

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the Civic Centre (Committee Room No. 1) on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 at 5.30 p.m.**

#### **Membership**

Cllr Beck, Bell, Francis (Vice-Chairman), Hunt, Jackson, O'Neil, Scullion, P. Smith (Chairman), Stewart, M. Turton, Tye and G. Walker

Coopted Members – Mrs A Blakey, Ms R Elliott and Mr S Williamson

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## **Part B – Scrutiny Business**

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

22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2016.

**At a meeting of the CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1 of the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER, 2016 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Smith in the Chair

Councillors Beck, Bell, Scullion, Stewart and Tye together with Ms. A. Blakey and Mr. S. Williamson.

**Also in attendance:-**

Councillor Norma Wright (Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee)

Ms. Karen Brown, Scrutiny and Member Services Coordinator

Mr. James Diamond, Scrutiny Officer

Ms. Rhiannon Hood, Assistant Head of Law and Governance

Mr. Alex Hopkins, Director of Children's Services

Ms. Ruby Johnston, Member of the Youth Parliament

Ms. Elaine Matterson, Attendance Manager

Ms. Beverley Scanlon, Head of Educational Attainment and Lifelong Learning

Ms. Joanne Stewart, Principal Governance Services Officer

Mr. Gavin Taylor, Deputy Independent Reviewing Manager

**Chairman's Announcement**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman, Councillor Pat Smith, read out a statement which she request be fully recorded in the minutes, namely that;-

Members will recall that a recommendation was put forward by the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee that an extraordinary meeting of the Committee be convened.

The Chairman was really sorry to say that despite best efforts, a date was not able to be secured prior to this meeting of the Committee and there was a number of reasons for this, not least because Officer's diary's did not allow it. However, the Chairman advised that she was very aware of the strength of feelings of the issues that were and raised and the many unanswered questions that Members had and for that reason Members would notice that she had ensured that Item 4, Early Help was to be the first item on the agenda, once Mr. Alex Hopkins was in attendance, who would be available to answer any questions that Members had relating to the Youth Offending Service; Early Help Services and Youth Service.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Francis, Jackson, O'Neil and G. Walker

## **Minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2016**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the of the last ordinary meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2016 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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

Councillor Tye made an open declaration in the Early Help Update item in relation to his Council appointment to the Youth Almighty Project.

### **Change in Order of Business**

At this juncture the Chairman proposed that Item 8 – Local Authority Designated Officer – Progress Report be considered first to allow time for Mr. Alex Hopkins, Director of Children Services, to arrive to present his reports.

### **Local Authority Designated Officer – Progress Report**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated the Committee on the progress and performance of the Local Authority Designated Officer service with regards to its relationship with religious organisations as requested following the presentation of the LADO Annual Report in September, 2016.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Gavin Taylor, Deputy Independent Reviewing Manager, presented the report advising that following a recommendation from the Committee in September, 2016 around a further report on the progress being made for the LADO service to improve links with the Muslim religious community a meeting had taken place with two religious leaders from the Majid Mosque and the Majid ibn Taymeeyah Mosque in October, 2016. A further briefing had been arranged at the Bangladeshi Community Centre to meet with the elders of the three Mosques in Sunderland to explain the LADO function and offer on-going support to them.

Mr. Taylor advised that they were currently developing a training programme with the elders and the wider community and that it was taking longer than originally expected but that this was down to Officers being sensitive to the needs of the community. A training day was arranged for January, 2017 where it was intended to share the referral process and contact details with attendees.

Within the wider context of religious organisations in the city, contact via emails and telephone calls had been made with the main religious organisations and a meeting had been held with the Safeguarding Leads for both the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses. A meeting with the Safeguarding Lead for the Methodist Church was being progressed.

Mr. Williamson thanked Mr. Taylor for the helpful report back to the Committee and felt that it identified that progress was being made and in relation to specific outcomes for particular areas of concern of radicalisation, Mr. Taylor advised that the training provided would predominately focus on the provision of the LADO function and service and that it was expected that there would be a large number of people on the training day they were keen to have them involved as part of a more joined up approach, considering the same agenda topics. In relation to radicalisation, Mr. Taylor advised that they were taking a wider approach, although work was already undertaken to identify any areas of concern, but that they would continue to talk to the leaders and cover those areas as part of their on-going relations with them.

Ms. Elliott asked if the Bethany City Centre at Bede Tower had been included in the process and Mr. Taylor advised that he was not aware that they had been contacted but that he would be happy to approach them to arrange a similar meeting.

Councillor Bell asked if, in light of recent press coverage, the service were looking to reach out to the Football Association and Sunderland Football Club and Mr. Taylor advised that this process had already been undertaken at the beginning of the year and they had advised football clubs not to make a referral and offered any training they may need in relation to the LADO service.

In response to a further question from Councillor Bell around the approach being made with the religious leaders, Mr. Taylor advised that they approached them as a friend and available support. There were clear messages shared around the anxieties faced, and the service would look to help them in their approach to dealing with issues and areas of concern whilst still delivering the key messages to them and the wider community.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and the multi-agency briefing scheduled for late February, 2017 and suggested that it may be beneficial to receive a further report following this meeting. Mr. Taylor advised that he intended to return to the Committee a month after the briefing with the Annual Report and suggested that he may incorporate findings from the February meeting into this report for the Committee's consideration.

Members, having fully considered the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- a) The LADO continue to forge links with the religious communities within Sunderland; and
- b) All religious organisations be invited to the LADO briefing in February, 2017 with an update to be included in a future report to the Committee in March, 2017.

### **Early Help Update**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the development of a proposed model for Early Help Services in the transition to Together for Children in April, 2017.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Beverley Scanlon, Head of Education Attainment and Lifelong Learning, presented the report advising that she had been put in place as caretaker manager of the service following the recent departure of Ms. Simone Common, as the new Officer would not be in post until 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 due to having to work notice in their current position.

Ms. Scanlon advised that the Ofsted Inspection in July, 2015 noted that 'gaps in provision of early year help means that families experience inequality of access to the provision they need' and that 'help is not always available at the right time and in the right place.' The proposal for future Early Help Services was to move forward towards a more targeted and preventative approach, supporting children and families whilst children remain in the care of the family.

The Committee were advised that between now and April, 2017 the service structure was being reviewed and further aligned to the proposed new Early Help model and the available budget in the new financial year. The newly appointed Director of Early Help would have a key role in the reshaping of both the model and the structure over the coming weeks.

Mr. Williamson referred to the model based on the tiered delivery of services and particularly c) Early Help alongside social workers at the initial contact and referral stage and commented that the workloads of social workers were trying to be reduced and asked if this would allow allocations to be made quickly enough and how referrals were directed at the initial stage. Mr. Hopkins advised that referrals could not get social care until they had been through the Early Help but it may be that when referrals are called in they are directed toward other services that could help and that the referral does not need to progress any further through the referral process, thus allocating the correct route at the point of referral and not waiting until initial contact. If working well then it should not pressure statutory services and an element of social work be available in everyone's offer where needed or when it is recognised that a child or young person needs more support than currently involved then better support would be available to support families at tier three. Mr. Williamson commented that it was a big ask on already stretched services but great to have.

In response to a query from Mr. Williamson in relation to e) a tiered and targeted approach to services which provides the right help at the right time; Mr. Hopkins advised that at the moment there was a broad range of different interventions and the introduction of the streamlined pathway for families would see the level of need met with services that were designed to target ranging from the highest level of need, level four and the introduction of the CAMHS service down. The new model would bring an order and structure to the approach to Early Help and if something was not working for a young person how to progress them through further services available.

Mr. Williamson referred to the budget proposals for Children's Services in relation to children remaining in the care of the family, whereby it was looked to make a saving of £0.317m for 2017/2018 and £0.940m for 2019/2020 through review and that the streamlining of services may have both a positive and negative impact on children and young people which would be fully considered during the completion of the equality analysis and asked if there was a clear budget plan to actually deliver in line with the proposals as it was a large chunk of money to be saved. Mr. Hopkins

advised that they were working on an Early Help Strategy which was not complete and very challenging but that there were efficiencies to be made and there were tried and tested programmes which could make a difference to the delivery of services and they would focus resource there. The money that was available to the services would have to be used as well as possible to ensure service delivery and there were key areas which worked well together which would be outlined in the Early Help Strategy and Key Plan.

Mr. Williamson requested that the Committee have further sight of the budget plan and assurances that the new Children's Company could deliver the level of services that were set out in the plan without negatively affecting children and young people in the city.

Councillor Tye commented that they were being informed that Early Help was not good enough and that a Director was being appointed to manage that service and asked why the review was taking place now, before the Director had taken up post? He went on to comment that surely the new Director would want to shape their own service and that it was preposterous to start a review now before they were in place. Mr. Hopkins advised that Early Help had been through a restructure already and that the new Director was looking to work alongside them in the review process but that if you were to look at any recognised good model of Early Help Services they would be in line with the model proposed at 3.4 of the report and include a streamlined pathway similar to those bullets set out at a)-h). There was then the need to tailor those services and to work with partners to ensure that it was the most appropriate for the city and its needs. He understood the concerns of the Councillor but this was a process he had been involved with in previous positions and he would not have continued with the review if he felt it were a job that he was not able to do. He also felt that there was nothing in the proposed approach to the new model that the new Director would disagree with.

Councillor Wright concurred with the comments that had been made by her colleagues and raised her own concerns:-

- There appeared to be confusion around Early Help and it would be useful if the Committee had a better understanding;
- A better understanding of the rationale behind Ofsted stating that it was not fit for purpose;
- Around experienced staff members who have left the authority and taken valuable knowledge with them;
- The contradiction in terms that millions of pounds need to be put into Children's Services and yet there are further efficiencies to be made; are the assurances that the skills and staff are available in Early Help to support the new model as it was absolutely vital to it being successful and what assessments were taking place to ensure there were sufficiently skilled people in place in the services?; and
- Was there a specific formal model for Early Help services that was being followed and were the Council fully reliant upon that model, even if they did not know yet as to how successful it would be?

Mr. Hopkins advised he would try to address each of the concerns, informing the Committee that once the new Director was in post, in February 2017, it may be beneficial to bring the whole team along to a session with the Committee to give the full detail of the service and clarify for Members the Early Help Service.

With regards to efficiencies, Mr. Hopkins advised that it had been really difficult as all external monies had gone into social care, to help manage caseloads and provide additional support but that once the social work service improves it was planned to move more resources out of social care and into Early Help. Unfortunately, efficiencies needed to be made and it had to be about choices and the priorities of the Council at the time and although it was not easy to make those decisions it had to be done.

In relation to the skills base of the staff, Mr. Hopkins informed the Committee that the staff that had left the service had done so through the severance scheme and that those remaining had certain skills and had wanted to stay within the service. He would look into how many members of staff had left and not been replaced for Members but it was important that the team that remained had the right skills and/or training to best suit the service, which was most important of all.

With regards to the model proposed for the future Early Help Services, he informed Members that it was based upon models that had been used in other local authorities which had received very good Ofsted reports. It was a very simple model which focussed on what works for the Early Help Service and simplified the paperwork process to make it easier for all parties to use. For instance, the Early Help Assessment was designed to become the beginning of the social work assessment so that it was not work that had to be recreated and carried out twice. He advised that if the Committee were to look at other authorities around the country where the Early Help Service was successful they would find a very similar model overall; basic principles being all the same; and suggested that it may be beneficial for the Committee to look at other information from some of those local authorities.

Councillor Wright commented that it would be most useful if information from some of the authorities Mr. Hopkins had referred to could be looked into further to consider areas of good practice or even for Members of the Committee to highlight and visit a particular area with recognised good Ofsted to gather further evidence.

Councillor Tye referred to the review of the youth service and asked where the findings of the first review had gone which had been carried out under the agenda of the previous Director of Children's Services. He informed Mr. Hopkins that Members had been given assurances that funding towards the youth zone provision was separate funding from capital spend and that budget continuity would remain and asked when discussions had been had formally to change this position.

Mr. Hopkins advised that unfortunately, there were some things that he could simply not answer, having not been in post at the time but he could look to find out what had happened to the outcome of the previous review. He could inform the Committee that the piece of work that was now being asked to be undertaken by Ms. Scanlon's team was to look at youth service provision and given the proposals in the budget look to see what could be done to mitigate the effect. He advised that meetings had been held with youth organisations in the city who currently received £2.5m in funding, with a proposed reduction of £0.5m from the Council budget, but that there were other potential resources in funding which could meet that funding gap if applied for and secured. Ms. Scanlon advised that there was funding available as part of the Youth Initiative Fund Grants and if successful, the decision was to be made in February, and then this would offset some of the £0.5m reduction. The VCS could then look to become more sustainable as it was a three year funding initiative.



Councillor Tye reiterated that Members had been misled as they had been told that there would be no reduction in funding towards youth services for 2017/2018 and yet the realignment of the budget to the Children's Company would now see the budget proposal stating that it would be cut in its entirety and that someone had to be accountable for that change and come before the Scrutiny Committee to provide the reasoning behind it. He also referred to information that had been given to Members by the Children's Commissioner who had advised of how funding would be protected for youth services and then three months later it appeared that they were in a completely different place.

Councillor Wright commented that it was well known the cuts that were having to be made to the VCS and that she had been hearing that there were some youth services who were simply not able to continue in the current financial climate, so it would make Members query the availability to secure further funding and how it would pan out in future for the service provision if it was not available as hoped.

With regard to particular Officers who may have provided that information at the time, Mr. Hopkins advised that they did not report to him and as he was not able to comment on what had occurred at that time, as he was not in post, he would need to take it up with the Director of People's Services to look at how best to address the issue and come back to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee with proposals. Councillor Wright commented that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee were due to meet the following week on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 where they would be discussing the budget proposals and asked if it would be possible to have that discussion with the relevant Officers and have a response available for that meeting as there needed to be a better understanding of the background to the proposals.

Councillor Bell commented that it had been clear to see 3-4 years ago where the funding cuts were going to hit and now youth services were being hit in the same manner. There was not a bottomless pit of funding available and one option could be for the Area Committees to step in and look to fund services in their areas to ensure contributions were being made to secure youth services in their area.

The Chairman having thanked Ms Scanlon for her attendance, and Members having no further questions or comments, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that :-

- a) the report be received and noted;
- b) further information on the newly developed Early Help strategy within the new Children's Company and assurances given as to how it would be delivered in line with its budget be submitted for consideration to a future meeting;
- c) the Committee invite the new Director of Early Help (and team) to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to give a clear distinction of Early Help;
- d) further information on other authorities where the new Early Help model had been implemented successfully be gathered and shared with the Committee; and

- e) that the Director of Children's Services follow up on the discussions that had taken place around the history and background of the issues in relation to the provision of youth services, and provide feedback prior to the meeting of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to be held on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2016.

## **Sunderland Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan – Progress Update**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on the progress being made on the Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Alex Hopkins, Director of Children's Services, presented the report advising that the report provided an update on key areas of progress in relation to Children's Services and that it provided a summary of the key actions and any changes in the Implementation Plan and the impact on performance. He advised that the current Improvement Plan was under review, being a year old, and that he would continue to bring along updated versions of the Improvement Plan to share at each future meeting of the Committee so that Members could get a sense of the improvements being made.

He explained that the report identified the current RAG rating assigned to actions by priority and that on the production of an updated Improvement Plan it would be noticeable that there would be a lot more actions marked red as work would only be commencing following the findings of the on-going review.

He advised that where an action was identified as completed in this report it would be removed on the next report and that the report helped to highlight where an area was not progressing. Mr. Hopkins commented that the services were intentionally tough on themselves when measuring to ensure the robustness of the plan and that actions were only marked as green and complete when it had been completed and checked over a specific timescale.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Hopkins for his briefing, invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Stewart stated that he understood that the current Virtual Headteacher was on long term sick leave and asked for an update on the situation. Mr. Hopkins advised that had been the case and they were now in the process of looking to appoint a permanent alternative over the next couple of months and he would look to keep the Committee advised of progress.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell in relation to agency workers within the social work teams, Mr. Hopkins advised that at times it could be difficult as social workers would report to each other their opinions on local authorities and it would take time for attitudes to change and positive messages to circulate. Once the positivity of the changes and improvements made begins to spread they would find that there were more social workers looking to consider a permanent role with the authority and new company as the good reputation as employers circulates by word of mouth.

Mr. Williamson stated that he had been very concerned to see that priorities 2, 4, 6 and 7 looked as there were no movement and had stalled, especially as Ofsted would only be looking to see if work had been completed and wondered what the strategy would do to make sure that things continued to move on. Mr. Hopkins advised that the priorities did appear to look as though they were stalling but that this was around the need for a new plan as some actions had been completed and now the next plan needed to be more detailed and sophisticated so that it was much more targeted for the next stage of developments. They were spending a huge amount of time talking with teams and ensuring that the feedback from them married up with what is set out in the new plan and the RAG ratings would be amended if it was not as reported. Actions against priorities were consistently checked and having the Councillors recently talking with the social workers was a really useful way in triangulating all of the information.

Mr. Williamson commented that he had understood that the update was to be on Early Help but there was no detail regarding it in the report and asked if the Director could ensure that the next report had clarity around the plan and the RAG priority and programme against that particular priority; priority 2 – providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families.

Mr. Hopkins advised that when the plan had initially been put in place they had had to make sure that children in the city were safe and the early help had not been as important then, although the next plan could focus more now that improvements in other areas had been made.

Mr. Williamson commented that he had attended the meeting of the Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee the previous evening, where they had discussed the introducing of a Housing First approach and referred to priority 6 around supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence and asked for assurances that services were tying in with Housing 21 and the model that Mr. Caddick, Head of Housing Support and Community Living, had described at the meeting. Mr. Hopkins advised that accommodation for care leavers had been very problematic in the past but that they were looking to provide a range of accommodation options that was suited to each care leaver, rather than one type fits all. Some care leavers were ready to live in their own property but others that were not ready for that much independence were offered support in the way that they needed, whether that be in supported living, or by the authority underwriting their tenancy agreement for example. He advised that Ofsted had recognised that significant improvements had been made but there was still more that could be done.

Councillor Bell asked if there would be a report back to the Committee on the recent visit some Members had made to a group of social workers and was informed that a report would be submitted to the January meeting. Councillor Bell advised that he had some very interesting and frank discussions with the social workers and it would be of interest to those who could not attend the visit. Councillor Smith thanked those Members that had been able to attend the visit as it was important for Officers to have the opportunity to speak with Members and feel that their voices and opinions were being heard.

Councillor Scullion advised that he had attended the meeting and was happy to have seen that discussions were very much driven by the social workers and felt that they

could be open and honest with them. There had been one or two issues they had raised which could improve the efficiency of the service, one of which was the provision of back office support staff who could offer administrative support which did not require the high level of skills of the social workers to complete but were still vitally important. Mr. Hopkins advised that the current model within the Council structure was that business support was a central function with a team of clerks available to offer support when required. He was aware that there was some friction towards the amount of resource available to them but that one option when moving to the new company could be to have a coordinating team clerk role which was fully embedded into the service but discussions would continue as the new company was structured.

In response to Councillor Beck's query around social workers and staff parking in the Council car park and having to walk to the new premises, possibly late on an evening and alone, Mr. Hopkins replied that staff safety was always of concern and importance and the logistics would need to be looked at.

Councillor Bell commented that it was rare for Councillors to meet with social workers nowadays whereas in the past they had carried out regular visits. The vulnerable adult team was another service they had not been involved with for a number of years and he felt that Councillors miss that level of interaction with staff. Mr. Diamond advised that the feedback given was that both parties had really appreciated the opportunity to share their views and the social workers had asked for their thanks to be passed on to the Councillors who had taken part in the visit for taking the time to listen to them.

Councillor Wright referred to page 23 of the report and referred to the Health Passports and the challenge in ensuring that medical histories were passed on as young people left care and stated that it was really important that health partners are mindful to the importance of this information and their involvement in ensuring they are shared. Mr. Hopkins advised that the situation had improved but that there was a way to go to make sure that all care leavers had their information passed on and that the issue could be raised through the Corporate Parenting Board. There is now a dedicated CLA nurse post at the CCG and there needed to be better practices embedded so as the young person prepares to leave care all of the health information is pulled together to be passed on with them.

Ms. Johnston, Youth Parliament Members, asked if a young person's mental health record would be included in the health passports and was advised that if a young person had had issues with mental health then it would form part of the passport prepared for them leaving care.

Ms. Johnston went on to advise that the NHS Youth Forum had found that young people often felt moved around between services and having to repeatedly explain themselves and their situation and that the passport she referred to was to record a young person's history and what treatments, etc they preferred to relieve this. Mr. Hopkins advised that for care leavers there was a slightly different process in the production of health passports and he didn't think the two would cut across each other.

There being no further comments or questions for Mr. Hopkins, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the report on progress in relation to the implementation of the Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan be received and noted,
- b) a further report in relation to priority 2 of the improvement plan, providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- c) assurances be given to the Committee that services were tying in with the new model as part of introducing a housing first approach;
- d) a feedback report on the visit to the Social Workers be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- e) the Committee's thanks be forwarded to those Social Workers who met with Members of the Committee for their input.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on Fixed Penalty Notices for primary and secondary schools in Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Elaine Matterson, Attendance Manager, presented the report, setting out the current position in Sunderland in relation to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices in schools in Sunderland and invited questions and comments from Members.

Ms. Matterson advised that penalty notices were intended to be used as an early intervention strategy in order to deter patterns of unauthorised absence and do not replace the wider powers under the Education Act 1996. Unlike other regional local authorities, penalty notices are only issued by the local authority and that this was put in place to ensure that all fixed penalty notices were issued fairly and consistently and could be defended.

During the academic year 2016/17 to date, Ms. Matterson advised that 32 fixed penalty notices had been issued; 9 issued due to children failing warning notice period; 6 cases of no further action and 17 cases currently within the monitoring period for the fixed penalty warning; of the 17, 5 had been paid, 3 had failed to pay and the authority were taking legal action and 9 were still within the payment period of 28 days.

In relation to term time leave, Ms. Matterson advised that a fixed penalty notice was a decision for the head teacher of a school to request and to date there had been 53 requests made; 9 requiring no further action as it was not appropriate to issue a fixed penalty notice, 44 fixed penalty notices had been issued, of which 30 had been paid, 12 were awaiting payment and 2 had failed to pay and were being processed to S444(1) prosecution.

Councillor Bell stated that as a school governor he understood the vexations and it was an unenviable task to have to issue fixed penalty notices on parents but

something had to be done if the authority were looking to improve attendances within schools in the city.

Councillor Stewart sought clarification on the 20 or more continuous sessions as set out in 3.7 of the report as it was not clear within the local code of conduct and Ms. Matterson advised that it was 20 continuous sessions within 10 school days, for unauthorised absences the triggers were for secondary 5 days within 10 weeks and in primary schools 2.5 days within 6 weeks. Any child hitting these thresholds would then be automatically referred to the attendance team to raise the issue.

Councillor Stewart also stated that some parents may be happy to pay a fine to take a holiday within school term times and asked if evidence and/or statistics showed the same parents offended habitually.

Mr. Williamson stated that he had a number of points which he wished to raise if Members would bear with him for just a moment, and also asked that it be clear he was speaking as a co-opted Member of the Scrutiny Committee and not in relation to his own school. He advised the Committee he had undertaken his own research into this issue which included but was not exhaustive to consulting; five Headteachers, 4 primary and 1 secondary, six local authority websites, news articles published on the issue; and that he had six key areas he wished to raise:-

- current policies have been legally challenged and a case won due to the findings that that child had an acceptable level of attendance;
- current policies were felt to be outdated and schools/local authorities were not issuing fixed penalty notices for particular reasons for unauthorised absences;
- fifteen cases had been sent to request a fixed penalty notice issued and there had been no responses received from the authority and they were now out of the timescales to issue;
- Headteachers feel unsupported and think that they should not bother to issue fixed penalty notices for parents taking holidays during term time;
- In relation to unauthorised term time absence after five sessions if an improvement is made in the attendance for three weeks then the attendance team write off the case which does not encourage long term improvements in attendance; and
- Because of the 20 sessions absence in 10 consecutive days for holidays and then only a 3 week monitoring period Headteachers feel there is not enough in place to safeguard pupils effectively, for instance, parents may say the absence is a holiday but there is no assurance of this.

Firstly, Ms. Matterson stated that she would like to have further information on the fifteen referrals that had been made by schools and not had responses and this would need to be investigated further.

Ms. Matterson informed the Committee she had seen no local authorities that had withdrawn from issuing fixed penalty notices for holidays, in light of the recent court findings, and that the issue of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised term time leave remain at the discretion of the Headteacher in line with their policy. The team continued to receive these requests from schools and they would continue to be considered by herself to ensure they were compliant to issue.

In relation to the three week monitoring period, Ms. Matterson advised that there were five members of the attendance team who dealt with 1,000 referrals. If a pupil's attendance improves continuously for a three week period then the team pass the monitoring of the attendance back to the school. The team do not have the capacity to monitor for any greater length of time than that but should there be concerns around the pupil or if they go on to meet the threshold triggers again then the school can re-refer that pupil. The attendance team cannot continuously monitor specific pupils as that can be seen as oppressive.

Mr. Hopkins asked how the Committee would feel about a number of Headteachers coming together and working through the current policy and raising any concerns or issues they had with it. Through working together with the attendance team they could look to make sure that the policy in place for the authority is fit for purpose and works for schools in the city.

Mr. Williamson commented that the current thresholds for Sunderland were out of sync with those set nationally; quoting:-

- Suffolk - 1 day absence;
- Rochdale - 5 days absence;
- Northumberland - 5 days absence;
- Leeds - 5 days absence; and
- Northampton - 10 days absence.

In relation to Northampton, he advised that following a review they had found that for them to achieve their aspirations and the very best educational outcomes it was felt missing five consecutive days was the threshold and they looked to change this in line with other local authorities nationally.

Ms. Matterson acknowledged that other local authorities had lower thresholds than the ten days Sunderland set but stated that when Sunderland issued a fixed penalty notice, they had to be confident that they could support that decision and defend that action and the ten days allowed that and showed that the authority worked fair and consistently in their approach.

Mr. Williamson asked where the issue of the safeguarding of the child was and it was an issue all Headteachers were very concerned about and Ms. Matterson commented that this was not just about the prosecution of families and the issuing of fixed penalty notices but also about getting those children and young people back into education without having to go down those routes. But when prosecution and fixed penalty notices have to be issued the authority have to be able to defend their actions. She also referred to those schools that may have lower thresholds of days absence before issuing a fixed penalty notice but this did not mean that those authorities would then issue the notice, whereas Sunderland looked to issue all fixed penalty notices that crossed the threshold triggers.

Ms. Blakey advised that she would be happy to be involved in any piece of work that was to be undertaken with Headteachers on this issue, although she did not feel she had any great issue in relation to unauthorised absence in her own school. She had only ever had the need to contact the attendance team around one possible issue and between them they had managed to turn that scenario around.

Mr. Williamson commented that with a duty to safeguard young people and children in the city and a Children's Services that had been deemed inadequate and with serious failings there was a need to show, that as Corporate Parents everything was being done to ensure that children were attending schools. There was a need to make sure that the policy was absolutely right to show that they were fulfilling their duties under the prevent agenda and protecting children from the possibility of being whisked off to other countries for harmful procedures, such as breast ironing or female genital mutilation.

He had prepared five recommendations for the Committee to consider but stated that they could all be encompassed if they undertook some initial work in preparing a policy review of the current code of conduct. Then all Headteachers could be contacted to invite them to be involved in discussions around attendance. It was important not to hit disadvantaged families in the city and to be transparent and open to make sure the public and authority come together to find a solution to the issue.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that it may be beneficial for a small group to meet in the first instance and then whatever findings came from those discussions to share those with a wider body of Headteachers, including Councillor Farthing as Lead Member, before returning to the Scrutiny Committee with any proposals/feedback.

Ms. Elliott commented that as a magistrate she did see cases in relation to unauthorised absences and could state that some parents did view it as a punishment, but that she always appreciated the detailed information that was provided by the authority for them to make their decisions upon.

Councillor Wright commented that as a former Vice Chairman of the Governing Body of Grange Park Primary School she could concur with the concerns that had been raised today and suggested that the Headteacher from the school could be contacted for their involvement to get a broad range of views and explore the issue fully.

Members having no further questions or concerns, it was-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a) that the report be received and noted; and
- b) that a small group of Headteachers and the Lead Member for Children's Services work with the Attendance Manager to consider the current local code of conduct in relation to fixed penalty notices and whether it remains fit for purpose and report back their findings to a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Complaints and Feedback – Children's Services Issues**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with information regarding complaints and feedback received by the Council in relation to Children's Services Issues.

(for copy report – see original minutes)



Ms. Rhiannon Hood, Assistant Head of Law and Governance, presented the report advising that due to the rescheduling of when complaints and feedback reports were submitted to this Committee the report presented an overview of complaints and feedback received by the Council, in relation to Children's Services, for the quarters April to June, 2016 and July to September, 2016. She informed Members that this would now ensure that further quarterly reports would be submitted in a more timely manner which would see the most current monitoring information available being provided to the Committee.

Ms. Hood referred to the increase in the number of stage one complaints made by children or young people and advised that this was a positive thing. She informed Members that in the past there had been a clear process for young people to lodge a complaint and it had been felt that this information may have lapsed in being openly available and promoted to children and young people. The service had been working on promoting the procedure to children and young people and the increase in the number made between the two quarters showed that this was allowing them to feed their voice and opinions into processes.

Ms. Hood also welcomed Members feedback on the format of the report so that any amendments or inclusions could be addressed for future reports to the Committee.

Councillor Wright referred to the Themes and Trends paragraph set out in the report and asked if, in future reports, more information could be provided which Ms. Hood agreed could be addressed.

Councillor Wright also referred to the small number of compliments recorded and commented that the message needed to get out to staff to report all compliments as they are received as it was so important that these were recorded as well as complaints. She also commented that Councillors often receive compliments which should be forwarded on and recorded within the figures.

Councillor Stewart commented on the number of complaints moving on to Stage 2 and asked how many of the outcomes at Stage 2 simply reconfirmed the decisions made at Stage 1 or how many came to the conclusion that the Stage 1 decision had been the wrong one. Ms. Hood advised that without further analysis she could not say as it varied from case to case. At times it could be difficult for the team to get responses on time from other services and therefore the complainant could be unhappy around that and escalate their complaint further. She explained that the small team worked hard to explain the importance of responding to initial complaints to keep the numbers as low as possible but that some complaints had multiple elements to them that made it more difficult to have them all answered at the Stage 1 level. Some complaints moved to Stage 2 simply as they could not give a full answer in the time frame set to respond at Stage 1.

In response to a further question from Councillor Stewart around staff training, so that complaints didn't progress through the stages, Ms. Hood advised that there had been a lot of staff movement, with various management changes in Children's Services and that the combined complaints team were looking to offer training to staff on letter writing and making resolutions to complaints, so it would be desirable should Officers look to take part in those sessions. Ms. Hood also advised that they looked to receive training from the Local Ombudsman so they were in the process of getting a dedicated session to give focus on responding to Local Ombudsman complaints also.

When asked if the timescales set for responding were statutory, Ms. Hood advised that they were and therefore there was no room to change them.

Councillor Smith referred to the on-going issue that appeared to be raised by complainants in a lack of communication from the Council and felt that some errors and compensation payments could have been avoided. Mr. Hopkins advised that lack of communication was always a common theme in complaints and that this could be down to sometimes cases would move so fast that it was difficult to keep communications timely, although he accepted that it was a recurring theme that was cited. He explained that previous poor practice in report writing were being looked at and that staff looked to resolve complaints and eliminate them from progressing further but at times the complainant would always go to the next Stage as they would want someone else to look into their issues if not given the response they wanted.

Councillor Scullion commented on the use of social workers time in responding to complaints when it could be so better used elsewhere, and suggested that this may be an area whereby a dedicated and experienced back office staff base that could assist in these coordinating and administrative duties would lead to more efficient use of everyone's time and resources.

There being no further questions for Ms. Hood, the Chairman thanked her for her attendance and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) that the report be received and noted; and
- b) that future reports contain more detail around the theme of complaints and compliments and any identified trends.

### **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from the 15 November, 2016.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Members having fully considered the report, it was:-

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

### **Annual Work Programme 2015/16**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information, the work programme for the Committee's work being undertaken for the 2016/17 council year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report and advised that a proposed report to Cabinet on CAMHS was to be added to the agenda for January, 2017 for consideration and that as the agenda was already quite heavy, he would hold discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman to look at moving some items to another Committee meeting date.

At this juncture Mr Williamson thanked Mr. Diamond for his rapid response to any correspondence sent to him and for the quality of his organising skills when having to diary meetings to try and accommodate the majority of Members of the Committee.

Members having no further questions or comments, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the information contained in the Work Programme be received and noted.

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

(Signed) P. SMITH,  
Chairman.

# Item 4

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### COMMISSIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

##### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To receive a report on the progress made in relation to the review of commissioning arrangements of children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in the city.

##### 2. Background

- 2.1 On 23 November 2016, a report was submitted to the Cabinet in relation to proposals for the existing and future commissioning of children and adolescent services (CAHMS) with the city with Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 2.2 The Cabinet report was prepared to update Cabinet members on the ongoing work programme with SCCG to better understand the funding arrangements and delivery of mental health services. The report to Cabinet also set out the background to the CAMHS service and how it was originally funded through a ring fenced grant arrangement. A copy of the full Cabinet report is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.3 SCCG's responsibility is to fund and deliver a universal, targeted and specialist model of community mental health services and related national KPI's and targets. This remains their key priority within the current contract arrangement.
- 2.4 The historical arrangements between SCCG and the Local Authority are that the Council makes a financial contribution to this service model in order to meet our own responsibility to provide early intervention and preventative services to improve children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing and minimise the number of referrals for CAMHS.
- 2.5 The November Cabinet report identified that both the existing arrangements and potential alternative options needed to be explored in more detail to ensure that the future model is up to date, addresses the right priorities and outcomes for these services and demonstrates value for money.
- 2.6 The most critical issue identified was that because there was not a Section 75 arrangement put in place at the start of the arrangement with SCCG for the provision of CAMH services, the Local Authority does not subsequently receive regular performance information which identifies what services are being delivered or whether the current service offer was meeting the needs of children and young people in the city. A Section 75 arrangement is a formal

agreement between the Local Authority and health in order to transfer funds for the provision of services and also outlines what measurable outcomes and performance monitoring arrangements will be established in order to be able to monitor delivery and impact.

- 2.7 Following discussion at the November Cabinet Board about the issues surrounding the commissioning of CAMHS services, Cabinet agreed the following recommendations:-
- (i) Endorse and agree to the extension of the existing contract and funding arrangements for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) for the period up to 31st March 2017;
  - (ii) Agree to work in collaboration with the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) as the existing lead commissioner of CAMHS in Sunderland and other partners to undertake a review of the options for the future commissioning and delivery of these services; and
  - (iii) Agree to receive a further report in due course for further consideration in relation to the outcome of this commissioning and service review and the proposed next steps.

### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The existing contract and funding arrangements are being maintained as agreed to the end of March 2017 whilst the review of CAMH service across the City is ongoing.
- 3.2 In terms of collaboration with the SCCG, the review began prior to the November Cabinet meeting. Local Authority senior managers are leading three working groups with partner organisations coming together to look at what services are available and the referral pathways. The completion date for this work has been set for June 2017.
- 3.3 At this point, the outcome of the review is not complete and further work is needed to develop a CAMHS commissioning strategy. The review will support the future development of CAMHS services across the City and robust commissioning arrangements, supported by a clear specification of need, to be established going forward from 2017 and beyond.
- 3.4 Whilst we are in a position of needing to better understand what services we require from CAMHS, it would be pertinent to commit to only maintaining the current funding to maintain a level of service at this point.
- 3.5 During the period of review the Local Authority will work with SCCG to agree improved commissioning arrangements. During this time, a Section 75 arrangement will also be put in place to ensure that there are measurable outcomes and a performance monitoring arrangement which will allow us to report to Members and monitor impact.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The arrangements proposed above are being taken forward in order to negate any risk of withdrawing funding which will result in a reduced service offer from SCCG at this time whilst the review is ongoing.

#### **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and discuss the contents of this report in relation to the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and SCCG to review the CAMHS provision for children and young people.

## **CABINET MEETING – 23 NOVEMBER 2016**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:** Commissioning of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**Author(s):** Director of Children's Services

**Purpose of Report:** To seek Cabinet's approval in relation to proposals for the existing and future commissioning of children, adolescent mental health services within the City.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Endorse and agree to the extension of the existing contract and funding arrangements for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017;
- b) Agree to work in collaboration with the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) as the existing lead commissioner of CAMHS in Sunderland and other partners to undertake a review of the options for the future commissioning and delivery of these services; and
- c) Agree to receive a further report in due course for further consideration in relation to the outcome of this commissioning and service review and the proposed next steps.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?** \*Yes/**No**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The existing contracts and funding arrangements for CAMHS have been in place for a number of years without a full service review being undertaken. This commissioning service review is now essential to ensure that the future commissioning and delivery model is up to date, addresses the right priorities and outcomes for these services and demonstrates value for money. In the meantime, a temporary extension of the existing arrangements with the SCCG (as the current commissioning partner) is required to ensure continuity of service provision whilst this review is undertaken.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

The alternative option would be to not undertake the commissioning and service review and to continue with the existing arrangements for CAMHS. However this will not ensure the most effective method of delivering the service as it will not take into account updated service specification requirements, using existing resources across the council and partner agencies or the views of elected members, service users or the current needs assessment which will be produced as part of the review process. In addition, this approach would not ensure value for money. Therefore this option is not recommended.

<b>Impacts analysed:</b>	
Equality <input type="text"/>	Privacy <input type="text" value="N/A"/> Sustainability <input type="text" value="N/A"/> Crime and Disorder <input type="text" value="N/A"/>
<b>Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative Values? Yes/No</b>	
<b>Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes/No</b>	



## **COMMISSIONING OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

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

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval to proposals for the existing and future commissioning of children, adolescent mental health within the City.

#### **2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Endorse and agree to the extension of the existing contract and funding arrangements for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
- (ii) Agree to work in collaboration with the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) as the existing lead commissioner of CAMHS in Sunderland and other partners to undertake a review of the options for future commissioning and delivery of these services; and
- (iii) Agree to receive a further report in due course for further consideration in relation to the outcome of this commissioning and service review and the proposed next steps.

#### **3. Introduction/Background**

- 3.1 The CAMHS has been in place for a number of years and was originally funded by a dedicated CAMHS grant. The ring-fenced funding grant came into the city in 2002 through a dedicated CAMHS grant.
- 3.2 In 2002 an Early Year's Mental Health Service (EYMHS) was also developed as part of the original Sure Start programme delivery which came into the city in early 2000. The service specifically focussed around infant attachment and effective parenting. Over the years this service has been reduced to meet reductions in funding.
- 3.3 In 2006 when the dedicated CAMHS ring fenced funding came to an end the local authority was required to pick up the service costs through its own budget and service delivery continued.
- 3.4 A formal process to pool budgets in 2012 led to £60k savings. In the summer of 2013 a decision was made to merge both services of CAMHS and EYMHS into a joint service specification with the wider CAMHS contract.

- 3.5 The CAMHS service is currently procured by the SCCG through a lead commissioner model on behalf of itself and the Council. As explained in Section 4 below, there are two current providers, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust (STFT) and Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust (NTW).
- 3.6 It was originally intended to complete a review of the approach to the commissioning and service delivery for CAMHS locally during the 2014/15 period. Unfortunately this has not been possible due to the local complexities with regard to children's services as well the publication of *Future in Mind: Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing* (Department of Health 2015) which articulated national requirements in relation to CAMHS delivery and influenced the management and prioritisation of the wider CAMHS contract.

#### 4. **Current Contract and Funding Position**

- 4.1 As explained above, the current contracts are managed by Sunderland CCG as lead commissioner and the existing providers are South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust (STFT) and Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust (NTW).
- 4.2 The Council currently pays £147,870 per year for the Early Years Mental Health Services (EYMHS) contract which is provided by STFT. In addition, the Council contributes a further £302,697 per year towards the wider Tier 1 and Tier 2 CAMHS.
- 4.3 The EYMHS service is specifically to deliver a preventative and early intervention service to children birth to five years and their families which include the following:
- Social Baby Programme and Incredible Years (Early Years)
  - School Age Incredible years programme
  - Incredible Years Parenting programme
  - Friends programme
  - Assessment and child/family intervention work
- 4.2 The wider CAMHS supports the mental health needs of children, young people and their families with a range of mental health needs including:
- Behavioural difficulties including oppositional defiant and conduct disorders
  - Emotional difficulties including low mood, anxiety and depression
  - Attachment difficulties
  - Eating distress
  - Sleeping difficulties
  - Self-harm
  - Psychological distress relating to low self-esteem and self-worth; loneliness, sense of belonging; self-control; stress; bullying; sexuality;

relationship difficulties; bereavement and loss; family relationships; growing up/ independence; weight; and trauma.

4.3 A Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS) is currently provided by NTW for children, young people and families with moderately severe mental health needs that cannot be met by universal or early intervention services. This service is funded by SCCG. This includes children and young people as follows:

- Who are or have been Looked After or accommodated including those adopted
- Who have been neglected or abused or are part of a child protection plan
- Who have a learning or physical disability
- Who have chronic, enduring or life limiting illness
- Who have substance misuse issues
- Who are homeless or who are from families who are homeless
- Who have parents with problems including domestic violence, illness, dependency or addiction
- Who are at risk of, or are involved in offending

## **5 Proposal for Commissioning and Service Review**

5.1 As explained above, it has been recognised for some time that a review of the commissioning and service delivery arrangements for CAMHS is essential in order to ensure that the commissioning and delivery model is up to date, addresses the right priorities and outcomes and demonstrates value for money

5.3 The initial review work undertaken to date has highlighted the following:

- There is a sense that the referral pathways are complicated potentially contributing to delays in children receiving a service.
- Performance information needs to be improved to demonstrate impact and value for money.
- There is no Section 75 agreement in place between the Council and SCCG.

5.4 It is now proposed to carry out a detailed review of the commissioning and delivery arrangements for CAMHS is undertaken in consultation with the Council's existing commissioning partner, the SCCG. The purpose of this review will be to consider both the existing arrangements and the potential alternative options to ensure that the future model is up to date, addresses the right priorities and outcomes for these services and demonstrates value for money.

5.5 On completion of this review, a further report will be presented to Cabinet seeking approval to the recommendations arising from this review and the proposed future commissioning and delivery arrangements for CAMHS.

- 5.6 Whilst this review is undertaken, it will be necessary to extend the existing contract and funding arrangements for CAMHS (as described in Section 4) to ensure there is continued service provision during this period. A Section 75 agreement will be put in place between the Council and SCCG to cover this contract period.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The cost of the Council's funding contribution to CAMHS during the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 is £450,567 (CAMHS £302,697 / EYMH £147,870) and is contained within the current budget.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 All new procurement processes arising from the commissioning and service review will be carried out in accordance with the relevant requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Procurement Procedure Rules. The proposed temporary extension of the existing contract and funding arrangements will be implemented in accordance with their existing terms and conditions and shall be for a proportionate and necessary period only to ensure continuity of service provision during the interim period.

## **8. Reasons for the Decision**

- 8.1 The existing contracts and funding arrangements for CAMHS have been in place for a number of years without a full service review being undertaken. This commissioning service review is now essential to ensure that the future commissioning and delivery model is up to date, addresses the right priorities and outcomes for these services and demonstrates value for money. In the meantime, a temporary extension of the existing arrangements with the SCCG (as the current commissioning partner) is required to ensure continuity of service provision whilst this review is undertaken.

## **9. Alternative Options**

- 9.1 The alternative option would be to not undertake the commissioning and service review and to continue with the existing arrangements for CAMHS. However this will not ensure the most effective method of delivering the service as it will not take into account updated service specification requirements, using existing resources across the council and partner agencies or the views of elected members, service users or the current needs assessment which will be produced as part of the review process. In addition, this approach would not ensure value for money. Therefore this option is not recommended.

## **10. Relevant Considerations/Consultations**

- 10.1 Consultation with all relevant stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the whole commissioning and service review.

## **11. Impact Assessments**

- 11.1 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the service review process.

## **12. Background Papers**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-mental-health-services-for-young-people>

# Item 5

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE INTERIM INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

#### SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ARRANGEMENTS 2016- 2017

#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider the Interim Independent Chair's Report on Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board arrangements for 2016-2017.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 At the start of the year, the Committee agreed to include in its work programme a report on the work of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board.
- 2.2 Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is a statutory body established under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004<sup>1</sup>. As required by statute, it is independently chaired and membership consists of the chief executive, or equivalent, representatives of the key partner agencies working together to safeguard children and young people in Sunderland.
- 2.3 The Local Safeguarding Children Board statutory objectives as outlined in section 14 of the Children Act 2004 are:-
- To coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
  - To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

#### 3. Current Position

- 3.1 A copy of a report prepared for the Scrutiny Committee on Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board arrangements for 2016-2017 is attached.
- 3.2 Jane Held (Interim Independent Chair of the Sunderland Safeguarding Board) will be in attendance to introduce the report and answer any questions.

#### 4 Conclusion

- 4.1 The report will provide members with an overview of the progress being made by the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the Interim Independent Chair's Report on Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board arrangements for 2016-2017.

## **6 Background Papers**

Interim Independent Chair's Report on Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board arrangements for 2016-2017.



## **Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)**

**Title of Report:** Interim Independent Chair's Report on Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board arrangements 2016-2017

**Author:** Jane Held

**Date of Report:** 21<sup>st</sup> December 2016

**Meeting Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017

### **Summary Points of Report:**

- The Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) was inspected by Ofsted and found to be inadequate at the same time as the Local Authority Inspection. An improvement plan was compiled and all actions have now been completed.
- An Interim Independent Chair was appointed, initially for 6 months, in May 2016, and plans are in place to appoint a permanent Chair by the end of March 2017
- The Board has been subject to considerable churn and change over 2016. An Annual Report is in final draft and will be published in the spring. Extracts from the Annual Report are set out in this report (Appendix 2)
- A diagnostic report was undertaken by the interim Chair and the report presented in September 2016. At the same time an independent review was completed after it was commissioned by the External Children's Commissioner. Both reports found a lot had been done and plans had been completed but a focus on process diverted attention from the more fundamental changes required in culture, partnership engagement and commitment, understanding and impact on practice. As a consequence insufficient progress had been made in achieving effective improvement. (Appendix 3)
- The Board priorities over the year were Neglect, the Toxic Trio (substance abuse, mental health and domestic abuse) and Risk Taking Behaviour
- The Board has published the learning from 6 Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) in the past year, 2016/17. There are 4 SCRs in the final stages of completion and these will be published by March 2017. No new reviews have been commissioned since July 2016.



- A major national review of the arrangements for multi-agency safeguarding was published by the Department for Education on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016 (The Wood Review). The Government accepted the majority of recommendations.
- In the light of the diagnostic and the Wood Report, the SSCB consulted widely on major changes to the Board designed to radically change the arrangements, ensure a focus on the Board's key statutory objectives and generate the necessary changes. The proposals were broadly accepted by key partners and will be finalised at the Board meeting in February 2017
- A Transformation Programme is now underway with a view to the new arrangements being in place for April 2017.

## **1. Purpose of the Report and recommendations**

- 1.1 This report is designed to update the Scrutiny Committee on the work of Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board in 2016.
- 1.2 For a variety of reasons, not least the pressures on the very small Business Unit of undertaking a significant number of Serious Case Reviews the Annual Report is not yet completed. In order to facilitate the Scrutiny Committee's considerations an extract is provided of the Annual Report's key points and findings as part of this Report.(Appendix 2)
- 1.3 The Report also informs the Scrutiny Committee of the radical changes to the Board arrangements that have been agreed in principle and will be finalised by the SSCB Board at its meeting in February 2016. The Scrutiny Committee's views on this change will be taken into account when agreeing the final arrangements.
- 1.4 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are invited to interrogate this report and to make comments accordingly. The Report contains no recommendations but the Interim Independent Chair will consider any made by Scrutiny Committee when finalising the transformation programme and developing the 2017/18 Strategic Plan and Business Plan.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1 Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is a statutory body established under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004<sup>1</sup>. As required by statute, it is independently chaired and membership consists of the chief executive, or equivalent, representatives of the key partner agencies working together to safeguard children and young people in Sunderland. The Board's values and principles are attached in Appendix 1
- 2.2 The LSCB statutory objectives as outlined in section 14 of the Children Act 2004 are:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

- To coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area; and
  - To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes
- 2.3 It is important to note that the Board is not responsible for the design, development, commissioning or delivery of services to safeguard children or promote their welfare and has no operational responsibilities for practice in any partner agency although each member of the Board has direct responsibility and accountability for their own organisation or agency's practice. Board members when meeting as "The Board" are jointly, severally and collectively responsible for the effectiveness of the whole system and for holding each other to account, seeking assurance from each other, and ensuring poor practice is identified, challenged and improved.
- 2.4 The Board has met on a quarterly basis since April 2015 following a full review of the SSCB governance arrangements in 2014. The Statutory Guidance *"Working Together to Safeguard Children"* was amended in 2015, and significantly amended statutory guidance was issued to all education settings in 2015 as well – *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015*.
- 2.5 In May 2016 a major review of statutory arrangements for safeguarding children was published. Known as the Woods Review it proposed a radical new approach to partnership arrangements, based on the principle of shared accountability and responsibility between the local authority, the police and the NHS, and mutual agreement as to the nature of the actual arrangements at a local, sub regional or regional level as decided locally. The principle of an independent element to the arrangements was retained, as was the focus of any arrangements on monitoring the effectiveness of what is done by partners to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The Review did not recommend any specific structural or organisational arrangements, but that each area or group of areas should design their own.
- 2.6 The Review recommended that Serious Case Reviews are coordinated at a national level, with certain high profile complex reviews being undertaken by a national body and the rest done as local reviews. It also recommended that the Child Death Overview Panel Arrangements are transferred to the NHS.
- 2.7 The impact of the review in effect is that:
- The local authority, police and health (sic) should become the 3 equal statutory agencies with responsibility for developing, agreeing,

implementing, funding and supporting safeguarding partnership activity in their area

- These arrangements can take any form agreed locally by those 3 statutory partners
- Each local area (not defined) should agree the arrangements that best suit their needs
- A strong degree of independence will still be required in terms of how those arrangements are supported or led (independent safeguarding leaders)
- The key objectives of an LSCB/or its equivalent need to be the key objectives of the arrangements made locally not set nationally
- A local area can be regional, sub regional, local, or any similar combination, and can take into account any other partnership arrangements in an area
- The arrangements made will govern how all the named “regulated agencies” work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare
- Responsibility for establishing and running CDOP arrangements will be jointly held by the NHS and the LA
- The responsibility for high profile significant SCR’s will transfer to the National Panel, and for local reviews will rest with the local safeguarding partnership arrangements in a local area
- There will be some form of notification of the agreed local arrangements to DfE required. DfE’ s role in commenting on them will be an advisory one

2.8 The Government has accepted the majority of the recommendations. Since the proposals required changes to primary legislation they will not be statutory until after the current Children and Social Work Bill has passed into legislation. The timetable for statutory changes is:

- Act passed Spring 2017
- Regulations made and laid and statutory guidance published early 2018
- Local Areas need to finalise and publish their plans for their new local arrangements late 2018/early 2019 (but do so earlier if they choose)
- All areas need to have moved to their new arrangements by 2020

2.9 Any local proposals for change agreed by the Board at this point in time need to be considered within the context of the statutory changes. However it is important to take the proposals into consideration from now and to base our developments and improvement trajectory on models that ensure we are fit for the future direction of travel.

- 2.10 Following the Ofsted Inspection in 2015 the Board began its improvement journey, with a highly detailed action plan, and major work to refresh a range of SSCB activities and programmes. The Board was already in the process of change as it had in 2014 agreed to work towards integration with the Sunderland Adult Safeguarding Board.
- 2.11 In May 2016 an interim Independent Chair took up post. She undertook a diagnostic of the progress made by the SSCB which reported in July 2016. A second review, commissioned by the Sunderland External Commissioner, was undertaken simultaneously by an Independent Chair of a successful board. Both reports drew the same conclusions. In short the changes made had not had the desired impact on outcomes for children, and on the effectiveness of the Board in improving safeguarding practice, although it had made progress.

### **3. The local safeguarding context**

- 3.1. Sunderland is a large city in the North-East of England with a population of approximately 281,000 people. Over the next 10 years this is expected to rise by at least 2,179 (0.8%). Approximately 54,500 children and young people under the age of 18 years live in Sunderland. This is 19% of the total population in the area. The child population is also expected to rise in the 10 – 14 year age group, remain stable in the 0 – 4 years and 5 – 9 years age groups and reduce in the 15 – 19 year age group as seen in the graph below.
- 3.2 Sunderland is the 41st most deprived Local Authority area in England and 26% of children and young people in Sunderland are defined as living in poverty<sup>2</sup> with the level of child poverty in Sunderland being worse than the England average.
- 3.3 The proportion of children entitled to free school meals:<sup>3</sup>
- In primary schools is 21% (the national average is 17%)
  - In secondary schools is 21% (the national average is 15%)
- 3.4 Approximately 13,000 of Sunderland's children and young people will need additional support from targeted and specialist children's services during their childhoods.
- 3.5 Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 6% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A child is defined as being in poverty when living in a household with an income below 60% of the UK's average.

<sup>3</sup> Source: DfE Schools, pupils and their characteristics

The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Asian/Asian British and Mixed.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language<sup>6</sup>:

- In primary schools is 5% (the national average is 19%)
- In secondary schools is 4% (the national average is 14%)

- 3.6 In the Academic year 2015-2016 there were 41,353 pupils in Sunderland on schools rolls. Sunderland has 9 nursery schools, 83 primary schools of which 19 are Academies and one is a Free School. There are 18 secondary schools of which 12 are Academies and one is a Free School. In addition there are seven schools for pupils with special educational needs of which five are Academies. There are also Pupil Referral Units at Nursery/Key Stage 1 Behaviour Team (ages 4-7yrs), Key Stage 2 and 3 (ages 7-14ys, and at Key Stage 4 (ages 11-16yrs). Sunderland also has two Private Schools.
- 3.7 Sunderland is characterised by low movement of people as families and communities are relatively stable and as such there are opportunities to harness the involvement of the wider family, including older people, to provide support and promote healthier choices and healthy lifestyles.

#### **4. Progress in 2015/16**

- 4.1 The draft Annual Report 2015/16 indicates that the Board made considerable progress despite multiple challenges over the 2015/16 year. The Ofsted Inspection recognised that the Board was aware of the issues and shortfalls in its effectiveness, and that the governance review and new arrangements were designed to address them but that it was too early to establish whether the changes were making the desired difference.
- 4.2 The Board's priorities during the year 2015/16 were set out in the SSCB Business Plan 2014-2018 and comprised three high level priorities, each with three objectives that the plan aims to achieve. These were:
- Neglect
    - SSCB will understand the prevalence and causation of neglect impacting on children and young people in Sunderland
    - SSCB will understand and seek assurance that the multi-agency arrangements in place to support children who are neglected are robust
    - SSCB will reduce the impact of neglect on children in Sunderland

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<sup>4</sup> Source: ONS 2011 census

<sup>5</sup> Source: ONS 2011 census

<sup>6</sup> Source: DfE Schools, pupils and their characteristics

- The toxic trio
  - SSCB will understand the prevalence and causation of the Toxic Trio impacting upon children and young people in Sunderland
  - SSCB will understand and seek assurance that the multi-agency arrangements in place to support children who are living with the toxic trio are robust
  - SSCB will reduce the impact of the toxic trio on children in Sunderland
- Risk Taking Behaviours
  - SSCB will understand the prevalence and causation of risk taking behaviour by children and young people in Sunderland
  - SSCB will understand and seek assurance that the multi-agency arrangements in place to support children who are engaging in risk taking behaviour are robust
  - SSCB will reduce the impact of risk taking behaviour on children in Sunderland

4.3 The Board also responded to a range of new Government requirements, policies and priorities over the year including

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015 and new Guidance on Children Missing Education (issuing new guidance)
- CSE and the need to regularly assess the quality and effectiveness of partner agency responses to CSE (resulting from the Casey Report 2015) (undertaking multi-agency self-assessment and implementing the learning arising from it)
- Responses to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and mandatory reporting (revisions to the SSCB guidance)
- Modern Slavery (assessing prevalence in Sunderland and developing guidance accordingly)
- Responses to PREVENT and the radicalisation agenda (auditing partner arrangements in respect of PREVENT)

4.4 The SSCB was inspected in May 2015 as part of the inspection of Children's Services in Sunderland. The review of the effectiveness of the SSCB concluded that it was inadequate because it was failing to meet its statutory duties and did not provide effective oversight of all areas concerned with children's safeguarding as required by statutory guidance. The Board agreed a strong and extremely detailed improvement plan to address the issues identified and recommendations made to the SSCB by Ofsted. The plan has been delivered with all actions assessed as completed or no longer relevant.

4.5 Issues and developments for partner agencies during 2015/16 as well as the activity of the Board in 2015/2016 are set out in Appendix 2 which comprises a significant extract from the draft 2015/16 Annual Report. This draft report concludes that *"A review of the information and intelligence considered by the SSCB throughout 2015-2016 and analysed through the annual review process suggests that overall the direction of travel is appropriate, and progress is*

*being made to realise partnership objectives and that change is being managed carefully and safely*". It is crucial to remember that the Report is now very "out of date" covering a very difficult year April 2015 to March 2016, and that more significant change and improvement has taken place in the last nine months (April 2016 to December 2016) as evidenced by the Board's assurance activity as well as by the External Improvement Board.

## **5. Progress to date in 2016/17**

5.1 The Board for the last nine months has focussed on

- Completing the improvement plan
- Delivering a performance framework
- Delivering multi-agency audits and other assurance activity
- Continuing to strengthen CSE arrangements and services
- Completing SCRs, addressing the learning from them and embedding it in practice
- Simplifying the plans in place,
- Stopping doing things that are not yet delivered, and not likely to make a significant difference
- Making meetings more effective, and not meeting unless it is necessary
- Identifying revised priorities
- Consulting on radical new arrangements designed to better deliver an effective Board and to initiate a direction of travel that fits with the Wood Review
- Increasing the degree of challenge to all partners
- Engaging with children and young people

5.2 In addition it has already agreed a new vision ***"High support and high challenge – working together to safeguard the children of Sunderland and improve their life chances"***

5.3 Work on the revised, simplified and fully multi-agency performance framework is nearly completed and three obsessions have been agreed:

- Children are supported as early as possible when they or their family needs help
- Every child in the City is happy, healthy, socially confident and prepared for adulthood
- Children are safe and protected from harm.

5.4 Our new operational priorities for action are that by the end of March we will have:

- A new performance data set and quality assurance plan which focusses on the two areas of greatest concern (threshold compliance and early help)
- A simple strategic plan 2017-2020 and a deliverable business plan for 2017/18

- New arrangements and a Board that is agile, fit for purpose, focussed and effective
- Stopped doing things that should more properly be done elsewhere (i.e. acting as a proxy for operational partnership working)
- Continue to focus on neglect, risk taking behaviours and the impact of living with domestic violence, mental ill health or substance abuse in the family

5.5 We have consulted young people and identified a range of concerns that they want us to focus on including:

- Safer outdoor spaces
- Better personal, health and social education
- Better support for LGBTB young people
- Better mental health provision

5.6 At our development day we agreed to change our strategic priorities. These were informed by the diagnostic, the JSNA, learning from CDOP and serious case reviews, multi-agency data, regulatory reports across the system and senior leader awareness of areas for improvement. Our new Strategic Plan (2017-2020) will focus on:

- **High Challenge** (developing our understanding of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice) and **High support** (using our understanding of practice to influence service development and develop our multi-agency workforce)
- **Key Practice priorities for improvement**
- **Engagement**, (communication, the priorities of young people, relationships and transparency)

5.7 The 2017/18 Business Plan will also focus on developing **Strong governance** (a robust assurance cycle, transparent simple systems, clear accountabilities and partnership relationships) and will take as its practice priorities for improvement

- Risk taking behaviours by young people (CSE, substance abuse, e-safety)
- Early Help, the thresholds of need framework and neglect
- Emotional health, wellbeing and mental health
- The child's journey through the system (referral, child protection and LAC practice)

## 6. Next steps – The Transformation Programme

6.1 However despite acting on all the recommendations made by Ofsted the independent review and the interim Chair's diagnostic in May 2016 both identified that more needs to be done. As a consequence of the diagnostic, and the review report a detailed consultation report was prepared, discussed



at the Board and circulated for consideration by all statutory partners. The consultation report set out 14 proposals for consideration. (Appendix 4).

- 6.2 Following consultation the Board Executive considered the responses and a report setting out final proposals for agreement in principle. A Transformation Steering Group has been established and a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Council, the Chief Constable (or their representative) and the Chief Executive of the Sunderland CCG arranged for the New Year to consider the proposals and negotiate any fine detail on budgets, establishment, accountabilities and the proposed new Board structure. These three senior leaders are the three that, under the new arrangements proposed by Alan Wood, hold shared responsibility and accountability for the arrangements, although currently the CEO of the Council holds ultimate accountability. The Statutory DCS retains an advisory role to the three accountable leaders, and as CEO of the new Company sits on the Board in the same way that the CEO's of the other Trusts do.
- 6.3 The Commissioner has also been consulted and indicated his agreement to the proposals.
- 6.4 The final negotiated proposals will go to the SSCB for agreement and sign off in February 2017.
- 6.5 Some action is being taken ahead of final agreement as the timescales for the Interim Independent Chair's contract mean that the permanent role needs advertise as soon as possible in the New Year. In addition the Business Unit currently has three vacancies which urgently need filled so the new posts agreed in principle are being evaluated ready for advertising.
- 6.6 The new Board is small, comprising 10 members (the key member agencies in relation to the Wood Report). The Board is responsible for strategic direction, governance, assurance and system oversight. Two programme Boards (Performance and Quality Assurance, and Learning and Workforce Development) support the Board and have far wider membership. The proposals for membership and responsibilities for the Board and the two programme boards are also included in appendix 4.
- 6.7 Members will know that the role of Scrutiny and the role of the SSCB can at times be similar. The SSCB is also subject to scrutiny in its own right by Scrutiny Committee, usually on receipt of the Annual Report. One proposal in the consultation is that at least once a year the Scrutiny Committee and SSCB undertake an in-depth scrutiny review of a key or priority area of practice or service provision together to ensure the whole system is subject to a rigorous examination. This has been positively received by the Board Executive and during the consultation. The Scrutiny Committee will of course also have a view.

- 6.8 Partner Agencies that work across the South Tyne system (police, probation, and the NHS Trusts) are clear that their ultimate preference would be a single sub-regional arrangement (similar to the current Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) arrangements), but recognise that the three local areas are not yet in a position to move to that approach. Joint working is increasing already and the three areas share the same procedures. As resources diminish the more that can be done together once the better, but it remains important to recognise the importance of local areas, places, and communities and the need to maintain a balance between local and wider partnerships.
- 6.6 In conclusion the Transformation Process will ensure radical change, designed to position the SSCB to more effectively fulfil its current statutory objectives and to achieve its vision and ambition, whilst preparing for the inevitable changes as more sub regional safeguarding activity is undertaken. Whilst the exact and final details have not been agreed the consultation indicates there is broad agreement and the Executive are satisfied in principle with the final proposals. Scrutiny may want to review progress in September 2017 six months after the new arrangements begin.

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## Appendix 1 – The Vision and values of the Board 2015/17

### Our Vision *“Every child and young person in Sunderland feels safe and is safe”*

In order to do this the SSCB will work together and make keeping children and young people safe everyone’s business.

### Our Values SSCB Values are:

- *To be individually and collectively committed to putting children’s interests first*
- *Seek the views of Children and Young People, families and carers in all aspects of our work*
- *Respect everyone’s contribution to keeping children safe*
- *Operate openly and honestly in the public interest and sharing responsibility*
- *Challenge and support all involved to improve outcomes for Children and Young People*
- *Accept accountability for SSCB decisions and actions*

### Our Principles The SSCB Principles are:

- *To continue to develop a shared understanding across agencies of the concept of safeguarding to provide a clear focus of work with the most vulnerable children and their families*
- *To ensure that systems are in place to support effective multi agency working in individual cases*
- *To ensure that systems that are developed across agencies for information sharing and early identification of children who will require additional support to achieve good outcomes, are able to identify children who are at risk and/or neglected*
- *To continually improve the delivery and quality of services particularly for those children who are the most vulnerable*
- *To continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency working particularly in relation to the protection of children from harm*
- *To ensure that children, young people and their carers are heard and have opportunities to contribute to shaping service design and delivery*

## Appendix 2

### Summary of the Annual Report 2015-2016

#### The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)

The CYPP was the joint, strategic, overarching plan for all partners within the Sunderland Children's Trust and the services they provide for children and young people. It described how partners work together to improve outcomes for our children and young people, setting out the long term vision for improving their health and wellbeing. This plan was intended to establish the strategic priorities for the Children's Trust and support the development of integrated and effective services to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

The Strategic Objectives of the Plan were:

- Improving the overall Health and Wellbeing of children, young people and families
- Reducing the number of families with children living in poverty in the city
- Improving educational outcomes and strengthening whole family learning
- Improving safeguarding outcomes for children, young people and families

One of the main aims of the Children's Trust Board, as was set out in the 15 year strategy, was that children and young people "feel, and are, safe and secure at home, at school and in their community." This links with the SSCB Vision that "Every Child and Young Person in Sunderland feels safe and is safe."

During the year there was no multi-agency strategic body in place in Sunderland to replace the Children's Trust which has resulted in a lack of progress with the CYPP. The Children's Strategic Partnership has now (2016) been established to replace the Children's Trust and the CYPP is subject to a full review with the draft expected to be available in spring 2017. The CYPP will be scrutinised and the impact of it on the lives of children and young people in Sunderland will be measured as part of the assurance activity of the SSCB in 2016 – 2017 and the following year.

#### Issues and Developments for Partner Agencies

Nationally the Public Sector continues to face the challenges of austerity measures and cuts to services at the same time that there is increasing demand for these services. The impact of these efficiencies and the impact of continuing austerity measures are identified as a risk in the SSCB Risk and Assurance Plan.

Partner agencies have identified challenges for the safeguarding system and how they intend to address these challenges. These challenges include:

- Continued budget pressures requiring further efficiencies to be made which is likely to involve further restructuring of services
- An unprecedented number of serious case reviews in progress
- Continual changes in external partnership arrangements
- The need to improve mental health and mental wellness

- To raise the expectation of being healthy for all and promote health-seeking behaviours

Good multi-agency working is essential to effectively respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people and in improving outcomes for them. Shared areas of development and progress in 2016 - 2017 include:

- Development and implementation of a Sunderland Early Help Strategy and refreshed Threshold Guidance
- Implementation of the new SSCB Performance and Quality Assurance Framework
- Implementing the SSCB Audit Cycle to provide the SSCB with a clear understanding of the quality of multi-agency practice
- Progressing a number of SCRs during the year

### **Sunderland Local Authority Children's Social Care**

The inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in Sunderland started in May 2015 and the overall grading for the service was inadequate. As a consequence of the inspection a Children's Commissioner was appointed to Sunderland and a statutory Improvement Board was established which is chaired by the Children's Commissioner. The SSCB Chair and members of the SSCB are part of the Improvement Board. In addition, an Improvement Plan was established to address the key findings of the inspection. The Plan is overseen by the Improvement Board and regular reports on progress are presented to the SSCB.

The direction from the Department for Education (DfE) required social care services to come out of council control. The Council is working with the Children's Commissioner and the Department for Education (DfE) to contract Children's Services functions to a new company which will be the first of its kind offering the opportunity to deliver innovative children's services. The company will be in shadow form from September 2016 and will "go live" from April 2017.

The SSCB will have a clear role in holding the company to account for the effectiveness of its safeguarding services and how effectively it contributes to the safeguarding system as a whole.

### **Clinical Commissioning Groups**

There is 1 Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Sunderland made up of 51 member practices. NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG) is the statutory health body responsible for the planning and buying of NHS services to meet the needs of the local community. The 51 GP practices in Sunderland are organised into five localities, namely Coalfields, Sunderland North, Sunderland East, Sunderland West and Washington.

The CCG Annual Safeguarding Report 2015-2016 identifies the following issues for 2016 – 2017:

- New statutory arrangements agreed for safeguarding children following the national review by Alan Wood
- The delivery of an alternative delivery model for children's services.
- A considerable amount of learning and improvement activity during 2015/16

## **South Tyneside and Sunderland HealthCare Group**

CHS and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust have formed a strategic alliance to work together to protect the future sustainability of hospital and community health services across Sunderland and South Tyneside. This alliance is called the South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group.

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust (CHS) consists of Sunderland Royal Hospital and Sunderland Eye Infirmary. Sunderland Royal Hospital provides medical, surgical, critical care, maternity, accident and emergency (A&E), outpatient services and children's and young people's services for people across the Tyne and Wear and Durham area. The hospital serves a population of around 350,000 and has 855 beds across two hospitals and employs around 4,923 staff.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust provides a variety of hospital services in South Tyneside and community services in Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. This includes school nursing service, sexual health, children's community nursing teams and Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Through the strategic alliance CHS will focus on leading and providing emergency surgical and complex acute services covering South of Tyne and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust will move away from complex acute care and lead on out-of-hospital services including rehabilitation, diagnostics and screening services with South Tyneside District Hospital continuing to provide a broad range of emergency and planned hospital services. The Trust will also be the lead provider of community services working closely with respective local authorities and primary care. These changes are planned to lead to greater integrated services which is essential to deliver improved healthcare to the communities they serve.

## **Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (NTW)**

NTW provides a wide range of mental health, learning disability and neurorehabilitation services to a population of 1.4 million people in the North East of England. It operates from over 60 sites and provides a range of comprehensive services including some regional and national services.

During 2015-16 the Trust successfully tendered for a number of new services and service Improvements, including:

- The implementation of evidenced based IAPT<sup>7</sup> interventions in Children and Young People's services in Northumberland and North Tyneside in partnership with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Sunderland Integrated Substance Misuse and Harm Reduction Service in partnership with DISC and Changing Lives, to commence on the 1st July 2016.
- Inclusion on a framework to provide mental health inpatient services to Sussex Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) out of area placements

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<sup>7</sup> Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Service is a national initiative

- Inclusion on a framework to provide Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Psychosis training for Early Intervention in Psychosis

## Northumbria Police

Northumbria Police serves a population of 1.5 million people, covering an area of more than 2,000 square miles in the North East of England. It is one of the largest forces in the country having approximately 3,253 police officers, 1,430 police staff and 183 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who work together to prevent, detect and reduce crime in the Northumbria area. (1st July 2016). Northumbria Police covers 6 Local Authorities and has 3 area commands, Northern Area, Central Area and the Southern area of which Sunderland is part. The Police and Crime Plan (2013-2018) has 5 objectives:

- Putting victims first
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour
- Domestic and sexual abuse
- Cutting crime
- Making people feel safe

## Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria

Schemes to safeguard victims and tackle perpetrators of domestic abuse have been developed after funding was secured by Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner.

The PCC made 2 successful bids to the Police Innovation Fund which supported the development of 2 multi-agency programmes to address domestic abuse, namely, the Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordinating (MATAC) Process and BIG Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Project.

## Gentoo – Social Housing Provider

Gentoo is a social housing provider in Sunderland and is represented on the SSCB and a number of sub committees. The Gentoo Group's Community Safety Strategy has the ultimate aim to ensure that "everyone within our communities feels safe and secure".

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Service includes the following elements of service delivery:

- Tenancy enforcement
- Early intervention
- Victim Support – providing support for victims of ASB, domestic violence etc.
- Positive Engagement (support for perpetrators) - to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour, for example, substance misuse (including alcohol)

Gentoo made 220 referrals to Children's Social Care in 2015-2016 which was an increase of 15% on the previous year. Of these referrals 51% of referrals were categorised by Gentoo as due to emotional abuse, 40% for neglect, 5% sexual abuse and 3% for physical abuse.

Gentoo Business Assurance Services conducted a review of the child safeguarding arrangements in the service with the purpose of providing assurance that the internal controls governing child safeguarding function effectively. This review concluded that the controls were basically sound and identified some areas for development to ensure that workers are able

### **Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass)**

Cafcass is a non-departmental public body in England set up to promote the welfare of children and families involved in family court proceedings. The agency is independent of the courts, social services, education, health authorities and all similar agencies. Cafcass represents children in family court cases. A national inspection of Cafcass was undertaken in 2014 with the overall judgement of the service being rated as good.

Cafcass published its third Cafcass Quality Account setting out how it has driven up casework quality and shared best practice with the sector during 2015-16.

Through innovative practice, Cafcass have:

- Continued to improve the quality of practice, building on the Good with Outstanding Leadership rating of the 2014 Ofsted inspection
- Learnt more about the impact of their work for children by assessing the quality of case practice against four child-focused outcomes (the extent to which the child is safe, heard, better represented and enabled) introduced through the refreshed Quality Assurance and Impact Framework, and used this insight to drive improvements
- Equipped practitioners with the tools and knowledge to strengthen practice and improve analytical reporting, including embedding Evidence Informed Practice Tools and disseminating learning driven by focused strategies for areas such as child exploitation and equality and diversity, and which caters to what Cafcass practitioners report they need
- Supported practitioners to enhance their expertise and improve the quality of recommendations and management of risk through pilots, such the Clinical Psychologist pilot which provided access to 1:1 consultations with accredited clinical psychologists. This is now an embedded service
- Continued to support improved services in the wider family justice sector and help shape future sector reform through close working with the Ministry of Justice, DfE, sector agencies, membership of formal boards such as the Family Justice Board and contribution to government consultations

Cafcass is committed to building on this progress and over the coming year will continue to:

- Draw on findings around the contribution the service makes to outcomes for children
- Embed the new outcomes-focused Quality Assurance Impact Framework

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBB) have responsibility to develop and monitor a Health and Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS). In Sunderland, the HWB strategy focusses on the city's health and social care system and how the system operates, as opposed to what it should be doing. Progress is being achieved through the adoption of an assets based approach and the embedding of design principles into ways of working, namely:



- Strengthening community assets
- Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Equity
- Promoting independence and self-care
- Joint Working
- Address the factors that have a wider impact on health e.g. education, housing

The HWBB has a statutory responsibility for producing a strategic level assessment of the health wellbeing needs of the population (the JSNA) and a high level health and wellbeing strategy. In Sunderland, the JSNA is separated into a number of profiles which include both adults and children's safeguarding

The Children's Safeguarding Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was updated in 2015 and endorsed by the Quality Assurance subcommittee and Executive Group following minor amendments being requested by the SSCB. The Headlines from the JSNA refresh were:

- Reducing 0 – 19 population
- 25.7% of children living in poverty
- 9 serious case reviews commenced during the period 2012 – 2014
- High levels of social and economic deprivation
- Increasing CiN, CP and LAC numbers compared with statistical neighbours and England
- 41<sup>st</sup> most deprived LA area
- 17 child deaths in 13/14
- High levels of teenage pregnancy
- Increasing referrals to:
  - MSET (missing, sexually exploited and trafficked)
  - Early Help
  - Social Care

Since the previous JSNA there had been two significant changes:

- Restructuring and service transformation - Children's Services had become part of the People's Services directorate with one Director of the service and is subsequently moving out to the New Trust
- Implementation of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – This is a multi-agency arrangement with the co-location of Police, Social Workers and Health professionals at the first point of contact for new safeguarding concerns

## Education Establishments

As part of the LSCB review in 2015 the SSCB needed to ensure effective engagement with schools from April 2015. The Head of Educational Attainment and Lifelong Learning was commissioned by the Board to engage with schools to identify the best way to improve engagement. From the research undertaken it was clear that schools understand that they have an extremely valuable role to play in multi-agency working, in addition to their statutory responsibilities.

The proposal that the schools requested was to have a private Safeguarding Company to represent them on the SSCB Executive Group. All but 4 schools employed the company for their 'safeguarding needs'.

Discussion with SSCB Members concluded that it would be a huge loss to the SSCB to not have the richness of the representation and contribution from head teachers/teachers. It was therefore agreed that representation from primary and secondary schools would be achieved through direct membership of the SSCB Executive Group.

### **Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements for Children and Young People in Sunderland**

A wide variety of resources are used to evaluate how effective safeguarding arrangements are and a structure of this section is set out as below:

#### **1. Engagement with and involvement of children and young people:**

- The views and experience of children and young people
- Listening to children and young people when working with them

#### **2. Monitoring and Reviewing:**

- Inspections and Reviews
- The incidence of the deaths of children and young people
- Lessons from Serious Case Reviews and Local Learning Lessons Reviews
- Allegations against professionals
- Private Fostering provision

#### **3. Performance Management and Quality Assurance of safeguarding services:**

- Partner compliance with required safeguarding arrangements
- The Child's journey through the safeguarding system and outcomes for priority vulnerable groups
- Quality Assurance and Audit

### **The Views of and Experience of Children and Young People**

The SSCB had limited direct contact with children and young people during 2015-2016. The SSCB Development and Training Officer is the dedicated participation and engagement lead for the SSCB and attends the participation and engagement champions meetings held by the council.

It has however engaged with the Children's Trust Advisory Network (CTAN) through the participation and engagement lead for children and young people in the council to look at how the SSCB can better engage with children and young people. The Board made an offer to young people as part of National Takeover day but this was not taken up.

The SSCB delivered a joint CSE conference in October 2015 in conjunction with the PCC and South Tyneside and Gateshead LSCBs. This conference had presentations from young people through the Police cadets and from young people who had been victims of CSE. This gave a unique perspective to the conference through educating professionals about how to engage more effectively with those at risk/being sexually exploited.

## The Incidence and Nature of Child Deaths in Sunderland

Since 1 April 2008, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in England have had a statutory responsibility for child death review processes under The Children Act 2004, and applies to all young people under the age of 18 years. The processes to be followed when a child dies are outlined within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015: Chapter 5 Child Death Review Processes. The process focuses on identifying 'modifiable factors'<sup>8</sup> in the child's death. The overall purpose of the child death review process is to understand how and why children die, to put in place interventions to protect other children, and to prevent future deaths.

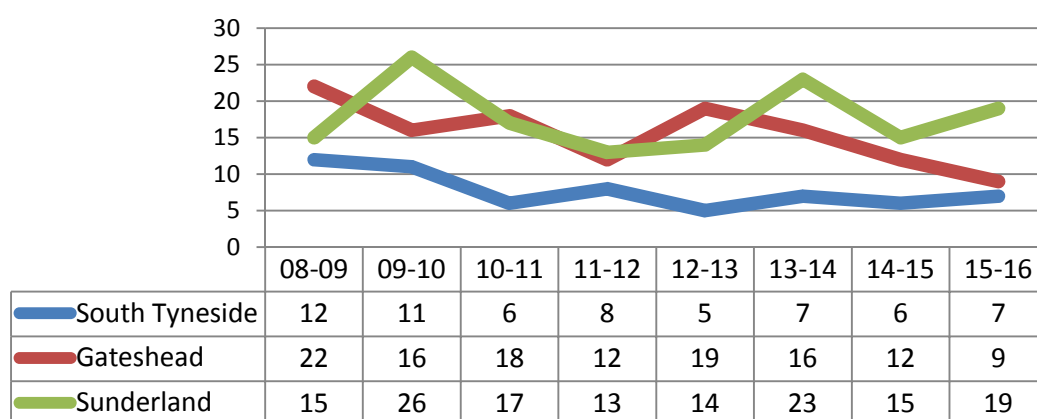
In the South of Tyne sub region the SSCB works with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) for South Tyneside and Gateshead to form a single South of Tyne (SoT) Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). Each locality has established a Local Child Death Review Group which reports directly into the CDOP and to the relevant LSCB. During 2015-16, the SoT CDOP was chaired by the Director of Public Health for Gateshead. The panel will be chaired by the Director of Public Health for South Tyneside in 2016-17.

There have been 18 child deaths in Sunderland between April 2015 and March 2016. This is a similar position to previous years. The deaths are categorised below:

- 8 Neonatal
- 4 Expected
- 6 Unexpected

1 additional case was notified to CDOP, but this was then re-classified as a still birth so does not fall within the CDR process.

The data is examined across the three local CDOP panels south of the Tyne.



Of the 3 areas Sunderland has had the highest level of deaths for the last 3 years. SOTW CDOP identified 'modifiable factors' in 17% of all completed cases. Modifiable factors are defined as 'one or more factors, in any domain, which may have contributed to the death of the

<sup>8</sup> Modifiable factors are defined as 'one or more factors, in any domain, which may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally or nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths.'

child and which, by means of locally or nationally achievable interventions, could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths’.

The highest percentage of cases with modifiable factors present was within the Sudden Unexpected Deaths category with 59% of deaths having modifiable factors present. Deliberately inflicted injury, abuse or neglect is next highest at 50%, but there have been less than 5 deaths in this category during 2008-16. 5 of the deaths in 2013-2014 became serious case reviews and the final SCR reports for each of these deaths were presented to CDOP to ensure learning can be embedded.

Timeliness of the child death review process has improved significantly with the majority of cases since 2014-15 being completed within 6-12 months of the child’s death. Those that have taken over 12 months to complete have been delayed by other processes, i.e. availability of post mortems, inquests, hospital mortality reviews, criminal investigations or SCRs. The LCDRP and CDOP are continuing to monitor the impact of parallel processes on the time taken to complete reviews.

Overall the findings show that the pattern of child deaths seen locally reflects those identified in regional and national findings; the largest proportion of deaths are associated with premature birth and males account for the majority of all deaths. The majority of modifiable factors identified by CDOP are in relation to known risk factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, as identified in previous years, and are subject to ongoing work by CDOP and local health agencies.

Actions undertaken/Learning shared following reviews include:

- Awareness raising around the known risk factors affecting infant mortality, Parental Smoking, bed sharing etc.
- Concerns around the limited availability of neonatal beds which has been raised with the regional neonatal network
- Partner agencies have been reminded of the importance of attending pre-birth strategy meetings and Child Protection Conferences
- Dangers of blind cords to children has been included in birth information packs
- Regional Units have been reminded that there should always be a planning meeting before the discharge of vulnerable infants. For very vulnerable families these should be carefully planned with prior notification of all community services known to be involved in caring for and supporting the family
- North East Ambulance Service requested to make paramedic crews available to attend Rapid Response/Case discussion meetings where ever possible
- SoT CDOP have reviewed their procedures around how parents are included in the process

### Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Local Learning Lessons Reviews (LLRs)

LSCBs are required to have a Learning and Improvement Framework and have a culture of continuous learning. In addition they are required to ensure that learning from the detail of serious child care incidents to improve practice and reduce the likelihood of these types of incidents happening again.

Between April 2015 and March 2016 there were five serious incident childcare notifications made to Ofsted that led to Serious Case Reviews in Sunderland. These cases related to two babies, two teenagers and one family of eight children. One of these cases was identified by Ofsted during the Inspection in May 2015. Of these one baby had died and the remaining children had been seriously harmed. In addition, the SSCB undertook two Learning Reviews into the circumstances of two other babies.

The SSCB published three SCRs in 2015 – 2016 which were all in respect of babies who had died or been seriously harmed. The learning from these SCRs includes:

- Safeguarding children and young people is dependent on effective communication between agencies
- The importance of timely, good quality, robust, assessments
- Professional challenge is everyone's responsibility
- Management oversight is central to supporting critical thinking, challenge and good assessment in multi-agency work

Parallel processes in relation to the death and/or injury of these children such as coronial processes and criminal proceedings caused delays in engaging with key family members and subsequently in publishing reports during 2015-2016. However work has been undertaken to embed the recommendations and the Learning and Improvement in Practice Sub Committee has scrutinised this process.

Despite these delays, the SSCB has monitored the implementation of the action plans from all of these reviews and provided challenge to agencies that have not robustly implemented their action plans. The SSCB has included impact statements in the SCR reports it has published in 2015 – 2016. There is some evidence of the learning improving practice:

- Reviewed and re-launching the Resolution of Professional Differences procedure
- Identifying multi-agency audits to be included in the SSCB Audit Cycle for 2015 – 2016
- Launched a procedure and prompt sheet to support staff to work effectively with parents who are resistant, hostile and uncooperative. Consultation with staff confirmed that the prompt sheets did have the required impact on staff
- The SSCB used the Section 11 audit process for agencies to self-assess their internal learning and improvement processes. This included assessment around if the agency used learning from all reviews/audits to develop service deliver. The SSCB is planning to undertake a staff survey in Autumn 2016 to triangulate the findings with the Section 11 audit findings in 2016-2017. This will give the Board a more accurate overview of the impact of the extensive improvement work across the safeguarding system as a whole
- The SSCB Unborn Baby procedures have been strengthened and a multi-agency audit of the instigation of pre-discharge meetings for babies (where appropriate) is to be undertaken in 2016-2017. This will measure the impact of the procedural changes focusing on both compliance and the quality of work undertaken
- The SSCB Threshold Guidance has been strengthened as part of the development of the SSCB Early Help Strategy. Analysis of performance information has identified

that these two frameworks have not significantly impacted to improve outcomes for children. The SSCB is therefore undertaking a further review of both documents, establishing a joint framework for dissemination of information as a mechanism to fully embed the changes in practice required. The impact this has will be measured through the planned multi-agency audits for 2016-2017 on referrals to Children's Social Care, the robustness of the Step Up/Step Down procedures and the quality of early help where domestic violence is a risk

There is still a significant amount of work to do to fully embed the learning and to be able to evidence the impact of this work. This is a priority area of work for 2016-2017.

### **Managing Allegations against Professionals**

The revised framework for the management of allegations of abuse is set out in Working together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2015) and in Keeping Children Safe in Education: statutory guidance for school and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment (2015).

The Annual Report of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 2015-2016 was presented to the Board in July 2016. In 2015-2016 the LADO service received 185 referrals from 15 organisations<sup>9</sup>. This represented a marginal increase of 3 additional referrals from the previous year. Direct comparisons of referral numbers against other LA's is problematic given that there is no national statistics available on LADO enquiries to each authority.

School holidays continue to represent the months the LADO service receives its lowest amounts of referrals. This correlates with the collective education profession being the predominant referrer into the LADO service.

2015-2016 saw a rise in the referrals for secondary education from 31 to 44, and foster carers from 35 to 40 referrals for the second year in a row. However, it was the 'Other' reporting group which had the biggest increase from 27 to 45 and this category includes; sporting organisations, after school clubs, youth clubs, and GP's. Referrals involving primary schools, nursery schools and health professionals were all reduced in 2015-2016.

Allegations of physical abuse continues to be the main category of abuse for referrals into the LADO service accounting for half of the total number of referrals at 92 cases which is 50% of the total number of referrals in 2015-2016. This year has also seen a significant increase in the number of referrals for emotional abuse from 10 in 2014-2015 to 44 referrals in 2015-2016. This coincides with a rise in the cases categorised under emotional abuse within the Child protection arena. At the same time there has been a reduction of 17 referrals in relation to other forms of concern from 30 to 13. This could be as result of overall better identification of categories of abuse and subsequent naming of the category of concern by the referral population in Sunderland. A significant number of referrals led to no further action

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<sup>9</sup> The LADO Annual Report 2015-2016

## Private Fostering

It is the duty of the Local Authority to satisfy itself that the welfare of children who are, or will be privately fostered within their area are satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 set out a policy and procedural function for the LSCB in relation to private fostering. The LSCB role includes monitoring and quality assurance and to ensure that public awareness is raised about private fostering.

This Ofsted inspection found that Private Fostering arrangements in Sunderland did not meet statutory requirements. The local authority accepted that insufficient work was being done to promote awareness of private fostering across Sunderland. A small number of young people had been appropriately identified as privately fostered but there were considerable delays in the completion of assessments of the circumstances. Assessments that were completed were of poor quality.

The Private Fostering Annual Report 2014 – 2015 was presented to the SSCB in July 2015. The report identified that there were only 3 private fostering arrangements notified to the local authority with another 2 ending recently as the young people had turned 16. This is quite a low number for an authority the size of Sunderland. The report did identify areas of improvement made in relation to private fostering by the Local Authority from April 2014 to March 2015m which included:

- A strengthened performance management process to ensure that those children who are privately fostered are visited and that their assessments are completed in a timely manner
- The council and SSCB websites were updated and all key partners' including health, school nurses, health visitors etc.
- A new leaflet and poster about private fostering was developed and shared with partners to display in schools, GP surgeries, hospital waiting areas etc.
- An advert was to be put in all of the Customer Service Centres, Gentoo housing offices and GP surgeries, mosques and other public venues
- The school admission service included a question about whether a child is privately fostered on their admission form and it was included in the governors handbook
- Sunderland Children's Safeguarding Service commissioned an advocacy service and children who are privately fostered are made aware that they are able to access this service

The report recognised this low number and also highlighted work that was required to improve the recognition and support offered to children and young people who are privately fostered. These areas for improvement were to be achieved by September 2015 and reported to the SSCB in 2016 are outlined below:

- Information leaflets about Private Fostering to be shared with partner agencies for public display (e.g. police, Schools, GP Surgeries, Children's Centres, churches, community hall, mosques and other public venues)
- All education settings are required to have a copy of the Private Fostering poster which should be displayed in their foyer

- Review the Private Fostering procedures
- Raise awareness training workshop with staff and partners
- Health staff to seek information from adults accompanying a child to Accident and Emergency attendances to establish who has parental responsibility for the child
- Access to Advocacy Service to be embedded
- Target audits to be put in place to monitor quality of practice as well as compliance with procedures
- To request the school admission service to include a question about whether a child is Privately Fostered on their admissions form
- Improving data collection focusing on the effectiveness of the Private Fostering Arrangement
- Consider adding to data collection a question about how notifications/referrals were first made and categorising the young person by reason for placement
- Identifying high and low risk groups
- Schools being required to clarify the number of children not living with their parents as part of the admissions process and annual returns
- Publishing annual reports on SSCB website
- Better targeting at 'raising awareness' work with emphasis on key contact points
- Make regular contact with language colleagues
- Capturing the views of the children and young people to inform service development by implementing a questionnaire for children and young people to complete.

Whilst the service recognised that the notifications about privately fostered children continue to remain low, the launch of the new leaflets and posters and workshops was anticipated to improve identification and notification of private fostering arrangements in Sunderland. Progress with and the impact of this improvement work will be scrutinised when the Board receives the Private Fostering Annual Report 2015-2016.

### Children and Young People who are Looked After

By May 2015 the number of children and young people looked after was 586 which was an increase of 20% or 96 children and young people since March 2014. This represented a rate of 107 per 10,000 children in the population, almost double the England average of 60 and above the average of 84 in similar councils. A high number of these children were looked after under voluntary arrangements and:

- Only a small number of 'connected persons' placements were previously approved as foster care arrangements which means some children remain in placements that may not be appropriate for their needs or may not even be safe
- Inspectors found a small number of cases where children have remained in family placements after a temporary approval has been ended due to the unsuitability of carers
- Some children have remained at home in harmful or potentially harmful situations for too long before becoming looked after
- Over half (52%) of looked after children are accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, almost double the national average of 28%
- When children do become looked after, they are often unable to develop trusting relationships with their Social Worker because of frequent staff changes
- Children wait too long to be placed with permanent carers and to achieve legal security
- The Local Authority has lost the confidence of the family courts



- When children return home from care, the Local Authority does not always ensure these decisions are underpinned by assessments that demonstrate risks have been addressed, or provide sufficient on-going support and monitoring
- There is limited evidence that challenge by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) leads to sustainable improved outcomes for these children
- There is insufficient placement availability and choice
- Increasingly children are being placed outside the city and placement stability is deteriorating children looked after and care leavers receive prompt and effective services that reflect their identified need

The Local Authority began auditing these cases from February 2015 and initially progress was slow but by the end of Quarter 4 the number of Looked After Children had been safely reduced to 544 (97/1000). Following this review the percentage of Looked After children accommodated under voluntary arrangements had also been safely reduced to 38.1% by end of Quarter 4. These concerns were addressed by the Local Authority implementing new systems to improve practice in these areas. The monitoring visit from Ofsted IN 2016 noted significant progress.

Performance Reports to the SSCB in 2015/16 and early 2016/17 have identified the following:

- Improved performance to Looked After Children whose future was secured legally by either a care order or interim care order to
- Improved performance in statutory reviews being held in timescales
- Improved performance in Looked After Children having a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Best performance was achieved for the percentage of statutory visits which had improved to 96%

Unfortunately the following areas of performance did not improved:

- Percentage of children and young people living outside of Sunderland's boundary  
In addition, the data around health assessments of Looked After children remains challenging due to failures to record activity on the electronic system.

Reassuringly the Ofsted Monitoring visit into LAC in the summer of 2016 noted that there had been significant progress made.

### **Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP)**

In 2014, the MALAP ceased operating as Children's Services had brought in a 'Getting to Good' Panel for looked after children. This failed to embed into the partnership structure at this time and the MALAP was resurrected in 2015 but did not start to work. As a result of partner concerns around the lack of progress of the MALAP, the SSCB decided it would become a subcommittee of the SSCB. Ofsted were concerned about this step. Following these concerns highlighted by Ofsted, the SSCB decided that it was no longer appropriate to have MALAP within its structure however once re-established the SSCB would provide more robust scrutiny of the MALAP. The Chair of the MALAP reported into the SSCB on a six monthly basis in 2015 -2016.

### **Corporate Parenting Board**

Corporate Parenting is the term used to refer to the collective responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection for children who are looked after. The Council as a whole is the corporate parent and councillors have key role to play in ensuring that children are well looked after and that they achieve their full potential.

The Local Authority (Council) has a strategic responsibility for Looked After children as documented in legislation and national and local guidance. The Children Act 1989 places a duty on Health, Housing, Education and Social Care as a minimum, to work together to improve outcomes for Looked After Children. This was strengthened by the Children Act 2004, which places a statutory duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

The Corporate Parenting Board in Sunderland meets on a quarterly basis and it has a work plan with the focus of improving the outcomes for Looked After Children. The Corporate Parenting Board scrutinises performance reports which outlines performance on placements, reviews, adoption, care leavers and offending and where possible a regional and national comparator.

### **Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET)**

With regard to the SSCB, the inspection found that the board's Missing; Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) subcommittee did not provide the strength of leadership or scrutiny necessary to support a robust and effective multi-agency response to missing children and those at risk of child sexual exploitation. The inspection also evaluated the findings of the review commissioned by the Council and concluded that the review "identified an approach to child sexual exploitation that is seriously underdeveloped and not currently capable of safeguarding young people".

The SSCB developed a CSE Delivery Plan for 2015 – 2016, which ran in parallel with the plan from the review undertaken in March 2015. A self-assessment undertaken in 2016 has identified good progress has been made in delivering the plan, and that services to prevent, disrupt, or intervene in situations where a child is at risk from or involved with CSE are significantly strengthened and improved although there is still a considerable amount to do. Learning from two recent SCR's has identified key issues that are now being addressed.

More than 500 delegates attended the North East's first Child Sexual Exploitation Conference, hosted by Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Northumbria Police and Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).

The conference formed part of Northumbria Police's Child Sexual Exploitation Week of Action, which covered issues including human trafficking, cyber-crime and the night-time economy.

### **Performance Management and Quality Assurance of Safeguarding Services in Sunderland**

The second objective of an LSCB is to ensure the effectiveness of multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. The Inspection in 2015 found that performance management was a particular weakness of the board and Ofsted concluded that the board was not monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of agencies in safeguarding and

promoting the welfare of children. Taken alongside the unreliable nature of much of the data and the lack of multi-agency audits, this lack of oversight means that often poor and uncoordinated safeguarding services are not receiving sufficient scrutiny and challenge of their quality and impact.

As part of the Board's improvement work in 2015, the SSCB approved its Quality Assurance and Performance Framework in July 2015. The Framework focuses on "outcomes" and the impact of services on the lives of children and young people in Sunderland. The purpose of the Framework is to enable the Board and agencies to:

- Have a planned approach in scrutinising and challenging the quality and effectiveness of their services through self-assessment
- Performance monitor safeguarding outcomes for children and young people
- Have single and multi-agency plans that are informed by need, identified by national and local safeguarding data and information
- Learn from reviews, audits and any other learning and improvement activity to continuously improve in accordance with LIP framework.

The Framework has elements which support performance being measured at 3 levels which are:

SSCB – How effective/efficient is our Board?

Individual agencies – How effective/ efficient are individual agencies in safeguarding children and young people

Children and young people – Outcomes/impact

Performance will then be measured by 3 types of performance:

Quantity - 'How much did we do'?

Quality – 'How well did we do it'?

Outcome/Impact – 'is anyone better off – so what'

Work to develop this framework was slow in 2015/16 but has rapidly improved more recently and an agreed framework will be in place by March 2017.

### **Section 11 Duty to Safeguard' Compliance**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 puts a statutory duty on key organisations to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging their functions they have the regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In addition, this section of the act requires LSCBs to ensure that organisations have safeguarding arrangements in place which are overseen and evaluated by senior managers etc. The Ofsted inspection of the SSCB in 2015 found that the SSCB had not done enough to evaluate how effectively agencies are keeping children safe or hold partners to account for their practice which included not undertaking a Section 11 Audit.

A self-assessment of statutory partners' compliance with Section 11 responsibilities was started in April/May 2015. A random sample of evidence of compliance was undertaken in respect of all Board agencies by members of the Quality Assurance Sub-Committee.

The findings of the Section 11 Audit as reported to the Board in January 2016 highlighted:

- All agencies had demonstrated an acceptable level of compliance
- Some agencies demonstrated a significant level of compliance with Section 11 of the Children Act 2004

Key improvement areas identified by partners resulting from the Section 11 audits included:

- Ensuring staff are fully trained to enable them to recognise safeguarding issues
- Having a robust allegation management policy in place
- External single agency safeguarding training to include children with disabilities
- Some cross boundary agencies such as Northumbria Police are required to complete a Section 11 Audit tool across more than one LSCB area. Further work needs to be undertaken by LSCBs who “share” agencies to minimise duplication of work - as a result of this finding Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside LSCB’s are completing a sub-regional Section 11 Audit for 2016-2017 to minimise duplication and to streamline the process for agencies who cover more than one LSCB area
- Commissioned services working on behalf of Sunderland Council have to demonstrate compliance with Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004. This includes having a safeguarding children procedure/policy that meets the minimum standards set by the SSCB
- The Business Unit works with the council commissioning service to ensure the requirements of Section 11 are met by commissioned services
- Some schools and education services completed the Section 11 audit tool in 2015 – 2016 instead of a Section 175 Education Act 2002 audit tool. This is a key area of development for the SSCB in 2016 – 2017 where there will be a Section 11 audit for Board Members and a Section 175 audit tool for schools and education settings which will reflect the changes in the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)

## Summary and Whole System Analysis

In order for the SSCB to demonstrate compliance in respect of evaluating the effectiveness of the safeguarding System in Sunderland, the following questions provide a clear framework:

1. Are we doing the right things?
2. Are we making sufficient progress?
3. Are we managing risk appropriately and safely?

### Are we doing the right things?

The SSCB was inspected in May 2015 as part of the inspection of Children’s Services in Sunderland. The review of the effectiveness of the SSCB concluded that it was inadequate because it was failing to meet its statutory duties and did not provide effective oversight of all areas concerned with children’s safeguarding as required by statutory guidance.

Ofsted concluded that the SSCB “has not done enough to evaluate how effectively agencies are keeping children safe or hold partners to account for their practice. It has not provided sufficient

leadership and coordination with regard to key priorities including children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation, those who go missing and those who live in homes where domestic abuse is a problem.”

The board had not undertaken a multi-agency practice audit for over a year. It had not therefore monitored the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard children as required under statutory guidance.

Ofsted acknowledged that an experienced independent chair, appointed in September 2014, had comprehensively reviewed the membership, structure and priorities of the Board which would come into effect in April 2015 and there was a commitment at senior leadership level to improving the effectiveness of the board. However, while accepting that there had been considerable development work undertaken the improvements had not so far shown a significant impact in ensuring that the LSCB was fulfilling its statutory functions.

Relationships with other statutory boards were not clear which meant that the SSCB had limited influence and impact on ensuring that children’s safeguarding issues were prioritised across other key partnerships such as the SSAB and HWBB. At this time the Children’s Trust had been repositioned to become a Children’s Trust Board and was sitting as a Sub-Group of the HWBB. Despite this, the Children’s Trust Board was not functioning effectively and the CYPP was not being progressed. Following the appointment of the Children’s Commissioner, Children’s Services was removed from the people Directorate and an Interim Director of Children’s Services was appointed. This Director began the process of establishing the Children’s Strategic Partnership.

As the SSCB had not established clear links between different planning documents it didn’t have clearly defined priorities or expectations about the quality of services for children in Sunderland against which it could hold agencies to account.

Ofsted found that the SSCB’s limited resources had been overwhelmed with the challenge of undertaking 10 serious case reviews (SCRs) in two years, which meant the Board did not have adequate capacity to undertake other activity. In addition, performance information reported to the SSCB was concluded to be insufficient to allow partners to scrutinise and challenge performance.

Representation by Children’s Services at sub-committees of the board had been inconsistent because of both poor attendance and staff turnover. Partners express exasperation at what they see as a lack of commitment and capability at middle management level within Children’s Services.

The SSCB implemented an SSCB Ofsted Improvement Plan following based on the recommendations from the inspection as outlined below:

1. Ensure full board approval of agreed priorities and action planning
2. Ensure that the board is able to effectively monitor the quality and impact of services for children across the partnership
3. Accelerate implementation of an early help strategy, ensuring that it is consistent with the ‘multi-agency threshold guidance’ document and then monitor its effectiveness

4. Review multi-agency training to ensure it supports and promotes front line practice and is able to respond to demand following the imminent publication of a high number of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs); then ensure lessons are learnt and improvements embedded
5. Agree with partner local authorities on Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), a coordinated response to the high number of SCR's awaiting publication
6. Ensure that multi-agency arrangements for the oversight of children missing and at risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking are driven by effective information sharing, performance monitoring, and action planning and are strategically coordinated and monitored by the board
7. Review the resources available to undertake the governance of Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) to ensure a sufficient focus

### Are we managing risk appropriately and safely?

Assessing and managing risk is a key responsibility in safeguarding children and young people and the LSCB has been absolutely clear that this must be maintained appropriately and safely during the period of 'whole system change' and accompanying restructuring being undertaken by many partners. The LSCB has considered the following factors in assuring itself that practice and multi-agency working is appropriate and safe:

Findings from external inspections:

- Sunderland Local Authority was judged to be inadequate by Ofsted in July 2015
- The Care Quality Commission inspection of STFT in 2015 found that the overall rating for STFT services was 'requires improvement' for 'safe'
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary an inspection on the experiences, progress and outcomes for children who need help and protection, a number of areas for improvement were found and an action plan is being progressed
- The majority of schools, child minders and day care settings inspected by Ofsted in 2015-2016 were judged to be 'outstanding'

Partner compliance with statutory duties to ensure arrangements are in place to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people:

- The Section 11 audit undertaken by partners represented on the Board indicated improved compliance since the previous audit in 2013

Findings from Audits

- The SSCB developed and implemented the SSCB audit process in 2015 -2016 but undertook limited multi agency audits in that year
- The neglect audit undertaken was completed at a time when the neglect category for child protection plans was at 80% and identified that the category of neglect was being used inappropriately when domestic violence was a factor in the case. This audit also

identified that multi agency professionals were not complying with the SSCB procedures in that they weren't making recommendations on the need for a child protection plan in their reports to initial child protection conferences

## Conclusions

A review of the information and intelligence considered by the SSCB throughout 2015-2016 and analysed through the annual review process suggests that overall the direction of travel is appropriate, and progress is being made to realise partnership objectives and that change is being managed carefully and safely.

## Appendix 3

### Key Findings of the Interim Chair's Diagnostic Report

#### Conclusions:

The Board has made progress in the last year and has some strengths to build on. Whilst it has changed and improved in many ways and in particular in terms of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) it lacks impact or effectiveness, is at times incoherent, unfocussed and is overburdened by process. Despite a lot of hard work and high levels of commitment from some key players the Board is still unable to effectively scrutinise safeguarding practice although it has made progress towards being able to do so. The Board needs focus direction, simplicity and drive, led by a strong chair.

#### Next steps:

1. A new vision should be agreed, as well as a set of “obsessions” against which to measure progress finalised.
2. Priorities for action are to:
  - a. Simplify our strategic and business plans and create focus, direction and drive, based on the Board's new obsessions and revised strategic priorities
  - b. Secure and implement a new refreshed performance data set, based on the three obsessions and outcomes, supported by a simplified quality assurance plan focussed on the two areas of greatest concern (threshold compliance and early help)
  - c. Revise the Board's governance arrangements, functions, systems, processes and structures to create a board that is agile, fit for purpose, focussed and effective
  - d. Appoint a new Chair with leadership skills, a strong knowledge of children's services, the ability to challenge others, the ability to make and maintain good relationships, to influence strategic partnerships and clear independence from all partner agencies
  - e. Engage with children, young people, families and communities, and frontline services and staff
3. The Board also needs to
  - a. Establish standards and clear expectations of member behaviour and values
  - b. Publish the delayed SCR's and complete those that are outstanding, and embed the learning
  - c. Review, revise and redevelop a multi-agency workforce development, learning and improvement strategy and work to embed practice improvement and change across all agencies
  - d. Work with the Improvement Board and senior system leaders to create a partnership landscape which is coherent and clear
  - e. Review and revise the threshold tools and referral requirements at the front door



- f. Contribute to the development of a coherent early help strategy and ensure its implementation makes a difference
- g. Initiate a new relationship with schools and establish clear expectations and neglect as well as review progress on the “toxic trio” priorities them as well as the support available to them
- h. Develop new ways to engage with frontline practitioners and community stakeholders
- i. Continue to work on the CSE and Vulnerable groups work streams, speed up work on vulnerable babies, and review progress on the toxic trio (mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence) priorities

## Appendix 4

### **Proposals for Transformation of the Board** *(changes following consultation)*

#### **Rationale for change:**

- Being ambitious for Sunderland's children and young people
- Recognition we are not making the difference we should or delivering our objectives or functions well enough
- SIMPLE is best – we are currently not at all simple
- Best use of limited resources
- Ofsted Report of July 2015
- Interim Chair diagnostic of July 2016
- Woods Review of 2016
  
- **Proposal 1:** The Board is designed to fulfil its two statutory objectives
  - Support the coordination of what is done to safeguard children and promote their welfare
  - Monitor the effectiveness of what is done to safeguard children and promote their welfare
  - *And is immediately de-coupled from joint arrangements with the adult safeguarding board*
  
- **Proposal 2:** We adopt a simple model of practice and behaviour for all aspects of our work in every part of the Boards structures.

We are suggesting a very simple set of proposals designed to ensure we make sense of the complex systems we are part of, and can deliver what we need through a culture of behaving

- Responsively
- Simply
- Collaboratively
- Transparently
- Respectfully
- Responsibly
- Purposefully
- Effectively

#### **Board Functions**

- Strategic leadership and governance
- Prioritisation and Business Planning
- Annual report

- Challenge to agencies and each other
- Influence on agency and multi-agency strategic design, delivery and commissioning activity
- Assurance cycle oversight
- Risk management
- Compliance
- Budgetary oversight

#### **Learning and workforce development programme board functions**

- Participation and voice
- Application of learning from practice reviews, SCR's, CDOP, quality assurance activity and learning reviews
- Use of research and evidence based practice
- Engagement activity, communication, campaigns etc.
- Agency training curriculum standards and content oversight
- Specific multi-agency training offers
- Workforce development strategy and oversight of delivery
- Practice impact assessments and evaluation
- Board development and training
- Development of new work on specific vulnerable group priorities etc.
- Policies, procedures, practice models and tools

#### **Performance and quality assurance programme board functions**

- Performance management, evaluation and analysis
  - Trend analysis, bench marking, exception analysis
  - Quality assurance, auditing, and audit cycle
  - Assurance activity: S11/S175/DILO/Chair's Audits/Peer Challenge/Practice deep dives/surveys and questionnaires
  - Participation and engagement activity – practitioner challenge and engagement
  - Support to specific interest groups
  - Impact assessments
  - Oversight of reviews, peer reviews, challenge activities, SCR's etc.
  - System monitoring and system effectiveness
  - Action tracking and impact assessments
  - System mapping and needs assessments
- **Proposal 3:** The key strategic senior leaders sit on a small board of no more than 10
  - **Proposal 4:** The Board has two programme boards, responsible for delivering the two Statutory Objectives of the Board, with the relevant functions of the Board split between them – the Learning and Workforce Development

## Programme Board and the Performance and Quality Assurance Programme Board

### Which partners where?

- Board
  - Independent Chair
  - Northumberland Police x1(Borough Commander)
  - Sunderland City Council x 1 (CEO)
  - New company x1 (CEO/DCS)
  - CCG x1 (CEO)
  - NTW NHS FT x 1 (CEO or Exec Director)
  - STFT x 1 (CEO or Exec Director)
  - City Hospital x 1 (CEO or Exec Director)
  - Gentoo
  - Lead Member (participant observer)
- LWD and PQA Programme Boards
  - Police
  - LA
  - New company
  - YOT
  - Range of relevant NHS staff
  - National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company
  - CAFCASS
  - Designated Nurse and Dr
  - Public Health
  - Lay members
  - Young advisers (when recruited)
  - Voluntary sector representatives
  - Education representatives
  - Relevant agency advisers and professionals with PQA, engagement and performance analysis skills
- **Proposal 5: We adopt programme methodologies and do the majority of our work through task and finish groups and project groups, which are flexible, time limited, appropriately led and supported, focussed and timely**
- **Proposal 6: we engage with our stakeholder groups through a range of stakeholder forums – e.g. cluster forums for school DSL's supported by the learning and workforce development programme board**

We plan to engage with school leaders during the spring term to debate and discuss how and where best to involve schools and engage with them as a Board with a view to agreeing how and where in the new arrangements schools are represented within the new board arrangements as well as how best to develop local school safeguarding networks or forums

- **Proposal 7: The “new Board” reviews and redesigns its strategic partnership relationships, and formal protocols and structures during the transition period (January-March 2017) *through a Transformation Steering Group***
- **Proposal 8: The accountability for the Strategic CSE sub group programme of work transfers to the Children’s Strategic Partnership with assurance and challenge provided by SSCB *at a point to be agreed during 2017/18*. The accountability for the delivery of an Early Help programme of work rests with the CSP too, again with assurance and challenge provided by SSCB. Accountability for the local CDOP rests temporarily with SSCB until the formal date of transfer supported primarily by the CCG *unless regional partners agree to stop requiring local as well as regional CDOP arrangements***
- **Proposal 9: SSCB agrees a coordinated programme of scrutiny priorities and activities with the Council Scrutiny Chairs**
- **Proposal 10: the Police and CCG in discussions with the LA CEO, consider whether they would be open to hosting the Business Unit or whether in their view the Unit should be supported by the LA CEO’s directorate and reach agreement as soon as possible *agreement in principle to retain the hosting arrangements in the council but transfer the unit to the Chief Executive***
- **Proposal 11: The CEO of the LA with the Chief Constable, the CEO of the CCG and the DCS *meet to agree the proposals subject to final Board sign off and then through the transformation steering group*, negotiate and agree a new job description, number of hours and remuneration package with a view to going out to recruit in November *January 2017***
- **Proposal 12: The LA, CCG and police agree a formula for contributions which as a minimum matches the national average (60:30:10) *between January to March 2017 based on the same funding envelope but a new distribution of contributions***
- **Proposal 13: Finance officers for the three key partner agencies review and rebuild a new Board budget and recommend, depending on the outcome of proposal 10 which agency should act as the budget holder *the Local Authority***

- **Proposal 14: The LA, CCG and police agree a new staffing structure, job descriptions, and remuneration arrangements in line with the proposed structure *during December 2016/January 2017***

## **TIMESCALES**

- **Consultation: October – November 2016**
- **Chair's role agreed and advertised November 2016 *January 2017***
- **Final Proposals agreed *in principle* December 2016 *and signed off by the Board February 2017***
- **New hosting arrangements from December 2016 *April 2017***
- **HR and Finance consultations etc. January-February 2017**
- **Appointments to new posts February – March 2017**
- **Shadow governance structures in place January 2017**
- **New arrangements begin April 2017**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES****SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN –  
PROGRESS UPDATE****1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To report on the progress being made on the Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan; focusing on the Improvement Plan priority to provide coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Learning and Improvement Plan was developed by the Children's Services Improvement Board in response to the areas of improvement highlighted by the Ofsted Inspection Report.
- 2.2 The Learning and Improvement Plan has been developed around seven key priorities for improvement:-
- Recruiting, retaining and developing a skilled and confident social care workforce
  - Providing coherent and coordinated early help services to children and their families
  - Improving the quality and timeliness of assessment and care planning
  - Ensuring high quality support and services for looked after children and effective permanency planning
  - Putting the voice of the child at the centre of social care practice
  - Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence
  - Embedding strong quality assurance and governance mechanisms to drive continual improvement of service
- 2.3 The Children's Services Improvement Board monitors the Improvement Plan on a monthly basis. Members of this Committee also receive the agenda for the Sunderland Safeguarding Board.
- 3. Current Position**
- 3.1 At its meeting on 6 October 2016, the Committee agreed that future monthly update reports should focus on one of the seven priorities contained in the Improvement Plan.
- 3.2 Alex Hopkins (Director of Children's Services) will therefore provide an update on the Improvement Plan priority for Looked After Children and Permanency Planning.

**4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The report will provide members with an overview of the progress being made in implementing the Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan focusing on the Looked After Children and Permanency Planning.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the progress being made.

## **6. Background Papers**

Safeguarding Children Learning and Improvement Plan



## Overview of Progress against the Learning and Improvement Plan for CLA & Permanence

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Ofsted inspection of Sunderland Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers took place between 11th May and 4th June 2015 and the final report was published on 20th July 2015. Following the inspection, a Learning and Improvement Plan was developed in response to the Ofsted inspection report. The plan identified seven priority areas, encompassing the 27 recommendations made by Ofsted together with other improvement areas identified in the narrative of the report.
- 1.2. This report provides an overview of progress made against priority areas four, five and six which are those focused on CLA and Permanence.

### 2. Priority 4: Ensuring high quality support and services for looked-after children (CLA) and effective permanency planning

- 2.1. Following the 2015 inspection, a review was conducted of all cases where children are looked-after under voluntary care arrangements (S20) to establish whether this legal basis is sufficient to ensure their safety and emotional security. Immediate actions were taken to address the identified issues. Section 20s continue to be reviewed regularly.
- 2.2. A permanence tracker has been developed to provide assurance that every child with a plan for long-term care has a robust plan for permanence. A life story tracker has also been developed to ensure effective life story work is progressing. Performance relating to the percentage of CLA with an up-to-date care plan (within 6 months) has remained consistently high over the last year. Life story work is progressing in accordance with the age and circumstances of each child but remains a priority for the service. In October 2016, the Commissioners review of Children's Services recognised that direct work with children could still be improved.
- 2.3. Our Placement Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy has been updated to increase the placement choice for children looked after. The number of CLA with unplanned placement moves and the percentage of CLA who have experienced 3+ placement moves in the last 12 months continue to perform well and are below the latest reported statistical neighbour and national average.
- 2.4. A review of the arrangements for supervised contact has been concluded and changes have been implemented. Practice standards will be amended by the end of December 2016 to reflect the new working arrangements. Plans are being considered to relocate the team to more suitable accommodation. It is envisaged that the new arrangements will be more appropriate to meet children's needs.
- 2.5. Progress is being made to strengthen the Virtual School but improvements are still needed. We have implemented mechanisms to track the progress of all looked-after children and care leavers, however the service needs to continue to seek ways to reduce the gap between CLA and other children at all stages. In October 2016, the Commissioner for Children's Services and Department for Education (DfE) undertook a review of our Children's Services and concluded that the educational needs of CLA were not well enough understood or addressed. During this visit the service was able to demonstrate how they were going to address the issues and what action was to be taken. By January 2017 we expect to see some positive impacts arising from those changes.

- 2.6. Following our Ofsted Monitoring Visit of Care Leavers in August 2016, Inspectors concluded that although young people were receiving appropriate support to access education and college, Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are not consistently provided or updated. Since the monitoring visit a new template has been provided for PEPs and a self-assessment sheet has been shared with schools to allow them to monitor their own PEP quality before submitting them to the Virtual School. Increased monitoring of the plans is also taking place. Children Looked After with a PEP has significantly increased from 69% in June 2015 to 80% in November 2016; however improving the quality of the plans remains a priority.
- 2.7. We have put in place a system to ensure that all foster carers have formal written confirmation of their delegated authority to make day-to-day decisions for the children in their care. We have also implemented an awareness campaign with our agencies to promote private fostering requirements. Websites have been updated, information has been disseminated across partner agencies, artwork is on display in public buildings, adverts have been placed on TV screens within our customer service centres and posters have been launched.
- 2.8. A recruitment strategy for adopters is in place together with a comprehensive post-adoption support offer which provides children and adopters with support that meets their needs. Guidance for the adoption panel chair on the requirements of reports has been welcomed. Guidance has been produced for the adoption panel chair and the fostering panel chair on the requirements of their reports so that the panels are able to demonstrate the impact of their work on achieving permanency for children. This guidance has been welcomed.

### **3. Priority 5: Putting the voice of the child at the centre of social care practice**

- 3.1. To ensure the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are fully considered we have improved our capacity and monitoring processes. This has allowed children to be seen more regularly in line with agreed timescales. In November 2016, 97% of CLA had had a statutory visit within the last 6 weeks compared to 70% in June 2015.
- 3.2. The support arrangements for Change Council have been further developed to enable Children to engage, support and represent the views of all children and young people who are looked-after. A Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app has been launched to improve communication between young people, their social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) to increase participation with their care planning. Young people are invited to attend the Looked After Senior Management Team and do so on a quarterly basis. We have six pledges for looked after children and have adopted the Care Leaver's Charter. Each pledge is owned by a young person and is linked with a member of Corporate Parenting Board and a senior manager. Regular meetings take place with the young people to monitor progress and to feed back to the corporate parenting board.

### **4. Priority 6: Supporting young people leaving care to have a positive and successful transition to adulthood and independence**

- 4.1. In August 2016 Ofsted conducted our first Monitoring Visit which reviewed the progress made in respect of the experiences and progress of care leavers. The report concluded that the local authority is making significant progress to improve services for care leavers.
- 4.2. We have a clear policy that informs care leavers about their rights and entitlements. The report from our recent Ofsted monitoring visit identified that care leavers are consistently provided with information about their rights and entitlements. This includes them being provided with all key documents, such as national insurance numbers, birth certificates and passports.

- 4.3. The Next Steps Team moved into new premises in June 2016 to allow care leavers to have drop-in access to the service. Young people were part of the decision making process for the relocation to the city centre. The new premises support social workers and personal advisors to keep in touch with care leavers. In November 2016, 75.8% of care leavers had a contact within the last 8 weeks compared with 30% in June 2015.
- 4.4. Pathway planning has been a priority for the Next Steps service to ensure that care leavers' needs are identified and action is taken to provide support. The pathway plan template has been revised in consultation with Care Council. In November 2016, 80% of care leavers had a pathway plan compared with 69% in November 2015. Whilst the number of pathway plans has improved, a recent sampling exercise has shown that the quality of plans is not consistently good. This was noted as an area for improvement in the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit and is a priority for the service.
- 4.5. Arrangements to monitor the education, employment and training status of care leavers have been strengthened. A team has been created with staff from Next Steps, Sunderland Virtual School and Connexions to support care leavers into Education, Employment and Learning (EET) (ELEET Team). This team works with Young People who are currently Not in Education, Employment or Trainign (NEET) to provide them with a number of Education/Employment opportunities, including apprenticeships. The ELEET Team is consolidating partnership working by the co-location of multi-agency partners within the Next Steps building. The number of care leavers who are NEET has improved from the time of inspection from 85% to 54.5% in November 2016, however progress is slower than expected and performance is still outside of national and statistical neighbour averages.
- 4.6. We have started to develop closer working relationships with Sunderland College and we will be exploring apprenticeship opportunities and further education opportunities for care leavers. The number of apprenticeships has doubled since the 2015. There are on-going discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in relation to supporting care leavers in accessing benefits and working with DWP to prevent sanctions.
- 4.7. Following a review of housing commissioning arrangements, care leavers have a greater choice of accommodation options. During our recent monitoring visit, Ofsted inspectors recognised how our increased use and promotion of staying put arrangements and supported lodgings has helped to ensure that care leavers have a better range of options. In May 2015 only 44% of care leavers were living in suitable accommodation compared with 69% in November 2016.
- 4.8. The health needs of care leavers are addressed within the pathway planning process. However, care leavers do not always receive their medical histories or health passports, despite raising this with our health partners. The lack of health passports is an issue and we are working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to obtain these for care leavers at their final health assessment. The CCG has recruited a dedicated CLA Nurse who is starting at the end of October 2016.

## **5. Summary**

- 5.1. Whilst much progress has been made since the 2015 inspection, there is more to do to ensure we continue to learn, improve and make the required progress.
- 5.2. Following each Ofsted Monitoring Visit, actions are being identified to address any weaknesses reported by Inspectors. Those actions are contained in a post-monitoring visit action plan and any significant areas of improvement are reported to the Improvement Board with a request for inclusion into the Learning and Development Plan.

## **6. Glossary**

CLA: Children Looked After

DfE: Department for Education

PEP: Personal Education Plan

EET: Education, Employment and Training

NEET: Not in Education, Employment and Training

DWP: Department for Work and Pensions

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JANUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF MEMBER SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

#### CONSULTATION WITH SOCIAL WORK STAFF

##### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider feedback from the Committee's visit to consult with social work staff from the North/West/South /East Locality Teams.

##### 2. Background

- 2.1 In setting its work programme for the year, the Committee requested that members be provided with an opportunity to meet and receive feedback from social work staff.
- 2.2 To this end, arrangements have been made for a series of meetings with staff involved in each stage of a child's journey through social care; including:-
- a) Integrated Contact and Referral Team (ICRT) - this is where referrals into social care are screened and, if appropriate, assessments are undertaken;
  - b) Locality Teams - these teams work with children who are subject to child protection plans and those children who were looked after while subject to court proceedings;
  - c) Permanence Team - this team is responsible for children who are looked after permanently and have no plan to return home;
  - d) Next Steps Team – who are responsible for our care leavers
- 2.3 On 21 September 2016, Committee members met with social work staff belonging to the Next Steps Team. A feedback report on that visit was considered by the Committee on 6 October 2016.

##### 3. Current Position

- 3.1 On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016, a visit was arranged to meet with social work staff from the North/West/South/East locality teams.
- 3.2 The meeting took the form of an open discussion between members and staff on a range of issues facing the service. In summary these included:-
- The staff present felt they have been well informed about the establishment of Together for Children and other general developments. Management are considered open and accessible. Morale was felt to be very good and staff were confident in coming forward with any issues or to

seek guidance. Formal team meetings were held which were felt to be important for the exchange of best practice and information.

- In terms of workload the individual number of cases carried by social workers had fallen to a more manageable level. The backlog had been cleared and there was therefore more opportunity to carry out and plan work more effectively;
- Relationships and the sharing of information between partners was good. However there were concerns that due to staffing issues the Police had failed to be represented at some strategy meetings. This issue was being followed up by senior management.
- In terms of agency staff it was felt that they make an important contribution to the service though there were inevitably issues where staff leave frequently at short notice. It was important that this issue was managed carefully and standard and quality of work maintained. It was felt important for the Council to continue to develop its number of permanent staff through effective recruitment programmes, attractive conditions of service and a national and regional reputation of being a good employer.
- Staff very much looked forward to the introduction of the new system (Liquid Logic) which should help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service.
- Staff noted that the social and economic problems facing the city were increasing the demand on the service and the complexity of their work. However it was felt that the team had the skills and expertise to meet these demands.
- It was felt that additional admin support was important to allow social work staff to focus on the key areas of their work and reduce the time spent on administrative functions such as arranging meetings and coordinating other agencies. It was also important that admin staff had sufficient knowledge and experience of social work issues in order to allow them contribute fully to social services work.
- Concerns were expressed about the potential levels of safety at several social work premises such as Washington and the Coalfields. Given the sensitive nature of the work involved, it was important that every effort was made to help staff feel secure when going about their work. Also the closing of some buildings at 7.00pm was an issue for those members of staff who needed to stay later to complete a piece of work as a matter of urgency. It was noted that staff had been provided with laptops which had proved a great help in providing greater flexibility.

#### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The meeting with staff from the North/West/South /East Locality Teams was the second in a series of meetings with social work staff. The meeting provided the opportunity to seek the views of staff on the development of the service.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the feedback from social work staff based in the Locality Teams.

#### **6. Glossary**

None

#### **7 Background Papers**

None

# Item 8

## **CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**5 JANUARY 2017**

### **ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17**

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

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The report sets out the current work programme of the Committee for the 2016-17 Council year.
- 1.2 In delivering its work programme the Committee will support the council in achieving its Corporate Outcomes.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The work programme is a working document which Committee can develop throughout the year. As a living document the work programme allows Members and Officers to maintain an overview of work planned and undertaken during the Council year.

#### **3. Current position**

- 3.1 The current work programme is attached as an appendix to this report.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The work programme is intended to be a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2016-17.

#### **5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the work programme.

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**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17**

REASON FOR INCLUSION	28 JUNE 16	19 JULY 16	8 SEPTEMBER 16	6 OCTOBER 16	3 NOVEMBER 16	1 DECEMBER 16	5 JANUARY 17	2 FEBRUARY 17	2 MARCH 17	30 MARCH 17
<b>Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses</b>					Youth Justice Plan (Sharon Clutton-Dowell)				Children and Young People's Partnership Plan (Portfolio Holder)	Education and Skills Strategy (Simon Marshall)
<b>Scrutiny Business</b>	<p>Remit and Work Programme of Committee (Jim Diamond)</p> <p>Children and Adult Mental Health Service – Progress Report (Janette Sherratt)</p> <p>Participation and Engagement of Young People (Jane Wheeler)</p>	<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (Gary Hetherington)</p> <p>Social Work – Arrangements for Obtaining Staff Views (Debra Patterson)</p>	<p>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) –Annual Report (Gavin Taylor))</p>	<p>Levels of Attendance and Exclusions in Schools (Simon Marshall)</p> <p>Social Work Staff Consultation – Feedback (JD)</p> <p>Opportunities for Consultation with Young People (JD/Jane Wheeler)</p>	<p>Independent Review Officer (IRO) – Annual Report (Gavin Taylor/Graham King)</p> <p>Corporate Parenting Annual Report (Martin Birch)</p>	<p>Early Years (Alex Hopkins)</p> <p>Local Authority Officer Designated Officer – Progress (Gavin Taylor)</p> <p>Fixed Penalty Notices (Simon Marshall)</p>	<p>Safeguarding Board Annual Report (Jane Held Independent Chair)</p> <p>Children and Adolescence Mental Health Service (Tracy Hassan)</p> <p>Social Work Staff Consultation – Feedback (JD)</p>	<p>Educational Attainment Schools Results/ Performance of Looked after Children and Vulnerable Groups(Simon Marshall)</p> <p>Pupil Place Planning (Graham King)</p> <p>Youth Offer (Bev Scanlon)</p> <p>Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Janette Sherratt/Ian Holliday)</p>	<p>Suicide and Self Harm, children &amp; young people – Progress Report (Gillian Gibson/Lorraine Hughes)</p> <p>Special Educational Needs (Simon Marshall)</p> <p>Support provided for Autistic Children (Simon Marshall)</p>	<p>Drugs and Alcohol – Support for Young People (Simon Marshall)</p> <p>Child Sexual Exploitation – Delivery Plan (Gary Hetherington)</p>
<b>Performance / Service Improvement</b>		<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Alex Hopkins)</p> <p>Children's Services Complaints (Marie Johnston)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Alex Hopkins)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Recruitment and Retention of Social Work Staff) (Alex Hopkins)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Assessment and Care Planning) (Debra Patterson)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Early Help Services to Children and Families) (Alex Hopkins)</p> <p>Children's Services Complaints (Marie Johnston)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Looked After Children and Permanency Planning) (Alex Hopkins)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Putting the Voice of Child at the Centre of Social Care Practice) (Alex Hopkins)</p> <p>Early Help – Meet the Team (AH)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Alex Hopkins) (Supporting Young People Leaving Care)</p> <p>Children's Services Complaints (Rhannon Hood)</p>	<p>Improvement and Learning Plan – Monitoring Report (Alex Hopkins) (Quality Assurance and Governance Mechanisms)</p>
<b>Consultation / Awareness Raising</b>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>	<p>Notice of Key Decisions</p> <p>Work Programme 16-17</p>

## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

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

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

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

#### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

#### 3. CURRENT POSITION

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

#### 4. RECOMMENDATION

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

#### 5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Agenda

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

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

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter	Address to obtain further information
160104/48	To consider the freehold acquisition of two properties to provide children's services accommodation.	Cabinet	Y	Between 11 January and 31 March 2017.	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
160728/94	To approve the disposal of premises within the Athenaeum Buildings, Fawcett Street, Sunderland.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 23 November 2016 to 31 January 2017.	N	Not Applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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160905/107	To approve the acquisition of HCA land and property interests at Holmeside, Holmeside Market and Park Lane.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 1 November to 31 January 2017	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report and Plan identifying interests to be acquired	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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160926/115	International Advanced Manufacturing Park – approval of the Joint Venture arrangements with South Tyneside Council in respect of the establishment of IAMP LLP.	Cabinet	Y	8 February 2017	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:committees@sunderland.gov.uk">committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161010/120	Leisure Facility Update	Cabinet	Y	During the period 14 December 2016 to 31 January 2017	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161013/121	Approve an update of housing allocation policy.	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report Updated Policies	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161019/122	To agree a Pilot Housing Delivery Project for the use of 3 Council owned plots of land to be developed for residential development.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 14 December 2016 to 28 February 2017	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report Business Case	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161020/123	To approve in principle the establishment of a new police led Road Safety Partnership (Northumbria Road Safety Partnership) embracing the Northumbria Force area.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 11 January to 31 March 2017.	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161020/124	To agree to consult on the draft Sunderland Local Plan: Core Strategy.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 1 February – 31 March 2016	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161026/128	To agree a Risk Based Verification Policy in relation to Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	Cabinet	Y	During the period 14 December 2016 to 31 January 2017	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>



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161031/129	To approve the proposed disposal of East Herrington Caretakers House.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 14 December 2016 to 31 January 2017	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161117/133	To seek endorsement of the amended Environment Enforcement Policy relating to litter, dog control, waste management and waste regulations and other associated offences.  To introduce a power available within the existing legislation that offers offenders Fixed Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecutions for some unlawful waste deposit offences	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report "Environmental Enforcement Policy"  2011 Environmental Enforcement Policy  2017 Environmental Enforcement Policy	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161124/134	To approve a scheme for Structural Maintenance of A195 Bridges.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 11 January 2017 to 28 February 2017.	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161125/135	To recommend for approval the Council Tax Base 2017/2018.	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161125/136	To recommend for approval the Revenue Budget Third Review	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161125/137	To recommend for approval the Capital Programme - Third Capital Provisional Resources 2017-2020 and Treasury Management Review	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161125/138	To recommend for approval the Revenue Budget 2017-2018 - Update and Provisional Revenue Settlement	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161125/139	To recommend for approval the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/2018	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161129/140	Proposal to jointly procure with South Tyneside Council a developer for the International Advanced Manufacturing Park.	Cabinet	Y	11 January 2017	Y	The proposed decision relates to an item during the consideration of which the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the decision relates to a report which contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161129/141	Approval to submit the IAMP Area Action Plan to the secretary of State	Cabinet	Y	11 January	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161212/142	Public Space Protection Order Endorsement – seeking Cabinet’s approval for the implementation of a City Centre Public Space Protection Order	Cabinet	Y	8 February 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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161212/143	To note the position in relation to the Collection Fund (Council Tax) 2016/2017 in respect of Council Tax and the amounts available to the Council and its major precepting authorities for use in setting Council Tax levels for 2017/2018.	Cabinet	Y	8 February 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161212/144	To recommend to Council to approve the Capital Programme 2017-2018 and Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2017-2018 including Prudential Indicators for 2017-2018 to 2019-2020	Cabinet	Y	8 February 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>
161212/145	To recommend to Council to approve the Revenue Budget 2017-2018 and Proposed Council Tax for 2017-2018 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-2018 to 2019-2020	Cabinet	Y	8 February 2017	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO Box 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN  <a href="mailto:Committees@sunderland.gov.uk">Committees@sunderland.gov.uk</a>

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

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

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

Who will decide;

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

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

Elaine Waugh

Head of Law and Governance

**13 December 2016**