

## Early Help Directorate Annual Review 2021/22



## Executive Summary – the Early Help Annual Review 2021/22 in brief

As in 2020/21, the body of this annual review is comprehensive and effusive, reflecting the enthusiasm and pride felt by managers in the Early Help Directorate in the work of our services and of our front-line staff. I appreciate, however, that it will take time and effort to read the entire document and understand clearly what difference these services and interventions are making for our children and families in Sunderland. This document is almost twice as long as last year's due to our much-extended prevention offer (apologies). This Executive Summary attempts to lay out briefly the major areas of progress and improvement.

It is difficult to draw a direct line between preventative and early interventions and the reduced need for higher level statutory support. There is no causal link between the provision of or lack of Early Help and a reduced or an increased need for child in need or child protection plans. Expressed mathematically A plus does not equal B minus. It could even be argued that the more we support families early, the more likely we are to uncover unmet need and hidden harm and the more statutory resources we need to deploy as a result. The argument for good Early Help services is not based on cost reduction, or even cost avoidance, but on better long-term outcomes for children and families.

In 2021/22 the services in the Early Help Directorate's portfolio achieved the following:

- Early Help Plans - a return to the pre-pandemic level of families being supported by Early Help Plan – page 7
- Step up to Children's Social Care - a further 8% decrease in the numbers of children stepping up to statutory services from an open Early Help Plan – page 11
- Troubled Families claims - a second year of 100% claims – page 12
- Family Group Conferencing - 75% of families supported through an FGC stepped down to the universal services and required no further support and a further 8% required a lower level of support – page 17
- NEET and Unknown data – the three-month average in 2021/22 was 5.4%, equal to the regional average – page 18
- Children Missing Education – 2,618 notifications tracked, and all children located safely – page 23
- Prevention – 248 young people supported with Relationships, Sex and Health Education – page 25



- Prevention – 2,137 young people supported via Participation and Engagement – page 27
- Prevention – 13 schools achieved the Healthy Schools Award – page 30
- Prevention – 1,573 Mind of My Own and Express statements received – page 31
- Prevention – 9,418 children attended a Holiday Activity and Food session – page 32
- Prevention – 2,564 young people supported by the Prevention Bus – page 34
- Bumps to Babies young parents' project – one young mum progressed to university and four gained employment – page 36
- Youth Drug and Alcohol project (YDAP) – 92% positive outcomes – page 37
- Wear Kids (Anti-Social Behaviour) programme – 80% of young people engaged remained out of the youth justice system – page 38
- Youth Offending Service – the number of First Time Entrants decreased for the seventh consecutive year - page 39
  - Offending by cared for children decreased again to 2.2%
  - 221 victims of youth offending supported

Page 41 details some of our plans for 2022/23. These are exciting as they are varied.

As Director, I remain fiercely proud of everything we have achieved over the last five years. Our staff are amazing, and our families are better off for the work that they do. Financially it remains a challenge to invest in early help when demand for statutory services continues to rise. 2022/23 will be an interesting year!

I do hope you are able to find the time to read the detail.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KD' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

**Karen Davison**  
**Director of Early Help**

## Background

The current Early Help Directorate 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 Early Help Service was developed to address this. The Directorate also has responsibility for the Youth Offending Service, Targeted Youth Services, Prevention and Innovation services which include Participation and Engagement, Family Group Conferencing and Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). More recently, responsibility for the Government's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme has been added to our areas of responsibility.

Reviews have been completed for 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

This review details performance in the financial year 2021/22.

## The Directorate

During 2021/22 the Early Help Directorate comprised the following:

- Two multi-agency Early Help Locality Teams working out of Family Centres and community buildings: 1) Washington and Coalfield, 2) Sunderland North and South

The Washington and Coalfield Team comprised two multi-disciplinary Early Help Teams working out of the Rainbow Centre and the Hetton Centre, plus our Bumps to Babies (B2b) young parents' project which is located in Ryhope but which serves the City.

The Sunderland North and South Team comprised three multi-disciplinary Early Help Teams working out of Bunny Hill and Thorney Close.

- A Prevention and Innovation Service responsible for our partnership and externally funded work including:
  - Family Group Conferencing and Mediation
  - Careers and NEET work
  - Participation and Engagement
  - Anti-bullying
  - The prevention project – part-year (funded by the CCG). This has transferred to the Corporate and Commercial Directorate, but the majority of the interventions are still undertaken by the Early Help Services.
  - The Troubled Families programme (funded by the MHCLG). In 2022 this became the Supporting Families Programme funded by the DLUHC.
  - The Reducing Parental Conflict programme (funded by the DWP)
  - The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Strategic (RSHE) Project with schools (funded by Public Health)
  - The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Project (funded by the DfE)
  - The mobile youth outreach and signposting prevention bus 'Wear Here 4 You'
- A central Early Help Advice and Allocations Team (EHAAT) and Families Information Service (FIS) which is co-located with the Integrated Contact and Referral Team (ICRT) at Sandhill. EHAAT and FIS operates 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.

- The Youth Offending Team, including restorative justice and victim work.
- Targeted Youth Services, comprising:
  - The Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP) commissioned from TfC by Public Health.
  - Wear Kids Youth Anti-Social Behaviour Team
  - Youth Advocacy and Restorative Justice
- The Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Business Unit.

In 2021/22 the remit of the Early Help Directorate was 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 Level 1
- Reduce NEETs and Persistent Absence
- Track Children Missing Education
- Act as the single point of contact for advice about early help and to track and evidence progress made by families
- Support the step-up and step-down processes between Children's Social Care and Early Help
- Support young offenders and those at risk of offending (reduce the number of first-time entrants and re-offending)
- Support the City's schools and academies to tackle bullying and discrimination
- Support young people with substance misuse issues
- Support young parents and provide childcare for parents of school age
- Deliver support to families experiencing child or adolescent violence or abuse towards parents, using the Respect Young People's Programme (RYPP)
- Improve our participation and engagement offer for young people and develop a more universal approach to gathering the 'child's voice' using tools such as Mind of My Own and more widely representative participation groups
- Support young people involved in anti-social behaviour
- Deliver the Reducing Parental Conflict programme on behalf of the regional group funded by the DWP
- Deliver 10 CCG-funded workstreams to support children's health and wellbeing

- Support schools and academies to deliver their statutory responsibility for relationships, sex and health education
- Support young people displaying inappropriate sexual behaviours
- Provide age-appropriate access to contraceptive advice for young people
- Deliver the Enhanced Parental Pathway (EPP) in partnership with the 0-19 Service
- Deliver the Holiday Food and Activity Programme for the City of Sunderland
- Work collaboratively with our partners on a youth outreach offer to engage with hard to reach young people and signpost them into appropriate services

## Covid-19 – the Coronavirus Pandemic

The work covered by this annual review has been conducted against the backdrop of services recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic and the three national lockdowns which ensued.

As reported in last year's Annual Review, services returned to business as usual from June 2020 and we continued with full-service delivery throughout 2021/22.

The pandemic allowed us to explore different ways of working with families and in a more agile manner with staff. We have retained some of those innovations, such as a virtual Children's Centre offer, as this has allowed us to reach more families including some from out of area, and home-working and hot-desking as this has supported staff to deliver a more responsive service to families.

## Strategy, Processes and Paperwork

The Early Help Strategy 2017-2020 continued to be our key reference document. Due to the pandemic, the anticipated refresh of the Strategy did not take place as planned. Consideration of the Strategy will be undertaken under the remit of the Starting Well Board. The Early Help Directorate will develop an Early Help Improvement Plan in 2022/23, setting out the aims and objectives of the full range of services covered by Early Help, future plans and time-scales for delivery.

The Liquid Logic Early Help Module (EHM) is well established and supports assessment, planning and review. External agencies continue to use paper versions of the documentation built into Liquidlogic.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not reinstate the Early Help Panel. Multi-agency discussions about the best way to support a family, where needed, are conducted by email or on Teams.

## Review of the Services in the Early Help Directorate

### **Early Help Service:**

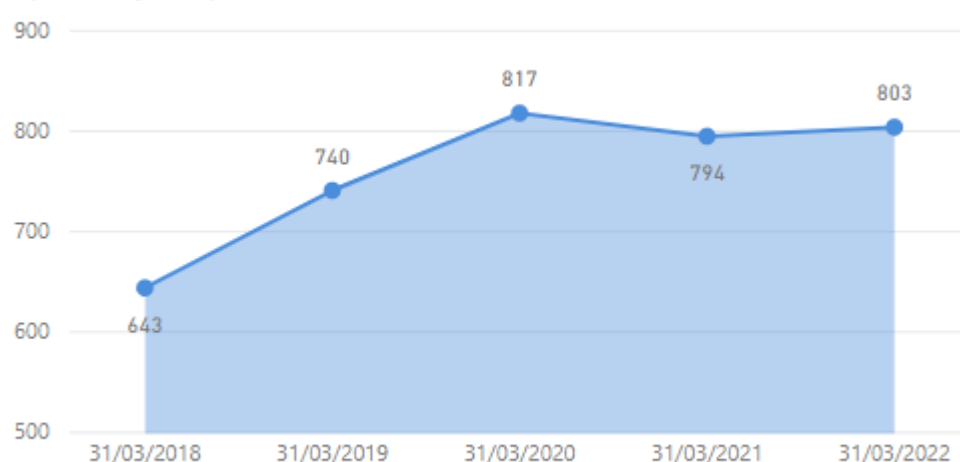
In May 2021 Together for Children's services underwent a full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS). This moved the overall grading for children's services including Early Help from Inadequate to Outstanding. The inspection report said this about TfC's Early Help services:

*'Early help provision is comprehensive and well embedded. It is making a real difference to children's and families' lives. Since the last judgement inspection, early help has developed into an innovative multi-agency service able to meet an increasingly complex level of need to prevent the escalation of cases to statutory services. Children benefit from a well-coordinated array of services that provide*

*help when needs first arise. The vast majority of children and families get the appropriate level of help and support at the right time delivered by skilled professionals, which makes a difference to their day-to-day lives. Children who met inspectors also reported very positively that early help participation groups had helped them develop new friendships, confidence and strategies for managing their feelings.’ Ofsted – August 2021*

At the end of March 2022 there were 803 open Early Help Plans, compared to 794 open at the end of March 2021. This was almost back to the pre-Covid number of 817 in March 2020. See graph below:

Open Family Groups as at the end of 31st March



Of these, 520 (64.7%) were being co-ordinated by the Early Help Service and 283 (35.3%) by the Universal Services (these figures are in line with March 2021).

The breakdown is shown below:

Co-ordinator	Family Group	%
Early Help	473	58.9%
EHAAT	44	5.5%
ECAF	1	0.1%
FGC	2	0.2%
Universal Services	283	35.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>100%</b>

As last year, the majority of cases registered by the Universal Service were being co-ordinated by schools.

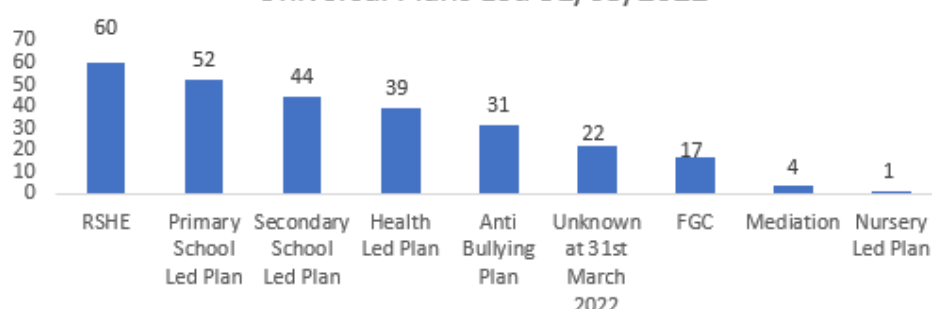
Below is a breakdown of open Universal Service cases on 31 March 2022:

Planned Lead	Family Group	%
RSHE	60	21.2%
Primary School Led Plan	52	18.4%
Secondary School Led Plan	44	15.5%

Health Led Plan	39	13.8%
Anti-Bullying Plan	31	11.0%
*'Unknown' at 31st March 2022	22	7.8%
FGC	17	6.0%
Mediation	4	1.4%
Nursery Led Plan	1	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100%</b>

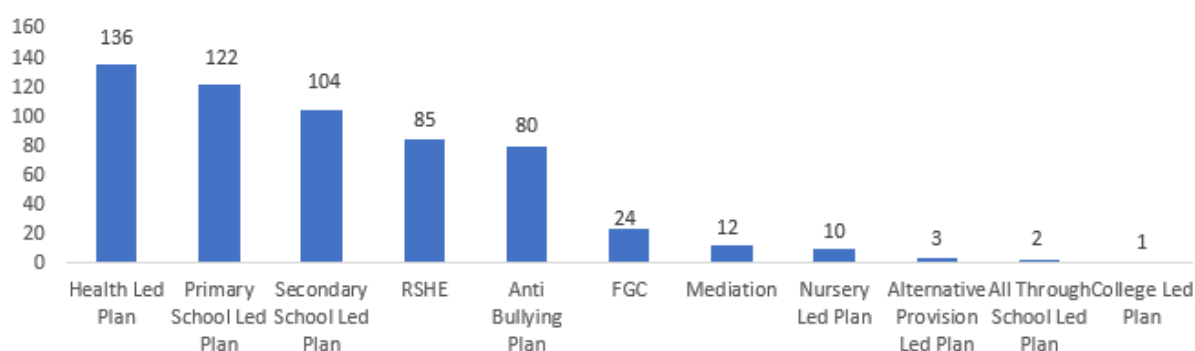
\*'Unknown' - Role in EHM is ambiguous as 'Other Role' or 'EH Co-ordinator' therefore cannot distinguish Universal Plan Lead

Universal Plans Led 31/03/2022



The following chart shows the number of cases co-ordinated by universal services where the episode opened in 2021/22. This demonstrates that the percentage of plans opened and managed by each service stayed constant across the year.

Plans Led starting in 2021/22



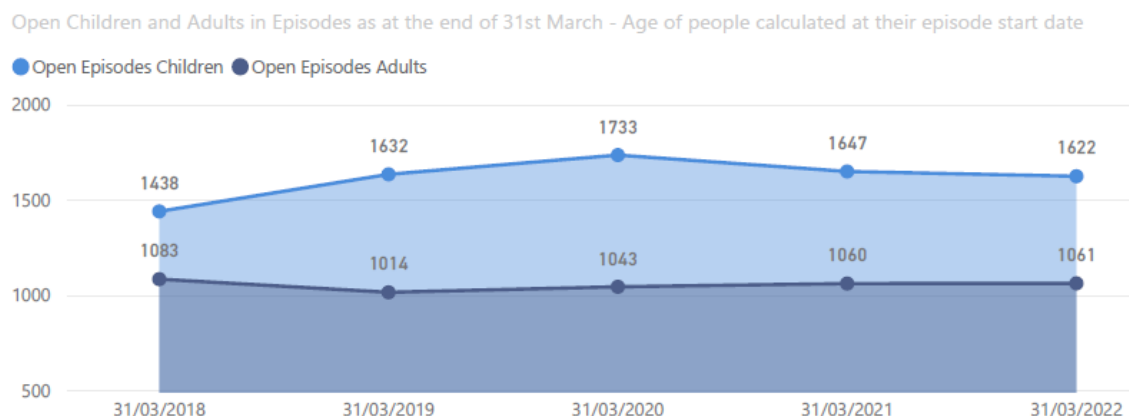
In addition to the open plans the Service closed 563 cases 'outcomes met'<sup>1</sup> during 2021/22. This represented 83.4% of the 675 cases worked to a conclusion by the Service across the year. This was a 15% decrease on the number of cases closed 'outcomes met' in 2021/22 (667), however the percentage of successful closures has increased by 9.3%.

263 out of 286 cases (91.9%) held by the Universal Services were also closed 'outcomes met'<sup>1</sup> across the year. This is a significant increase on the 74.8% in 2020/21.

<sup>1</sup> To qualify as 'outcomes met' two or more of the key presenting issues must have been resolved for a sustained period of at least six months, and for three consecutive terms in the case of school attendance..

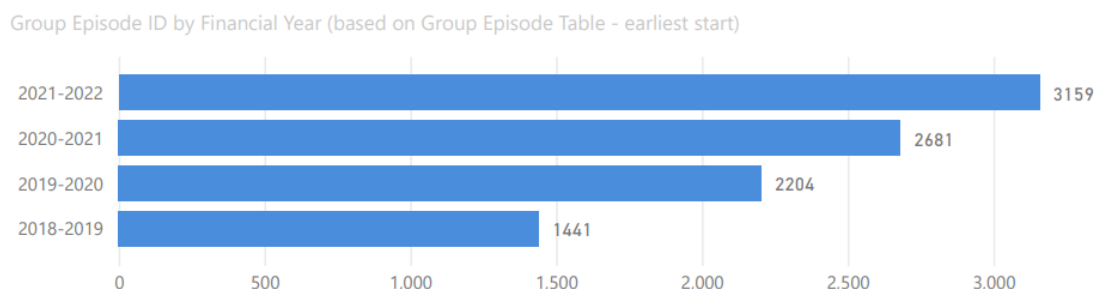


In March 2022, there were 1,622 children being supported on Early Help Plans. This is a slightly lower number than that reported in 2020/21 (1,652) however, as above, the retrospective closure of cases has generated a more accurate number for 2020/21 as represented in this graph:



In 2021/22 an Early Help Worker carried an average case load of 15 families. Typically, this was 13 cases where the worker was the Early Help Co-ordinator, plus two where the worker was completing direct work with a family whose plan was being co-ordinated by the universal services. Based on the number of children being supported, this equated to an average case load of 35 children per worker. The average case load was lower in 2021/22 than in 2020/21 as the universal services returned to holding plans. Average caseloads have also reduced over the past five years as we have recruited more staff.

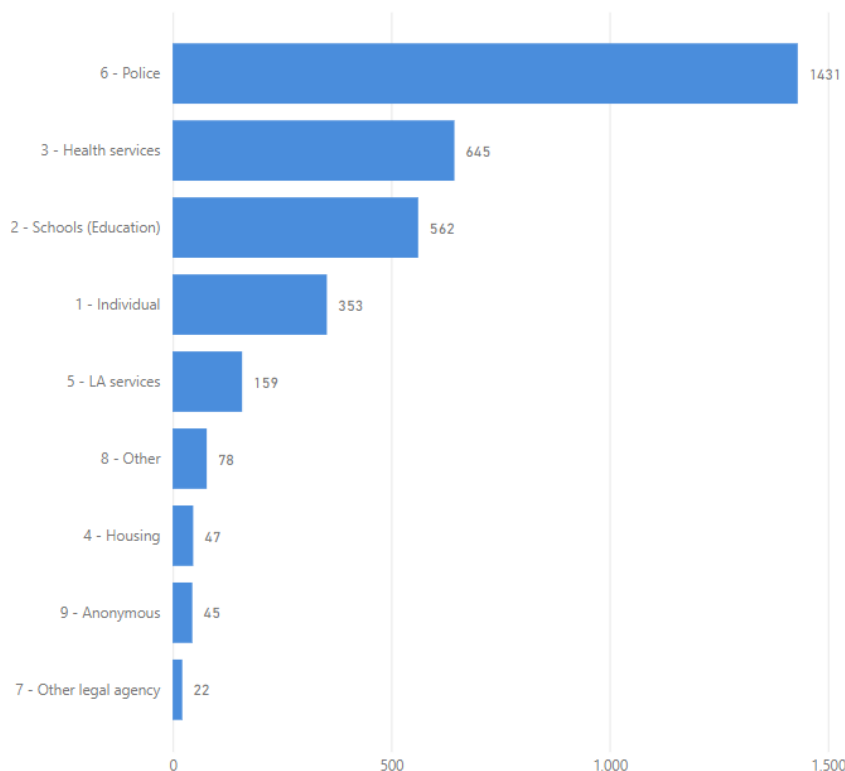
Between April 2021 and March 2022, 3159 families were opened to Early Help (some families opened more than once). This was a 119% increase on 2018/19. These families included 6622 children (although the multiple plans meant that 5476 unique children were worked with in total). The increase in family plans over three years is shown below:



Current reporting makes it difficult to analyse the source of all requests for support from the Early Help Service. However, we know that approximately two thirds of all cases come from Children's Social Care (ICRT contacts, MASH assessments, CIN assessments and CIN step-downs).

The table below shows the source of referrals into Early Help which are generated by contacts into ICRT:

Source (Contacts into ICRT with Outcome Progressing to Early Help.)



Other cases were co-ordinated by the Early Help Service following requests from partners where they identified families with complex needs or where the issue was parenting and work was required in the home. Some were identified directly by the Early Help Service via the Children's Centres, DWP workers, YOS, YDAP and Careers & NEET or Attendance Workers. Early Help support directly into schools (20 schools having purchased a Service Level Agreement in 2021/22) was a significant source of identification in 2021/22. Increasingly families were self-referring.

### Referrals resulting in no Early Help Plan

There are occasions where a contact/referral is passed down from Children's Social Care to the Early Help Service, or comes via another agency, which does not result in an open Early Help Plan. These include:

- Instances where signposting to a single-agency is deemed more appropriate eg to Housing;
- Instances where workers have made multiple attempts to contact a family (phone, text, home visit), but these have been unsuccessful – (where the referral has come from Assessment, the assessing social worker should be informed, a non-engagement protocol is in place);
- Instances where a family has agreed with ICRT or Assessment that they will engage with Early Help, but then decline to engage when contacted – (where the referral has come from Assessment the assessing social worker should be informed, a non-engagement protocol is in place);

- Instances where families have moved out of area very quickly after being referred, or where families already live out of area – these cases are signposted to the relevant local authority service.

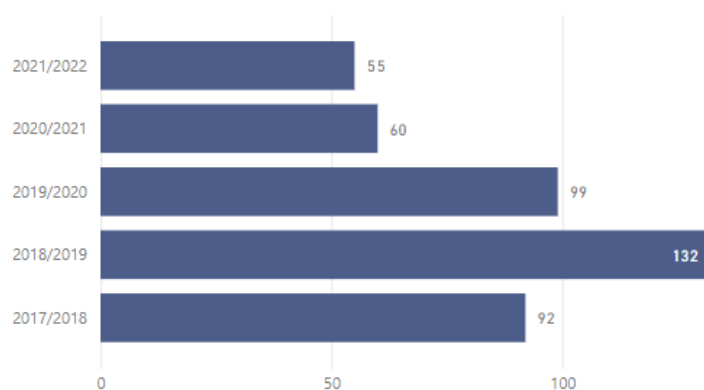
After three years of monthly monitoring of the timeliness of the initial home visits following allocation to an Early Help Locality Team, this is much improved and no longer a focus for the service. We have now moved on to monitor more regularly the timeliness of the completion of assessments but also shifted our focus onto the quality of interactions, interventions and outcomes for children and families (see Early Help Improvement Plan 2022/23).

### Step up and Step down

We have now recorded all contacts into the Front Door in the Early Help Module for two years. This has enabled us to monitor accurately the step ups and step downs between the different levels of service. There is now good evidence that the application of the thresholds is consistent, demonstrating clearly the benefits of operating a co-located Early Help and Children's Social Care Front Door since 2019.

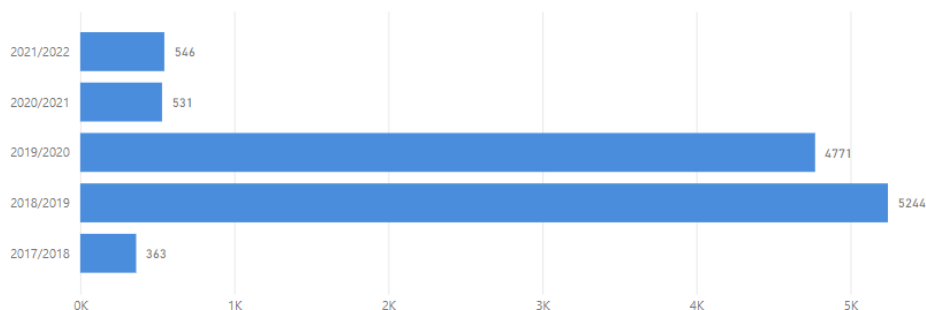
Count of Individual Steps - Step up to Social Care - Removing duplicate steps on the same day

Step Name ● Step Up to Children's Social Care



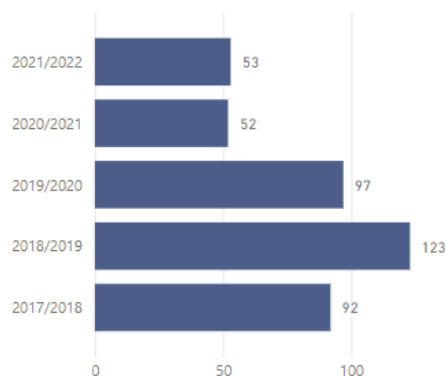
Count of Individual Steps - Step Down to Early Help - Removing duplicate steps on the same day

Step Name ● Step Down to Early Help

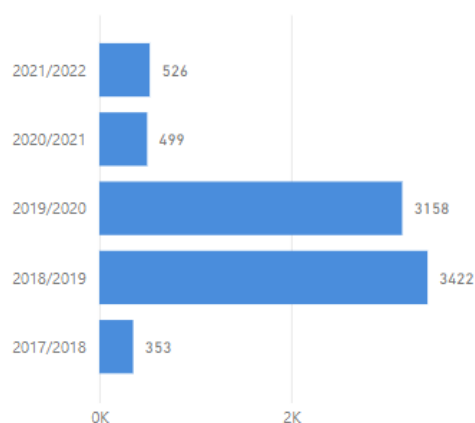


Unique Children Stepping up to Social Care

Step Name ● Step Up to Children's Social Care



Step Name ● Step Down to Early Help



### Cases closed 'outcomes met' and Troubled Families claims performance

In 2021/22 563 Early Help Plans were closed 'outcomes met'. This is a small increase on 2020/21 (548). This supported the Service to make 100% claims against the Troubled Families payment by results grant as follows:

Month	Claims made	Funds claimed
April 2021	61	£48,800
May 2021	48	£38,400
June 2021	28	£22,400
July 2021	26	£20,800
August 2021	16	£12,800
September 2021	38	£30,400
October 2021	37	£29,600
November 2021	28	£22,400
December 2021	39	£31,200
January 2022	26	£20,800
February 2022	29	£23,200
March 2022	67	£53,600
<b>Total 2021/22</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>£354,400</b>



This compares to 425 claims and £340,000 in 2020/21, which was the maximum claim we were permitted to make under the new funding arrangements. Much-reduced funding and a cap on claims were features of the Troubled Families programme in 2020/21 which rolled forward into 2021/22.

We are currently preparing for the implementation of a new 'Supporting Families' framework from October 2022, so our claims for 2022/23 will be made under two different part-year frameworks.

As in 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, the funds enabled the Service to employ additional workers to meet the high demand for services, the maintenance of the core Family Group Conferencing team and the retention of workers in the Targeted Youth Services following the removal of the liaison and diversion grant to the YOT in 2018.

## Interventions

Interventions offered in 2021/22 included:

- 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 for children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviours
- support 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)
- RISE Groups
- Family Group Conferencing
- Family Mediation
- Respect Young People's Programme (child/adolescent violence/abuse towards adults)
- Support with parental conflict
- Mind of My Own and Mind of My Own Express
- Participation and Engagement groups
- Access to the Phoenix Project and 'YOLO' (anti-knife crime project)
- Support for children missing from education and those electing to home educate
- Knife crime Prevention Programme (KCPP)
- Be Safe Weapons intervention
- One punch intervention
- Driving offences intervention
- RESPECT intervention
- General Offending Behaviour intervention packages which cover consequential thinking, peer pressure, anger management, bullying, victim awareness and ASB
- Brief interventions delivered from our new 'prevention bus' – Wear Here 4 You – as required





## **Demand and Capacity**

During 2021/22 the services were largely operating at maximum capacity. Additional staffing and management support has been created in the Early Help and in some of the Participation and Engagement Teams, but we are now at the limit of what the budget will afford.

To respond to previous demand, the service began to offer a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to schools from April 2018. Schools were offered the chance to purchase a level of support for either Early Help or for Attendance. This was offered in packages of one day per week. In April 2018 four schools were buying one day per week each. By March 2020 this had risen to 13 schools purchasing 23 days between them. By March 2021 this was 20 schools purchasing 33 days between them. Capacity for this has come from employing some workers on sessional contracts and others on fixed-term contracts.

## ***Early Help Advice and Allocations Team***

The Early Help Advice and Allocations Team (EHAAT) is the Early Help Front door and is co-located with Children's Social Care's Integrated Contact and Referral Team (ICRT). This ensures good communication about contacts into our services and that the right level of support is offered.

In September 2020 we strengthened this co-working by placing an Early Help Worker into ICRT to give advice about thresholds into Level 2 services and to help direct lower-level concerns back to the referrer or to the universal services. In 2021 we reviewed this and converted this post into an Assistant Team Manager for EHAAT.

## ***Families Information Service***

The Families Information Service (FIS) is a statutory function of the Children's Centre offer. Our FIS sits alongside our Early help Advice and Allocations Team (Early Help Front Door) to support sign-posting into services for families in challenging circumstances.

Two of the main functions of the FIS are to support and verify claims for Free School Meals and to support families looking for childcare, particularly those eligible for the two-year-old funded offer where the criteria for eligibility are the same as for free school meals.

## **Free School Meals**

In a second challenging year when food poverty has been highlighted in high profile media stories many vulnerable families have struggled. A combination of lower wages, job losses and Covid-19 have seen a continuation of families applying for free school meals. In 2021/22 we received 3765 applications through the dedicated free school meals portal service and added 1536 children to the free school meals list.

## **Two year funded early education offer**

FIS continues to process applications for children to access 15 hours of early education at one of our registered childcare providers throughout the city. A total of 2407 applications were received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022. Of these applications, 1578 were eligible while the remaining 829 were not eligible. This compares to the total applications received during the previous year where



1434 were eligible with 861 not eligible. Eligibility numbers have increased since 2020-2021 which hopefully evidences families getting back to normality after COVID-19 restrictions and children's development will be supported so they meet their full potential.

145 of the children requiring a check via FIS were eligible for reasons other than household income: cared for children, children who left the care system via adoption or special guardianship or children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or who had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The FIS Team supported 21 eligible families by completing the application on their behalf and intervened to advocate for an additional 40 families who were struggling to navigate the system (either the on-line portal or bureaucracy in settings).

### ***Family Group Conferencing:***

A Family Group Conference enables a family, children and young people to plan for their future with help and support as needed. Family Group Conferences are a means of helping families to find their own solutions to problems. In the period of 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 we extended our offer to include referrals from universal services and also self-referrals.

The Supporting Families: Investing in Practice (SFIP) programme concluded for Together for Children in October 2021.

118 families were randomised and 59 were referred for FGC and 59 were not referred for FGC.

### ***Mediation Referrals***

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 105 referrals were received from services. This is a 64% increase in referrals from the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 where 64 referrals were received into service.

36 families with 66 children underwent family mediation in that period.

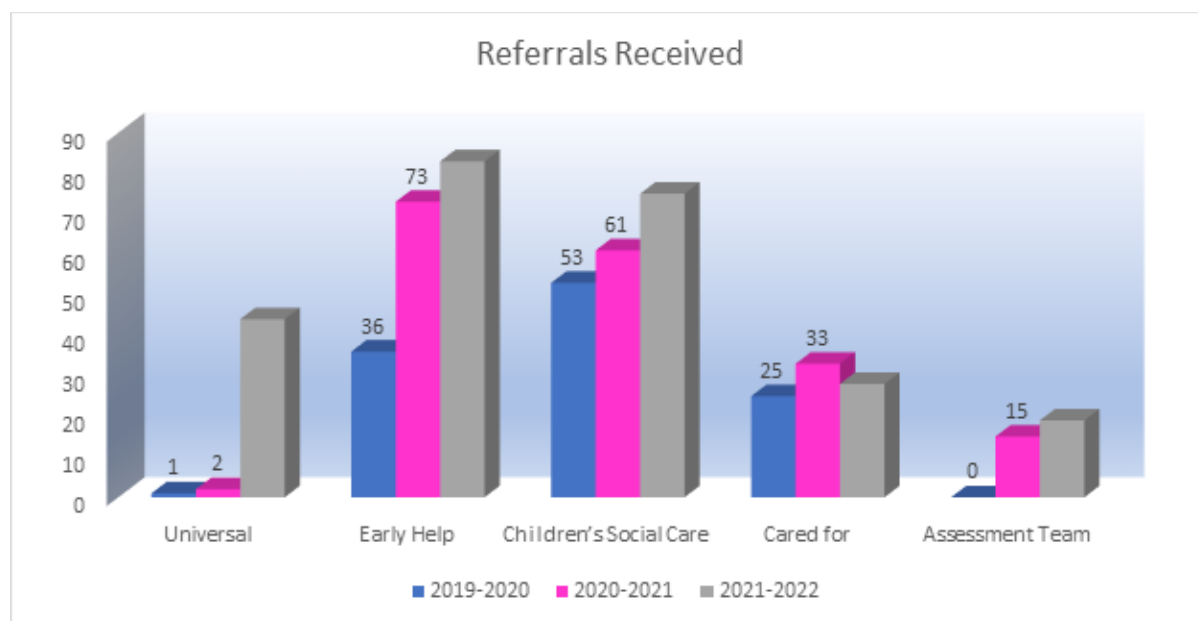
There were 69 families that did not undergo mediation and the reasons were as follows:-

Consent withdrawn 19  
Change in circumstances 18  
Cannot agree a plan 2  
No longer required 2  
Refused / declined by family 17

### ***Family Group Conference Referrals***

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 248 referrals were received from services. This is a 35% increase in referrals from the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 where only 184 referrals were received for an FGC.





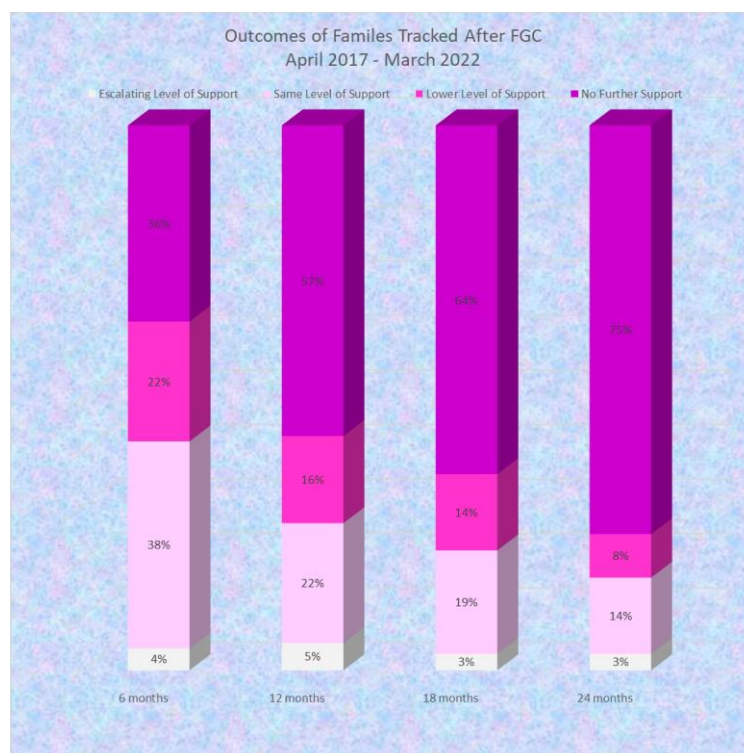
Performance information suggests that family group conferencing is an effective intervention. Over the five years between April 2017 and March 2022 443 families with 948 children underwent an FGC.

Of the total number of FGCs since April 2017 where it is possible to track progress for six months or more (398 families) 36% stepped down to a universal service or required no further support, a further 22% required a lower level of support, 38% required the same level of intervention six months later, however only 4% required a higher level of need, escalating to a higher threshold of support.

Of the total number of FGCs since April 2017 where it is possible to track progress for 12 months or more (353 families) 57% stepped down to a universal service or required no further support, a further 16% required a lower level of support, 22% required the same level of intervention 12 months later, however only 5% required a higher level of need, escalating to a higher threshold of support.

Of the total number of FGCs since April 2017 where it is possible to track progress for 18 months or more (297 families) 43% stepped down to a universal service or required no further support, a further 14% required a lower level of support, 19% required the same level of intervention 18 months later, however only 3% required a higher level of need, escalating to a higher threshold of support.

Of the total number of FGCs since April 2017 where it is possible to track progress for 24 months or more (250 families) 75% stepped down to a universal service or required no further support, a further 8% required a lower level of support, 14% required the same level of intervention 24 months later, however only 3% required a higher level of need, to a higher threshold of support.



### Quotes demonstrating the impact of Family Group Conferencing:

*My family group conference helped me to tackle problems we had, and I felt I was in a comfortable environment, and everything was safe. I could speak my mind. It was really good. I felt listened to at the conference and at times I haven't felt that. I got my points across, and people acknowledged and understood my words, so I was listened to. Young Person*

*A family group conference has helped me as I felt a weight was lifted from my chest as we needed to do something, and we did. I was really pleased and impressed with the structure, the process, and the family privacy. Private family time was the biggest aspect and I valued it so much. We could talk openly and felt our privacy was preserved. I was nervous, but this took the dread away. As a family we achieved a lot. It was empowering for us as we could address our questions. The questions help to bring you back to what you need to focus on. We got a lot out of it. Parent – Mum*

*Family group conference has given me and my two girls our lives back together which I thought would not happen as you never hear about dads getting their children back. I want to thank my worker and everyone else who was involved in the rebuilding of my family and helping us be together again. Things are going strong, both girls are home with me now and I can say none this would have been possible without the family group conference, I'll be for ever thankful to you and the team. Parent – Father*

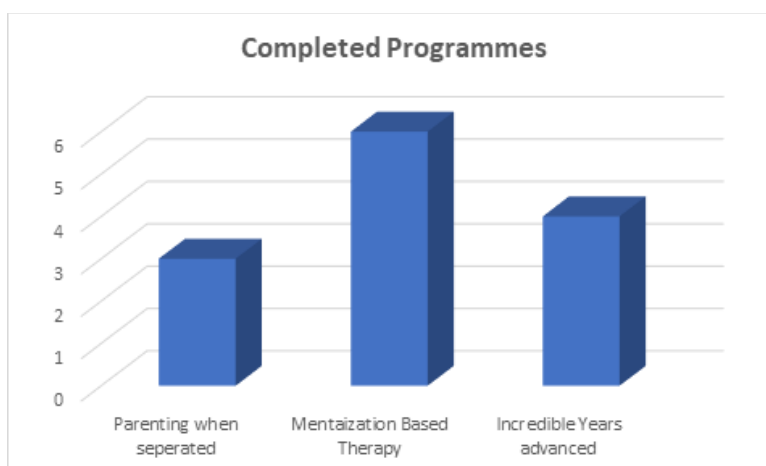
### Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC)

Together for Children worked closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to deliver the Reducing Parental Conflict programme. The Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) programme is aimed at conflict below the threshold of domestic abuse.

From 1 April 2021 – 31 March 22, the gateway received 46 referrals from front line practitioners in Sunderland. This is a reduction of 17% compared to the previous period.

Of those 46, 37 couples progressed to a parenting intervention with relate with 13 completing the full intervention.

Of the 13 that completed a full parenting intervention they were in the following programmes:



*"We talk a bit more...we are aware of problems that would come about in the future" Parent 1*

*"We're doing like more stuff together, we're going out for meals, stuff like that" Parent 2*

### **Careers and NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)**

The service provides impartial Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) services in partnership with Sunderland Local Authority, wider Together for Children services, learning providers, employers and young people that meet the needs of all young people of Sunderland.

The Department for Education measures local authorities' performance based on combined NEET and Unknown figure.

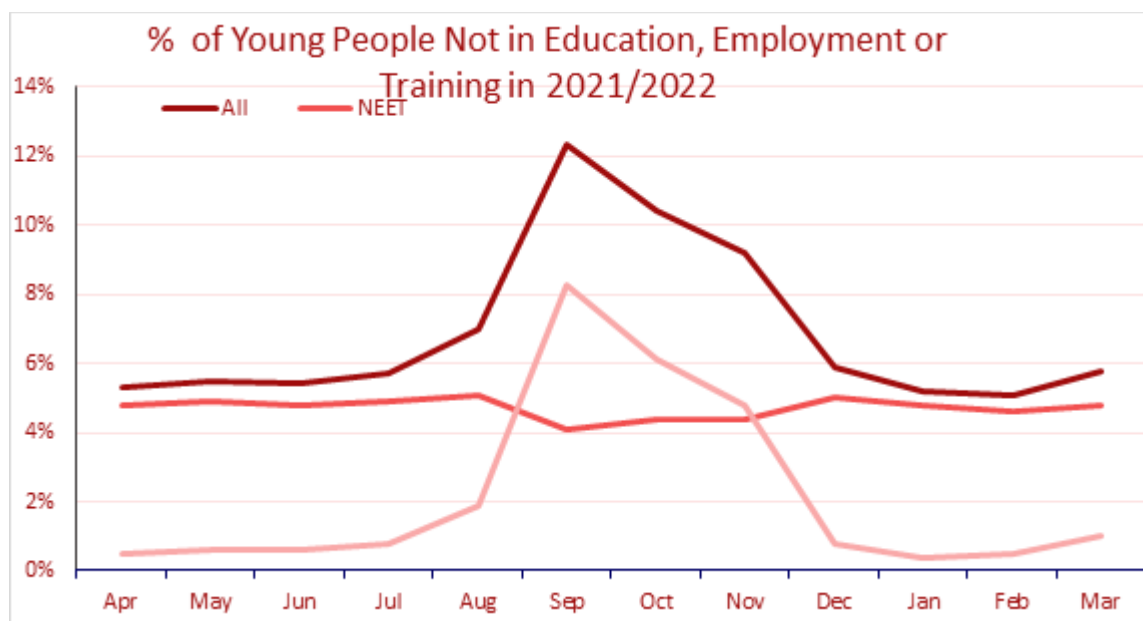
Sunderland Local Authority reports on both NEET and Unknown figures monthly. Its annual performance is judged on a three-month average figure taken from December to February each year.

Together for Children's annual performance for 2021/22 is a combined figure of 5.4% (NEET 4.8% and Unknown 0.6%) This is above the England national average (4.7%) and equals the regional average (5.4%). We were listed 7<sup>th</sup> out of 12 regional LAs.

Our performance is 0.3% higher than last years (2020 - 2021) three monthly averages of 5.1%. Although monitored monthly, it is important to make comparisons with previous periods as it is useful to show any changes in the cohort. The NEET/Unknown figure is not a static figure and is not made up of the same young people each month.

The graph below shows the combined NEET and Unknown figures from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.





### Employment, Education and Training (EET) Work

In the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, 11,013 interventions were carried out with Year 10 to Year 14 young people and their families by the Careers Team. This is a 62% increase in interventions compared to the previous year.

Of the 11,013, 2,060 (18.7%) of young people received a substantive contact either face to face or virtually. Interventions included providing information, advice, guidance, and support services that are independent, impartial, and confidential and in line with the National IAG Quality Standards, the rest were lighter touch contacts via text, telephone or digital means.

The average percentage of young people in learning over the reporting period of 2021/22 was 90.7%. This is a 1.8% decrease from 2020/2021 when the 3-month reporting period showed 92.5%. The decrease in learning is believed to be an impact of the second academic year of learning being affected and impacted by the Covid Pandemic, young people becoming disillusioned, the impact of learning being affected by less face-to-face contact and continued reporting of young people's heightened anxieties.

### September Guarantee

The September Guarantee is a guarantee of an offer, made by the end of September of each year of an appropriate place in post-16 education or training for every young person completing compulsory education in Year 11 and education and training in Year 12.

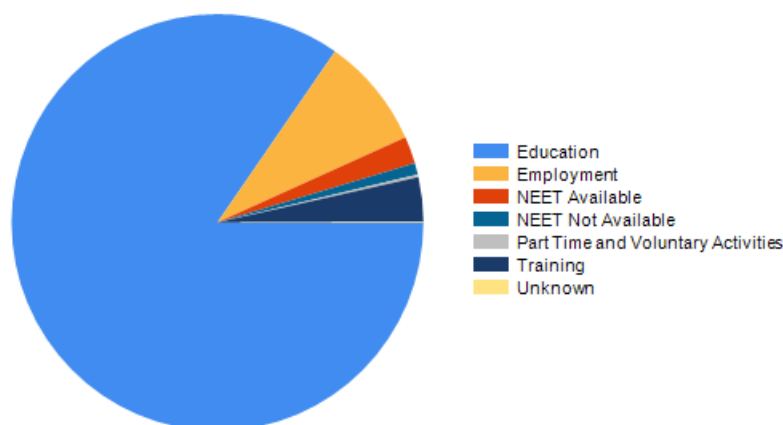
In September 2021 96.1% of young people received an offer of a suitable place in EET. This is a 0.4% increase of the September Guarantee 2020 which was 95.7%

The continued positive recording of September Guarantee offers being recorded is due to continued communication and review of the data sharing agreements with EET providers and more timely sharing with TfC of the offers of learning made to young people.

### Annual Activity Survey – 2021 School Leaver Cohort

Annual Activity Survey (Nov 2021, Dec 2021 & Jan 2022) for 2021 is completed in January looking at the previous year's Year 11 school leaver cohort following their exams.

The Annual Activity Survey (AAS) data for 2021, diagram below, shows continued improvement from the AAS in 2020.



This improvement has occurred due to continued collaborative working with School CEIAG partners .

Data sharing agreements have been established with EET providers including Colleges, Sixth Forms and Training and Apprenticeship providers. Through these offers being received and recorded we have a much clearer picture of where young people have progressed onto.

There were only two young people recorded as Unknown linked to the AAS 2021 compared to four Unknown young people for the AAS 2020. Every effort had been undertaken to ascertain information on these two young people including working with school links and undertaking home visits.

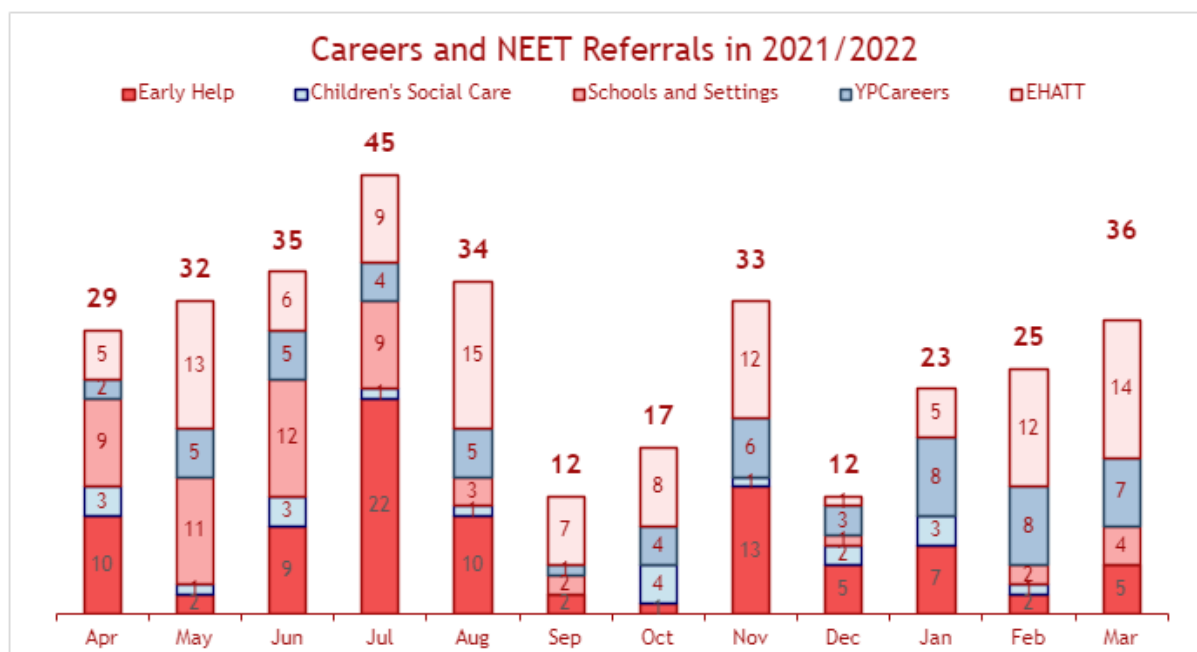
### Careers Service Referrals

The continued accurate and timely recording of referrals received into the Careers Service shows additional work involved that sits outside of our targeted / vulnerable cohorts.

Prior to 2020 / 2021 there was no mechanism for recording or showing the number of referrals received into the Service, where these referrals originated from and subsequently the impact and outcome of the actions undertaken following engagement once the referral had been actioned by a Careers Advisor. The referrals are now received in via EHAAT or directly through the Careers – Young Persons email folder which is monitored daily.

Referrals are received directly from young people, parents and carers and any other agencies or professionals involved in working with young people. The agencies / professionals involved in making referrals include Early Help workers, Social Workers, YOS, Next Steps, CAMHS / CYPS, SEND as well as from agencies linked to other Local Authorities who may be involved in supporting young people needs.

Recording of Careers and NEET referrals remains steady month on month as you can see in the graph below. The high number of referrals received in the month of July 2021 was in relation to young people seeking EET opportunities after leaving various educational placements, particularly making enquiries about part-time employment.



### Careers and NEET Feedback

*“Young person shared with TFC Careers Advisor that they had seen two other private Careers professionals who were engaged within their school, they confirmed that this intervention with TFC Careers Advisor had been the most helpful and that they had been listened to” Young Person.*

*“Young person told me that college hadn’t got her email and Careers had been in contact with her and have sorted all of this out for her and young person couldn’t have been more thankful highlighting she wouldn’t have been going to college if it hadn’t been for Careers Service help. Young person hasn’t always felt supported by school staff so social worker just wanted to say thank you because at this time in this young person’s life and the pressure she feels from school it would have been easy for her to have lost interest and motivation in accessing additional education despite her clear capabilities”. Social Worker – Next Steps.*

*“CA has worked with several pupils from our school. CA has demonstrated a range of strategies to support our pupils with many successful outcomes. I must state that her dedication and professionalism with these young people cannot be really stated in this communication – I am amazed with the amount of personal time she has given to support pupils in crisis – this has been commented on by pupils/parents and carers. Her knowledge and understanding have supported my staff in dealing with issues and all of the student support team are always kept “in the loop” with regards to progress” Deputy Head teacher.*

## **Attendance Support**

In September 2021 the Attendance Service moved under the Prevention and Innovation area of Early Help joining with the Careers & NEET Team and becoming the newly named Careers & Attendance Team (CAT). Service review was required of the Attendance Team and its working practices. Several actions were introduced, and this review continues to take place to strengthen Attendance working practice.

1. Introduction of a new SPOT (Specialist Practitioner on the Team) post into team
2. Development of new publicity materials for Attendance Team
3. New working practices due to COVID development of virtual way of working
4. Robust performance data monthly recording systems – referrals received
5. Business process linked to referrals received into the Attendance Team
6. Robust performance data mechanisms established
7. Increased presence on social media / TFC website

Sunderland City Council has a legal obligation to enforce the law relating to school attendance. All parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability, and aptitude and any special needs to maximise educational opportunities. Pupils who are absent for 10% or more school days are classed as persistent absentees.

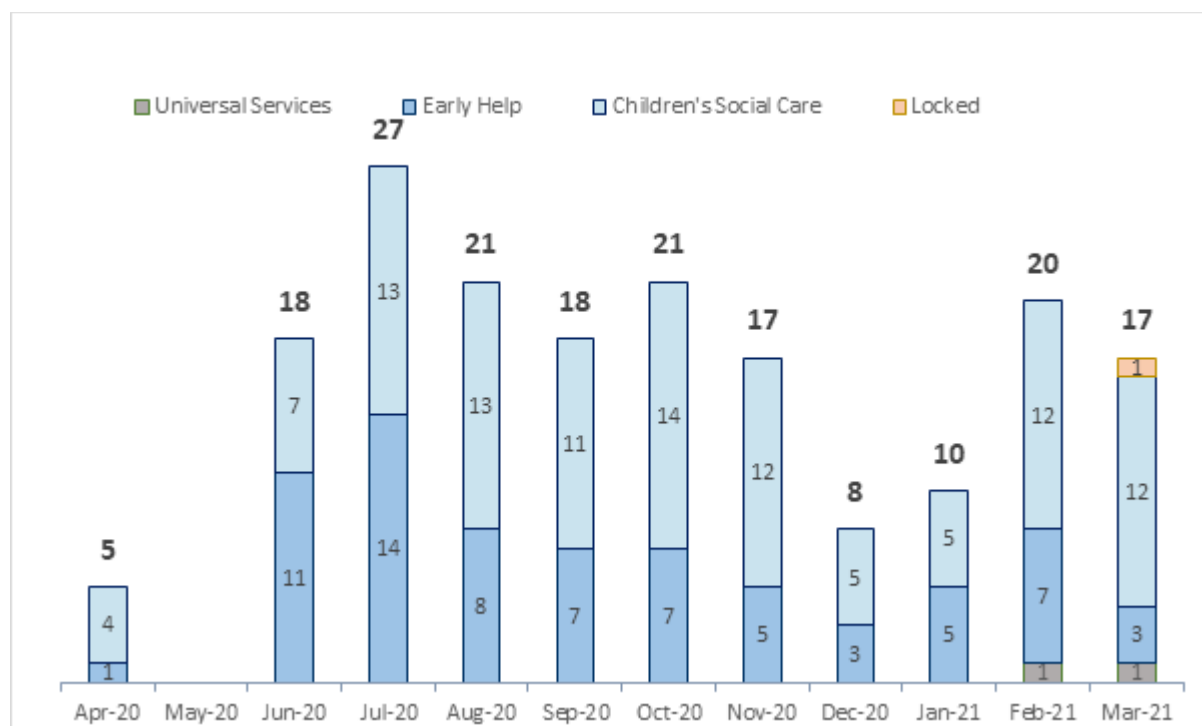
Our TFC attendance officers' prime role is to promote regular school attendance through advice and support to schools, pupils and their families and to support the Council's enforcement role where appropriate. Their ultimate aim is to ensure every pupil has the opportunity to enjoy school and achieve as much as they can from their school experience. To enable them to improve their chances when they enter the world of work and have the best opportunities in adult life.

### **Attendance Referrals**

Accurate and timely recording of referrals received into the Attendance Team shows additionality of the work involved that sits outside of LA statutory Enforcement work.

Prior to September 2021 there was no mechanism for recording or showing the number of referrals received into the Attendance Service, where these referrals originated from and subsequently the impact and outcome of the actions undertaken following engagement once the referral had been actioned by an Attendance Officer.

From the period April 2021 - March 2022, 182 referrals were received for Attendance intervention. The chart below shows where the referrals came from. As noted earlier there was no mechanism for recording of referrals correctly prior to this recording of referrals being established in September 2021, and no referrals were recorded for month of May 2021.



### ***Elective Home Education:***

Together for Children's Attendance Team, supported by other staff where necessary, conducts welfare visits for all children taken off a school roll to be electively home educated. When appropriate, families are sign-posted to support services, helped to re-enrol their children in schools or supported to post-16 pathways.

Careers Advice and Guidance is offered to all electively home educated students in Year 11.

### ***Children Missing Education:***

During 2021/22 the Children Missing Education Service received 2618 notifications about children requiring tracking as they had moved school or moved into or out of Sunderland. This was an increase of 721 (38%) on 2020/21 figures.

Of these 1430 54% were boys and 1188 46% were girls (in line figures for the last two years); 36% were of secondary age and 64% of primary age (this is in line with 2020/21 and continues the upward trend for pupils in KS1 and KS2).

489 of the referrals were in respect of children moving into Sunderland Local Authority from outside the area. This is an increase on the 2020/21 figure of 359. These children were tracked until they joined a Sunderland school roll.

1267 of the children were tracked to a new school in Sunderland. This is a small increase on the 2020/21 figure of 1203.



Of the remaining 1351:

- One was under the age of 5 (not of statutory school age and referred in error), the same number as last year;
- Nine had been permanently excluded, a small increase on the seven from last year. This is still a low number compared to 2018/19 (25) and likely still due to the Covid pandemic;
- Two had died (a decrease on the three in 2020/21);
- 138 were removed from roll to be electively home educated (a significant increase on the 85 in 2020/21);
- 18 moved back to a Sunderland school after a period of elective home education (an increase on the 11 in 2020/21);
- 489 moved to schools in other local authorities and were tracked to these new schools (33% more than in 2020/21);
- 30 moved abroad and were tracked to a new school in their new country of residence (eg New York, Spain, Hong Kong). This is a significant decrease on the 73 who made this move in 2020/21;
- 15 moved abroad and could not be tracked (eg to Bangladesh, Poland, Australia), this is in line with 2020/21;
- 41 were passed to another local authority who picked up responsibility to track. This is in line with 2020/21;
- 17 children were still on roll at their original school, but not attending (so reported as missing from education). This is a slight increase on the 13 in 2020/21. Attendance officers worked with these families;
- Two children remained on the list after March 2022 – these children are still being tracked; and
- The remainder returned to their original school in Sunderland.

With the exception of those children who moved abroad where there is no reciprocal agreement to track children (eg Bangladesh), all children were tracked to a new destination.

The CME Officer uses all methods at her disposal to find children who have been reported missing from education and out of area. In one example, a family had moved temporarily to a country that was placed on the Covid Red list and so they could not return. We tracked the family using phone and email until they returned safely and re-enrolled in school. In another, slightly odd case, a school removed a child from roll as they believed s/he had been taken to live in Spain. In fact, the family had just gone on holiday!

### ***Anti-Bullying Service:***

The **Anti-Bullying Charter Mark** now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year and is well established in Sunderland across schools, children's homes, and other settings. In the period of April 21 and March 2022, nine schools received a charter mark award, one school received a bronze award, two schools received a silver award, one school received a gold award and five schools received the platinum award. The Charter Mark is awarded for a period of two years. Sunderland Youth Council has supported with the moderation of these awards.

All five of our internal Children's Homes have a charter mark award. Nook Lodge gained their first charter mark while Revelstoke and Grasswell renewed their award using the revised criteria achieving



Platinum status. Auton House (residential home for young people with special educational needs and disabilities part of St Cuthbert's Care) also achieved a Platinum Charter Mark award.

### **Anti-Bullying Referrals**

The Anti-Bullying and Engagement Manager receives referrals from Accident and Emergency, Schools, Services, and parents throughout the year. From the period April 21 – March 22 117 referrals were received with 100% of accepted referrals closing with one of more of the following outcomes;

- Young person has received support with issues they are experiencing
- Direct work has been completed around strategies to use to manage any further issues
- Safety plan is put in place and agreed by all involved and reviewed,
- Referrals made to other support services,
- Information shared with schools/services who can provide additional support, communication channels with parents/carers are discussed and agreed.
- Young person feels happier/safe/confident to share concerns.

### **Anti-Bullying Week**

Anti-Bullying Week 2021 took place during the week 1 – 5 November. The theme for the year was "One Kind Word". The first conference was held at St Aidan's Catholic Academy and was attended by six primary schools and three secondary schools, supported by Simon Marshall (Director of Education) Mark Lloyd (Kinetic Education), RSHE and RJ workers from Early Help. The young people participated in workshops around online safety – keeping yourself safe online, using kind words - how your words impact others and what is a restorative approach and how can it help. All young people who attended enjoyed the workshops and took away information to share with their schools.

Unfortunately, the rest of the week was cancelled due to Covid restrictions and was rearranged for 10 – 14 January 2022. Covid restrictions were still in place at this time therefore the conferences could not go ahead.

#### ***Feedback from the Anti-bullying event:***

*'We really enjoyed the anti-bullying event, the information they received from the workshops we fed back to the school. We were really impressed with the approach around restorative justice and will use this in our school ' Ryhope Juniors*

*'I didn't realise how words can upset people, so I now know how to use kind words'*  
Young person Age 9

### **Relationships, Sex and Health Education**

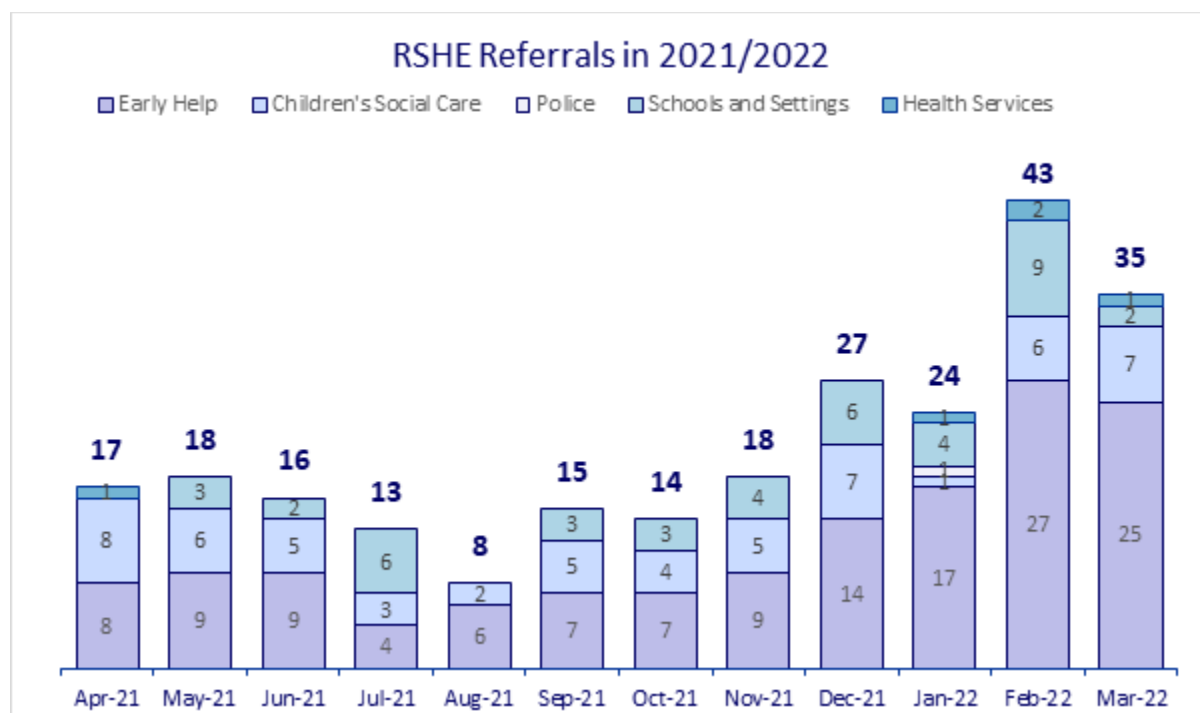
#### **RSHE Referrals**

The Relationship Sex and Health Education Team works with Children and Young People aged 8-18 (unless cared experience or SEND then it is up to the age of 25). Referrals are received from Early Help, Children Social Care, Schools, Health or Self-Referrals by young people aged 13+ or their parents.

The RSHE Team offers work around: Healthy Relationships, Sexual Health, Self-Esteem, Internet Safety, Child Sexual Exploitation and grooming. This work can either be completed through direct work, classroom-based learning, groupwork or assemblies.

In the period from 1 April 2021-31 March 2022, 248 referrals were received for direct work. The chart below shows where the referrals came from. This is a 169% increase in referrals compared to the previous year.





In the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 83 children and young people successfully completed direct work with the RSHE – This means children and young people completed the number of sessions which was agreed at the initial appointment and were not re-referred into the service within this time period.

In addition to the direct work offered to young people who have been referred into the service. The team delivered 79 RSHE alternative sessions. Alternative sessions are where children and young people receive information about RSHE in group work, lessons, drop ins or other including opening evenings or freshers' fayres:

- 24 drop-in sessions taken place in schools.
- 41 lessons were delivered, this includes going into schools on their drop-down days or going into school for a set period covering a certain lesson a week.
- Eight group work sessions, this was delivered at one school after multiple referrals with similar concerns were referred into the team.
- Six other sessions were delivered.

This allowed 3732 unique children and young people to access the RSHE team and relevant RSHE information.

At the end of March 2022, the RSHE team were working with 80 open referrals with 60 waiting for allocation.

- 'I can make better decisions now' - 12
- 'The sessions have made me be more careful online and in relationships and to tell someone if I'm worried about something that might happen' - 14
- 'I've really enjoyed sessions. I know how to identify good friends and my self esteem is better. I've become a better person overall and I have great friends now' - 12
- 'I'm encouraging myself more instead of making myself feel down' - 10
- 'I've learnt how to look after myself while in relationships and during sex, how to feel happier in myself as a whole' - 16

## RSHE Co-ordinator Role

In September 2020 it became statutory for all pupils who are primary aged to receive Relationship Health Education and all pupils who are secondary aged to receive Relationship, Sex and Healthy Education. The role of the RSHE Co-Ordinator was funded by Public Health to support schools in their initial implementation of RSHE. This support was given by looking at schools policies, lesson plans and offering both standard and bespoke staff CPD to not only upskill and make staff feel more confident within their RSHE delivery but to ensure they have a clear understanding of why behind why RSHE has been made statutory.

In the period 1 April 2021- 31 March 2022

- 19 schools received a consultation around their RSHE delivery.
- 19 Schools received 'Introduction to RSHE'.
- Seven Bespoke Training sessions were delivered.
- One Partnership Conference supported.

In the period 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021, 82 primary schools, 18 secondary schools, seven schools for pupils with Special Educational Needs, seven special schools and six pupil referral units and alternative provisions were contacted and informed regarding the RSHE Co-Ordinator role and the training offer via school emails, Education Services Newsletters, phone calls and other professionals.

*'It was an excellent session which all staff were engaged with and found extremely useful for their classroom practise. Staff thoroughly enjoyed the training and the way in which it was delivered'* - Castle View Enterprise Academy

*'This was a very informative session and delivered in a way that held interest and made it fun.'* - Fatfield Primary Academy School

## Participation and Engagement

Together for Children support the following participation and engagement groups:

- Sunderland Youth Council
- Change Council – 10-15 years
- Change Council – 16+
- Stars
- Cozmic 3piphany
- Health and Happiness Group

In the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, 743 unique children and young people engaged in a participation activity, however 1,394 children and young people participated in a participation activity. This means that one young person may have participated in a number of different participation activities.

Below is a summary of the activities and outcomes of our participation and engagement work in the period of April 21 – March 22 (the full list of outcomes and activities can be found in the annual participation and engagement report).

## Homelessness Campaign Comfort Packs (Sunderland Youth Council)

Output	Outcome	Impact
17 secondary schools were contacted to ask for support with the collections of items for the comfort packs.	Young People worked with other agencies, this highlighted the SYC profile within these organisations.	Awareness of homelessness in local schools increases and support giving by pupils in the shape of toiletries and food.
Four schools and Bede college took part. Several TFC staff also donated items.	SYC were able to work alongside other TFC groups throughout the campaign which allowed them to be aware of what other groups are on offer and to join in where appropriate to them.	After speaking to the support groups SYC are going to continued throughout the year asking for donations as they understand this is only a small part of the support people need.
Total Sport donated 100 bags to hold the items	SYC visited the soup kitchen in Bethany City Church to get an understanding of the support being offered. This supported young people's understanding regarding the items needed. Focus was then toiletry packs for people who were homeless.	From the visit they have more understanding of the issues of homelessness and what support there is in the city and the opportunity to help in the centre with the food bank. Young people have learnt about the importance of generosity, educating young people about the importance of helping others.
Stars supported the campaign, our SEND voice group.		
Supported 40 families with much needed toiletry packs.		
One young person volunteers with the food banks.		
Six SYC members visited Soup Kitchen	<b>Sunderland Soup Kitchen:</b> Quote "These items, (toiletries) are always in short supply and the comfort packs will make a great difference to people we support.  Bethany's City Church acknowledged to the SYC group how their efforts had been an immense help in getting much needed packs to homeless families which boosted their self-esteem and confidence.	Showing a positive impact in society. Young people are now more confident about taking part in projects in their local community. Young people are inspired and enabled to make a positive contribution to their communities Awareness raising of local food banks and volunteering opportunities  Young people have learnt about the importance of generosity, educating young people about the importance of helping others. Showing a positive impact in society. Young people are now more confident about taking part in projects in their local community. Young people are inspired and enabled to make a positive contribution to their communities. Awareness raising of local food banks and volunteering opportunities.
100 bags were distributed to organisations who support homeless people.		

## Health and Happiness Prevention Programme

Output	Outcome	Impact
<p>Delivered 84 Health and Happiness meetings</p> <p>Delivered five events with groups of young people.</p> <p>Facilitated meetings with young people and health professionals, Public Health, CAMHS and Harrogate and District Nurses.</p> <p>Five projects were chosen to work on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti Bullying</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Problems associated with mobile phones.</li> <li>• Cyber bullying in school.</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity</li> </ul>	<p>Young people were involved in making health-related decisions and developed solutions in collaboration with health professionals.</p> <p>Children and young people take a lead in preventing their chosen, avoidable poor health and happiness problems.</p> <p>Children and young people are empowered to work with health professionals to design and develop solutions to problems affecting health and happiness.</p> <p>By choosing topics of concern and addressing those problems in collaboration with health professionals young people found solutions to problems and to help avoid those problems in future.</p>	<p>By being involved in designing and developing solutions to problems, children and young people will contribute to an improvement in specific health and happiness outcomes in City of Sunderland.</p> <p>This outcome will contribute to preventing a decline in the health and happiness of Sunderland's population.</p>

## Care Experienced Cook Book – Change Council 16+

Output	Outcome	Impact
<p>Due to government restrictions, Change Council could not have a big launch, Two mini celebrations were held giving TfC staff the opportunity to pop in and buy a cookbook.</p> <p>32 care experienced young people have received a cookbook in the period of April 21- March 22.</p> <p>60 cook books were used as part of the holiday Activity and Food Programme</p> <p>Over 50 in the period of April 21- March 22 sold to professionals, funding will go back to the Change Council funding pot.</p>	<p>Next Steps activity co-ordinator is using the cookbook when delivering cooking session to care experienced young people both individually and in a group.</p> <p>Supports young people with their time management skills as different food needs cooking at different times.</p> <p>Feedback from PA in Next Steps. <i>They used the cook book with a young person living in foster care. The PA supported the young person to choose a meal from the cookbook to cook for the full family, ensuring skills are developed to cook independently.</i></p>	<p>Young people feel more confident cooking and have the ability to cook independently.</p> <p>It's healthier when cooking in the kitchen will be much healthier than processed foods</p> <p>By cooking at home you have complete control over the recipes that can be followed, this will also lead to a healthier diet and reduce the risk of obesity and medical conditions that come with it, so takes pressure away from our health services and young people feel happier.</p> <p>Cooking at home can boost your mental health and in return lead to better mental health so reduces</p>



6 TFC Children's Homes in Sunderland have a copy of the cookbook	Young Person living independently (18), <i>he needed a food parcel but didn't know how to cook with the food in the food, the cook was given to the young person and has easy to follow recipes in. The young person was able to use the stuff from the food parcel to cook a meal from the cook book.</i>	the need for intervention from services.
All Sunderland Support 2 Independence accommodation have a copy of the cook book.		Financial gain for young people as reduces young people buying processed foods and take always as they can batch cook.
All young people when they move into independent living receive a cook book and a necessity pack.	<i>Quote 'it is a really positive thing to have been involved in. it can be hard to follow recipes on line, but the cook book is easy to follow and well planned out (Care Experience Young Person Age 19)</i>	Raises aspirations of young people by giving them new skills, support them into education, employment and training reduces the likelihood of them becoming NEET.

Feedback from young people who attend TFC engagement groups:

*'It has helped me with my confidence and I have been able to make friends which I didn't have before'*  
Cozmie Young person Age 14

*'It helps me to create a better future for the next generation. I like the fact we can and do make a difference to other young people'* Change Council Young Person Age 18

*'Being a part of an engagement group can broaden our horizons you can share your thoughts and views about subject and services in your local area. You meet lots of new faces and different perspective of certain subjects'* Stars Young Person, 13

## Healthy Schools Award

In February 2021 the Prevention & Innovation Team launched the Health Schools Award. The Sunderland Healthy Schools Award has been developed by a local multi-agency group of health, education and social care professionals to support Sunderland schools to establish a positive, healthy school environment.

The award recognises the dedication of schools within the city to the health and wellbeing of their pupils, staff and local communities. Participation in the award will also support schools to prepare for Ofsted inspection as each charter has been developed in line with Ofsted guidance and physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing are all key components of Ofsted's common inspection framework.

The award consists of five criteria which include all aspects of health & wellbeing. Where possible criteria have been directly connected to pre-existing locally developed charter marks. Two new charter marks have been developed to ensure all aspects of health are considered under the Healthy Schools Award:

- Anti-Bullying Charter Mark
- Great Active Sunderland Schools Charter



- Food and Nutrition Charter Mark
- Mental Health Charter Mark
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education Charter Mark

Between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 27 schools have applied for a healthy school award with 13 receiving a healthy school award, these will be presented in our first Healthy Schools Celebration which is due to take place in July 2022.

Name the schools that will receive an award;

- Eppleton Academy - Emerald
- Gillas Lane Primary Academy - Emerald
- New Penshaw Academy - Emerald
- Oxclose Primary Academy - Emerald
- Ryhope Infant School Academy – Emerald
- Trinity Academy New Bridge - Emerald
- Burnside Academy - Bronze
- East Herrington Primary Academy - Bronze
- Fatfield Academy - Bronze
- Plains Farm Academy - Bronze
- Richard Avenue Primary School - Bronze
- Ryhope Junior School - Bronze
- Willow Wood Community Primary School - Bronze

### Mind of My Own

We continue to use Mind of My Own to gather the voices of children and young people in assessment, planning and intervention.

Between the period 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 there were **1573** One and Express statements received in 2021-22. Of those 1573, 1234 were One statements and 339 were Express statements.

This reflects a 117% increase from the previous financial year as there were 724 statements issued in 2020-21, with statements received in Q4 totalling just 7 fewer than in the whole of 2020-21.

By the end of 2021-22 financial year, 799 individual children and young people aged between 4 and 21 had used Mind of My Own as a tool to ensure their voice was heard.

For the first time, the most used statement from children and young people was **'My Life'**. **'Worker visit'** and **'Preparation'** fell out of the top scenarios in 2021-22, further supporting the widening of use of Mind of My Own, beyond meetings with workers.

Compared to the same point last year, children are also more likely to use Mind of My Own to report a problem. This coincides with the introduction of the safety link feature of Mind of My Own, which is a new process for addressing where problems are reported, specifically with concerns to safety and happiness. Additionally, the introduction of the **'Return from Missing'** statement type at the end of the period demonstrates the widening scope of Mind of My Own. Of the 204 Return from Missing 95% of Return from Missing statements were opened within 24 hours of being received by a worker.

Most statements in the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 have come from 10-16-year-olds. This age range used the **'my life'** and **'return from missing'** statements the most. As expected, those in the age group were also the most likely to use Mind of My Own to set the direction of their visits, allowing workers to better prepare for themes raised.



From 1 April 21 to 31 March 22 128 statements have appeared on the safety link sent from 75 individual young people. 62 statements came from children and young people who felt scared, 34 were highlighted because they felt unsafe, and 32 statements were highlighted as unhappy where they lived. All safety statements are assigned to direct line managers to ensure worker has a safety plan in place.

**Young Person Age (12)** was very happy with the response from her Early Help Worker who messaged her as soon as she received the statement to make sure everything was Ok which made her happy.

**Young Person (16)** said she does not see the point using Mind of My Own as no one listens, responds and nothing changes. The only time she can recall a response is when he appeared on the safety link and her worker called to make sure she was okay. Alicia was confused by this'

**Young Person (16)** discussed how Mind of My Own was not used when she became cared for so feels like she is very used to filling in forms/sending emails/phone calls and does not really like mind of my own, but did say that if it had been introduced from the beginning and she had always used it then she probably would be fine to use it.

**Young person (17)**, said she really like it, find it easy to navigate and knows people read it.

## Holiday Activity and Food Programme

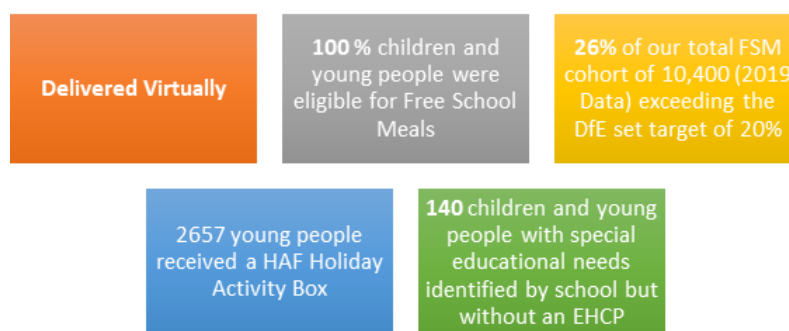
The Department for Education recognised that school holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from disadvantaged families.

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

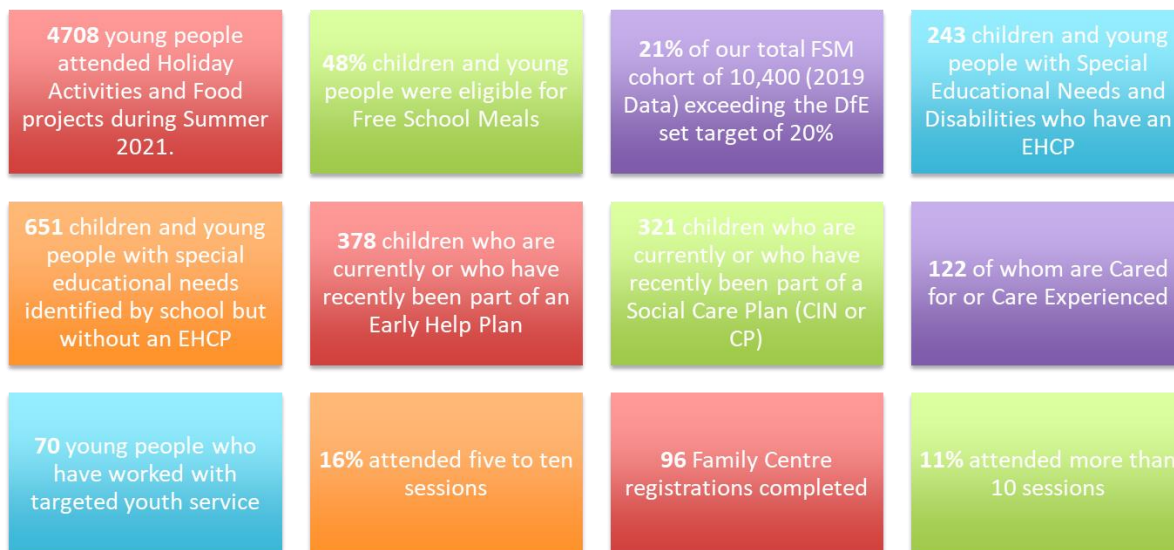
In December 2020, Together for Children submitted an application of interest to the DfE. In January 2021 the DfE informed TfC that the application of interest was successful. TfC were awarded £1,365,160 to coordinate 24 days of provision over:

- Easter 2021 (Four Days)
- Summer 2021 (16 Days)
- Christmas 2021 (Four Days)

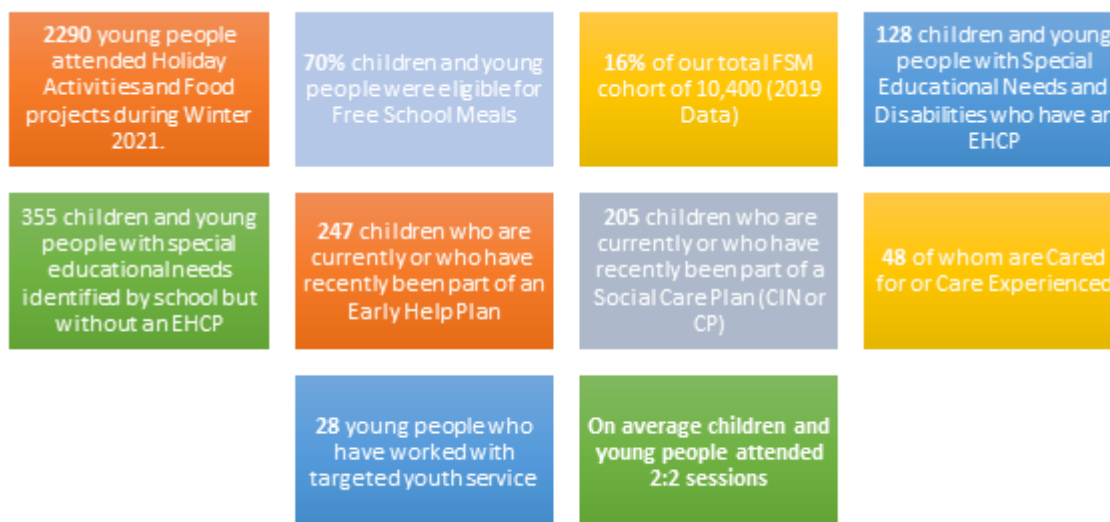
### Easter 2021



## Summer 2021



## Winter 2022



Overall **9,418** children and young people engaged in a HAF activity in 2021 of which 70% were receiving means tested Free School Meals. We worked with 29 External providers and delivered HAF provision in 24 of 25 wards in Sunderland.

*'It was great to see some of the older children encouraging and showing children from Asylum seeker/ Refugee background how to play pool and table tennis as they had never played before. They even saved seats for them to sit next to them whilst having their food. This created a sense of inclusion and integration for these children and formed positive relationships and friendships'. (Young Asian Voices)*

*"Having one meal a day given to you is a massive help for parents" (Parent)*



*"I enjoyed sitting with my friends and having some food, some of the foods I didn't really like but I tried them" (Young Person Age 10)*

*'Parents reported cooking for the first time with their children after an activity using the cookery book, we supplied to each child who attended HAF (Provider - Targeted Youth Services)*

*"I have never had the chance to try tomatoes before, they are yummy" (Child, Age 7)*

*Six young people who accessed the mobile bus in the Summer and sought advice from Sunderland Sexual health service have had repeats visits which we hope would reduce teenage pregnancy and STI's. (Sexual Health Services)*

*One young person who attended the session engaged in a brief intervention around healthy relationship advice after the parent shared some potential CSE concerns, and an Early Help referral was also agreed with the family. (Targeted Youth Support)*

## **Prevention Bus – Wear Here 4 You**

The Mobile Prevention Bus known as WEAR HERE 4 YOU launched on the 16 October 2021.

The Mobile Wear Here 4 You Bus is a partnership bus and offers support children and young people in Sunderland. Staff from Together for Children, Growing Healthy, Northumbria Police, Youth Consortium and other partners will engage with children and young people on issues that matter to them, offer light refreshments and give advice, support and signposting them to other agencies.

The **Wear Here 4 You** bus:

- provides a safe space for children and young people
- highlights the support services available across the city for children, young people and their families
- directly delivers prevention programmes, one-to-one targeted interventions and evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes for children and young people
- directly delivers themed sessions to raise awareness of online safety, cyberbullying and bullying and the impact this has on mental health and emotional resilience.
- delivers health interventions to children, young people as part of Growing Healthy 0-19 programme
- delivers and promotes C Card (age specific)
- takes support provision to geographical areas/wards where there has been difficulty for young people to access it or where a targeted provision is required
- enables young people to have a positive voluntary relationship with an adult who has a professional interest in the well-being of young people.
- enables Together for Children to gain a greater understanding of young people's situations in order to increase accuracy of intervention.
- supports the partnership to understand the issues and needs of young people to the benefit of both.
- supports young people to gain a variety of skills and knowledge and raise their aspirations.
- prevents young people taking risks and engaging in unhealthy and unsafe behaviours

The Mobile Wear here 4 You bus offers the following support services to children and young people:

- Anti- Bullying Support (TfC)
- Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) (TfC)
- Youth Drug and Alcohol (YDAP) (TfC)



- Co-production Opportunities (TfC)
- Better Mental Health (Growing Healthy)
- Careers Advice and Guidance (TfC)
- Nutritional Education (Change 4 Life) - PH
- Staying Safe Advice and Guidance (Police)
- Virtual Reality Police Kit – CSE, Criminal Exploitation, Hate Crime (Police) (TfC)
- Violence against women and girls (police) (SSCP)
- Family Centre Taster Opportunities (TfC)
- Detached Youth Work (Youth Consortium) Area Dependant

In the period of 16 October 21 – 31 March 2022 the Prevention Bus completed the following sessions;

	Number of Sessions	Number of Children and young people	Number of parent/carers
School Session (TfC Led)	17	1,384	0
Community Session – Day	8	385	47
Community Session - Evening	21	795	11

### Feedback from Children, Young people and Families

"I was on the bus at Washington Galleries it gives us something to do and was great talking to staff, was helpful"

"what a night great staff"

"the bus is fab, even the staff have fun"

"don't get in trouble"

"it's just amazing"

What we love about the bus - "the staff, the support, the tunes, the free food"

### Themes

Young people want somewhere safe to go, just to chill out and listen to music	Young people want help with their well-being.	Young people want to know what employment and training opportunities there are available	Young people want to feel safe	Young people want help to stay out of trouble
Families want access to information in one place	Young people want information about safe sex	Young people want advice about being in a healthy relationship	Young people want to talk to someone who will listen (a trusted adult)	Some young people aren't attending school
	Young people are telling us they are meeting up and fighting in groups	Young people are mixing in a varied age range from across the city	Young people are aware of 'only fans' and who to contact.	



## Outcomes

Below are some short-term outcomes that were achieved in period;

- One of the STI screening kits issued on the bus was returned and came back positive. The young person was able to be identified and treatment was arranged for this young person
- Two young people asked for help when they felt unsafe from bus staff, the bus staff worked with the police to get the two young people home safely.
- From a school session it became apparent the lack of awareness or understanding around RSHE, this allowed us to link the school with our RSHE team to do some specialist sessions.
- Intelligence around use of ketamine and poppers with teenage boys 15-17 have supported the extension of support from our youth drug and alcohol services and delivering some targeted intervention
- One young person gave contact details to contact the following day, which has led to an Early Help referral to support the family and young person referred to RSHE service.
- Police intelligence submitted after sessions (partners didn't know we could submit intelligence)
- Concerns were raised by Sexual health re young people's knowledge around sexual health and relationships, schools were contacted, and work has been completed.
- Two young people disclosed that they were being bullied in school and had not shared this with anyone and would like support, TfC AB lead is now working with the school.
- Over 50 new families signed up to their local family centre at the FC promotion session.
- One young person disclosed she thought she had experienced being groomed online, the appropriate referral was made and the young person is receiving one to one support.

## ***Bumps to Babies (B2b):***

Bumps to Babies (B2b) is a specialist service for young parents up to the age of 16 – 20 years. Its offers further education courses, training opportunities and emotional support to young mums, children under 5 and mums to be.

B2b moved to old Ryhope Library on 18 February 2019, staffing has continued to grow to support the expanding service, which supports young parents, parents to be and their children in the Further Education and onsite Early Years provision. It operates alongside the Young Mums' Project which was previously managed by Thornhill Academy for statutory school aged parents.

B2b offers young mums the opportunity to further their individual education, gaining qualifications and accreditations, in a safe and nurturing environment.

All sessions offer the opportunity to improve their personal development and outcomes for children and young parents, which includes increasing self-esteem and self-confidence, independent living skills, parenting advice and support and socialising with other young parents, in similar situations as themselves.

B2b aims to empower young parents to make positive life choices for themselves and their children. All courses, groups and activities are planned and developed with full involvement of the young parents. Educational courses include Occupational Studies, Maths & English, Health & Social Care Level 1, 2, 3 and General Studies. Staff offer advice and support on issues around smoking cessation, breast-feeding, mental health, relationships, sexual health, weaning, childhood ailments,

parenting, baby massage, routines and boundaries, as well as benefits advice, budgeting and healthy eating.

To enable staff to support our service users fully, we work closely with multi-agency partners including Family Nurse Practitioners, Young Person Sexual Health Nurse, Health Visitors, Early Help, Children's Services, YDAP, NE Lads and Dads and Housing Options

Whilst young parents access B2b, their children are cared for in two fully equipped nursery rooms. B2b provides an environment, underpinned by the EYFS principles, Ofsted guidance and SEND Code of Practice. B2b offers an inclusive service where babies and children are safeguarded; their happiness and wellbeing for children in our nursery is paramount. Staff use 'quality first teaching' technique to implement a safe, heuristic environment; continually accessing, planning, tracking and reviewing changes and development for their key children.

Partnership with parents plays a key role in promoting a culture of cooperation between parents, the nursery, the Local Authority and others. This is important in enabling children with SEND to achieve their potential. When a child/adult is identified as having a special educational needs and/or disability; having significantly greater difficulty in learning, than the majority of those children of the same age, they will be managed through the assess, plan, do and review process. When using the SEND Ranges four areas of the SEND Code of Practice (2014/2015) and the Golden thread of the Graduated Approach, B2b would make reasonable adjustments for anyone with additional within our setting, enabling all to achieve their potential

Over the year 2020/21 the project supported 76 Young Mums under the age of 20, alongside 60 babies and toddlers aged 0-5 years.

Of the cohort that was supported by B2b in 2019/20:

- 18 Young Parents remained with B2b for a further period
- One went on to university
- Seven gained employment

### ***Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP):***

The Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP) in Sunderland provides Structured Drug Treatment to young people with complex and problematic substance misuse, as well as providing Brief Interventions to young people with less complex needs, targeted group work within schools and youth groups and training to professionals such as residential home staff and the foster care group.

During this period YDAP also continued to deliver Basic Drugs Awareness Training throughout the local authority – supporting and upskilling the workforce to identify and work with young people regarding their substance use.

As with previous years, and in line with the national data, the majority of young people referred to YDAP during this period were seeking support for cannabis and alcohol misuse. However, many of these young people also reported using other substances including cocaine, ketamine, and a range of benzodiazepines and other prescription type medication.

YDAP receives referrals from Early Help, Schools, Health and Social Care and the Youth Offending Service. In the year 21/22 YDAP received 225 referrals in total, which is significantly higher than last

year. This is due to implementing an implied consent model to referrals from A&E department at Sunderland Royal Hospital. Any young person who attends A&E under the age of 18 where there is a drug or alcohol concern is now automatically referred to YDAP.

In the last year YDAP also introduced a scheme whereby any young people who are admitted to Sunderland Royal Hospital for alcohol or drug related concerns, a member of the team will attempt to visit them in hospital to assess and engage them with the service.

In the last year 82 young people progressed into treatment, the majority of these were into structured treatment. 92% of structured treatment cases were closed with a successful outcome.

### ***Wear Kids Anti-Social Behaviour Service:***

In 2021/22, a total of 58 young people, aged between 9.5 to 15 years, consented to work with Wear Kids. This compares to 70 young people in the same age-range in 2020/21.

30 of those young people underwent an intervention with one of our workers.

78% were male and 22% were female and 98% were White-British. The percentage of boys supported by the service in 2021/22 was higher than in 2020/21 (69%) and the percentage of girls correspondingly lower (31%).

Of those, 71% successfully completed an intervention which is a decrease on 2020/21's figure of 86%. An additional 5% completed some work with Wear Kids.

The largest referrer to Wear Kids was the Police by way of direct referrals or the issuing of Anti-Social Behaviour Agreements (ABA), followed by Early Help. However, school referrals remained low, mainly due to Covid during the period.

Since April 2022 Wear Kids monitoring has now been modified to capture more detailed reports including specific referral pathways which will allow us to target external partners.

***Impact of the service:*** of the 30 young people who worked with Wear Kids in 2021/22:

- Six of the 30 went onto be arrested for an offence (20%)
- Of the six, three received an Outcome 22, one was sent to Custody and two cases remain pending
- Overall of the 30, only one (3.34%) went on to be criminalised

The numbers escalated to the Youth Offending Team were lower in 2021/22 than in 2020/21 (16) and in 2019/20 (11). This is a very positive picture, but must be taken in the context of fewer young people being referred to Wear Kids overall.

### **Youth Offending Service:**

The latest available from the YJB as reported in the YOT Data Summaries:

	First Time Entrants rate per 100,000	Binary re-offending rate	Use of custody rate
<b>Sunderland</b>	109 (down from 122)	22.9% (down from 30.0%)	0.00 (remained the same)
<b>YOT family*</b>	165 (down from 249)	40.6% (up from 38.8%)	0.07 (down from 0.18%)
<b>National*</b>	154 (down from 219)	34.0% (down from 39.3%)	0.11 (down from 0.22%)

\* YOT Family and national figures are the most recent we have

21% of young offenders in 2019/20 were female and 79% were male. This is in line with last year.

51% were aged between 10-14 years and 49% between 15-17 years. This is a significant change from 2020/21 where 36% were in the younger age group and 64% in the older age group.

95.55% of young offenders had a recorded ethnicity of White British, and 4.45% had an ethnicity of BAME. This is in line with last year and reflects Sunderland's overall demographic.

Offending by Looked After Children is provisionally recorded as 2.2% which is our lowest ever figure. This has reduced over the last seven years following the introduction of a Cared For protocol with Police. We do not yet have national figures for comparison.

The multi-agency YOS Board meets regularly, and more detailed reports in respect of YOS performance are available quarterly.

### **Victim Work – Restorative Justice:**

In 2021/22 the YOS restorative justice team worked with 221 victims of youth crime. This compares to 189 in the previous year. However, in addition to this training has been completed with the Wear Kids Prevention team and two pieces of indirect restoration were successfully completed with young people who had engaged in anti-social behaviour. They completed reparation to make amends for their behaviour in the community where they had caused the anti-social behaviour and at the direct request of the people harmed as a result of this. This is an area that will continue to be developed over the coming year.

In terms of outcomes based on victim requests, 41 cases of indirect restorative responses were recorded, which is similar to the previous year, however only two direct (face to face) pieces of restorative intervention were recorded. This is in part due to a change in the case-management system which is being addressed, although it has been noted that certainly for the beginning part of the year Covid was still having an impact on the communities and people's desire to engage in face to face meetings.

In addition, the restorative justice team completed their work with Washington School as part of the restorative justice pilot and created links with Thornhill Academy, supporting them in a move to incorporate restorative practices in their behaviour management policies. This included training on both restorative approaches and on restorative conferencing. Links with the Anti-Bullying Team and the school charter marks have led to a series of planned training events with individual primary and secondary schools in using restorative approaches.

The team has continued to support Sunderland's cared for young people in the residential homes via regular drop ins and training and through four facilitated restorative pieces of work with young people to divert them from being involved in the criminal justice system for anti-social or offending behaviour within their living environment.

Reparation schemes have continued throughout the year, with a particular focus on nature, based on both young people's interests and victims' requests in this area. Schemes have facilitated the making of bird boxes, bat boxes and bug hotels which have been erected throughout the City, often as indirect requests from victims. Young people have also been busy planting vegetables throughout the season that will be distributed to various foodbanks in the Sunderland area. The recycling project has continued in partnership with the Council who provide the use of recycling bins for tin cans, plastic bottles, cardboard and general litter collected by young people on litter-pick schemes. These schemes are then used to provide some education about the importance of recycling and seeing the impact litter has on the local community and wildlife. Schemes have also included the re-painting of local Teen Shelters and graffiti removal, and this has been welcomed by local councillors and residents.

### ***Staffing and Workforce Development***

Training delivered to staff in the Early Help Directorate in 2021/22 included:

- Induction for all new staff
- Early Help Assessment training
- Signs of Safety
  - Snapshot sessions – first visit
  - Snapshot sessions – chronologies
  - Snapshot sessions – safety house
  - Snapshot sessions – words and pictures
  - Snapshot sessions – journals and fire drills
  - Snapshot sessions – networks and safety circles
  - Snapshot sessions – my three houses
  - Snapshot sessions – language
  - Snapshot sessions – danger statements, safety goals and scaling questions
  - Snapshot sessions – trajectory and time-line
- YDAP ecstasy briefing
- YDAP cannabis briefing
- ASD
- Mermaid training (LGBTQ+)
- Emotional regulation tools
- Trauma-informed practice workshop – shame
- Trauma-informed workshop – relationship templates and re-enactments
- Insights
- Post-graduate certificate in family group conferencing
- Mind of My Own
- C-Card (contraception)
- Personal Development in Health, Social Care or Children's and Young People's Settings (E-Learning)



- On-line safety for learners
- Smoking cessation
- Suicide prevention
- Delivering DAPS Level 2 (DVA)
- Auditing group exercise
- Allocations, update stepdown, dealing with CCN (EHAAT)
- Various shadowing opportunities

### ***Future Plans***

We will continue 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.

We will focus on our successful submission to establish a Family Hubs Network across Sunderland, grown out of our current Family Centres model. This will require improved integration with our partners and co-location of services across all areas of the City.

We will continue to look for opportunities to bid for funding to extend the interventions we can offer.

We will continue to offer schools and academies support through Service Level Agreements and use this as an opportunity to promote the value of early intervention 'from within'. It is hoped that by training school staff to lead on plans we can develop a model of early intervention which is sustainable going forward. We will look to extend this offer to include Careers Education, Information, Advice & Guidance and Attendance.

We will increase still further the number of participative groups available to support young people and to hear their voice. This will be both for groups with a particular identity (such as our LGBTQ+ support group Cozmic 3piphany) and for the wider young population of Sunderland. We will promote the use of Mind Of My Own and Mind Of My Own Express, including exploring how schools might become registered users. We will focus on our RISE groups in our Family Hubs and in schools to ensure isolated young people have a voice and a support network.

We will continue to support neighbourhood initiatives such as the SARA Project in Southwick, the HALO Project in Hetton and other new community projects as they arise to enhance our locality working.

We will monitor the impact of our Attendance Initiative with Infant Schools and schools with infant classes as part of a long-term strategy to improve outcomes for vulnerable pupils by tackling persistent absence.

We will develop at least one more toolkit for professionals in 2022/23 to support their work. This is likely to be an Exploitation Toolkit.

We will expand our Restorative Justice in Schools pilot to a third secondary school and feeder primaries.







We will improve our data analysis of projects such as the Holiday Activity and Food programme and Breathing Space to ensure that we are reaching the right young people and that we understand the difference these initiatives make to families' lives.

We will refurbish our new 'Food Truck' to enhance our support to the HAF and work with families, communities and schools to improve nutritional advice to families.

We will analyse the impact of our Prevention Bus and seek funding for a third year of operation.

We will work with the Council to support families through the Cost of Living Crisis, with a focus on child poverty and food insecurity. We hope to use a new Family Hub in the east of the City to support The Bread and Butter Thing community food programme.

We will develop our own Parenting Programme in partnership with the University of Sunderland and train three cohorts of staff to masters level in the delivery of interventions.