credit Union**, has resulted in the following actions:

- Creation of 3,000 postcards to both raise awareness of the dangers of using illegal money lenders/ loan sharks and also promote joining the Credit Union
- Using Proceeds of Crime Act money (POCA) to incentivise new accounts being opened at the Credit Union, e.g. matching savings after 12 weeks with £25 deposit for the customer.
- Credit Union is launching next year to attract new savers / borrowers and promote sensible lending.

### Crisis Support

Improvements have been made to the criteria and process around the Councils Local Welfare Provision Scheme with improved forms, assessments and data planned for next year to ensure targeting of resources

The council has also supported the improvement activity linked to progressing End Food Poverty Sunderland Actions which has mainly been undertaken by the Food Bank Network (FBN) members themselves. The following is a brief update

### **Completed**

- Additional Funding – including £15,000 from Guy-Readman Philanthropy Foundation to help the FBN develop the supporting infrastructure required
- Sunderland Food Bank Partnership ( FBP ) registered with the Trussell Trust and commenced member training and other development actions
- Steering Group formed made up of FBN members, to provide the collective leadership required to take forwards a range of actions While not all FBN members have yet signed up formally to become part of the FBP they are represented by the steering group and involved in the improvements
- Recruited a Part time FBN Coordinator , to work across the FBN to support the delivery of a more consistent approach and joined up offer
- Obtained a central hub with both office space and significantly increased food storage capacity. This enables taking on increased food donations / supermarket spare capacity and better assist with on-going distribution.

- Completed initial mapping of what each food bank delivers directly and links to asset with both developing awareness and integrating referral pathways
- Council Customer Services Network can now directly refer Washington residents to the Washington Community Food Project
- The Council updated its own Local Welfare Provision Scheme from November to enable more successful applications, and also created integrated pathways to provide quicker and more effective support for people being assisted by the Housing Options Team

### **On-going**

- Developing more consistent offer and access arrangements across the city
- Appropriately publicising / promoting FBN and feeding programmes through such tools as the Community Hub - that will assist organisations to signpost or directly refer
- Looking at sharing data to better identify demand across the FBN, and information about the presenting and underlying reasons for customers needing such Crisis Support
- Working with the council to offer '**more than food**' so that appropriate support and services can be directly accessed by referral (integrated pathways) by FBN members for their customers.

An event is being organised for January to increase the numbers of accredited organisations that can make referrals to Food Banks.

### **Specific Responses**

This has focused on improved access to information advice and guidance

- **Welfare Rights Service** Continues to support people to challenge decisions to refuse, suspend or remove benefits and have been very successful with success rates above the national average – regularly over 70%.
- **Contracts** New council advice contracts continue to provide a citywide basic infrastructure for open access benefits and debt support and were awarded for a 3 year period from 2017 to 2020
  - Shiny Advice and Resources Project: Coalfield and Washington Areas.
  - Sunderland West Advice Project: Sunderland West Area.
  - Citizens Advice Sunderland: Sunderland East and Sunderland North Areas.

In the first 5 months of the contracts, the providers have held almost 3,700 casework appointments
- **Benefit Cap** All of the Capped Households in Sunderland consist of families – normally with 2 or more children.  
The Benefit Cap Adviser continues to support customers, affected by the Cap Outcomes so far:
  - 90 Exemptions secured, ( 28% of capped customers)
  - 51 Residents are now in employment, and many of them receive additional income - Working Tax Credits, Carers Allowance, or Personal Independence Payment.
  - 100 residents signposted to a number of services that can help improve mental health/wellbeing

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide performance information in relation to Together for Children and the commissioning arrangements in the Council, offer assurance over progress and any issues that arise, in the context of the scope of service and performance indicators set out in the service contract.

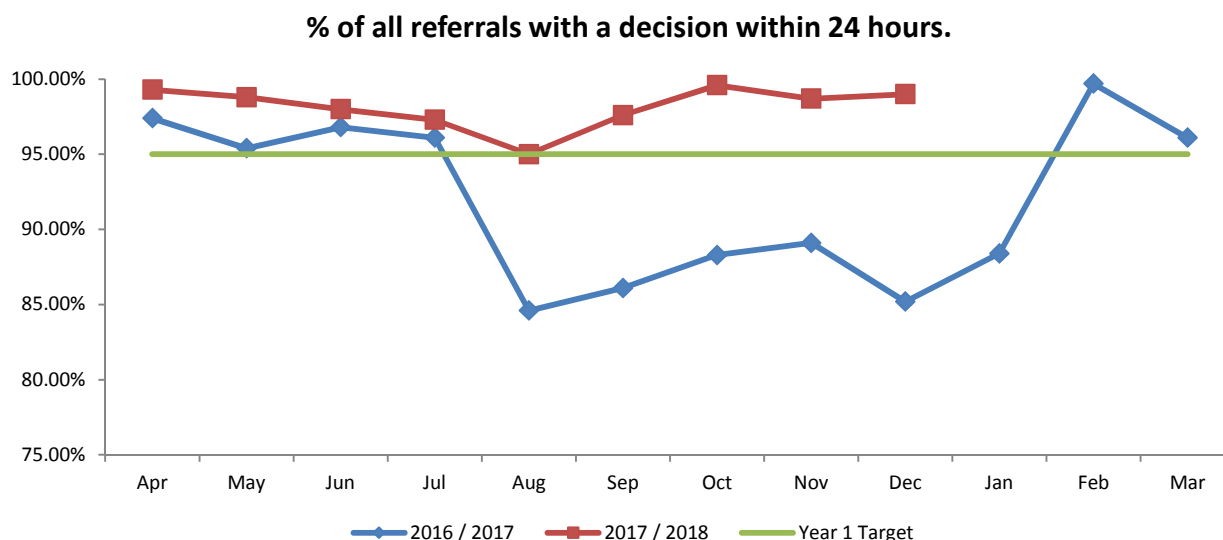
**2. Background**

- 2.1 The guide to contractual and governance arrangements has been shared with members and outlines the governance and how the company will be held to account for delivery/performance.
- 2.2 The Performance Framework arrangements under the Service Contract are described within the aforementioned guide and were developed in consultation with elected members to put arrangements in place which provide assurance that the relevant statutory duties and functions of the Council are being met and that services are being delivered to meet the agreed requirements.
- 2.3 The contractual and performance of Together for Children is monitored on a monthly basis through the Operational Commissioning Group and the Chief Executives Performance Clinic.

**3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The Operational Commissioning Group and Chief Executives Clinic are meeting on a monthly basis to consider information and progress made.
- 3.2 Information contained within this report will include all 9 of the Key Performance Indicators, those supporting measures that are not meeting target and some areas of management information. The tolerance levels for each of the measures will be included within the report.
- 3.3 Each graph will include current Sunderland Performance, the target for the year and Statistical Neighbour and National Rates for the measure where this is available.
- 3.4 The population figures used to calculate the rate in some of the measures are the number of children and young people in Sunderland aged 0 – 17 (54,260) based upon the latest mid-year estimate figures, currently 2016
- 3.5 The performance information contained within the report relates to the period April 2017 – December 2017.

### 3.6 Key Performance Indicator 1 - % of referrals with a decision within 24 hours Tolerance 85 – 100%

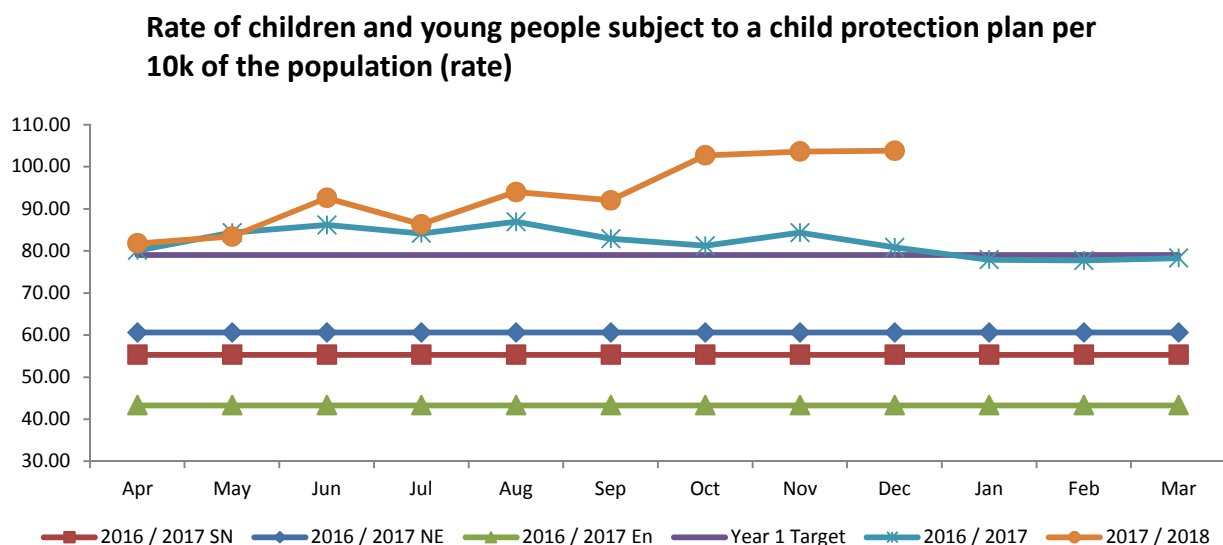


The timeliness of decision making within 24 hours continues to be maintained and exceed target at 99% in December 2017.

The number of referrals into the service has increased in October (449) and November (447) but has decreased in December to 312.

This measure is achieving the target of 95% for 2017/18.

### 3.7 Supporting Measure 1.1 - Rate of Children and Young People subject to Child Protection plan per 10k of the population Tolerance 69 - 89



There has been a continued increase in the rate of Children and Young People subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10k of population from 92.0 in September 2017 to 102.7 and 103.8 in December 2017; this rate remains outside of target and tolerance.

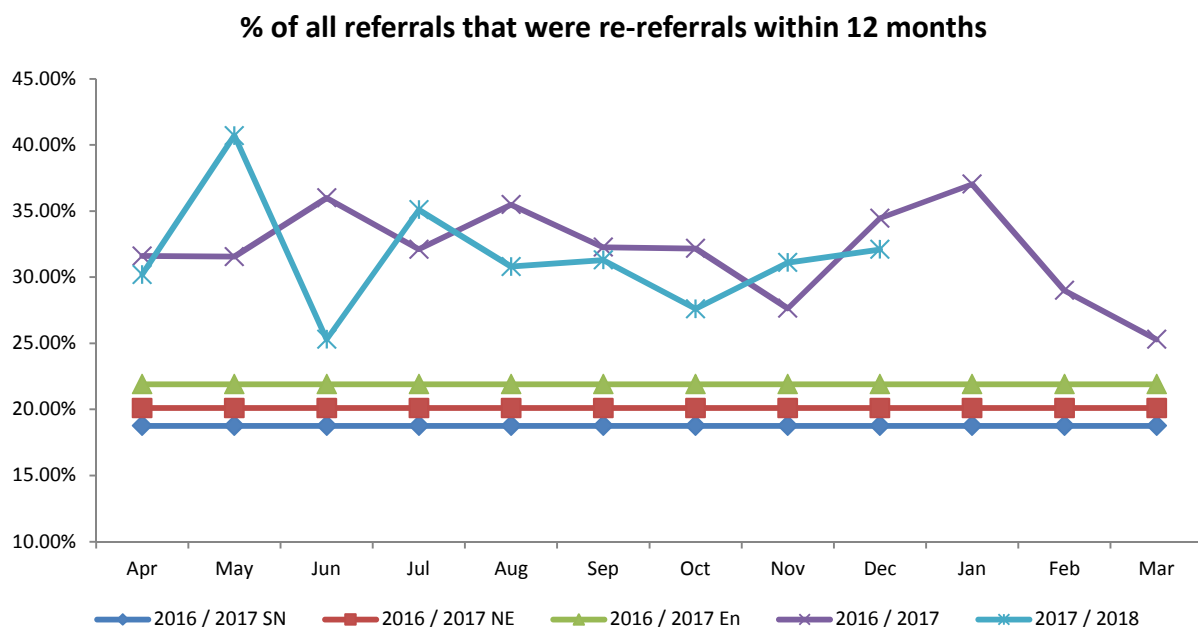
The rate reflects an increase in the number of Children and Young People on a Child Protection Plan from 499 in September 2017 to 563 in December 2017.

Due to the continuing increase in demand over a number of months, the Operational Commissioning Group have requested an investigation and analysis is undertaken, reviewing all those cases where a child has become subject to a Child Protection Plan in the last three months. The audit should breakdown whether the child was open to children's Social Care pre Child Protection Plan, was not known to children's Social Care, or historically known to children's Social Care.

The audit and findings are expected back at the March Operational Commissioning Group.

This measure is not meeting target and is outside of tolerance range.

### 3.8 Management Information 1.6 - % of all referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months No target or tolerance set

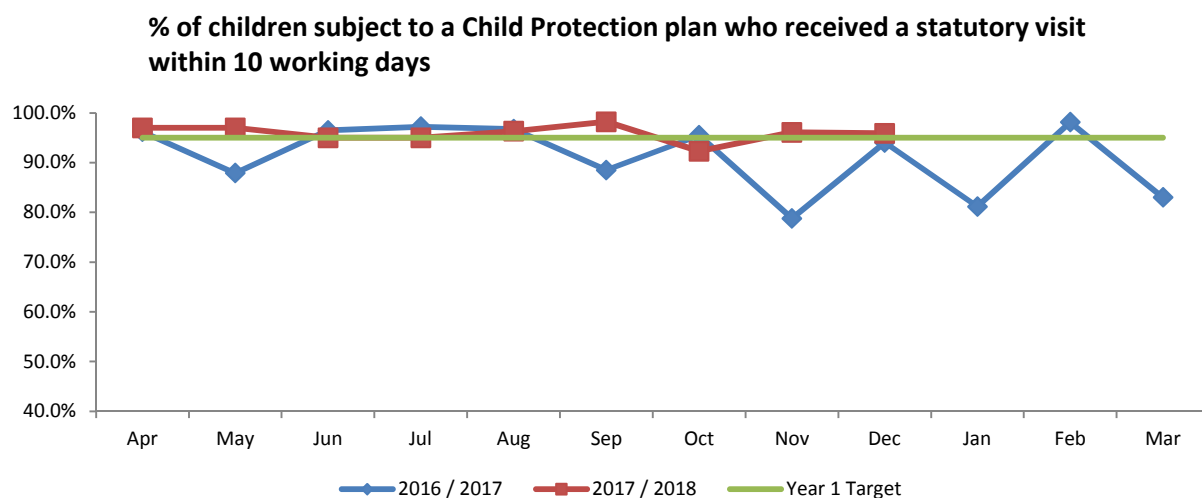


Throughout November and December 17 there has been an increase in the rate of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months to 31.1% then 32.1%. As there were less referrals received in December compared with November the actual number of re-referrals received in December has reduced from 139 to 100.

The re-referral action plan continues to be embedded within the service and an updated position against activity and progress is expected back to the Operational Commissioning Group in March 2018.



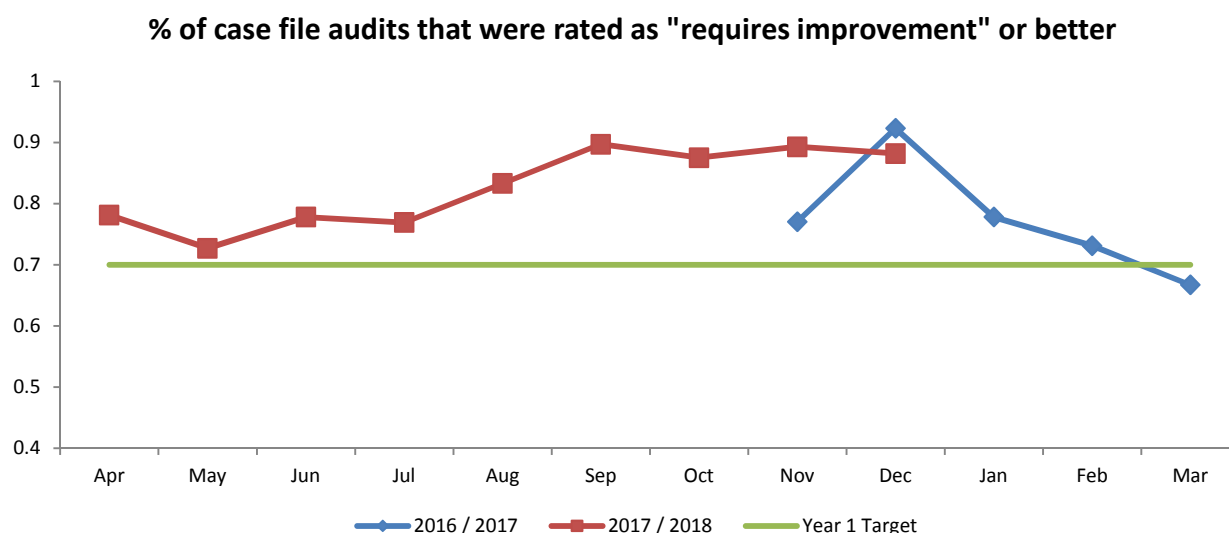
**3.9 Key Performance Indicator 2 - % of Children and Young People subject to Child Protection plan who received a statutory visit within 10 working days**  
Tolerance 85 – 100%

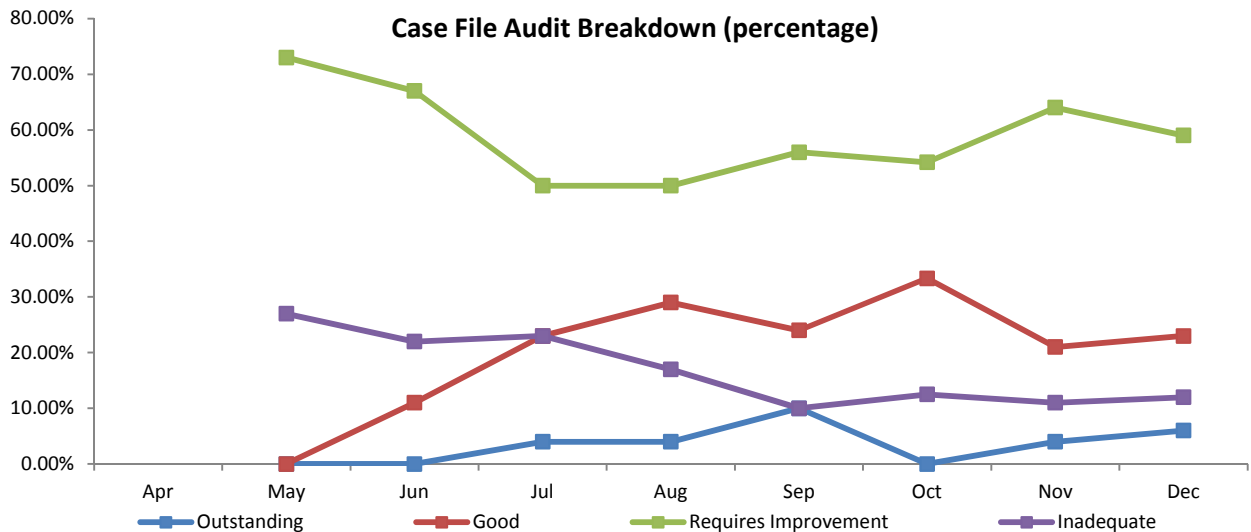


After a brief dip in performance in October 2017 performance against this measure has improved in November and December 2017, with the latest data reporting 95.9% of visits being completed within timescales.

This measure is achieving the target of 95% for 2017/18.

**3.10 Key Performance Indicator 3 - % of casefile audits that were rated as 'requires improvement' or better**  
Tolerance 60 – 100%



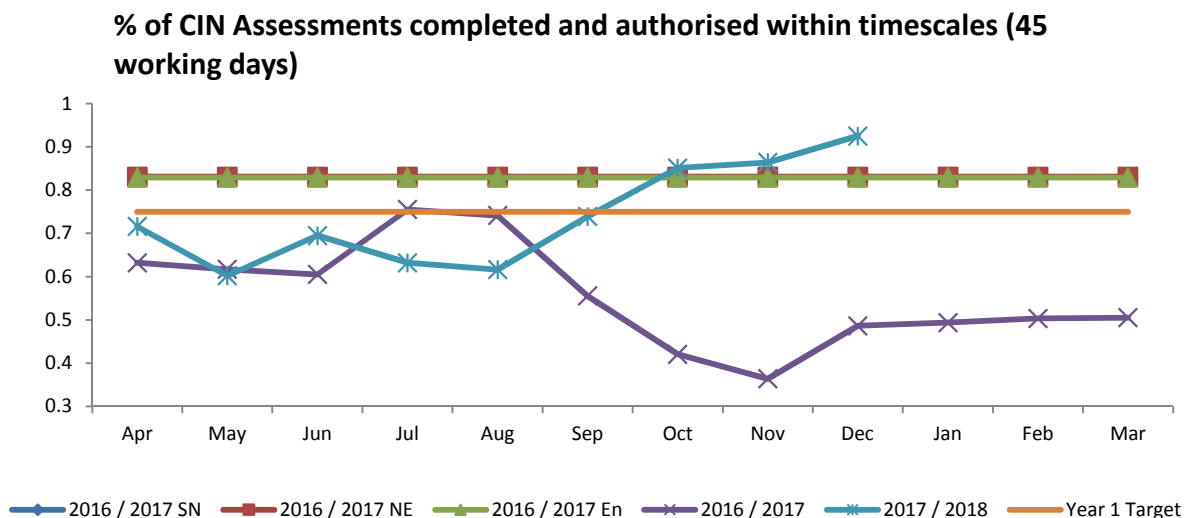


During April – December 17 221 case files audits have been completed across the service of which 174 (78.7%) were rated as requires improvement or better. The latest figures for December are 17 audits completed, with 1 outstanding, 4 found to be good, 10 requiring improvement and 2 found to be inadequate.

In month and year to date performance continues to exceed the target of 70%.

### 3.11 Supporting Measure 3.1 - % of Child In Need assessments completed and authorised in timescales within 45 working days

**Tolerance 65 – 100%**

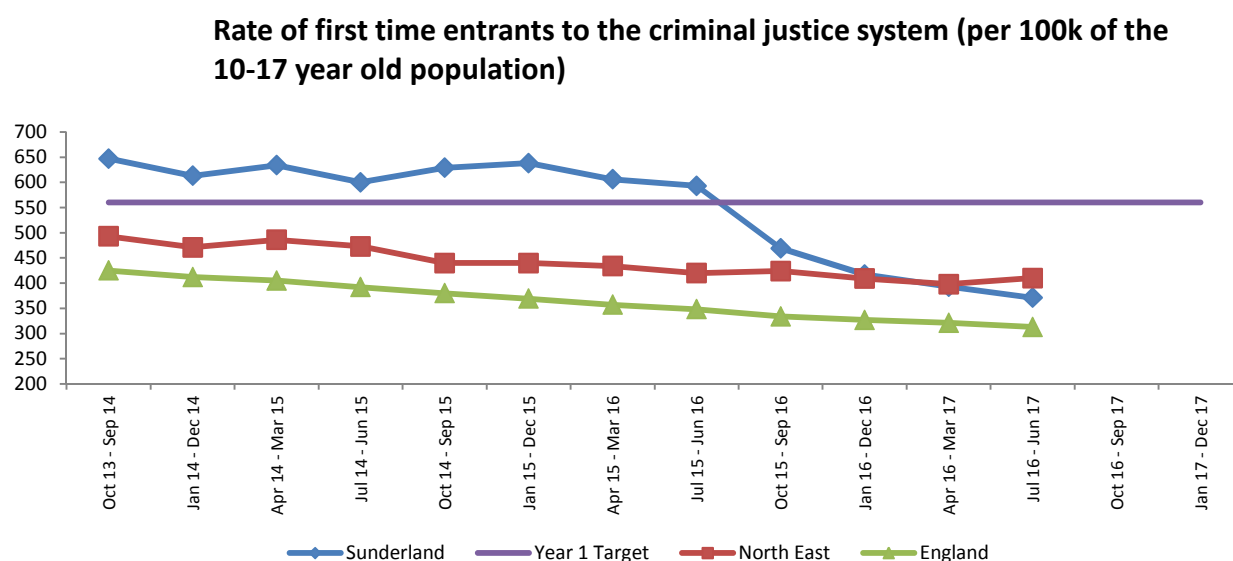


Child in Need assessments completed in timescales has increased in performance in November and December to 86.4% and 92.5% with the year to date figure at 73.5%.

Performance continues to improve further in this area with the compliance improvements and continued management of demand despite spikes in the numbers of referrals received.

Performance against this measure is now exceeding the target of 75%.

**3.12 Key Performance Indicator 4 - Rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system (per 100k) of 10-17 population**  
**Tolerance target +10%**

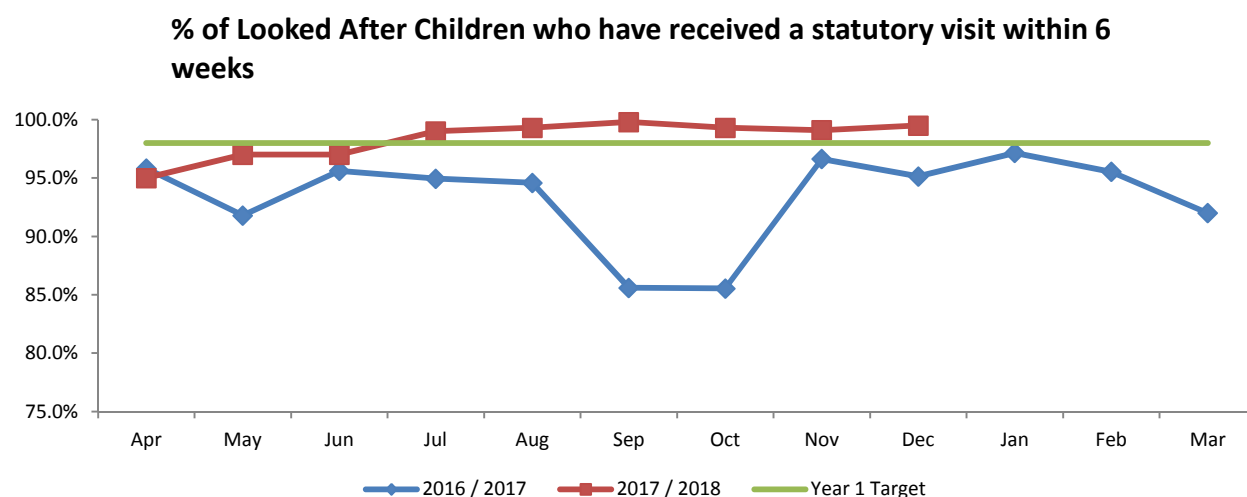


There is a data lag on this metric as the source of the data is the Police National Computer; data reflects the most recent publication as at August 2017

The rate of first time entrants has decreased over the last four reportable quarters up to June 2017 with the latest reported figures at 371 per 10k of the 10-17 years population. A further positive decrease from the 393 reported for the period April 2016 – March 2017.

Performance in this measure remains ahead of target of 560.

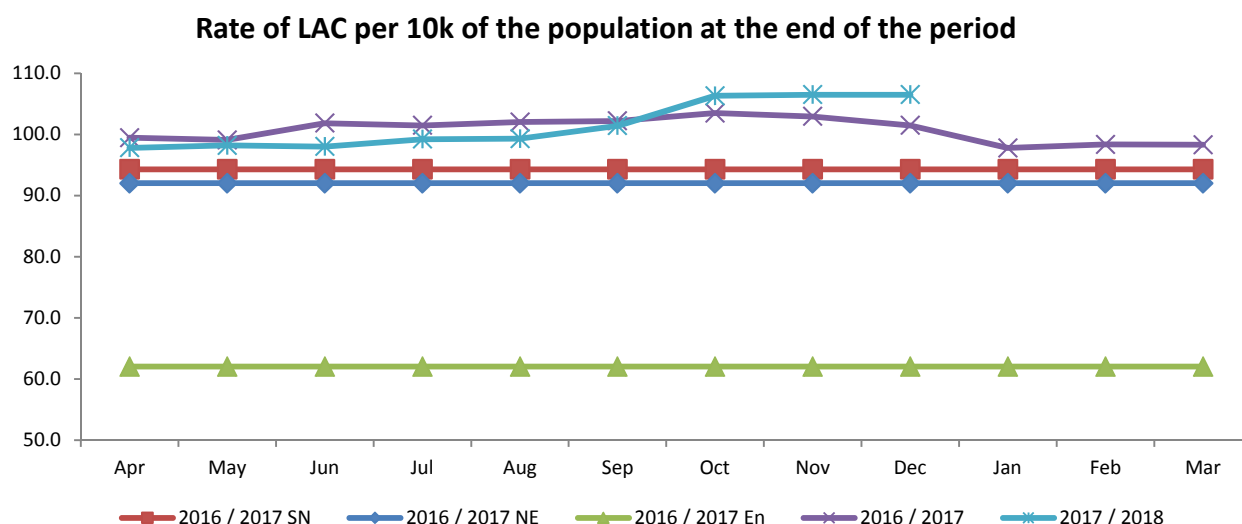
**3.13 Key Performance Indicator 5 - % of Looked After Children who have received a statutory visit within 6 weeks (7 days newly Looked After Children)**  
**Tolerance 95 – 100%**



The % of Looked After Children who have received a statutory visit within 6 weeks has been maintained throughout November and December 2017 at 99.1% and 99.5%.

This measure continues to exceed the target of 98%

### 3.14 Management Information 5.19 Rate of Looked After Children at the end of the period No target or tolerance set



The rate of Looked After Children has continued at the higher rate seen in October. In December the rate of LAC per 10k of the population was 106.5 which is 578 children. This is the highest it has been since April 2016 and significantly higher than the latest figures available for our usual comparators. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 the average rate of Looked After Children for statistical neighbours is 94.3, the average for the North East is 92 and average for England 62.

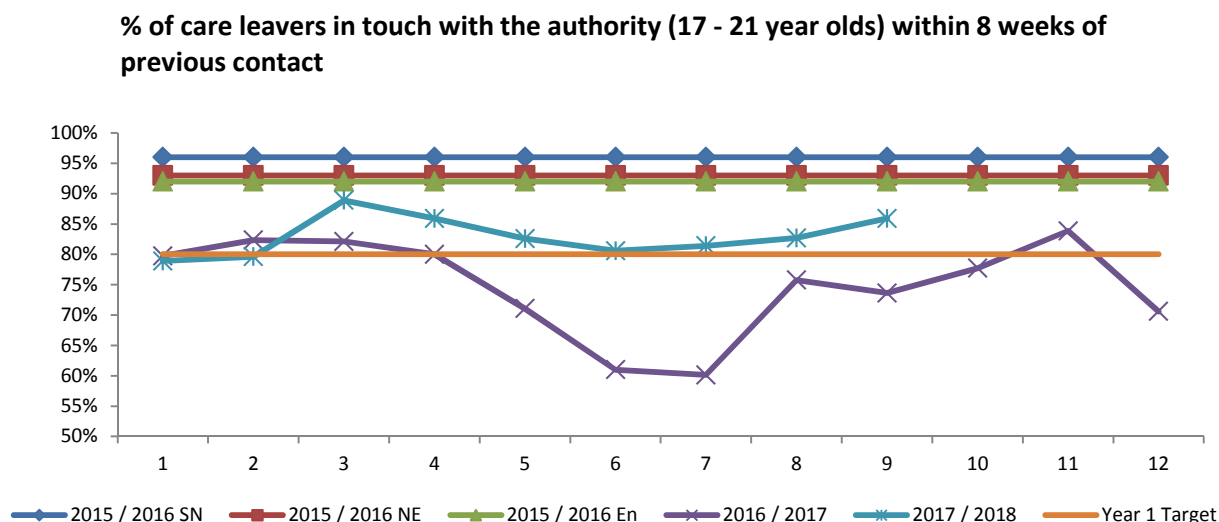
Due to the continuing increase in demand over a number of months, the Operational Commissioning Group had requested an audit of those children who had become Looked After over the last 3 months be undertaken, with the findings and recommendations reported back to Operational Commissioning Group.

The report was presented to February Operational Commissioning Group and is attached at Annex 1.

The key findings were:

- 76 children accommodated in September and October
- 63% of those accommodated were part of sibling groups
- 59% of the children accommodated were age 9 or under
- The majority of cases had management oversight in terms of the decision to accommodate
- 71% of those accommodated were already on a child in need or child protection plan
- 25% of those accommodated was due to a serious safeguarding incident that could not be predicted
- 80% of those accommodated were with Connected Carers or Internal Foster Carers
- There is a need for provision for a crisis intervention service to provide intensive support to families with complex needs where children are on the edge of care.
- There is a need for more or better access to services including Domestic Violence, health services and interventions.
- TfC are taking part in the 'Pause Approach', it is designed to break the destructive cycle of repeat removals by intervening at a point when women have no children in their care.
- Through the PLO process exploring the use of short-notice legal gateway meetings to ensure legal advice and direction is clearly recorded and shared with Service Managers to facilitate robust gatekeeping.
- Senior managers are liaising closely with colleagues in the CCG to ensure that discharge plans for children detained under the Mental Health Act support children to be safely rehabilitated home, wherever possible.

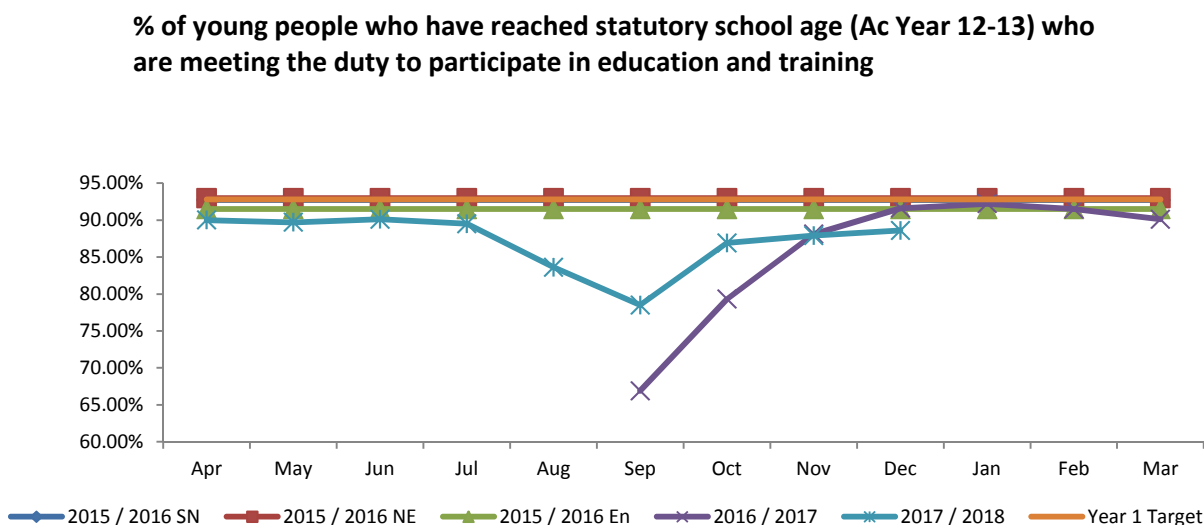
**3.15 Key Performance Indicator 6 - % of care leavers in touch with Together for Children within 8 weeks of the previous contact age 17 – 21**  
**Tolerance 72 – 100%**



The % of care leavers in touch with Together for Children in December within 8 weeks of a previous contact is in December is 85.9% an improvement on recent performance. Whilst comparators are included in the graph within the report, they cannot be directly compared as published information is based upon a contact with Care Leavers within the 'birthday window' whereas TfC contact Care Leavers every 8 weeks which is a much more frequent contact.

Performance continues to be maintained against the target for this measure of 80%..

**3.16 Key Performance Indicator 7 - % of young people who have reached statutory school age (academic year 12 – 13) who are meeting the duty to participate**  
**Target 92.8%**  
**Tolerance 92.3 – 100%**



Cohort	December-17	
	Numbers	Percent
EET	5346	90.6%
NEET	196	3.3%
Unknown	356	6.0%
Meeting Duty	5220	88.5%
Cohort Total	5898	100%

Performance has continued to improve from 78.5% in September to 88.5% in December 2017; however this remains below target and outside of the tolerance limits.

The measurement of this data during the summer months is not an accurate indicator of performance. Further Education establishments do not count young people as having engaged until they have completed six weeks in placement, and there are delays in receiving a full data set from a wide range of schools, colleges and training providers, some of whom are outside Sunderland.

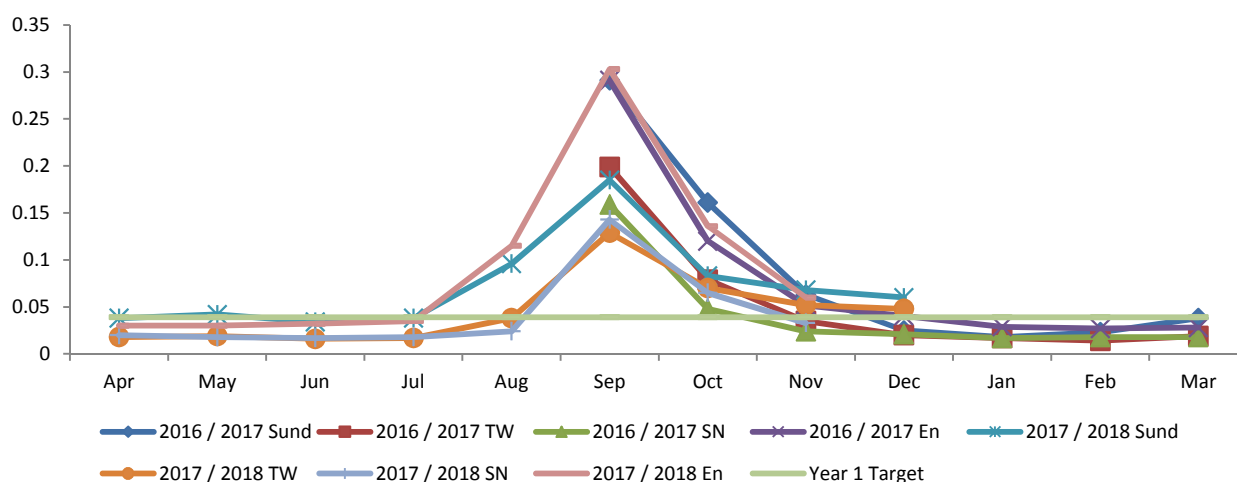
The key dates for measurement are November, December and January when students are settled in placement and this period is used nationally to measure performance. A significant improvement in this indicator is expected during these months.

The annual indicator will be received after February 2018.

This measure is below tolerance and outside of target of 92.8%.

### 3.17 **Supporting Measure 7.1 % of young people who have reached statutory school age (ac yr 12-13) whose status is unknown** **Target 3.9%** **Tolerance 0 – 3.9%**

**% of 16-17 year olds with Not Known status**

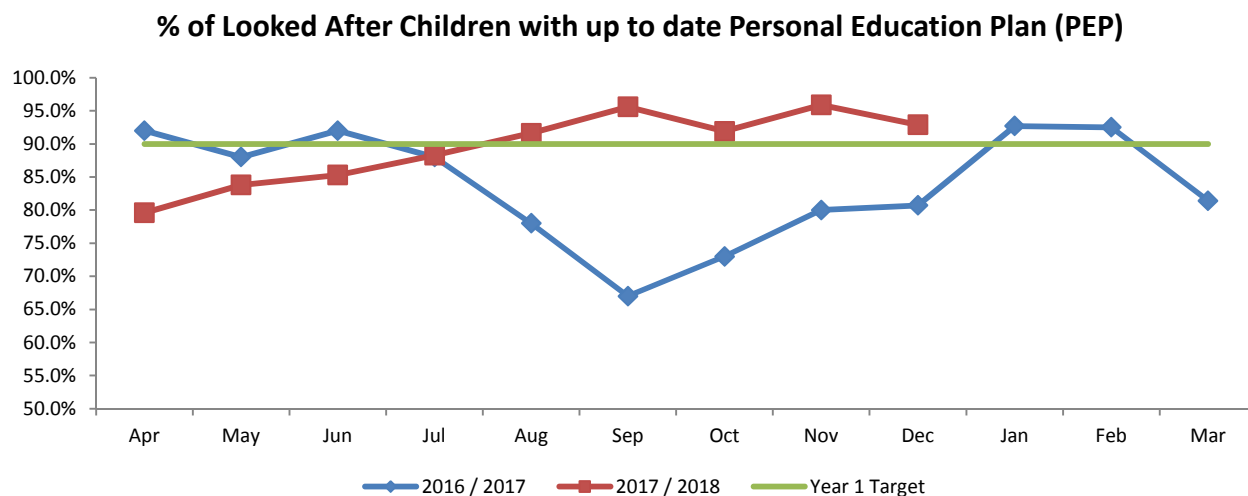


The % of 16-17 year olds with a Not Known NEET status has improved from 18.5% in September to 6% in December, however it still remains outside of target and tolerance.

As per KPI 7, this needs to be monitored over the next few months to ensure performance improves as expected.

This measure is not meeting target and is outside of tolerance.

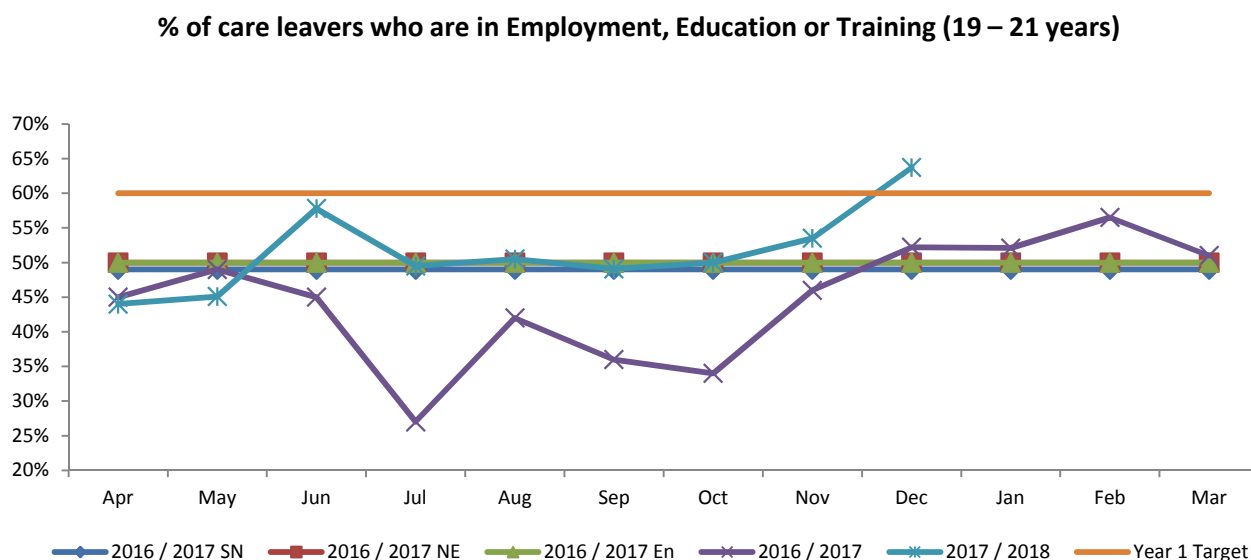
**3.18 Key Performance Indicator 8 - % of Looked After Children with an up to date Personal Education Plan**  
**Tolerance 81 – 100%**



The performance for this indicator continues to maintain improvements seen with 92.9% of children having an up to date Personal Education Plan.

This measure is continues to exceed the target set of 90%.

**3.19 Supporting Measure - 8.1 % of care leavers (aged 19-21) who are in Employment, Education or Training**  
**Tolerance 40 – 100%**

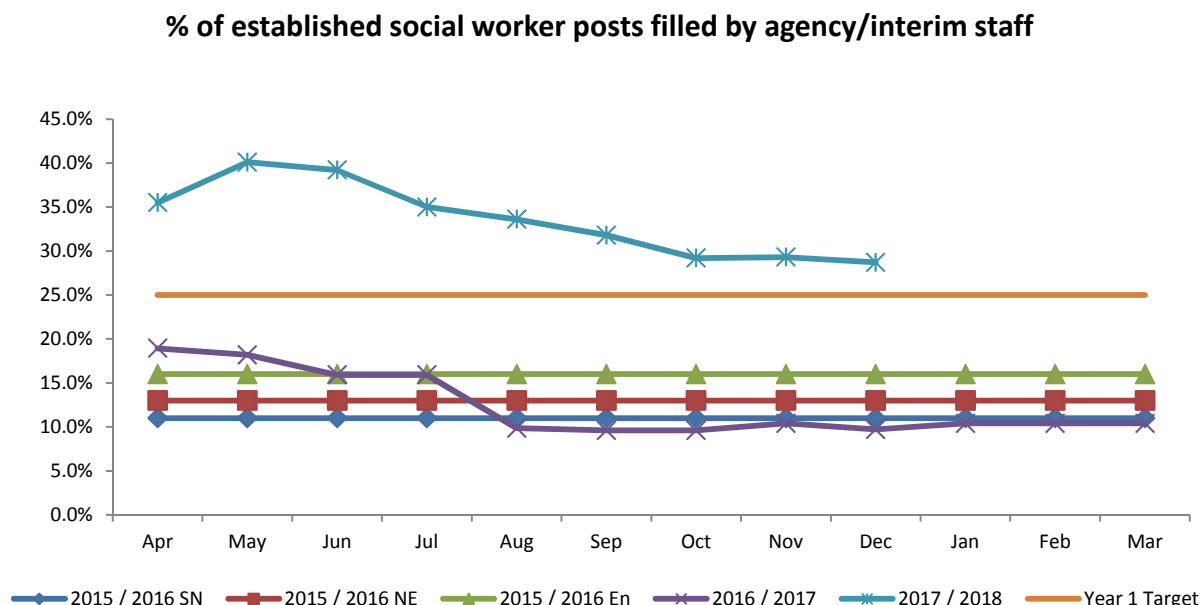


Performance against this measure has improved significantly in December 2017 to 63.7% of care leavers being in employment, education and training. This performance is exceptional when compared with average statistical neighbour (48%), regional (50%) and England (50%) averages.

It is acknowledged that this % will be affected by both the numbers in the cohort which will change each month as well as the performance of being 'in touch' with the young person within 8 weeks.

Performance has now exceeded the target for this measure at 60%.

### 3.22 Key Performance Indicators 9 - % of established Social Work posts filled by agency/interim staff Tolerance 25 – 27.5%



Performance against target has improved slightly from the October position of 29.2% to 28.7% in December 2017.

The performance report % is based upon a permanent structure of 151.8 full time equivalents social work posts within Children's Safeguarding.

In December there were three actual permanent Social Worker starts, as well as one Advanced Practitioner. There was also one permanent Social Worker that left the service.

There are currently six Social Care appointments awaiting clearances and 2 new starters scheduled for January and March 2018, respectively.

There are 2 live recurring vacancies for Social Workers in Assessment and Localities. Four vacancies have closed and will be processed for shortlisting in January 2018, and there are two vacancies which are currently at interview stage.

There is a Social Care open day which will be planned for February 2018 to target all Social Care recruitment. TfC continue to promote social care careers pages through targeted recruitment adverts on social media and through contribution at regional workforce groups.

This measure remains below target and outside of tolerance.

## 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the performance to date.

## 5. Background Papers

Guide to Governance and Contractual Arrangements

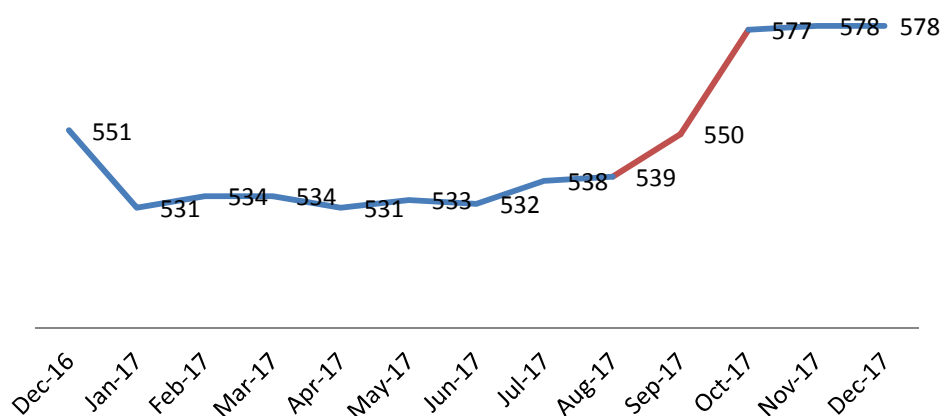


<b>TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN</b>	
DATE:	<b>January 2018</b>
REPORT AUTHOR:	<b>Jess Moore, Strategic Service Manager, Children's Social Care</b>
SUBJECT:	<b>Children new into care</b>
PURPOSE:	<b>To provide an analysis of children new into care and identify any recommendations and improvement actions required to enable children to remain safely at home.</b>

## 1. Context

The number of looked after children in Sunderland remained relatively stable in the first eight months of 2017, ranging from 531 to 539 children and with small increases or decreases ranging from 2-5 children per month. However, in September 2017 there was an increase of 11 children and an even more significant increase the following month of 27 children, bringing the total number of LAC to 577 at the end of October 2017. The figure has stabilised in the past two months.

### Number of LAC

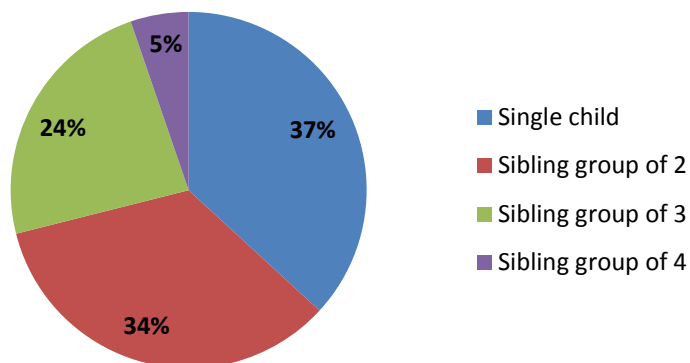


An analysis of all children who were accommodated in the two months when there was a significant increase in LAC has been undertaken to provide a better understanding of the presenting needs and risks, previous level of intervention and management oversight which informed the decision to bring them into care.

## 2. Analysis

### 2.1 Family composition

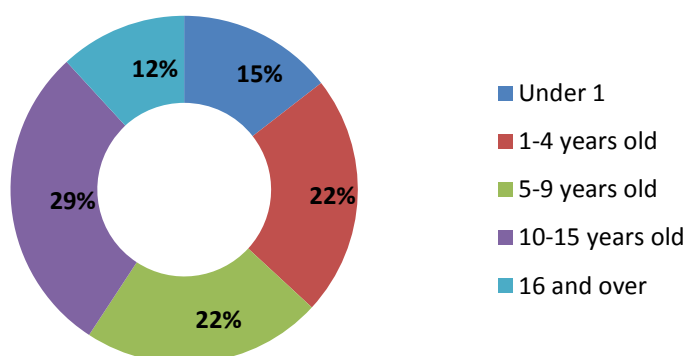
There were 32 children accommodated in September 2017 and 44 children in October 2017. 63% (48) of these children were accommodated as part of sibling groups:



54% of children were female and 46% male. 4% of children were from ethnicities other than White British.

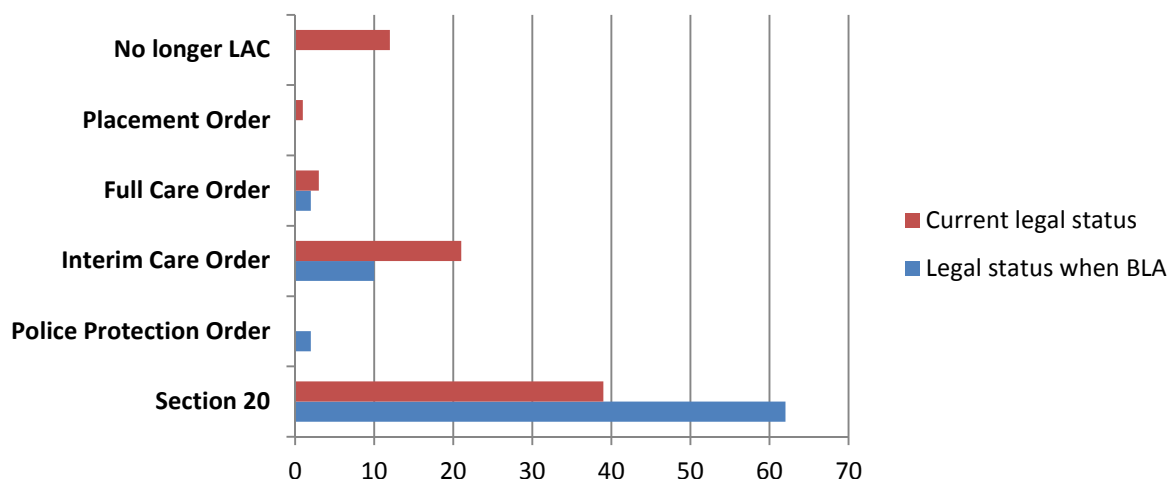
### 2.2 Age profile

The majority (59%) of children accommodated were aged 9 and under. 11% of children were newborns where their pre-birth plan was not to remain with parents. 3 of these children were accommodated directly into foster-to-adopt placements, 3 were placed with in-house foster carers and 2 were placed with connected carers.



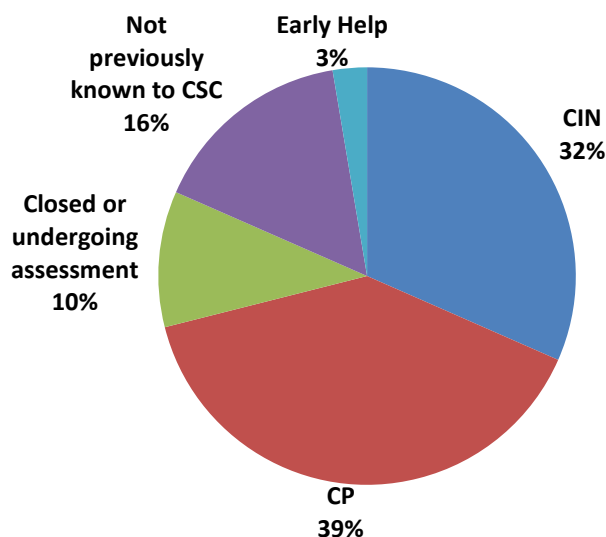
12% of children were aged 16 and over when placed. 4 of these children were disabled and had extremely challenging behaviour, with 2 having had in-patient assessments at Ferndene. 3 were young people with mental health issues and 2 were part of wider sibling groups.

## 2.3 Legal status



The majority of children were initially accommodated under Section 20 arrangements. Interim Care Orders have subsequently been granted in 11 of these cases. 12 children have subsequently left care, including 4 children who were returned to their home authority and 1 child who was returned to his home country. In several cases, the Court imposed Care Orders (including under placement with parents arrangements) when TfC's plan was for Supervision Orders or Child Arrangement Orders. In a small number of cases, Senior Manager approval to bring a child into care was not evidenced in case recording.

## 2.4 Plans and presenting concerns



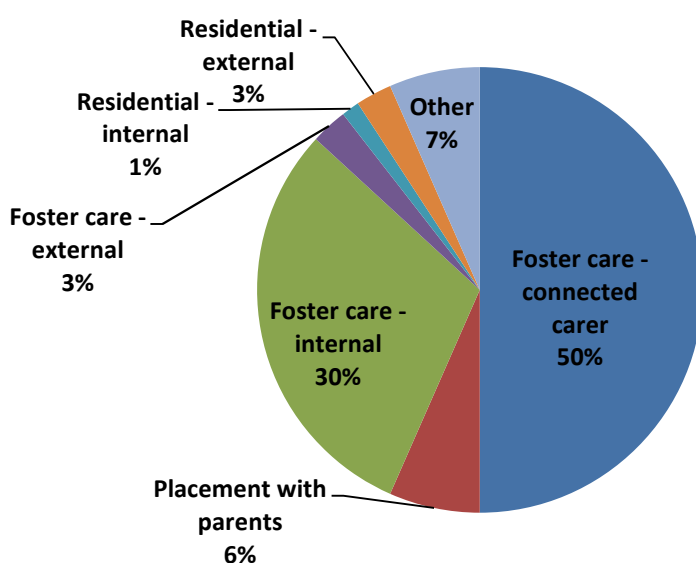
The majority of children were subject to child protection or child in need plans at the time that they became looked after. Three children had previously been looked after and were subject to Residence Orders at the time they were accommodated for a second time. 16% of children were not previously known to children's social care in Sunderland.

25% of children were removed following serious safeguarding incidents which could not have been predicted, including: disclosures of sexual abuse perpetrated by immediate family members; non-accidental injuries; disclosures of physical abuse; fabricated / induced illness; and child abandonment. 12% of children had disabilities or complex health needs.

## 2.5 Interventions

In 36% of cases, there was evidence of ongoing or previous interventions from partner services including Wear Recovery, WWIN, CYPS and the Family Group Conference service. In some cases, information from partner agencies contributed to the decision to remove the children. This included disguised compliance or non-engagement in domestic abuse programmes and/or substance misuse interventions.

## 2.6 Placement type



Positively, the majority of children (56%) accommodated during this period were placed with connected carers or parents. A further 30% of children were placed in internal foster care provision, including foster-to-adopt placements. Two children were placed with IFA providers; one by EDT out of hours after being discharged from hospital following an overdose – this child subsequently returned home two days later. Three of the children who were placed in externally-commissioned provision (2 in residential care and 1 in an IFA placement) had challenging behaviour associated with disabilities or mental health which, alongside significant parenting concerns, meant that these children were not able to safely live at home. There were no children placed in secure accommodation during this period.

## 3. Improvement actions

Whilst there is clear evidence of the application of thresholds and appropriate management oversight to support the decision to bring the majority of children into care, there are a number of improvement actions which could support some children to safely remain at home:

### **3.1 Intensive intervention service**

Our needs analysis has evidenced a gap in provision for a crisis intervention service to provide intensive support to families with complex needs where children are on the edge of care. In 13% of cases in this cohort, there is evidence that intensive family support could have reduced the likelihood of children becoming looked after where limited or no progress was being made against identified actions in CP plans. We are considering a range of options to resource this service, including remodelling existing services to provide additional capacity which will allow us to deliver within existing budgets.

The service will work intensively with families where there is a high risk of children becoming looked after, particularly children subject to CP plans where there are multiple risk factors and complex family dynamics. This approach would use evidence-based interventions tailored to a family's specific circumstances to address problems including domestic violence, parental substance misuse and poor physical and mental health.

### **3.2 Pause approach**

The cohort of children accommodated during this period included four new born babies whose mothers have had other children removed and / or adopted. TfC is one of 10 children's services selected for a scoping exercise to identify repeat removals over the last 3 years. Financial info will also be gathered to inform a cost-benefit analysis which may inform a business case for a Pause approach. Pause is designed to break the destructive cycle of repeat removals by intervening at a point when women have no children in their care. It offers them a chance to take a pause from the usual periods of chaos, anger and reaction to care proceedings in order to be supported to reflect and develop new skills and responses.

### **3.3 Public Law Outline processes**

A significant number of cases had already been considered at PLO Panel, or were referred soon after the children were accommodated under S.20 arrangements. Whilst there was evidence of management oversight and consideration of PLO processes at an early stage for planned admissions to care, we are exploring the use of short-notice legal gateway meetings to ensure legal advice and direction is clearly recorded and shared with Service Managers to facilitate robust gatekeeping.

### **3.4 Children with disabilities and mental ill-health**

A small but significant cohort of young people were accommodated following assessments which indicated they required a residential team approach to manage their complex behavioural or emotional needs. In some cases this was following inpatient assessments at Ferndene Hospital. Senior managers are liaising closely with colleagues in the CCG to ensure that discharge plans for children detained under the Mental Health Act support children to be safely rehabilitated home, wherever possible. Where this is not possible, we are developing robust joint-funding arrangements backed by a clear escalation process.

## 4. Conclusion

There has been a recent spike in looked after numbers through September and October 2017 which put Sunderland's LAC rate at 106.3 per 10,000 as at 31 Oct 2017 (an 8.1% increase since April 2017). This reflects the national increase in the number of looked after children and an even more significant increase in the North East, (92 CLA per 10,000 children as at 31 Mar 2017).

An analysis of the 76 children who were accommodated during this period has identified a number of causal factors, including: significant safeguarding concerns which could not have been predicted, in some cases in families who were not previously known to children's social care; babies who were accommodated soon after birth as part of pre-birth plans; sibling groups where progress against CP plans has not been made over a sustained period; and children with complex behavioural or mental health needs leading to family breakdown.

This increase has been largely absorbed via internal provision, including a high proportion of family placements made with connected carers. Alongside the improvement actions identified, there will continue to be robust gatekeeping by senior managers of all requests to bring a child into care and to swiftly rehabilitate children home, whenever it is safe to do so.

**EARLY HELP UPDATE****REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Early Help Service since its launch on 1 April 2017.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The new Early Help Service was established on 1 April 2017, to replace the previous arrangements which were known as 'Strengthening Families'. It was recognised that the Strengthening Families model had become inefficient and was not working in the way it was originally set up, and the new service was developed to address this.

**3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The new Early Help Service was developed as a locality model, mirroring the children's social care locality arrangements to facilitate step-up and step-down processes.
- 3.2 There are three Early Help Locality Teams working out of Children's Centres and community buildings: a) Washington/North, b) East/West, c) Coalfields

Each team is made up of a Locality Service Manager, a Locality Team Manager, five Senior Early Help Workers, six Early Help Workers, four Children's Centre Activity Workers, four Connexions Personal Assistants and either one or two Attendance Officers.

Connected to the teams are also two DWP Employment Advisers, one Generation North East NEET Worker and since November 2017 three Police Community Support Officers.

- 3.3 In addition there is a new, central Early Help Advice and Allocations Team operating out the Civic Centre as a single point of contact for all information and advice, and the tracking and monitoring of the work undertaken. This team is also responsible for the tracking of Children Missing Education.
- 3.4 The Early Help Service works very closely with the Youth Offending Service (including Wear Kids ASB Service), the Youth Drug and Alcohol Service, the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and the Bumps to Babies Young Mums Project.
- 3.5 The revised remit of the Early Help Service is to:
- Develop and embed the concept of Early Help across the partnership
  - Brief partners and train staff in the delivery of early help at all levels

- Work with vulnerable and complex families identified as needing support, but who sit below the Level 3 threshold for social care intervention
  - Work with families who meet the criteria for the Troubled Families programme
  - Work with families who have stepped down from CIN or CP plans to offer a 'soft landing' and try to address the issue of re-referrals
  - Deliver parenting interventions for families mandated by the courts (CIN/CP, attendance, youth offending) and for those identified by the Early Help Service, the universal services and those that self-refer
  - Support the universal services to deliver early help at the lower end of Level 2
  - Reduce NEETS and Persistent Absence
  - Track Children Missing Education
  - Act as the single point of contact about early help and to track and evidence progress made by families
- 3.6 An Early Help Strategy has been launched. Consultation with partners took place between April and September and the Strategy was signed off by the Children's Strategic Partnership on 8 November 2017. A link for further information is attached <https://togetherforchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11/Sunderland%20Early%20Help%20Strategy%202017-2020%20compressed.pdf>
- A new suite of Early Help paperwork was introduced in February and launched with partners from April. This uses a straightforward identify, assess, plan, do, review model. Progress is measured using a pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, maintenance and sustainability matrix to enable practitioners to make informed, evidence-based decisions about closure or step-up.
- 3.7 A multi-agency **Early Help Panel** meets fortnightly to consider families where a request for Early Help has been made, but where there is insufficient information to make an informed decision about who should co-ordinate the plan, or about whether a plan is really needed. Attendance from partners at this Panel is very good.
- A multi-agency **Early Help Steering Group** has been set up to monitor progress with Early Help and to hold partners to account for their contribution. It has met three times to date. A multi-agency audit workshop to consider externally-held Early Help Plans is scheduled for mid-March.
- 3.8 Following the training that has taken place between April and December 2017, the Early Help Service is now able to offer:
- interventions in Children's Centres (designed with our health colleagues to address poor child health outcomes for the 0-4s)
  - support in the home with routines, home conditions, behaviour, relationships
  - support with school attendance and NEET
  - support with housing, debt management, employability, training



- parenting support (groups) for families directed by the courts – ages 0-12
- parenting support (groups and 1:1 in the home) for families identified by partners and self-referrals – ages 0-12 – co-delivered with schools
- parenting support as above for parents of teenagers
- support for young parents (B2b and Young Mums)
- support through YDAP for children displaying sexually harmful behaviours
- support through YDAP for young people affected by substance misuse
- referrals to the Phoenix Project for young people involved in anti-social behaviours and/or fire-starting (co-delivered between Fire Service and Early Help Service)
- Isolated Girls' Group (pilot project in the West)

3.9 A Neglect Toolkit was published in November 2017 – this will support practitioners with their assessments of need. If received well we will look to develop other toolkits (eg DV, CSE, mental ill-health etc).

#### **4. Progress to date**

4.1 In February 2017 there was evidence of 94 families being supported in some way with interventions that could be tracked.

At the end of December 2017 there were 646 open Early Help Plans. Of these 475 were being co-ordinated by the Early Help Service, and 171 by the Universal Services (up from 2 in April). The majority of those registered by the Universal Services are being co-ordinated by schools, with increasing numbers from health visitors.

In addition 171 cases were closed 'outcomes met' between April and December.

Currently, there are 1,446 children being supported on Early Help Plans, out of a total of 1,824 supported since April 2017.

4.2 An Early Help Worker carries an average case load of 20 families. Based on the number of children currently being supported, this equate to an average case load of 45 children per worker.

4.3 Just under half (43%) of the cases resulting in an open Early Help Plan since April have come to the Early Help Service via Children's Social Care.

Data from April – December 2017 shows that 93% of the children supported via the Early Help processes remained within the Early Help arena or stepped back down to universal services, an early indication that Early Help is an effective way of preventing families escalating to Children's Social Care.

4.4 In January 2018 Ofsted conducted its sixth monitoring visit, with a focus on Early Help. The monitoring letter was published on 15 February.

Ofsted commented that:

'TfC is making steady progress in improving services when problems first emerge for children, young people and their families. The refreshed early help service was established in April 2017 and is already demonstrating a significant increase in the take up of early help services: from 252 open cases in April 2017 to 646 open cases in December 2017. Schools and Northumbria police in particular are more engaged and have an increased understanding about the threshold to children's social care and their roles in providing early help to children and their families. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these developments.

TfC is working effectively with other agencies to manage the early help response and to further develop information sharing across agencies. Positively, early help staff within TfC clearly understand what is to be achieved and the flexibility required in their approach. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment, planning and management oversight.

Inspectors found that early help plans demonstrated some effective work with families in offering support where needs were often complex. One parent reported: 'I was angry at first but it's the best thing ever... I'm a better parent to my child.' Early help workers are consistently providing parenting support as well as undertaking direct work with children. Early help workers spoken to demonstrated a clear understanding of their work within a broader context of supporting and protecting children, and could speak with authority about children and families that they are working with. However, the quality of practice is inconsistent.

The self-assessment, provided by TfC for this monitoring visit, reflects well the progress and areas for development of early help services in Sunderland. These correlate with inspectors findings. The action plan to address the areas for development is appropriately focused, guidance has been produced and shared where necessary, and improvements in the quality of work could be seen in the more recent assessments and plans.'

The full monitoring letter can be found at:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/sunderland>

## **5. Future Plans**

- 5.1 We intend to monitor progress with Early Help and analyse the number of cases that are closed 'outcomes met' and what has made the difference to those families. This will inform our offer and our workforce development programme.

Families are now able to give us feedback via the TfC website, which will inform service developments.

An Early Child Development Programme will become part of our Children's Centre offer from September. This will help identify children who are under-

stimulated in the early years (age 2) and allow us to put parenting interventions in place.

We have begun a bi-lingual parenting course with one of our primary schools for parents of the Bangladeshi community.

We have booked mediation training for 10 workers for February 2018 to strengthen our family support offer. The North East Regional Troubled Families Network has also been successful in bidding for funding for family mediation training.

The Family Group Conferencing function will move from Children's Social Care to the line-management of Early Help from April 2018. This will strengthen the early help parenting intervention offer particularly for those cases stepping down from CIN or CP plans.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

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**Contact Officer:**     Name Karen Davison  
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                                 Telephone 0191 561 1501

**CONNEXIONS UPDATE****REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Connexions Service.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Under the Education and Skills Act 2008, local authorities have a range of duties to support young people to participate in education or training which are set out in statutory guidance on the participation of young people. Local authorities should have arrangements in place to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds have agreed post-16 plans and have received an offer of a suitable place in post-16 education or training under the 'September Guarantee', and that they are assisted to take up a place.
- 2.2 In addition, local authorities have a statutory duty to provide CEIAG for groups of students considered to be 'vulnerable'. In Sunderland this service was provided by Connexions historically. On 1 April 2017 the duty to provide CEIAG to vulnerable groups passed to Together for Children and the staff in the Connexions service transferred to TfC.
- 2.3 The 2011 Education Act made schools and academies responsible for securing independent and impartial careers advice for students from September 2012. The funds to procure this passed from local authorities to the Dedicated Schools Grant and were distributed to schools according to the local formula.
- 2.4 Originally schools and academies were responsible for securing independent advice for students from Year 9 upwards (age 14+). This was then widened to include students in Year 8 (age 13+).
- 2.5 Schools and academies are free to commission their independent careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) from any organisation or agency with appropriately qualified staff. They are not obliged to purchase this CEIAG from their local authority. There are several providers in the market and schools and academies should undertake a procurement exercise annually to select their provider.
- 2.6 The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 made it possible for schools and academies to accredit their own careers programmes and legitimately provide independent CEIAG 'in-house'.

### 3. Current Position

- 3.1 In Sunderland, some schools have purchased their universal CEIAG from agencies such as South Tyneside College and Zenith People since 2012. Eighteen schools continued to purchase a relatively small number of days' support for this universal advice from the local authority Connexions Service and these service level agreements passed to TfC in April.
- 3.2 CEIAG to vulnerable groups continues to be provided to all schools and academies via the Connexions Service in the Early Years Directorate in TfC.
- 3.3 The vulnerable groups include:
- Young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (SEND)
  - Looked After Children
  - Teenage parents and pregnant teenagers
  - Refugees and asylum seekers
  - Young Carers registered with the Carers Service
  - Young People on Child Protection, Child in Need and Early Help plans who meet the Troubled Families 'financial exclusion' criteria (eg from a workless household)
  - Young people who are electively home educated (although parents do not have to accept the offer)
- 3.4 The duty to report on the following also passed to TfC:
- The 'duty to participate' in education to the age of 18
  - Numbers Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)
  - Numbers whose status is 'Not Known'
- 3.5 The Connexions Service also supports those young people known to be NEET to re-engage them and encourage them towards the jobs market and into training opportunities, and tracks those young people whose status is 'not known' to locate them and similarly encourage them to participate.

### 4. Connexions data

- 4.1 The table below shows the data in relation to NEETs, Not Knowns and the duty to participate, for the last three academic years:

	Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)		Not Known		Participating in education ('duty to participate')	
	Sunderland	Statistical Neighbours**	Sunderland	Statistical Neighbours	Sunderland	Statistical neighbours
December 2017	3.3%	3.9%	6.0%	2.9%	88.5%	91.1%
December 2016	4.2%	3.8%	2.5%	2.1%	91.4%	92.0%
December 2015*	6.0%	5.2%	3.3%	3.8%	86.2%	86.1%

\* 2015 figures include Year 14. The duty to report on Year 14 was removed in 2016.

\*\* Sunderland's statistical neighbours can vary annually, but in 2017 they were: Gateshead, Wakefield, Durham, St Helens, Halton, Barnsley, South Tyneside, Hartlepool, Tameside and Darlington.

- 4.2 Our nearest statistical neighbour demographically is Gateshead. In December 2017 we compared as follows with Gateshead and our regional neighbours:

	Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)			Not Known			Participating in education ('duty to participate')		
	Sunderland	Gateshead	Regional Neighbours	Sunderland	Gateshead	Regional Neighbours	Sunderland	Gateshead	Regional neighbours
December 2017	3.3%	3.8%	3.9%	6.0%	7.0%	4.0%	Y12 93.7% Y13 82.4%	95.6% 80.1%	95.0% 85.8%

- 4.3 The table above show that:

Sunderland's NEET figures have reduced annually over the last three years.

Our Not Known figures have fluctuated and there is still work to do to track this cohort of young people to ensure that they are meaningfully occupied in employment and/or training.

Compliance with the 'duty to participate' is on a par with our statistical and our regional neighbours.

- 4.4 Together for Children's Connexions Service, supported by the wider Early Help Service, will continue to focus on our NEET and Not Known population to drive further improvements in this area.

## 5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

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**Contact Officer:** Name Karen Davison  
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**ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report sets out for members' consideration the work programme of the Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The work programme is designed to set out the key issues to be addressed by the Committee during the year and provide it with a timetable of work. The Committee itself is responsible for setting its own work programme, subject to the coordinating role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.
- 2.2 The work programme is intended to be a working document which Committee can develop throughout the year, allowing it to maintain an overview of work planned and undertaken during the Council year.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake all of its business and respond to emerging issues, there will be scope for additional meetings or visits not detailed in the work programme.
- 2.4 In delivering its work programme the Committee will support the Council in achieving its corporate outcomes

**3. Current position**

- 3.1 The current work programme is attached as an appendix to this report.
- 3.2 It is suggested that Members may wish to review the composition and priorities of the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year in view of the number of remaining items and earlier discussions during the meeting (Agenda Item 3 refers).

**4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The work programme is intended to be a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2017-18.

## **5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the work programme and consider its composition and priorities for the remainder of the municipal year.

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James.diamond@sunderland.gov.uk



**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2017-18**

<b>REASON FOR INCLUSION</b>	<b>27 JUNE 17</b>	<b>13 JULY 17</b>	<b>6 SEPTEMBER 17</b>	<b>5 OCTOBER 17</b>	<b>2 NOVEMBER 17</b>	<b>30 NOVEMBER17</b>	<b>4 JANUARY 18</b>	<b>1 FEBRUARY 18</b>	<b>1 MARCH 18</b>	<b>12 APRIL 18</b>
<b>Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses</b>	Children and Young People's Partnership Plan (Jane Hibberd)							Youth Justice Plan (Linda Mason)		
<b>Scrutiny Business</b>	Remit and Work Programme of Committee (Jim Diamond)	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) –Annual Report (Gavin Taylor)  Pupil Place Planning (Alan Rowan)	Independent Review Officer (IRO) – Annual Report (Gavin Taylor)  Early Years Funding (David May)	Training and Preparing for Work/ – NEETS Update (Karen Davison)  SEND Update – (Annette Parr)  IRO Report – Looked After Children (Gavin Taylor)	Corporate Parenting Annual Report (Sheila Lough)	Fixed Penalty Notices (Elaine Matterson)  Elective Home Education (Elaine Matterson)  School Exclusions and Attendance (Simon Marshall)  Feedback from Social Work Visit (Jim Diamond)	Safeguarding Board Annual Report (Paul Ennals-Independent Chair)	Together for Children (Chief Executive)  Educational Attainment Schools Results (Simon Marshall/Richard Cullen)	Universal Credit (Joan Reed)  NEETS/Connexions Progress Report (Karen Davison)  Early Help Strategy (Karen Davison)	Scrutiny Annual Report (JD)  Child Sexual Exploitation/Role of Licensing (Stuart Douglass)  Special Educational Needs/Special Educational School Progress (Simon Marshall)  Youth Offer
<b>Performance / Service Improvement</b>		Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Julie Lynn)  Children's Services Complaints (Rhiannon Hood)	Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Julie Lynn)		Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Julie Lynn)		Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Julie Lynn)  Children's Services Complaints (Stacy Hodgkinson)		Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Julie Lynn)	Children's Services Complaints (Stacy Hodgkinson)
<b>Consultation / Awareness Raising</b>	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18	Notice of Key Decisions  Work Programme 17-18

**Future Items to Timetable:**

School Exclusions

Suicide and Self Harm, Children & Young People – Progress Report

Nursery Provision for Two Year Olds in Sunderland

CAMHS

Children and Young People Strategy – Update

University Technical Colleges

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

#### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions.

#### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Holding the Executive to account is one of the main functions of Scrutiny. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Notice of Key Decisions) and deciding whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. This does not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.2 To this end, the most recent version of the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions is included on the agenda of this Committee. The Notice of Key Decisions is attached marked **Appendix 1**.

#### 3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In considering the Notice of Key Decisions, Members are asked to consider only those issues where the Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel could make a contribution which would add value prior to the decision being taken.
- 3.2 In the event of Members having any queries that cannot be dealt with directly in the meeting, a response will be sought from the relevant Directorate.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To consider the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

#### 5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Agenda

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The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is given of the following proposed Key Decisions (whether proposed to be taken in public or in private) and of Executive Decisions (including key decisions) intended to be considered in a private meeting:-

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter	Address to obtain further information
170810/205	To approve the freehold acquisition of a property to provide children's services accommodation.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 21 March to 30 April 2018.	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
170927/212	To approve in principle the establishment of a new police led Road Safety Partnership (Northumbria Road Safety Partnership) embracing the Northumbria Force area.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 19 September to 30 November 2018.	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter	Address to obtain further information
180103/235	To seek approval for the procurement and award of contracts to providers for local welfare provision	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
180124/238	To approve the Enforcement Policy for Public Protection and Regulatory Services	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
180124/239	To approve the Together for Children Business Plan and associated Key Performance Indicators 2018-2019	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report Business Plan	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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180126/241	To seek approval of the use of Section 106 Contributions for Affordable Housing.	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report A Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2017 - 2022	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
180205/242	To seek approval of proposals for the organisation and delivery of Programme and Learning activity funded through Sunderland Culture National Portfolio award.	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 4 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information on consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Council and its employees The public interest in maintaining these exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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180205/243	To seek approval for the proposed maintained school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2018-2019 and to describe proposed amendments to published admission numbers (PANs) for the academic year 2017-2018, where it is necessary to provide additional places.	Cabinet	Y	21 March 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
180103/237	To seek approval of the Active Sunderland policy position and themes until 2021, ensuring that the policy is relevant to both corporate priorities and Sport England outcome framework.	Cabinet	Y	25 April 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
180205/244	To seek Cabinet approval of the Housing Allocations Policy which has been revised in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.	Cabinet	Y	25 April 2018	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

**Note;** Some of the documents listed may not be available if they are subject to an exemption, prohibition or restriction on disclosure.

Further documents relevant to the matters to be decided can be submitted to the decision-maker. If you wish to request details of those documents (if any) as they become available, or to submit representations about a proposal to hold a meeting in private, you should contact Governance Services at the address below.

Subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of documents submitted to the decision-maker can also be obtained from the Governance Services team PO Box 100, Civic Centre, Sunderland, or by email to [committees@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk)

Who will decide;

Cabinet; Councillor Henry Trueman – Deputy Leader; Councillor Mel Speding – Cabinet Secretary; Councillor Louise Farthing – Children's Services; Councillor Graeme Miller – Health, Housing and Adult Services; Councillor John Kelly – Public Health, Wellness and Culture; Councillor Michael Mordey – City Services; Councillor Cecilia Gofton – Responsive Services and Customer Care

This is the membership of Cabinet as at the date of this notice. Any changes will be specified on a supplementary notice.

Elaine Waugh

Head of Law and Governance **20 February 2018**