

together for
children
SUNDERLAND



BUSINESS PLAN 2019-2022

putting
the child first

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1. WELCOME

Together for Children is entering a new phase of stability and optimism. Our focus continues to be on improving our services to children and young people in Sunderland. We were delighted that our hard work through tough times was recognised by Ofsted in improved ratings in three areas, but their overall judgement inevitably resulted in disappointment and turbulence. It is a tribute to the quality and resilience of all my colleagues that we have emerged stronger and even more determined to improve. We have a robust and experienced leadership team in place, and our partnerships with Sunderland City Council and the LSCB are mature and supportive. Together we will succeed in developing excellent services.

Our third year will build on the improvements we have made. We have many outstanding colleagues and we will give them the support and training they need to flourish. Our financial context remains constrained, but with the help of partners from across the city, we will launch new training and development programmes, not only for our staff, but for colleagues from other organisations in Sunderland working for families. As our workforce gains stability and permanence, we are driving improvement and consistency of practice.

It is central to our ethos that children and young people should be involved in what we do and how we do it. We already have many remarkable young people engaged in our work through groups such as the outstanding Change Council. We will develop a new emphasis on increasing opportunities for our children and young people not only to join our work, but also to take advantage of what the city as a whole can offer through mentoring, apprenticeships, training, development and enterprise. They are the future of our great city, and we want to engage the whole of its population in supporting and encouraging them.

We know that we still face considerable challenges. Many families in Sunderland are under stress and many children suffer as a consequence. We have a particular role to play in keeping them safe and helping them to thrive, and we are committed to doing that. As part of a wider community of partners, we are ambitious to develop resilience and strength for the children and for their families through shared resources.

I am immensely grateful to all those who have brought Together for Children to this place of optimism. My colleagues have worked beyond the call of duty; powered by professional dedication and passionate commitment to the children they serve. The leadership of Sunderland City Council has supported us through circumstances that have presented them with challenge in already challenging times. Our partners in the LSCB have been good friends and wise mentors. Our children and young people have given us sensible advice, cheerful inspiration, and a constant reminder of our purpose.

Thank you all for guiding us this far. I know you will join us again to take us on the next step of our journey.

Deborah Jenkins, Chair, Together for Children



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2022

Despite a challenging operating environment, Together for Children remains determined to succeed. Based on the review described in detail in this plan, the five key areas for focus over the next period are:

Quality

We want to offer services of the highest quality. Whilst some Together for Children services are recognised for the quality of their work, some remain inconsistent. We want all of our services to achieve the highest standards and improvement in services for the most vulnerable children and young people in Sunderland remains firmly at the top of our agenda. Quality must be our priority.

“We want all of our services to achieve the highest standards and improvement for the most vulnerable children and young people”

Partnership

We are committed to leveraging resources across Sunderland and beyond for the benefit of children and young people, yet joint planning and commissioning is presently underdeveloped in Sunderland with both statutory and third sector partners. If we are to achieve our collective ambitions as well as improve efficiency, then Partnership must be a key priority.

“We are committed to leveraging resources across Sunderland and beyond for the benefit of children and young people”

Early Help

We are committed to offering help early before situations worsen, enabling families to resolve their problems. We believe that this is the route to resilient and sustainable communities. However, in Sunderland, not enough of our families receive help early and possibly as a result, more might receive statutory services either through a child protection plan or by becoming looked after, than is necessary. Working with our partners, we want to alter this balance and so Early Help must be one of our priorities.

“We are committed to offering help early before situations worsen, enabling families to resolve their problems”

Efficiency

The financial climate for services requires that more is achieved with less. This necessitates innovation and efficiency. Efficiency can mean spending less, or exercising better budgetary control, but it can also mean using resources better to achieve better value or re-engineering processes to become more effective. The urgent budget pressures we face make clear that Efficiency must be a priority that is meaningful for all of our staff and managers.

“Efficiency must be a priority that is meaningful for all of our staff and managers”

Business Growth

Together for Children exists in order to be a force for improvement and innovation in children's services. We want to exploit the opportunities that come from being an arm's length not-for-profit enterprise and in so doing, to generate income that will benefit the children and families of Sunderland. A number of areas of our business are traded successfully already and we have ambitious plans to extend into new areas of work regionally and nationally. We recognise that this will require a professional approach to business development, able to respond to market demand, and so Business Growth must be one of our priorities.

“Together for Children exists in order to be a force for improvement and innovation in children's services”

3. OPERATING CONTEXT

Together for Children, like most Local Authority children's services, is facing a very challenging environment, both at national and local levels.

National

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the rate of children in need has remained relatively steady since 2010, but rates of children with Child Protection Plans and Children Looked After have risen throughout that time.

Over the same period, Local Authority budgets have reduced significantly and a national funding gap of £2 billion has been predicted by 2020 should current trends continue.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) 2018 report for the Children's Commissioner "Public Spending on Children 2000-2020", states that almost half of the national budget is spent on the 73,000 children who are looked after, whilst the remaining half is spent on the other 11.7 million children.

Although overall spending on children and families has been maintained at similar levels overall, almost 72% of budgets are now spent on interventions for families with complex needs, as spending on prevention and youth services had been reduced by over 60%. Benefit spending on families has reduced by 11% since 2010 and is planned to reduce further. National research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2018 showed that 66% of children in poverty live in working households, so unemployment is no longer a good indicator of child poverty.

Although spend on 4-16 education has been maintained, resources in post 16 and Further Education will be at 1990 levels by 2020 if current trends continue.

It is clear that funding has been diverted away from universal prevention and early help services towards very costly services for children and families in extreme need. The impact of this trend is causing concern amongst professionals and policy makers.

Local

Approximately 54,260 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Sunderland. This is 20% of the total population in the area. 28,037 are male and 26,223 are female.

Sunderland is relatively undiverse. The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language in primary schools is 6% (nationally 21%) and in secondary schools is 5% (nationally 16%). Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 6% of all children living in the area, compared with 21% in the country as a whole, with the largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area being Asian/Asian British and Mixed.



Sunderland has high levels of deprivation, is the third most deprived local authority area of 12 in the North East and the 37th most deprived local authority area out of 150 nationally. 38% of Sunderland's population live in the top 20% most deprived wards and Sunderland has the worst outcomes in the region on education and health, with the second worst on income and employment (JSNA of Child and Family Health 2015).

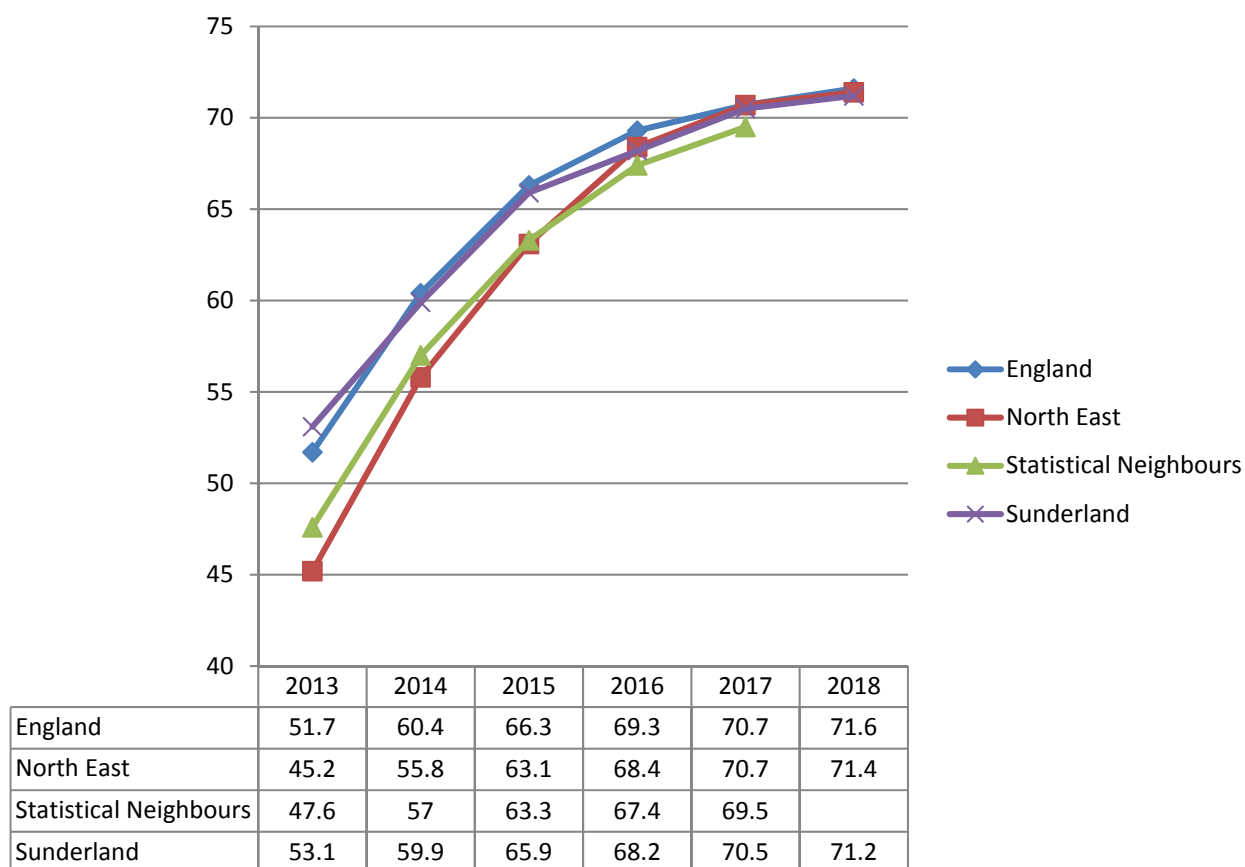
38% of Sunderland's population live in the top 20% most deprived wards

The impact of welfare reforms have yet to be fully felt in Sunderland, with Universal Credit being introduced in July 2018.

Approximately 26% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years are living in low income families. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals in primary schools is 20% (the national average is 14%) and in secondary schools is 21% (the national average is 13%).

Approximately 26% of the local authority's children aged under 16 years are living in low income families

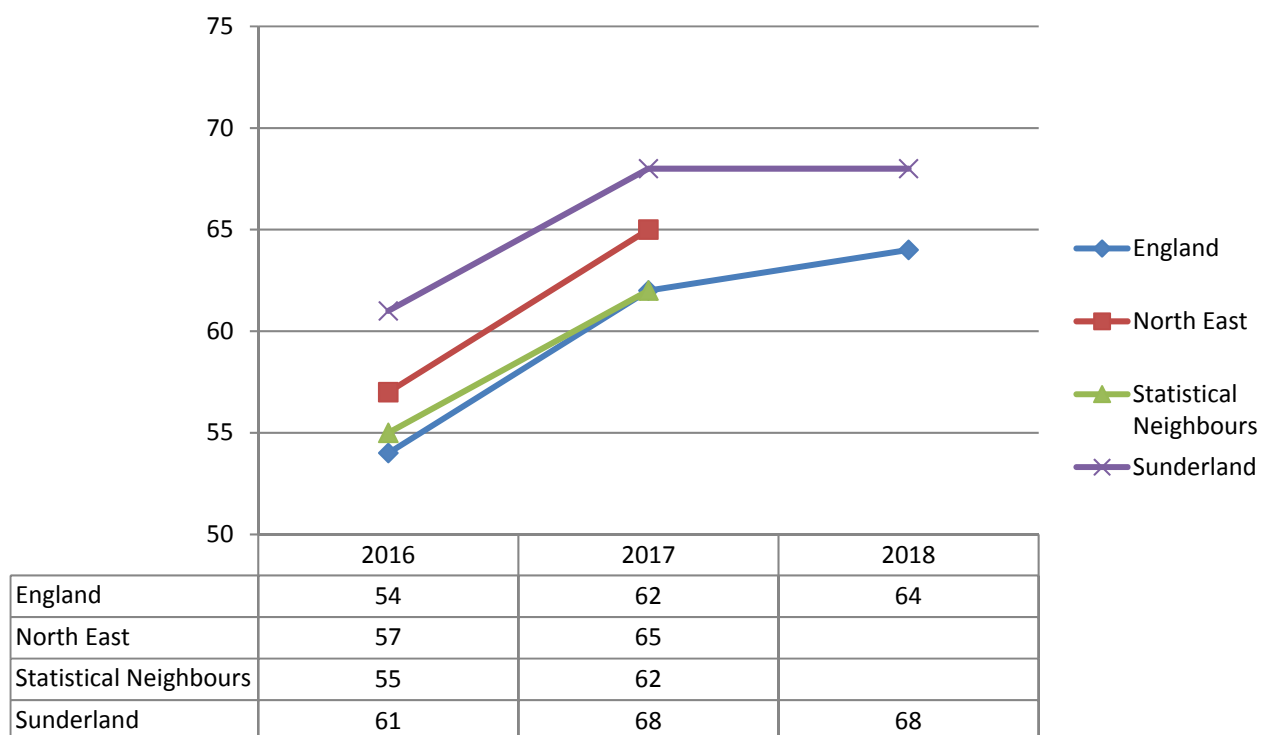
Early Years Foundation Stage Percentage of Good Level of Development



*2018 data is provisional

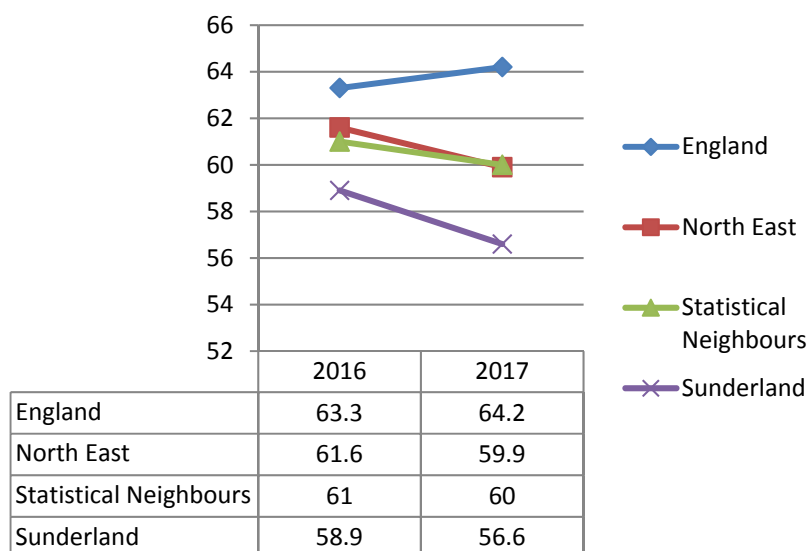
Children in Sunderland are more ready for school at age four than children in similar areas and nationally and they attain well at the end of Key Stage 2. However, Key Stage 4 attainment lags behind expected levels for similar areas, particularly in English and Maths and post 16 qualification rates are not as good as we would wish. There has been success however, in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers.

KS2 Percentage Reaching Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths

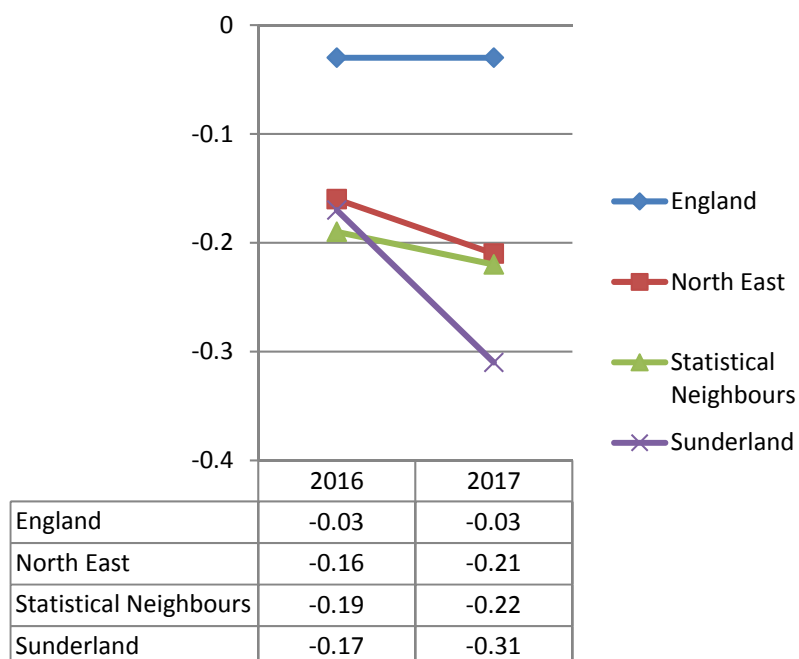


*2018 data is provisional

KS4 – Achieving C+/4+ in English and Maths



KS4 – Progress 8 Score

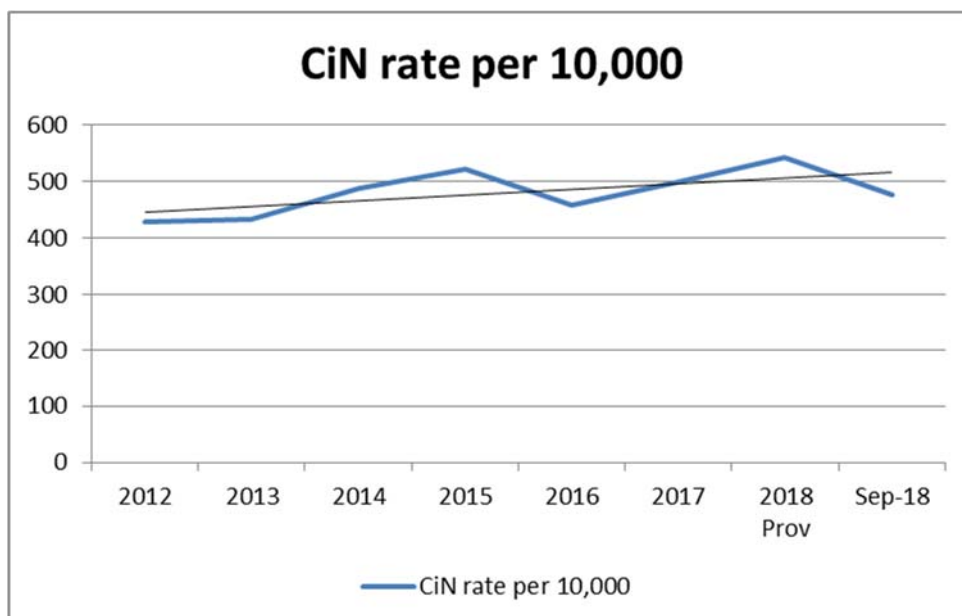
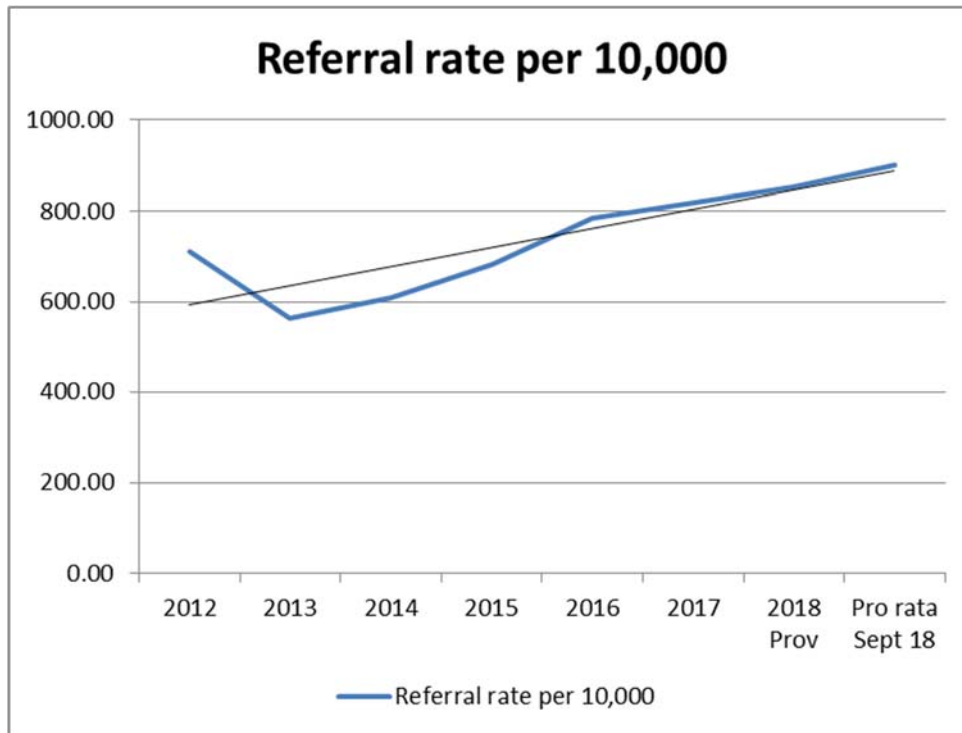


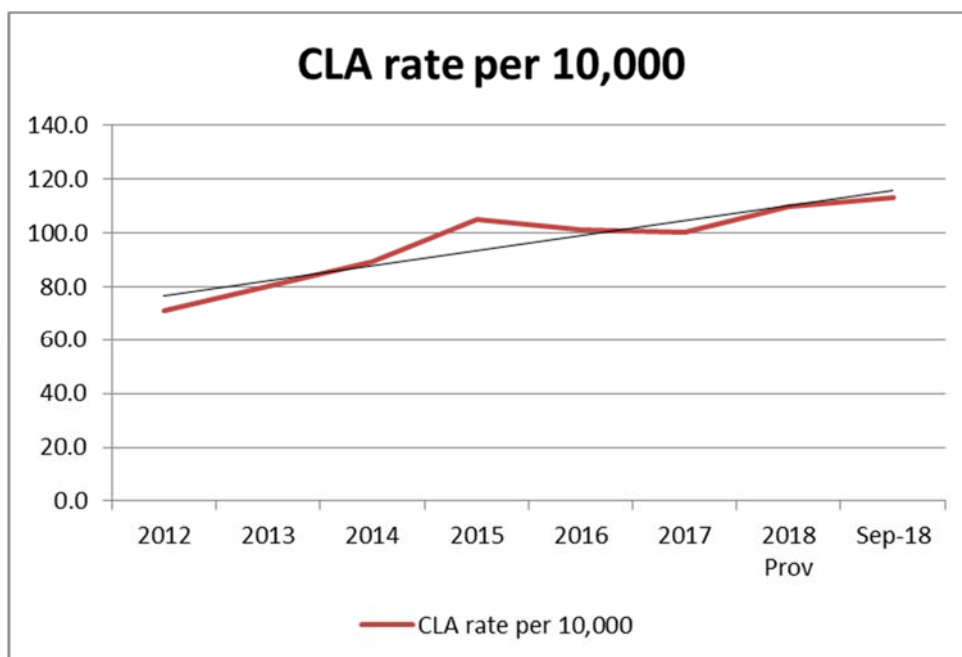
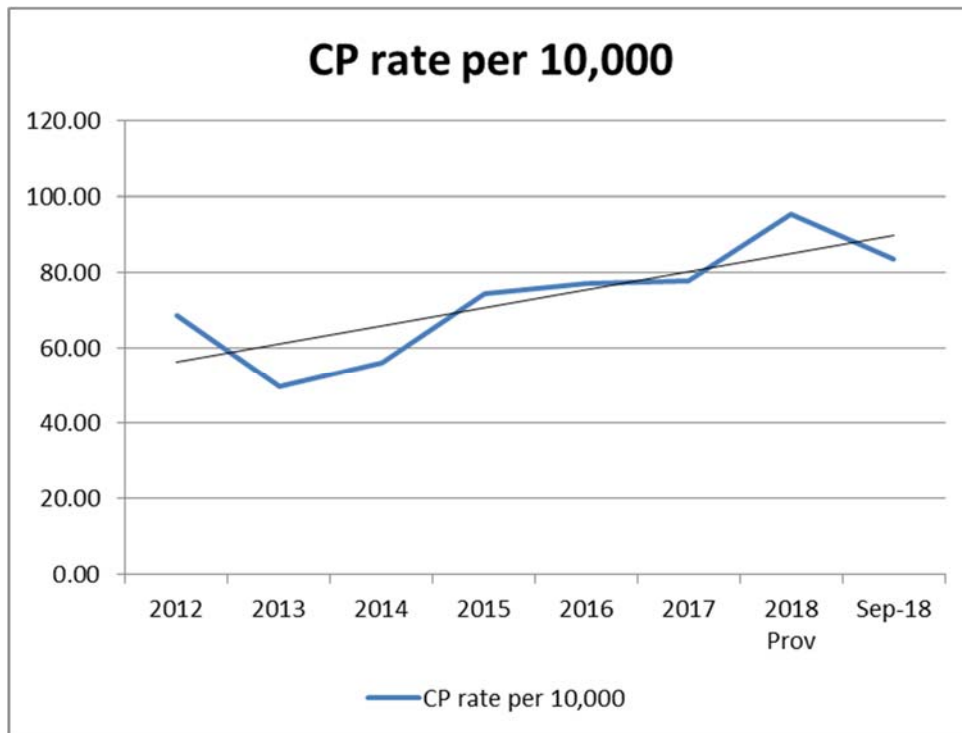
Progress 8 captures the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of secondary school. It is a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the actual achievements of other pupils with similar prior attainment. Progress 8 scores are centred around 0, with most schools within the range of -1 to +1:

- A score of 0 means pupils in this school on average do about as well at KS4 as those with similar prior attainment nationally
- A positive score means pupils in this school on average do better at KS4 as those with similar prior attainment nationally
- A negative score means pupils in this school on average do worse at KS4 as those with similar prior attainment nationally.

A negative score does not mean that pupils did not make any progress; rather it means they made less progress than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

National trends in social care are reflected in Sunderland, but are more pronounced. Demand for social care services in Sunderland have increased significantly over the last five years. Referrals to social care are up 53% since 2013. The number of open children in need cases has increased by 25% in the same five year period. The rate of children looked after (CLA) is projected to have increased by 37% whilst the rate of children with a child protection plan (CPP) has increased by 91%.





Local authorities across the region and the country are reporting increased demand for services. However, in Sunderland, whilst demand has increased, the social care response has tended towards higher level interventions, such as CPP and CLA, which are the most serious interventions into family life that the state can make. These are also the most costly interventions, both in professional time and in financial resources. Sunderland threshold document describes four **Thresholds of Need** levels.

As the level of need increases, the number of children requiring that service should decrease (high need/low incidence). In Sunderland though, many more children receive statutory services than early help and this indicates an area for further investigation.

It is evident that social care responses in Sunderland tend to be at a higher level than we would expect and resources have become focused at this level at the expense of preventative and early help responses.



At September 2018:

- 278 children per 10,000 had an early help plan
- 901 children per 10,000 were referred to social care services for assessment (pro-rata)
- 476 children were assessed as a child in need per 10,000 population
- 84 children had a protection plan per 10,000 population
- 113 children were looked after per 10,000 population.

Early Help services in Sunderland have suffered budget reductions over a number of years since 2012 with reductions in children's centres, in services and in staffing. In response, early help services were restructured in 2018 and now provide targeted support for families with complex needs, including Family Group Conferencing. As a result, more families who need one now have an Early Help plan. However, there is more work to do to ensure that all partners work together to identify need early and intervene before problems worsen, so that more families can benefit from earlier help.

It is very clear that increasing numbers of looked after children and children with high levels of need have placed budgets under pressure and caused overspends. At a time when Council budgets are under severe pressure, this situation requires our concerted focus.

What this means for children

The current circumstances in Sunderland suggest that some children and young people:

- do not have their needs identified early enough and so do not receive help soon enough
- may be experiencing the intervention of the State in their lives when it may not have been necessary
- may be taken into care, when they could remain with their families
- are experiencing too many changes of social worker and are not able to develop trusting relationships
- are uncertain what the future holds for them, because assessments take too long or are of poor quality.

Ofsted Inspection

Ofsted published a report in July 2018 detailing its findings from its inspection of children's social care services. Services overall were judged to be "inadequate", despite children being "better served today than they were 3 years ago", services for looked after children and care leavers being judged as "requiring improvement" and adoption performance being "good".

Clearly progress has been made, but while serious shortcomings in the safeguarding of the most vulnerable children persist, this activity remains a priority. Progress in this area of the business is essential in order to build trust and credibility with partners and potential customers across the region and beyond.

This inspection judgement means that the Council and Together for Children's social care services will remain under the direction of the Department for Education for a further period. A detailed improvement plan has been developed to respond to the fifteen recommendations identified by Ofsted.

Workforce

Workforce instability in social care services has inhibited progress over recent years, but progress has been made in reducing the number of temporary staff employed and in recruiting permanent managers. This area is now subject to a robust Workforce Strategy to ensure progress continues. The Workforce Strategy has five priorities which are:

1. That information on qualifications, training and progression routes is accessible and help to develop skills and careers.
2. That the TfC workforce has the skills and knowledge that they need to undertake their roles and to access progression routes, to include development of the TfC Academy.
3. To create a knowledge bank evidencing best practice and based upon what makes the most difference.
4. To create an Aspirant Managers Program for TfC, ensuring effective succession planning across the company.
5. To adopt a strategic approach to recruitment, raising the profile of jobs at TfC and encouraging the best to join us.

The successful implementation of this supporting strategy is critical to the implementation of this plan.



Finance

The budget agreed at the outset with Sunderland City Council was found to be insufficient to manage demand-led pressures and financial targets agreed at inception predicated on reductions in the number of looked after children proved to be undeliverable, given the increased CLA numbers noted above.

The financial outturn in 2017/18 showed an overspend of £8m. A subsequent zero based budget exercise established a clearer understanding of the costs required to deliver required activity levels. This showed a requirement of £4.2million over the contract offer, after an efficiency target of £406,000 was delivered by the company.

Non-recurrent funding of £3m has been identified for 2018/19 only, payable against evidence of transformation, efficiency and robust financial control. The volatile area of expenditure on children looked after is reported regularly to both the Together for Children Board and to the Council.

Given the severe impact of ongoing austerity measures on Council finances, this situation gives cause for concern and necessitates radical action in response. This plan proposes that priority is given to actions designed to improve efficiency at the same time as improving services. A detailed Financial Strategy has been developed to outline the detailed measures that will be taken in order to bring budgets under control. That plan mirrors the main actions set out in this Business Plan.



Budget 2018/19 £000 exc DSG



4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN AND CONSULTATION

This plan has been developed following:

- **review of current performance and progress**
- **a survey of employees**
- **consultation with TfC managers and staff**
- **consultation with the TfC Board**
- **consultation with Sunderland City Council**
- **review of inspection outcomes**
- **review of external factors**

Together for Children is committed to hearing "the voice of the child". For many years we have used the Viewpoint method of consulting with children who are looked after and are now also committed to the implementation of the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app. This allows us to hear the views of children and young people about the service they receive and their life experiences. Our Change Council for care leavers is vibrant and active in representing the views and experiences of children who are leaving the care system. This activity is leading to some fundamental changes in the way the voice of the child is understood, as well as making a difference for individual children.

We will create sustainable opportunities for dialogue over the next months, so that the detailed implementation of this plan can be informed by the views of our children, young people and their families. We also want to continue to develop the use of MOMO alongside our other consultation methods to ensure the views of children and young people drive strategic action in the future until that becomes a core feature of our culture



What our staff thinks

A survey of Together for Children employees was conducted for the development of this plan. Online forms were completed by 121 employees across Together for Children, many of whom took time to submit detailed, thoughtful responses to the questions posed.

From the survey, it is clear that employees across the company are committed to achieving the best outcomes for children and young people. Many are attracted to working for a new form of organisation and are keen to explore some of the opportunities this may bring.

A strong theme from the survey is that staff want to feel that they are "in it together" with colleagues across Together for Children, with leaders, with the Council, with partners and with children and families.

Employees are keen to achieve stability, having experienced a number of changes in management and short term employment patterns in some teams.



They are also enthusiastic in wanting to be engaged in the development of the company and its services, and feel they are capable of developing their own solutions to agreed problems, if encouraged to do so.

In order to be fully involved with the future of the company, staff want to discern a clear purpose and vision and be kept in the picture through effective communication.

Above all, staff want to feel valued and recognised for their contribution.

What children, young people and their families want

Although children, young people and families have not been consulted directly for this plan, consultation with children and young people receiving social care services has previously and repeatedly shown that what children want from services is:

- a stable relationship with a professional they can trust
- an age appropriate understanding of what is happening, including why they are receiving services
- excellent communication
- to feel listened to
- practical help for their parents

Analysis of complaints and representations in Sunderland reflect these concerns.

“Staff want to feel valued and recognised for their contribution”

“A stable relationship with a professional they can trust. To feel listened to”

5. OUR VISION AND MISSION

Vision

In light of this operating context, Together for Children has developed this vision, describing its purposes and long term aspirations.

Through Together for Children, we will improve the lives of children and their families, keep children safe from harm, and ensure they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

As a not for profit organisation, we aim to merge the best of public service with private enterprise, leveraging resources across Sunderland and beyond and using innovation with purpose for the benefit of Sunderland's children, young people and families. This provides Sunderland with the exciting opportunity to create new partnerships, approaches and services, to increase efficiency and access funding.

Mission

Together for Children will work with all partners to ensure that every ounce of energy and every penny of resource is focused on achieving this vision.

Together for Children provides a range of services to meet the education, early help and social care needs of Sunderland's children, but we can't do this on our own. We work with statutory and community partners in everything we do. This includes in the most fundamental responsibility for the safeguarding and protection of children, including looked after services and those for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Together for Children was set up to respond to unparalleled challenges in children's services, following a highly critical Ofsted inspection of social care services in 2015. Sunderland City Council agreed that Social Care, Early Help and Education services should be delivered by Together for Children, along with a range of business, human resources and finance services.

This plan acknowledges the improvements made since Together for Children was created, but also the ongoing difficulties faced by some services, as reported by Ofsted in July 2018.

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Values and Culture

We recognise that it is not just *what* we do that matters, but the *way* that we do it. How we work is very important to us. We want our values to permeate every aspect of our organisational culture so that the children, young people and families we work with experience them.

These values are woven into this plan and our priorities. However, we are also realistic. We know that culture is not created overnight. As a relatively new organisation, Together for Children will actively focus on culture and behaviour through all layers of the organisation to ensure that we encourage those behaviours to which we aspire, regularly checking with the users of our services as well as our staff on their experiences. The acid test of our work is what it means for children, young people and their families.

The work of Together for Children will be characterised by the following themes:

- **Working with, not doing to**
- **Excellence and professionalism**
- **High support and kindness together with high challenge**
- **Innovation and learning**
- **A focus on outcomes and effectiveness**
- **Listening and hearing the voice of the child.**

6. OUR PRIORITIES IN DETAIL

Based on this review and in response to our operating context, the five key areas for focus over the next period need to be:

- 1. To improve the quality of all services for children in Sunderland and build trust with partners**
 - We will improve the quality of social care services, so that children and young people are safe.
Together with our partners, we will work to keep children safe in their families where possible, healthy and involved in their communities.
 - We will support schools to overcome all forms of barriers to attainment and to narrow the gaps.
 - We will develop integrated and effective early help services that help reduce the need for statutory service involvement.
- 2. To develop partnerships across Sunderland and beyond to support children and families**
 - We will provide leadership for the creation and development of partnerships focusing on outcomes for children and young people of all ages.
 - We will encourage the pooling of human and financial resources with partners in order to achieve our mutual objectives.
 - We will build partnerships with voluntary and community sector partners to support families where they live.
- 3. To optimise investment in early help and edge of care services in order to safely reduce demand for statutory services**
 - Together with our partners, we will identify social and educational needs early and work to ensure that no child or young person in Sunderland slips through the net and no family lacks support when they need it.
 - We will work to help children grow up in their own families by developing edge of care services for families in crisis.
 - We will develop or commission interventions to respond to parental alcohol and substance misuse, domestic abuse and parental mental health needs.
- 4. To improve efficiency, both within Together for Children and across the partnership**
 - We will manage the social care system. Specifically, we will offer help earlier, and step cases down from statutory levels where it is safe to do so. We will develop alternatives to care to reduce entries to care. We will ensure we have enough placements of the right type to meet our children's needs, including increasing the number of available foster carers. We will manage cases effectively to ensure children's needs are met in a timely and effective way, without delay.
 - We will manage our money by redesigning and restructuring some of our services. We will rigorously manage all of our expenditure.
 - We will pool our resources with partners to seek

opportunities for joint commissioning and sharing of resources.

5. To grow Together for Children so that it can become a force for improvement and innovation

- We will develop the brand of Together for Children so that it is recognised regionally and nationally as a credible provider of high quality services.
- Together for Children will trade high quality services in order:
 - to build capacity for improvement in Sunderland and beyond
 - to generate funds to invest in development and innovation for the benefit of children, young people and families in Sunderland and beyond
- We will explore the creation of a charitable organisation for Together for Children as a vehicle to maximise income, investment and flexibility.

PRIORITY 1:

To improve the quality of all services for children in Sunderland and build trust with partners

INTENTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEAD	SUPPORTING PLANS
We will improve the quality of social care services, so that children and young people are safe. Together with our partners, we will work to keep children safe in their families where possible, healthy and involved in their communities	Children are safe and receive high quality, timely services matched to their needs	Director of Children's Social Care	Operational Plan (which includes Children's Social Care Service Plan)
We will support schools to overcome all forms of barriers to attainment and to narrow the gaps	Children attain in line with their potential at all phases of their life The impact of social disadvantage on life chances is reduced as a result of our work	Director of Education	Operational Plan (which includes Education Service Plan)
We will develop integrated and effective early help services that help reduce the need for statutory service involvement	Children and families' needs are identified and met before they worsen	Director of Early Help	Operational Plan (which includes Early Help Service Plan)

PRIORITY 2:

To develop partnerships across Sunderland and beyond to support children and families

INTENTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEAD	SUPPORTING PLANS
We will provide leadership for the creation and development of partnerships focusing on outcomes for children and young people of all ages	Partners work with a common purpose to achieve agreed outcomes for children Partnerships are strong and effective in acting together to improve the lives of children and young people	Chief Executive, Together for Children	Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans) Children and Young People's Partnership Plan
We will encourage the pooling of human and financial resources with partners in order to achieve our mutual objectives	Partners develop shared plans, pool budgets and commission together Partners work together to share delivery of services	Director of Performance and Quality	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans)
We will build partnerships with voluntary and community sector partners to support families where they live	Families can find support both instead of statutory intervention and following it, to improve sustainability	Director of Early Help	Operational Plan (which includes Early Help Service Plan)

PRIORITY 3:

To optimise investment in early help and edge of care services in order to safely reduce demand for statutory services

INTENTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEAD	SUPPORTING PLANS
Together with our partners, we will identify social and educational needs early and work to ensure that no child or young person in Sunderland will slip through the net, no family will lack support when they need it	<p>Special needs are identified at the earliest opportunity so that support can be effective</p> <p>Social needs are identified at the earliest opportunity so that support can be effective and fewer children suffer neglect</p> <p>Families can find help when they need it</p>	Director of Early Help	Operational Plan (which includes Early Help Service Plan)
We will work to help children grow up in their own families by developing edge of care services for families in crisis	Young people and families in crisis are able to resolve their difficulties and safely stay together	Director of Children's Social Care	Operational Plan (which includes Children's Social Care Service Plan)
We will develop or commission interventions to respond to parental alcohol and substance misuse, domestic abuse and parental mental health needs	Parents' needs are met without their children suffering neglect and being taken into care	<p>Director of Early Help</p> <p>Director of Children's Social Care</p>	Operational Plan (which includes Early Help and Children's Social Care Service Plans)

PRIORITY 4:

To improve efficiency, both within Together for Children and across the partnership

INTENTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEAD	SUPPORTING PLANS
We will manage the social care system. Specifically, we will offer help earlier, and step cases down from statutory levels where it is safe to do so. We will develop alternatives to care to reduce entries to care. We will ensure we have enough placements of the right type to meet our children's needs, including increasing the number of available foster carers. We will manage cases effectively to ensure children's needs are met in a timely and effective way, without delay	Our care system will meet the needs of the children it serves in a timely and appropriate manner, giving them the best chance possible to grow up with their own families	Director of Children's Social Care	Operational Plan (which includes Children's Social Care Service Plan)
We will manage our money by redesigning and restructuring some of our services We will rigorously manage all of our expenditure	Services will be fit for purpose. Appropriate governance and management oversight will be exercised over all budgets and main functions, providing assurance for the TFC Board	Director of Finance	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes Children's Social Care Service Plan)
We will pool resources with partners to seek joint commissioning opportunities and resource sharing.	Service delivery will be integrated. Duplication, overlap and gaps will be eradicated	Chief Executive, Together for Children	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans)

PRIORITY 5:

To grow Together for Children so that it can become a force for improvement and innovation

INTENTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEAD	SUPPORTING PLANS
We will develop the brand of Together for Children so that it is recognised regionally and nationally as a credible provider of high quality services	TfC has a recognisable brand identity, supported by a professional web presence and materials	Director of Performance and Quality	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans)
Together for Children will trade high quality services	TfC will trade a wide range of high quality services, in line with market demands and service capabilities	Director of Finance	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans)
We will explore the creation of a charitable organisation for Together for Children as a vehicle to maximise income, investment and flexibility	Together For Children Trust will exist, effectively accessing charitable funding to support its work	Director of Finance	Financial Plan Operational Plan (which includes all Service Plans)

7. GOVERNANCE

The Together for Children Board is responsible for ensuring that the company succeeds in achieving its objectives, but the statutory responsibility for the delivery of Children's Services in Sunderland remains with the Council.

This plan sets out a new arrangement through which assurance will be provided, and is part of a new assurance framework.

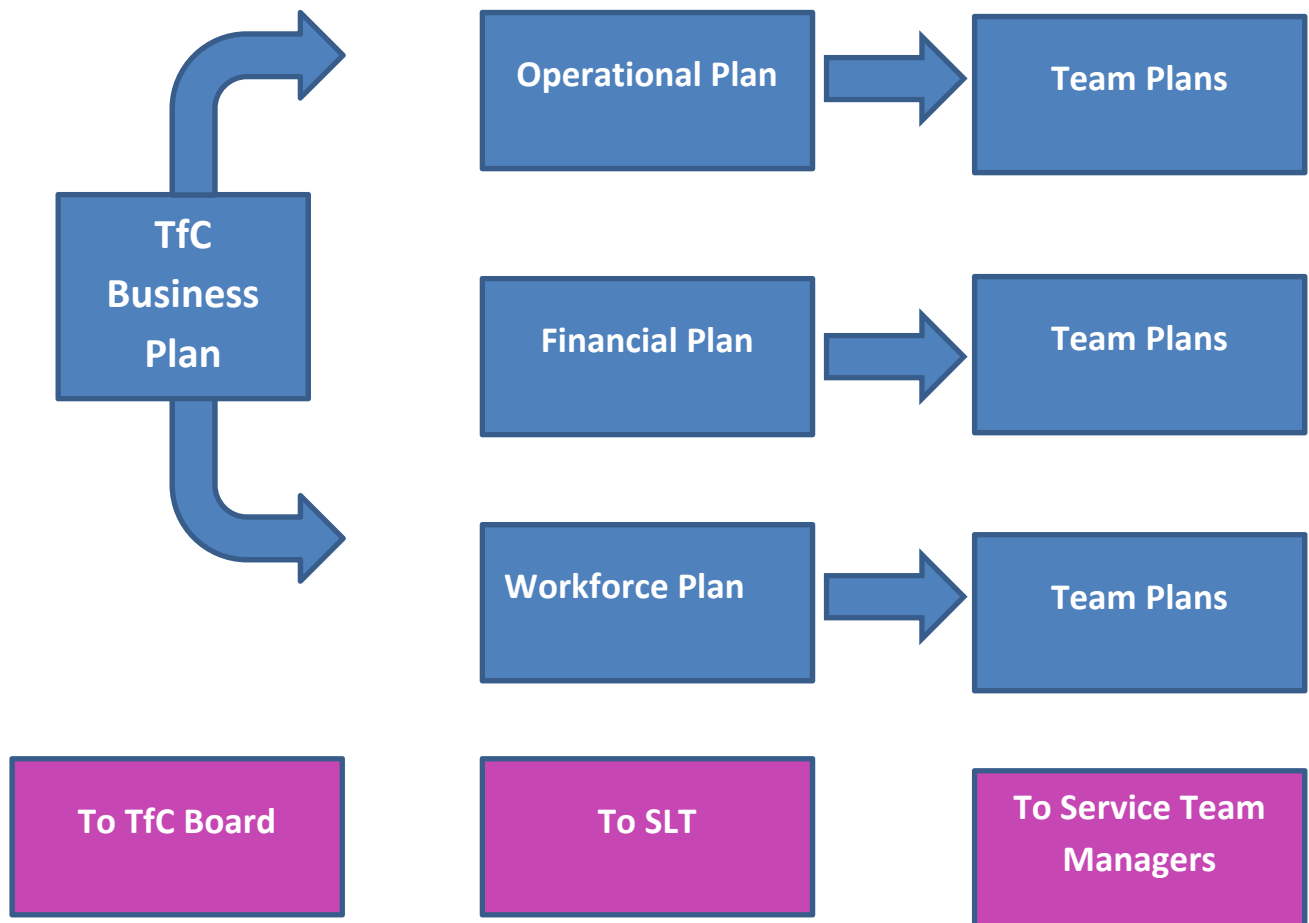
Responding to Ofsted's findings on governance, this approach is designed to:

1. Allow the Together for Children Board to exercise appropriately strategic oversight of activity and monitor its impact.
2. Enable the Together for Children Board to challenge and scrutinise specific aspects of service and to hold leaders to account.
3. Enable the Together for Children Board to identify, by exception, areas of business failing to meet expectations or targets.
4. As part of the wider Assurance Framework, minimise the risk of the Together for Children Board becoming over-reliant on a limited set of performance indicators.
5. Facilitate reporting to the Council.
6. Ensure Together for Children leaders and practitioners throughout the organisation are responsible for what they can control and become accountable for the same.
7. Bridge the gap between strategy and practice by engaging practitioners and front line managers directly.
8. Empower employees at all levels and in all functions to own their own performance, to shape services and to find innovative solutions to challenges.
9. Allow the pace of work to be managed by clarifying the number and complexity of packages of work being managed at any one time.

Plans will be simple but will ensure that everyone remains focused on those activities that have been identified as priorities. This approach particularly responds to the staff survey theme on staff engagement and is key to the development of a positive culture.



Hierarchy of Plans



TfC Performance Indicators 2019/2020

Sunderland Council Performance Clinic – Proposed TfC Performance Indicators

No	Contractual KPI's	Target	Tolerances
KPI 1	% of Early Help cases that were closed with two or more successful outcomes (TfC)	65%	62% – 64.9%
KPI 2	Rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System	375	375.1-402.9
KPI 3	% of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours	95%	85% – 94.9%
KPI 4	% of children subject to a child protection plan who have received a statutory visit within 20 working days.	95%	90 % - 94.9%
KPI 5	% of CLA with 3+ placements in the last 12 months	11%	11.1-13%
KPI 6	% of CLA with an up to date PEP	85%	80% - 84.9%

No	Supporting Indicators
SM1	Rate of CIN
SM2	Rate of CP
SM3	Rate of CLA
SM4	% of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months
SM5	% of Child in Need assessments authorised within 45 wds
SM6	% of children subject to CIN plan who received a visit within 20 working days
SM7	% of Children Looked After who have received a statutory visit within timescale
SM8	% of care leavers in suitable accommodation (19-21)
SM9	% of care leavers who are in employment, education or training (19-21)
SM10	% of care leavers contacted within 8 weeks (17-21)
SM11	% of established social worker posts filled by agency/interim staff
SM12	% of Early Help cases that were closed with two or more successful outcomes (Partner)
SM13	% of children subject to a repeat plan (within 2 years)
SM14	Number of missing from home episodes (& children)
SM15	Number of missing from care episodes (& children)
SM16	% of children identified at risk of MSET who have a completed MSET Framework
SM17	% of children subject to CP plan longer than 2 years
SM18	% of children placed with internal foster carers
SM19	% of CLA with a plan of permanence by second review (in period)
SM20	Number of CLA who have had unplanned placement moves in the period
SM21	Number of internal foster carers
SM22	% of young people who are NEET or whose activity is not known (age 16 – 17)
SM23	% of established social worker posts that are vacant
SM24	Proportion of Education Health Care plans issued in 20 weeks/excluding exception cases
SM25	The provision of a detailed financial update report to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources within 5 days of the Company Board
SM26	The provision to the S151 Officer of timely School's Finance Reports within 5 days of each Schools Forum meeting

8. OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

TfC BUSINESS PLAN	OPERATIONAL PLAN	TEAM PLANS
<p>Sets out the priorities for the whole company over the next 3 years</p> <p>Responds to the operating context facing the company</p> <p>Identifies the long term outcomes the company seeks to achieve</p> <p>Identifies high level measures of success that will be used to indicate progress towards desired outcomes</p>	<p>Sets out each service's contribution to the TfC Business Plan (Social Care, Education, Early Help, Quality and Performance and Finance)</p> <p>Sets out the specific actions that will be taken in each service to deliver the TfC strategic intentions</p> <p>Identifies the measures of success that will be used to track progress</p> <p>Sets targets for progress</p>	<p>Identifies the specific actions and behaviours required from individual teams in order to deliver project and service plans which contribute to the TfC Business Plan</p> <p>Sets out key targets the team will commit to achieve and the actions they will take to achieve them</p>
	<p><i>The Operational Plan will interpret the strategic priorities of the Board as they relate to the specific function</i></p>	<p><i>Not every team will require their own plan, but where a team's actions are critical to the delivery of particular outcomes, then a team level plan will assist. It is essential that team members develop the plan themselves, so that they own responsibility for it. It is possible to develop individual practitioner plans where this is required, indicating that each individual can make a difference. This can be managed via supervision</i></p>
Managed by TfC Board	Managed by SLT	Managed by Service Teams

Next steps in developing the Together for Children Strategic Planning Framework

To ensure that the Business Plan is owned by everyone in Together for Children, Service Management Teams now need to develop their Service and Team Plans, in consultation with their staff.

A schedule for this process is set out below, which will allow all plans to be signed off by March 2019 and to be in place by April 2019.

PLAN	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
TfC Business Plan	TfC Board	End of September 2018
Operational/Financial/Workforce Plan	Strategic Leadership Team	End of December 2018
TfC Business Plan	Sunderland City Council Cabinet	Mid-January 2019
Team Plans	Senior Management Teams	End of February 2019
WHOLE PLANNING FRAMEWORK	TfC Board	End of March 2019

Monitoring

Once agreed, the plans will be monitored through the respective management arrangements. Achievement of objectives and targets will be reported to the TfC Board quarterly, and lack of progress will be reported by exception quarterly.

Progress on service and team plans will be monitored monthly by the relevant management team.

Where an exception report is necessary, the responsible manager will at the same time present a remediation plan, outlining what actions are being taken to bring performance back into line with expectations.

The TfC Board and all management teams will not rely exclusively on written reports, but will, in line with the Assurance Framework, seek a variety of evidence of progress. This may include visits to service teams, focus groups with staff, meetings with young people and parents, discussion with partners, for example Cafcass and others.

Review

The Together for Children Business Plan will remain in place for a period of three years, but will be formally reviewed annually, with amendments made as indicated by progress, performance and context.



Working on behalf of Sunderland City Council
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