

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7th January, 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

This meeting will be held remotely. Joining details will be emailed to all participants.

The meeting will be livestreamed for the public to view on the Council's YouTube channel, 'sunderlandgov' at :-
<https://youtu.be/0h3SktZdtxY>

Membership

Cllr Crosby, Hunt, Mann, McDonough, Mc Keith (Vice-Chairman), F. Miller, Mordey, Samuels, Scanlan, P. Smith (Chairman), Tye and K. Wood

Coopted Members – Mrs. A. Blakey and Ms. J. Graham

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	No Items	
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E. WAUGH,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance,
Civic Centre,
SUNDERLAND.

17th December, 2020

Item 2

At a meeting of the CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held REMOTELY on THURSDAY 26th NOVEMBER, 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Smith in the Chair

Councillors Crosby, Hunt, Mann, McDonough, McKeith, F. Miller, Mordey, Samuels and Scanlan together with Ms A Blakey.

Also in attendance:-

Ms Nicola Appleby, Senior Policy Officer, People & Neighbourhoods (observing)

Ms Jill Colbert, Chief Executive, Together for Children

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Sir Paul Ennals, Independent Chair Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board

Mr. Luke Hall, Sunderland Youth Council

Ms Marianne Huison, Independent Scrutineer - Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Partnership (observing)

Mr David Noon, Principal Governance Services Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny and Members' Support Coordinator, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor K. Wood.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 22 October, 2020

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 22 October, 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillor Mordey made an open declaration in respect of Item 5 on the agenda (Establishment of Regional Adoption Agency) as having been a member of Cabinet during the development of the proposals.

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Annual Report 2019/20

The Chair of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board submitted the 2019/20 Annual report on the work of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership which provided an update for members on the progress made during the last year and the changes that have been made since the introduction of the Partnership.

(For copy report – see original minutes.)

Sir Paul Ennals Independent Chair of the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board presented the item briefing the Committee on the key issues arising from the Annual Report, the changes in arrangements following the move from a Board to a Partnership and in conclusion a reflection on his three years as Chair of the Board.

Highlights of the work detailed in the annual report included:-

- i) The Implementation of Operation Endeavour, a joint operation between SSCP, Northumbria Police and the Police and Crimes Commissioner to safeguard children and young people at risk of harm from going missing.
- ii) Influencing regional safeguarding developments by contributing to the development of a safeguarding children procedure manual covering the North and South of Tyne
- iii) leading the implementation of the regional Missing, Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking (MSET) Framework.
- iv) strengthening the multi-agency working of the Integrated Care and Referral Team (ICRT), and saw significant progress within a dedicated team.
- v) Overseeing the introduction of “Signs of Safety” a strength-based approach to working with children and families which had already brought real benefits to all. Although data suggested that the curve had been turned regarding the demand into the system, initial contacts remained high
- vi) Early Help Services had continued to expand and improve. Mental health services had been highlighted, attracting an increase in funding and a reduction in waiting times, despite seeing a continuing rise in demand

With regard to the changes in arrangements, the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board, became the Sunderland Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (SSCP) from September 2019 in response to Government’s legislation. The small change in name reflected much larger changes in structure and purpose. The statutory responsibilities for overseeing safeguarding now rested equally through a partnership of the three ‘Statutory Partners’ – the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Police. The role of the independent person would be undertaken by Ms Huison.

With regard to Covid 19, Sir Paul advised that it had provided the safeguarding arrangements with its ultimate stress test. It was an event that could be expected less than once in a generation and attacked areas in which you already knew you were weak. Covid-19 had hit Sunderland hard. There were high levels of deprivation within the city, and an age profile which had a higher than the average proportion of elderly people; these factors meant the city suffered high levels of infection and deaths. Nevertheless the city’s true nature was revealed, and the partnership within Sunderland had proved itself to be extremely strong. It brought out the best in

partners. Services adapted very rapidly to the new challenges, communications were fast and efficient, and partnership working flourished. The input from public sector workers across the city had been excellent. There was evidence that the Partnership in Sunderland was strong and there was much that it could be proud of.

In conclusion Sir Paul advised that he had taken up the Chairmanship of the Safeguarding Board shortly after Children's Services in Sunderland had received its first Inadequate rating. Sunderland had then received a second Inadequate rating which had surprised him. He believed that Children's Services were now in a much stronger position and the service in Sunderland deserved to be taken out of special measures. There was no room however for complacency. A crucial test when faced with adversity was whether a partnership turned on itself or held together. In 2015 the Partnership had turned on itself. "The Council hated everyone and everyone hated the Council." Sir Paul stated that the same thing could have happen when tested by Covid but it didn't. No bricks were thrown and instead people stood up and supported each other. This gave him confidence for the future.

Councillor Crosby referred to the mention of 4 rapid review meetings on page 24 of the agenda pages and asked if these were recent or historic meetings. Ms Colbert replied that they took place during the year in question (2019/20) and related to the death of a child.

Councillor Samuels thanked Sir Paul for his frankness and welcomed Ms Huison in her new role. She noted that Sir Paul had mentioned the stress test that Covid 19 had provided to the new Partnership arrangements and asked if any bench marking had been done with other areas in order to make comparisons and to share best practice in respect of where Covid had forced systems to change. In addition she noted that over the years Sir Paul had usually ended his presentation by sharing what kept him awake at night and wondered if he'd like to do so again?

Ms Colbert replied that Sunderland had its formally constituted Partnership but it contained partners who worked together every day, for example the Safeguarding Front Door, a multi-agency team that had had its response to Covid tested. Another example was paediatric health care. These partnerships were real and operational everyday, continuing to share best practice. At a strategic level the LA7 councils were working together to share and consider the learning arising from Covid 19. Sunderland was also part of the North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Forum which covered the footprint of the Northumbria Police Force Area which was also looking to share best practice and learning arising from the pandemic.

With regard to what kept him awake at night, Sir Paul advised that it was twofold and both had arisen from Covid. Initially his concern had centred on the worry that the additional pressures Covid was placing on families would result in a rise in domestic violence. He was cautiously optimistic that the preliminary evidence showed that this had not been the case. His major concern now centred on child mental health. Services in this area had been placed under enormous pressure and despite the receipt of additional resources, waiting lists and times remained too long and too high. He felt there were growing anxieties among young people facing the uncertainties of the future and revolving lockdowns and feared 'the lid was about to come off.'

Councillor Hunt referred to page 21 of the agenda regarding the evaluation of Operation Encompass and what had been done to overcome the lack of contact schools had had with children during lockdown. Ms Colbert replied that Operation Encompass had continued to operate during lockdown. The Police had continued to make the information available to the school and contact was then made by the school with TfC. It was important to note the difference between a notification and a referral. Not all lower level of notifications would be referred as they did not meet the safeguarding thresholds. The Safeguarding front door would work with the school in respect of an Operation Encompass referral to agree how to proceed with that particular child.

Councillor Hunt then asked Ms Colbert to expand on the statement on page 21 that 'Quality of school support and engagement with the child is variable' and in particular the challenges around identifying which school the child attended and the subsequent quality of the engagement from the school to the child. Ms Colbert replied that Operation Encompass was a Police led initiative but it was fair to say that the quality of the multi-agency work had improved during the Covid crisis. Arrangements had been added to and strengthened and work was continuing regarding where particular responsibilities sat with a school. Schools currently faced a massive problem in just keeping their doors open and it may be good to ask the question again in 6 months time to fully judge the effectiveness of the changes made.

Councillor Mann welcomed the preliminary evidence to show that the feared increase in domestic abuse levels during lockdown had not come to pass. With regard to child mental health, she referred to the various digital platforms that had been made available such as Kooth and asked if there had been a big take up, had it helped, and were children being well signposted to it? Colbert replied that she did not have the performance data to hand but had recently received a report on the operation of Kooth and would be happy to bring this to members.

Councillor F. Miller referred to the planned redesign of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and asked what form this would take? Ms Colbert advised that the re-design had been delayed by Covid 19. This in itself was not a bad thing as it had allowed time for an extensive forensic deep dive to be undertaken. The redesign would follow the provisions of the 'I Thrive Model' and it was hoped that a full summary would be brought to the Committee in the new year.

Councillor Mc Donough referred to Sir Paul's suggestion that children's mental health was a ticking time bomb and suggested that given its importance the Committee might wish to dedicate a session to looking at the issue in detail. Ms Colbert replied that with regard to this issue she 'wore the hat' of a commissioner rather than that of the service provider. She suggested that it would probably be beneficial if the Committee looked at current issues regarding access and the redesign of the service moving forward rather than focussing on historic issues.

Mr Diamond, Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that it was intended that a representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would attend the January meeting to discuss CAMHS. Sir Paul advised that the Partnership were also scrutinising the matter and cautioned against the issue of duplication. He also added that the timing of any scrutiny was important. Previous periods of national crisis had

shown that the most resilient sector of society had been its children and he offered a note of optimism that the current generation would also bounce back.

The Chair asked Sir Paul if he was satisfied with the amount and quality of training that had been given to workers with a responsibility for safeguarding and was he confident that the learning had been taken onboard. Sir Paul replied that at first he believed that there wasn't enough multiagency training and that it tended to be very sector specific. This situation had gradually improved and he suggested that moving forward, multi-agency training in respect of safeguarding was provided on a regional basis rather than just a local authority level.

There being no further questions or comments for Sir Paul or Ms Colbert the Chairman thanked them for their presentations and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Establishment of Regional Adoption Agency - Update

The Chief Executive of Together for Children submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on proposals to establish a Regional Adoption Agency following consideration of the matter by Cabinet on 17 November 2020.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Colbert, Chief Executive of Together for Children, presented the report confirming that the Cabinet had granted approval to the Full Business Case for the 'Adopt Coast to Coast Regional Adoption Agency' ("RAA") together with the proposed next steps. Members were informed that the proposals were in response to the Government's requirements to move to Regional Adoption Agency models where the aspiration was to have fewer organisations recruiting and assessing adopters and having organisations that were operating at much greater scale.

Cumbria County Council, Durham County Council and Together for Children / Sunderland City Council had been working together since December 2016 to consider how they could best develop a RAA and it had been agreed to establish a Partnership Model with a Hub and Spoke delivery.

It was envisaged that the proposals would deliver the following key benefits on a regional scale:

- i) Sunderland children would have the opportunity to be matched and placed with adopters from a wider pool, improving the quality of the match;
- ii) The ability to share best practice and resources across the Adopt Coast to Coast area to enhance the service for vulnerable children in their adoptive families; and
- iii) The establishment of a collaborative hub and spoke model which would secure the benefits of regional collaboration at a focused "hub" level, whilst allowing each authority to continue to operate at a local "spoke" level without service disruption and without any delegation of legal powers or transfer of existing staff required.

Councillor Mann asked why Sunderland had opted for the spokes that it had (Durham and Cumbria) rather than with other LA7 partners? Ms Colbert replied that there was a North and South of Tyne Adoption Agency but at the time it was being developed it was felt that it was not the right time for Sunderland to get involved as TfC had too many priorities of its own that it needed to deal with. It would have also meant that if Sunderland were to join it would have required the TUPE transfer of TfC's adoption social workers who had only just transferred from Sunderland City Council to TfC. In order to do this, the social workers would have first had to be transferred back from TfC to the Council in order for them to be TUPE transferred to the new adoption agency. At the time this was a level of bureaucratic change that could not be justified.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor McDonough regarding expected efficiencies, Mr Colbert advised that the recruitment of a greater number of adopters would lead to a decrease in the amounts paid out in respect of inter-agency fees.

In response to an enquiry from the Chair, Ms Colbert advised that Paula Gibbons of Durham County Council had been appointed to head up the RAA.

There being no further questions or comments for Ms Colbert the Chairman thanked her for her report and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2020/21

The Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided members with details of the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2020/21

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Diamond, Scrutiny Officer presented the report reminding Members that the January meeting would include the attendance of a representative from the CCG to discuss CAMHS and the impact of Covid 19 on child mental health

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notices of Key Decisions for the 28 day periods from the 13th and 19th October, 2020.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Committee was advised that if Members had any issues to raise or required further detail on any of the items included in the notice, they should contact Mr Diamond, Scrutiny Officer for initial assistance.

The Chair having asked for further details in respect of item 201013/526 (To seek approval to a proposal to Amend the Sunderland Council's Code of Conduct for the Issue of Penalty Notices Relating to Unauthorised School Absences) it was:-

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

There being no further items of business, the Chair closed the meeting having thanked members and officers for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) P. SMITH,
Chairman.

Item 4

7 JANUARY 2021

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHILD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES – UPDATE

Report of the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on child mental health service in the city.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 At its last meeting, the Committee agreed to receive an update from the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group on the current position and challenges facing child mental services in the city.
- 2.2 Ann Fox (Executive Director of Nursing Quality and Safety) will be in attendance to provide an update report and answer any questions.
- 2.3 A briefing paper prepared by the CCG is attached for information.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the report.

Children and young people's mental health briefing for Sunderland Children's Scrutiny Committee on 07/01/21

1.0 Overview

Following the update provided in October 2020, this briefing note sets out the current position regarding waiting times for children and young people's mental health services

During the second Covid-19 lockdown all children and young people's mental health providers continued to deliver services, including accepting referrals, undertaking assessments, and delivering treatment. All providers now deliver a mix of online and face to face interventions, the latter being undertaken according to clinical need.

Clinical time is maximised through the use of online appointments. Clinical time to undertake appointments has been released through the cancellation of non-essential meetings and a reduction in time spent by staff travelling to appointments. 'Did not attends' have also reduced. However, additional clinical supervision sessions have been required due to the demands of telephone and online working.

Due to the low referrals during the first lockdown and new ways of working implemented by providers, services have reduced their waiting lists.

Positive feedback continues to be received from children, young people and families regarding the delivery of online interventions. STSFT, who deliver the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, report that clinical outcomes are comparable for both online and face to face interventions.

2.0 Waiting time data

Referrals into children and young people's mental health services reduced during the first lockdown but have risen during September and October to higher levels than this time last year. The comparison of referrals this year to last year by month is set out in chart 1 below.

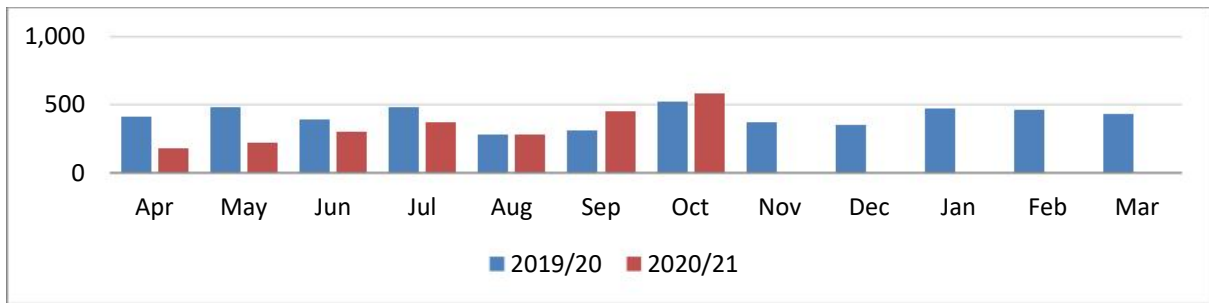


Chart 1: referrals into the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Waiting times to treatment (i.e. to second appointment) have reduced, see chart 2 below.

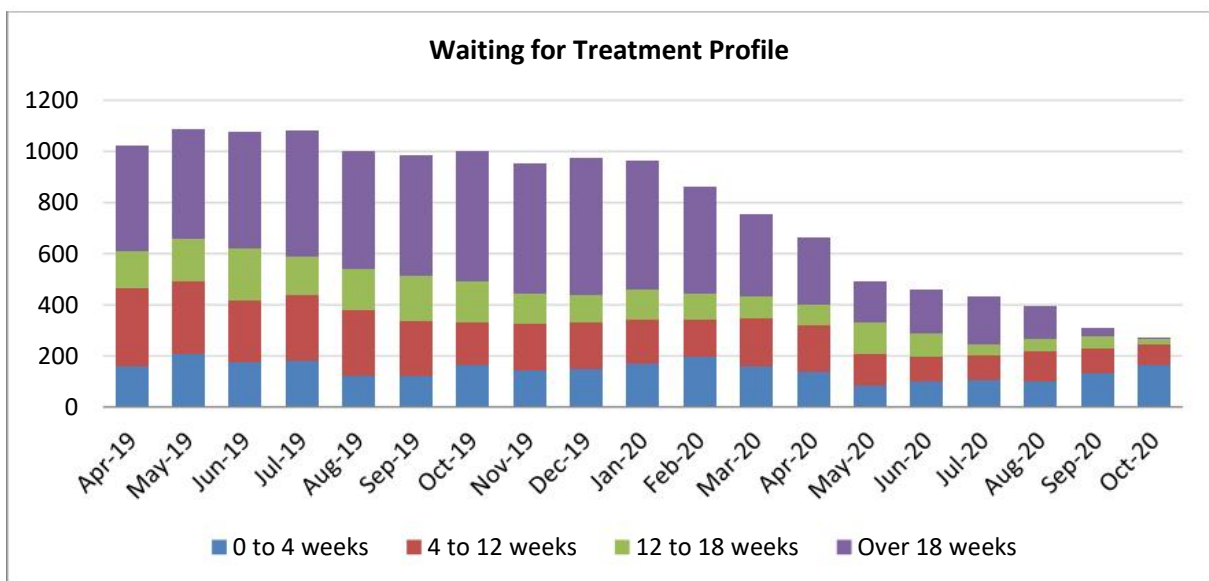


Chart 2: Waiting times for treatment across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Chart 3 below sets out the current caseloads across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

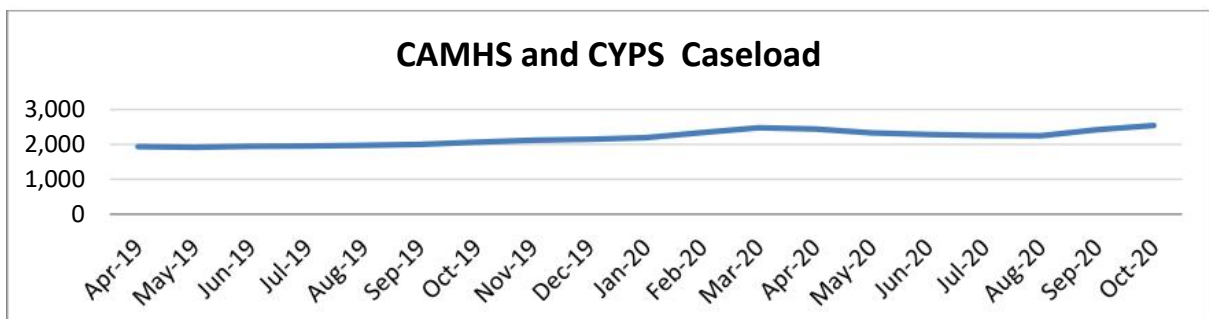


Chart 3: caseloads across the Children and Young People's Service and the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

3.0 Other work underway to reduce waiting times

Mobilisation of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST)

The mobilisation of the first Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in Sunderland is underway with four trainee Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs) commencing their training at Northumbria University. This is a 12 month course and will end in November 2021. Another four additional clinical roles are currently out to advert with an administrative role to be advertised shortly. All staff will be employed by South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.

The MHST will deliver three core functions:

- Deliver evidence-based interventions for children and young people with mild to-moderate mental health problems, including:
 - Individual face to face work: for example, effective, brief, low-intensity interventions for children, young people and families experiencing anxiety, low mood, friendship or behavioural difficulties, based on up to date evidence
 - Group work for children and young people, students or parents for conditions such as self-harm and anxiety
 - Group classes for parents to include low intensity group approaches to issues around conduct disorder, communication difficulties
- Support the senior mental health lead in each education setting to introduce or develop their whole school/college approach
- Give timely advice to school and college staff, and liaise with external specialist services, to help children and young people to get the right support and stay in education

Eight schools have been identified and will host the trainee EMHPs, 2 secondary schools and 6 primary schools.

When the EMHPs have completed their training and the MHST goes fully live in November 2021, it will cover approximately 20 schools and approximately 8,000 pupils.

Children and young people's mental health service redesign project

A children and young people's mental health service redesign project is underway to develop a CYP MH service model for commissioned children and young people's mental health services in Sunderland, based on the i-THRIVE needs led framework:

- Thriving - prevention and mental health promotion
- Getting advice - advice and signposting
- Getting help - focused goal-based input
- Getting more help - more extensive and specialised goal-based help
- Getting risk support – where CYP have not benefitted from or are unable to use help, but are still in contact with services

The collation phase of the project plan is underway, bringing together existing local information (funding, workforce etc.), national information (e.g. NICE Guidance, models and best practice).

Consultation has commenced with practitioners and providers. Co-production will also be undertaken with children and young people, parents/carers, and other stakeholder groups.

Item 5

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7 January 2021

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN PERFORMANCE UPDATE

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Background

- 2.1 The contractual and performance of Together for Children is monitored regularly through the Operational Commissioning Group and the Chief Officers Group.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 Information contained within this report will include the agreed Key Performance Indicators for Together for Children. The tolerance levels for each of the measures will be included within the report.

4. Recommendations

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

5. Background Papers

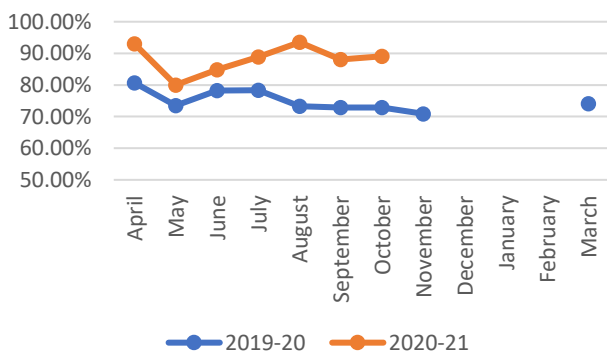
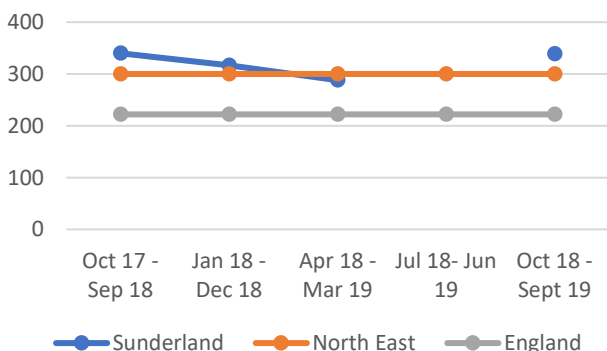
Guide to Governance and Contractual Arrangements

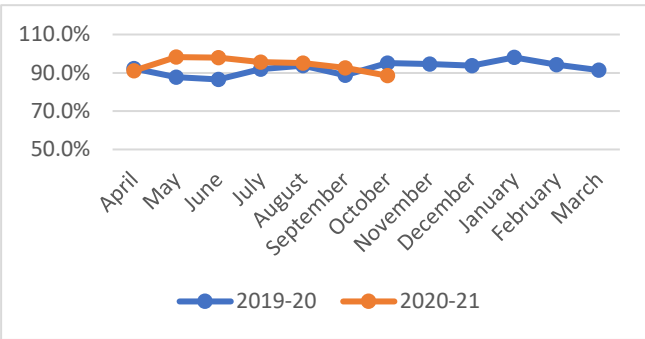
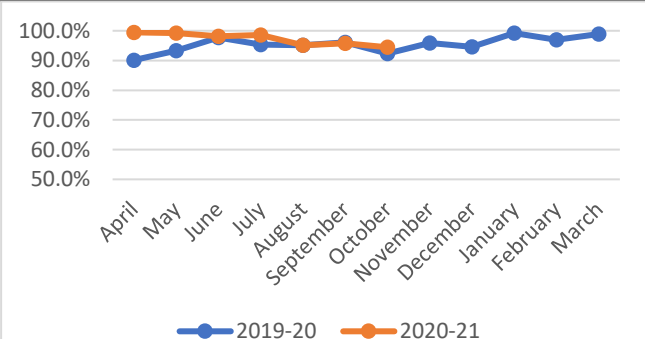
TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN	
DATE:	07 January 2021
REPORT of	Jill Colbert, Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Together for Children Performance Report
PURPOSE:	<p>To provide Committee with an overview of performance against the contractual indicators with Sunderland Council. Comments and analysis relates the performance over August to October 2020.</p> <p>The report below sets out the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six key contractual performance targets with the Council; • Table of supporting measures reported to the Council; • Service commentary for any supporting measure reported as amber or red, and • Summary table showing the RAG rating of all contractual performance targets and supporting measures

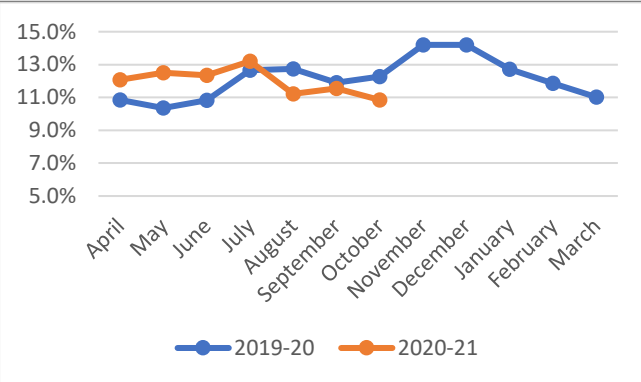
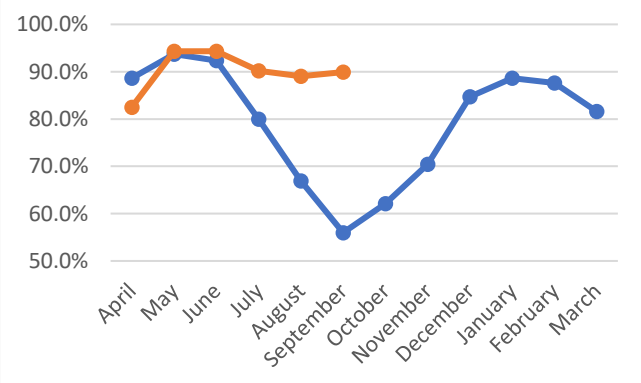
Rag Rating Definitions

Red	Indicator is not meeting target and is outside of tolerance range
Amber	Indicator is not meeting target but is within tolerance range
Green	Indicator is meeting or exceeding target
Blue	No data available

CONTRACTUAL KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2020/21

MEASURE	Annual Target and Tolerance	October 2020 position	TREND/BENCHMARKING DATA	COMMENTARY/IMPROVEMENT ACTION																																							
KPI1 % of Early Help cases that were closed with two or more successful outcomes (TfC)	65% 62% – 64.9%	89.1%	 <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>April</td><td>80.00</td><td>93.00</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>73.00</td><td>79.00</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>78.00</td><td>85.00</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>78.00</td><td>89.00</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>73.00</td><td>94.00</td></tr><tr><td>September</td><td>73.00</td><td>88.00</td></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>73.00</td><td>89.00</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>71.00</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>January</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>March</td><td>74.00</td><td></td></tr></tbody></table>	Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	April	80.00	93.00	May	73.00	79.00	June	78.00	85.00	July	78.00	89.00	August	73.00	94.00	September	73.00	88.00	October	73.00	89.00	November	71.00		December			January			February			March	74.00		Performance is stable over the period and has remained ahead of performance last year and the annual target.
Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)																																									
April	80.00	93.00																																									
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KPI2 Rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System	375 375.1-402.9	339	 <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Period</th><th>Sunderland</th><th>North East</th><th>England</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Oct 17 - Sep 18</td><td>340</td><td>300</td><td>220</td></tr><tr><td>Jan 18 - Dec 18</td><td>320</td><td>300</td><td>220</td></tr><tr><td>Apr 18 - Mar 19</td><td>290</td><td>300</td><td>220</td></tr><tr><td>Jul 18 - Jun 19</td><td></td><td>300</td><td>220</td></tr><tr><td>Oct 18 - Sept 19</td><td>339</td><td>300</td><td>220</td></tr></tbody></table>	Period	Sunderland	North East	England	Oct 17 - Sep 18	340	300	220	Jan 18 - Dec 18	320	300	220	Apr 18 - Mar 19	290	300	220	Jul 18 - Jun 19		300	220	Oct 18 - Sept 19	339	300	220	<p>The rate of first-time entrants to the criminal justice system (per 100,000 population) has continued to reduce over the past two years. In the latest data, performance is now lower than the North East average.</p> <p><i>There is a data lag on the data metrics as the data source used is the Police National Computer; data is the most recent publication.</i></p>															
Period	Sunderland	North East	England																																								
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MEASURE	Annual Target and Tolerance	October 2020 position	TREND/BENCHMARKING DATA	COMMENTARY/IMPROVEMENT ACTION																																							
KPI3 % of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours	95% 85% – 94.9%	88.5%	 <table><caption>KPI3 Performance Data (Estimated)</caption><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>April</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>September</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>January</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>March</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr></tbody></table>	Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	April	90.0	90.0	May	90.0	90.0	June	90.0	90.0	July	90.0	90.0	August	90.0	90.0	September	90.0	90.0	October	90.0	90.0	November	90.0	90.0	December	90.0	90.0	January	90.0	90.0	February	90.0	90.0	March	90.0	90.0	<p>Performance has been mixed for this target over the past couple of months.</p> <p>It is not always possible, to make decisions within 24 hours, for example while waiting for partner agencies to respond to our requests for information.</p> <p>There is strong senior management oversight by Senior Management within Social Care, to ensure the most appropriate practices were followed.</p>
Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)																																									
April	90.0	90.0																																									
May	90.0	90.0																																									
June	90.0	90.0																																									
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February	90.0	90.0																																									
March	90.0	90.0																																									
KPI4 % of children subject to a child protection plan who have received a statutory visit within 20 working days	95% 90 % - 94.9%	94.5%	 <table><caption>KPI4 Performance Data (Estimated)</caption><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>April</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>September</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>January</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>March</td><td>90.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr></tbody></table>	Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	April	90.0	90.0	May	90.0	90.0	June	90.0	90.0	July	90.0	90.0	August	90.0	90.0	September	90.0	90.0	October	90.0	90.0	November	90.0	90.0	December	90.0	90.0	January	90.0	90.0	February	90.0	90.0	March	90.0	90.0	<p>Performance has remained consistently high over the period. This has been a challenge owing to the pressures of working in a Covid secure way.</p> <p>The performance in the month of October was slightly below target, so reported as amber. In all other months, performance had been above target.</p>
Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)																																									
April	90.0	90.0																																									
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MEASURE	Annual Target and Tolerance	October 2020 position	TREND/BENCHMARKING DATA	COMMENTARY/IMPROVEMENT ACTION																																							
KPI5 % of Cared for Children with 3+ placements in the last 12 months	11% 11.1-13%	10.8%	 <table><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>April</td><td>11.0</td><td>12.0</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>10.5</td><td>12.5</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>11.0</td><td>12.5</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>12.5</td><td>13.0</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>12.5</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>September</td><td>11.5</td><td>11.5</td></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>12.0</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>14.0</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td>14.0</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>January</td><td>12.5</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td>11.5</td><td>11.0</td></tr><tr><td>March</td><td>11.0</td><td>11.0</td></tr></tbody></table>	Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	April	11.0	12.0	May	10.5	12.5	June	11.0	12.5	July	12.5	13.0	August	12.5	11.0	September	11.5	11.5	October	12.0	11.0	November	14.0	11.0	December	14.0	11.0	January	12.5	11.0	February	11.5	11.0	March	11.0	11.0	<p>Performance has improved for this target over the past couple of months.</p> <p>This measure is reviewed closely by Senior Management in Social Care, and the Leadership Team.</p> <p>The placement moves for all children with three or more placement moves in a 12-month period are scrutinised. They have always been in the best interest of the child and following best social work practice.</p>
Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)																																									
April	11.0	12.0																																									
May	10.5	12.5																																									
June	11.0	12.5																																									
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January	12.5	11.0																																									
February	11.5	11.0																																									
March	11.0	11.0																																									
KPI6 % of Cared for Children with an up to date Education Plan	85% 80% - 84.9%	89.9%	 <table><thead><tr><th>Month</th><th>2019-20 (%)</th><th>2020-21 (%)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>April</td><td>88.0</td><td>82.0</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>93.0</td><td>94.0</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>92.0</td><td>94.0</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>80.0</td><td>90.0</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>67.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>September</td><td>56.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>October</td><td>62.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>November</td><td>70.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>December</td><td>85.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>January</td><td>89.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>February</td><td>88.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr><tr><td>March</td><td>82.0</td><td>89.0</td></tr></tbody></table>	Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)	April	88.0	82.0	May	93.0	94.0	June	92.0	94.0	July	80.0	90.0	August	67.0	89.0	September	56.0	89.0	October	62.0	89.0	November	70.0	89.0	December	85.0	89.0	January	89.0	89.0	February	88.0	89.0	March	82.0	89.0	<p>Performance remains above target throughout the year.</p> <p>The improvement from this year compared to the same point last year is based on improved recording in the case management system.</p>
Month	2019-20 (%)	2020-21 (%)																																									
April	88.0	82.0																																									
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September	56.0	89.0																																									
October	62.0	89.0																																									
November	70.0	89.0																																									
December	85.0	89.0																																									
January	89.0	89.0																																									
February	88.0	89.0																																									
March	82.0	89.0																																									

SUPPORTING INDICATORS 2020/21- performance as at October 2020

REF	Supporting Indicators	Target	Tolerance	Current Position	YTD	RAG	RAG FQY
SM1	Rate of Child in Need	-	-	379.8	379.8	-	-
SM2	Rate of Child Protection	-	-	73.3	73.3	-	-
SM3	Rate of Cared for Children	-	-	113.6	113.6	-	-
SM4	% of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months	23%	23.1%-28.9%	22.1%	24.0%	AMBER	YTD
SM5	% of CiN assessments authorised within 45 wds	85%	80% - 84.9%	85.4%	93.2%	GREEN	YTD
SM6	% of children subject to CiN plan who received a visit within 20 working days	75%	70% - 74.9%	90.7%	90.7%	GREEN	Monthly
SM7	% of Cared for Children who have received a statutory visit within timescale	95%	90% - 94.9%	96.3%	96.3%	GREEN	Monthly
SM8	% of cared experienced young people in suitable accommodation (19-21)	85%	80% - 84.9%	n/ava	n/ava	BLUE	Annually
SM9	% of Care Experienced young people who are in employment, education or training (19-21)	40%	35% - 39.9%	n/ava	n/ava	BLUE	Annually
SM10	% of Care Experienced young people contacted within 8 weeks (17-21)	85%	80% - 84.9%	89.7%	89.7%	GREEN	Monthly
SM11	% of established social worker posts filled by agency/interim staff	16%	16.1% - 20%	0.05%	-	GREEN	Monthly
SM12	% of Early Help cases that were closed with two or more successful outcomes (Partner)	-	-	86.8%	81.0%	-	-
SM13	% of children subject to a repeat CP plan (within 2 years)	10%	10.1% - 15%	0.0%	9.0%	GREEN	YTD
SM14	Number of missing from home episodes (& children)	-	-	73 (52)	433 (247)	-	-
SM15	Number of missing from care episodes (& children)	-	-	41 (25)	381 (84)	-	-
SM16	% of children identified at risk of MSET who have a completed MSET Framework	98%	95% - 97.9%	n/a	100%	GREEN	Monthly
SM17	% of children subject to CP plan longer than 2 years	0%	0.1% - 1%	0.0%	0.0%	GREEN	Monthly

SM18	% of children placed with internal foster carers	-	-	56.8%	56.8%	-	-
SM19	% of Cared for Children with a plan of permanence by second review (in period)	-	-	100%	100%	GREEN	Monthly
SM20	Number of Cared for Children who have had unplanned placement moves in the period	-	-	1	10	BLUE	Annually
SM21	Number of internal foster carers	-	-	247	247	-	-
SM22	% of young people who are NEET or whose activity is not known (age 16 – 17)	6%	6.1% - 10%	6.5%	6.5%	BLUE	Dec – Feb 2020 Average
SM23	% of established social worker posts that are vacant	15%	15.1% - 20%	1.15%	-	GREEN	Monthly
SM24	Proportion of Education Health Care plans issued in 20 weeks/excluding exception cases	67%	62% - 66.9%	-	-	BLUE	Annually
SM25	The provision of a detailed financial update report to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources within 5 days of the Company Board	100%	95% - 99.9%	100%	-	GREEN	Monthly
SM26	The provision to the S151 Officer of timely School's Finance Reports within 5 days of each Schools Forum meeting	100%	95% - 99.9%	100%	-	GREEN	Quarterly

Commentary on Supporting Measures rated as red or amber

SM4- % of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months

There have been 363 repeat referrals since April 2020, this is lower than the same point last year, when there were 470 repeat referrals. Also, in the month of October, performance was within the annual target.

Since February, a “closure summary” now exists in the case recording tool, meaning we can clearly state the safety plan for a family when closing a case. This means we can make a better-informed decision about any subsequent referrals for these children, as we can assess the new risk against this plan. Over time, this will help improve the performance against this measure.

SUMMARY OF INDICATORS- WHICH ARE RATED RED, AMBER, GREEN, OR BLUE

REF	Key Performance Indicators	FQY	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
KPI1	% of Early Help cases that were closed with two or more successful outcomes (TfC)	YTD	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
KPI2	Rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System	Q	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
KPI3	% of all referrals with a decision within 24 hours	M	G	A	G	G	G	A	A					
KPI4	% of children subject to a child protection plan who have received a statutory visit within 20 working days	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	A					
KPI5	% of Cared for Children with 3+ placements in the last 12 months	M	A	A	A	R	A	A	G					
KPI6	% of Cared for Children with an up to date PEP	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
REF	Supporting Indicators	FQY	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
SM4	% of referrals that were re-referrals within 12 months	YTD	R	A	A	A	G	A	A					
SM5	% of Child in Need assessments authorised within 45 wds	YTD	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
SM6	% of children subject to CIN plan who received a visit within 20 working days	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
SM7	% of Cared for Children who have received a statutory visit within timescale	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
SM8	% of Care Experienced young people in suitable accommodation (19-21)	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
SM9	% of care leavers who are in employment, education or training (19-21)	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
SM10	% of care leavers contacted within 8 weeks (17-21)	M	G	A	G	A	A	G	G					
SM11	% of established social worker posts filled by agency/interim staff	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
SM13	% of children subject to a repeat plan (within 2 years)	M	G	G	G	G	G	A	G					
SM16	% of children identified at risk of MSET who have a completed MSET Framework	M	G	G	-	G	G	G	G					
SM17	% of children subject to CP plan longer than 2 years	M	G	A	G	G	G	G	G					
SM19	% of Cared for Children with a plan of permanence by second review (in period)	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					
SM20	Number of Cared for Children who have had unplanned placement moves in the period	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
SM22	% of young people who are NEET or whose activity is not known (age 16 – 17)	3 M AVG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
SM23	% of established social worker posts that are vacant	M	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

SI24	Proportion of Education Health Care plans issued in 20 weeks/excluding exception cases	A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
SM25	The provision of a detailed financial update report to the Executive Director of Corporate Resources within 5 days of the Company Board	M	G	G	G	-	G	G	G					
SM26	The provision to the S151 Officer of timely School's Finance Reports within 5 days of each Schools Forum meeting	Q	-	-	-	-	-	G	-					

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN – UPDATE

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an update report on the progress being made on the Learning and Improvement Plan 2020/21.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2020, following discussion with Ofsted, a revised Learning and Development Plan was developed that pays attention specifically to the areas that have been explored through recent monitoring visits or identified through the services' own audit and quality assurance activity.
- 2.2 The Plan is monitored via the Children's Services Improvement Board and update reports are provided to the Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 Jill Colbert (Director of Children's Services) will provide an update on the progress being made in relation to the Learning and Improvement Plan 2020-21.
- 3.2 A copy of the Plan is attached as an appendix.

4. Recommendations

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

Together for Children

Learning and Improvement Plan 2020 – 2021

(Updated October 2020)



PROGRESS TRACKER

All actions in the Learning and Improvement Plan are RAG-rated. A key to the RAG-rating system is below.

RED	Agreed date passed - action not complete.
AMBER	Action not on target for completion by agreed date.
GREEN	Action on target to be completed by the agreed date.
COMPLETED	Action complete.

The RAG system is intended to be used to illustrate our improvement progress against the domains in the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services framework (ref web link), which also provides the structure to our organisational Self-Assessment.

Table 1 shows the current position of all actions broken down into the relevant domains, and table 2 shows the totals of priority actions by RAG status.

Table 1

Current Status	Help and Protection	Children in Care & Care Leavers	Leadership	Totals
Red	0	0	2	2
Amber	2	2	1	5
Green	7	3	7	17
Completed	19	6	9	34
Total	28	11	19	58

Table 2

Priority Actions	Red	Amber	Green	Completed	Total
	1	1	4	7	13

THE EXPERIENCES AND PROGRESS OF CHILDREN WHO NEED HELP AND PROTECTION

*High Priority Action

**Status: Red, Amber, Green, Completed

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
1	Implement the FGC and domestic abuse innovations in Early Help whilst ensuring capacity continues to be reviewed in line with need.	Director of Early Help	01/07/2020		Complete.
2	Implement Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub arrangement to strengthen multi -agency information sharing and decision making.	Head of Service – Safeguarding to lead with all 3 Statutory partners	01/05/2021		MASH model is in place and partners continue to refine the processes around urgent decision making. A fuller report on the progress of the MASH and common issues will be reported to a future Board meeting.
3	Northumbria Police to continue to work jointly with us to address high volume of Police contacts that do not meet threshold.	Northumbria Police	01/09/2021		This is ongoing through the MASH partnership work and continues to be an area of focus for joint training and co-work.
4	All current cases in legal proceedings to be reviewed to ensure any critical barriers or obstacles are addressed.	CEx of TfC & Director of Children's Social Care	01/02/2020		Complete. Report provided to RH Judge Hudson. A similar process will be repeated at an appropriate date – at the moment as cases are delayed by Covid the process would not be as effective.
5	Early Permanence Strategy to be updated and workshops to be held to increase staff confidence and competence in early permanence planning.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	14/02/2020		Complete.
6	Undertake further work with schools (particularly nursery and primary) to encourage direct delivery of Early Help and further embed application of the thresholds.	Director of Early Help & SSCP	01/07/2020		Continuous and ongoing. Some very strong examples of Early Help practice in schools has been seen during Covid, which has greatly impacted on school attendance and engagement. These can be reported to a future Board meeting. This will remain an open action as schools continue to respond to Covid.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
7	Continue to work with Head Teachers to develop better understanding of front door processes and access to advice and information, in line with 'Keeping Children Safe' (2019).	Director of Education & Director of Children's Social Care	01/07/2021		The joint safeguarding work completed with HTs during Covid to assess and respond to welfare and vulnerability has greatly strengthened understanding of thresholds and the role of ICRT. The Safeguarding Education officer continues to provide training on 'Keeping Children Safe' to all schools. This area of improvement will continue to be monitored given its importance in keeping children safe.
8	Implement and evaluate the Child and Family Support Worker roles which have been piloted as part of the development of a greater skill mix.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	30/04/2021		These roles have been extended for a period of time to respond to the Covid pressures. The benefit and value added of the roles will be considered as part of future skill mix.
9	Develop a performance report for the revised MASH/front door that reports on general data as well as re-referrals, timeliness and NFAs	Head of Service – Safeguarding & Service Manager for IRO and Performance	01/03/2020		Complete. An ICRT scorecard is now in production.
10	Implement Signs of Safety within case management system, Liquidlogic.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	17/10/2019		Completed. TfC is now part of the National Learning Lab with Signs of Safety and Liquid Logic and continued to produce learning material throughout lockdown, despite the challenges.
11	Work with staff in social care and early help, to improve the quality of assessments to ensure there is sufficient information on the presenting risks and strengths in the family and what actions have been taken.	Head of Service – Safeguarding & Director of Early Help	01/06/2020		SOS peripatetic TM in post from February 2020 and will drive this forward as part of the coaching to implement SOS. All assessments are QA'd by a TM before they go to conference, and dip sampled through the normal QA process.
12	Ensure regional child protection procedures remain up to date and are easily accessible and available to all staff.	Business Manager SSCP	01/03/2020		Completed.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
13	Initiate Lancaster University project: Improving safe, ethical and effective practice when the State intervenes to protect newborn babies at birth: co-designing and testing an evidence informed guideline (Follow up to the Nuffield Foundation research on newborns entering care proceedings)/	CEx TfC& Service Manager for Localities	01/10/2021		Focus groups and research now underway although significantly delayed by Covid. To be completed by Autumn 2021.
14	Ensure a consistent process for the recording of missing episodes in Liquidlogic from both social care staff and the MFH service provider is in place.	Director of Children's Social Care & Director of Corporate and Commercial	01/04/2021		Complete. See action 16 below – RHI will now be undertaken by Early Help staff and recorded directly onto Liquid Logic.
15	Ensure Missing From Home Return Interviews are offered and progressed with all eligible CYP.	Director of Children's Social Care & Director of Corporate and Commercial	01/04/2020		See action number 16 below.
16	Undertake regular monitoring of quality of return home interviews.	Commissioning Service Manager	01/06/2020		Underway and reported to the SLT and via the SSCP. The return home interview function has now been transferred into the Early Help directorate as the external service has come to an end. RHI will be quality assured by the Early Help management team and reported up accordingly.
17	Work with partners to review the effectiveness of recently implemented Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficking pathway.	Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership	01/07/2021		Delayed due to Covid but still planned by the N&ST safeguarding forum.
18	Ensure compliance, on an ongoing basis, with the Social Care Practice Standards that are now launched.	Director of Children's Social Care	Monthly from 01/04/2020		Complete with appropriate performance reporting through to the Director of Children's Social Care and children's social care SMT.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
19	Review children subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time to identify themes and action accordingly.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	Quarterly from 01/12/2019		In place. A brief audit of repeat plans has also been conducted by the IRO service and future dip sampling built into the QA process.
20	Review CIN, CP and CLA plans to evaluate quality, consistency of practice, management oversight and child centred planning.	Director of Children's Social Care	Bi-monthly from 01/02/2020		This will be part of the new QA framework approach. All managers have now had training and are undertaking audits on the agreed themes. Complete.
21	Implement actions from the review of all S20 arrangements.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	01/04/2020		Complete. Head of Service, Safeguarding regularly reviews sec 20 as part of core practice.
22	Increase the range/use of direct work tools to enhance our ability to hear the child's voice.	Director of Corporate and Commercial	01/05/2020		Workshops and training delivered to IRO service and the service is providing evidence of the range of tools in use.
23	Increase the uptake of Mind of My Own in Early Help and Social Care.	CEx, TfC	01/04/2021		Routine performance reporting on uptake is in place and Mind of My Own champions now identified across the service. Reporting is to the TfC CEx and SLT/SMT. Action complete as this is firmly core business.
24	Combine PLO and Proceedings tracking and update within Gateway/Planning meetings.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	01/01/2020		Completed.
25	Review the quality of letters sent as part of the Public Law Outline process and address any areas for improvement.	Head of Service - Safeguarding	01/04/2021		Reviewed at each panel meeting and as they are despatched. Reviews to continue as part of PLO gateway process. Action complete.
26	Police and Senior Management to review Powers of Police Protection process and to periodically sample cases.	Director of Children's Social Care and Northumbria Police	Quarterly from 10/01/2020		CEx TfC, the Director of Children's Social Care and the Head of Safeguarding in Northumbria Police have discussed and agreed an approach to monitoring PPO activity. An offer of training has been made by TfC to ensure the Police feel well equipped to undertake PPOs. Action completed and ongoing.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
27	Capacity and capability of the Legal Service to be monitored and reported to ensure any risks to timeliness and outcomes for CYP are understood.	Director of Corporate and Commercial	Ongoing on a monthly basis from 01/12/2019		Complete. The capacity of the legal team reports routinely through to SLT and the CEx.
28	Develop a Transitions Protocol and way of working with Adult Social Care that transitions YP at an earlier point through good quality, joint assessment activity	CEx, TfC & DAS, SCC	01/06/2021		The transitions working group continues to meet and this work is now sponsored by the CEx TfC and the DAS in SCC. Improving the quality of transitioning to adult SC remains an important area of improvement.

THE EXPERIENCES AND PROGRESS OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

*High Priority Action

**Status: Red, Amber, Green, Completed

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
1	Develop a new sufficiency strategy that builds on the recommendations from the Placements Review 2018, increasing provision for urgent care, complex care and keeping more children in borough.	Working group in place, composed of Joint Commissioning, social care and education.	01/09/2020		Sufficiency strategy is now complete and in place.
2	Undertake a review of all external placements to consider current position and to determine if children and young people can be placed in internal provision or with family member.	Head of Service for Cared for Children	29/02/2020		As an action this is complete. A process is in place via the external placements panel to continuously review the quality and outcomes of external placements for children.
3	Monitor demand for urgent PACE beds for Sunderland young people open to the YOS, and report accordingly to the YOS Board and commissioning colleagues in order to find an appropriate solution.	Head of Service, YOS	01/09/2020		Issues around access for all LAs raised at N&ST Safeguarding Forum and further work on a collaborative commissioning process to be agreed. National review underway by MOJ and YJB and Sunderland feeding into that fully. This action is delayed overall by Covid. In any event there are no significant issues for Sunderland due to the low numbers of YP requiring overnight provision.
4	Review all CLA processes including those specific to placement types and entry routes into care.	Head of Service for Cared for Children	31/02/2020		Complete. New Permanence Strategy is in place with all appropriate panel and review processes in place.
5	Undertake a review of the Next Steps service offer to ensure the model and service is optimised for all YP.	Head of service for Cared for Children	01/06/2020		Review completed by external consultant. New finance policy agreed and in place.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
6	Continue to develop the knowledge base, consistency, quality and timeliness of life story work and later life letters both for children/young people with an adoption plan and for those living with long term with foster carers.	Head of Service for Cared for Children	01/05/2020		A digital Life Story system, called Arc Box, has been procured and is in the process of implementation across the permanence, adoption and fostering teams.
7	Review the impact of the implementation of the new offer and training to foster carers, particularly in terms of placement stability and outcomes for CYP.	Service Manager – Permanence & CLA	01/04/2021		Implementation of new foster carer fees structure is complete. A report regarding the impact of the changes will be brought to a future Board meeting.
8	Deliver a Quality Improvement Project to look at the availability and use of health assessments in looked after review meetings.	Designated Doctor for CLA	01/04/2021		Latest review shows good performance in terms of timeliness and quality of health assessments, but the project will consider if greater impact could be secured in review meetings. Ongoing.
9	Continue to monitor the implementation of the EPEP and the impact of the new Virtual School staffing model on EET outcomes for LAC.	Virtual Head	01/04/2021		EPEPs are now in place and QA activity indicates improved quality of PEPs and improved monitoring of impact on children's learning goals. Given the newness of the EPEPS and the new staffing structure in the Virtual School a further update will be reported to the Board to provide assurance regarding impact.
10	Consider implementing the Care Leaver Covenant in Sunderland with local employers and the Council.	Head of Service for Cared for Children	01/04/2021		Implementation implications to be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board.
11	Extend the CLA/YOS/Police protocol to supported accommodation for under 18's.	Head of Service for Cared for Children	01/01/2021		Partners have been working with the protocol in other settings (hence the Howard League award) but working with external accommodation providers will be a challenge.

LEADERSHIP: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

*High Priority Action

**Status: Red, Amber, Green, Completed

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
1	Put in place a quality assurance forward plan for Social Care based on the new QA framework.	Head of Service – Cared for Children	01/03/2020		Complete and reporting of QA outcomes and actions in place.
2	Training plan to be developed for Social Care Team Managers to address identified training needs and consistency of decision making and management oversight.	Director of Corporate and Commercial	01/04/2020		Complete.
3	Review of the Corporate Parenting Board with a view to producing a strengthened partnership, greater membership and a more focused workplan.	CEO of Sunderland City Council	01/06/2020		Underway and due to report back in November. The review was delayed due to Covid.
4	An independent peer challenge process to be commissioned Autumn 2020 to assess improvement progress and quality of practice.	CEx of TfC	31/12/20		To be considered post-regional improvement alliance challenge sessions. *All SLI activity is now delayed and this action will be reviewed after the Focused Visit from Ofsted.
5	Strengthen strategic governance and reporting mechanisms between the Council and TfC Board to ensure Board Members can exercise their accountability accordingly.	CEx of TfC, CEx of SCC and Improvement Advisor	01/09/20		Improvement Board is in place and papers and key actions are reported to the TfC Board.
6	Move to new audit system for recording full case file audits on Liquidlogic.	Head of Service – Cared for Children	30/11/19		Completed and testing has been successful.
7	Improve the quality of recording for all CYP open to early help and social care.	Director of Early Help and Director of Children's Social Care	1/10/2020		This is a wide action that is likely to remain an area of focus for the foreseeable future. The action will be closed and the requirement to assess quality of recording routinely will be an integral part of the QA process.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
8	Implement any recommendations from Regional Improvement Alliance Directors challenge and associated processes, taking place in February 2020.	Chief Ex, Tfc	09/09/20		All formal SLI activity is delayed due to the impact of Covid but Tfc have continued to work with improvement alliance peers to weave in relevant areas to the ongoing improvement activity.
9	Performance and progress reporting to increase focus on outcomes for children and the voice of the child.	Director of Corporate & Commercial	01/04/2020		Significant improvements have been made to the performance reporting of uptake of Mind of My Own which means that uptake and usage can be regularly reviewed. Additionally, all thematic and case level audits assess the voice of the child and report on how well that has been heard. There is greatly increased visibility therefore on the voice of the child. It will always be imperative to monitor this aspect of practice and this action will remain open in order to do that.
10	Implement recommendations from the Peer Review of the IRO service.	Director of Corporate & Commercial	01/07/2020		Completed.
11	Implement supervision tracker and data report within Liquidlogic and monitor effectively.	Director of Children's Social Care	01/02/2020		Rolled out and in use. Complete.
12	Create a plan/process to track the implementation of Signs of Safety, Success and Wellbeing, including meaningful measures of success.	Head of Service, Cared for Service	01/06/2020		SOS peripatetic TM due is in post and driving Signs of Safety implementation although a business case is in development as more coaching resource is required. Continuing to monitor progress.
13	Continue to actively participate and drive the North and South of the Tyne Safeguarding Partnership arrangements as part of new Working Together arrangements.	CEx of Tfc	01/04/2021		Ongoing, new Chair and project support arrangements agreed. SSCP and CEx Tfc to continue to report back.

NO	*ACTION	LEAD	TIMESCALE/ DEADLINE	**STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE & ANY EVIDENCE OF IMPACT
14	Develop and support the transitional plan for the Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that TfC safeguarding priorities and activities get appropriate support and profile.	CEx of TfC	01/04/2020		Complete. Independent Scrutineer has been recruited and will be managed by CEx of TfC. Interim SSCP business unit posts also being managed by TfC on a matrix managed basis.
15	Complete urgent estate options appraisal for Next Steps, IRO service and YOS, as well as a completed conditions survey for existing estate for all of the estate in use.	Director of Finance & SCC Property Services	01/04/2020		Search for urgent alternative accommodation for Next Steps is underway and progressing. Full conditions survey completed on all other buildings occupied.
16	Council to rapidly progress the recommendations from its review of its Apprenticeship activity and align with the ELEET/NEET project team activity.	CEO of Sunderland City Council	Complete		The Council has agreed its Apprenticeship pay policy to be implemented in 2021. NEET project has now concluded and transferred into core business for Early Help.
17	Continue to progress integrated children's commissioning activity through the Children's Integrated Commissioning Service, located with TfC.	Director of Corporate and Commercial & CCG Accountable Officer	2020		A co-located commissioning team is in place in TfC with governance back to the CCG and TfC Board and H&WB. CYP Joint Commissioning Strategy has been signed off and work plans underway. Full engagement in place with CCG and Council on ICS/ICP developments.
18	Council to strengthen visibility of contract monitoring reporting for children's services commissioned by Public Health.	Director of Public Health	01/01/2021		Prevention project underway and led by TfC. Future oversight of services to be negotiated when the Council appoints a new Director of Commissioning.
19	A clear understanding of the resources required to sustain the improving operating model to be developed as part of the future negotiations around the contract.	Director of Finance, TfC & Director of Resources, SCC	01/02/2021		Although future focused, complex scenario planning and exit planning is underway as part of the transformation programme.

Item 7

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 7 JANUARY 2021

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SIX MONTHLY REPORT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with information relating to compliments and complaints received by Together for Children in the period April 2020 – September 2020.

2. Background

- 2.1 Together for Children is committed to listening to those who use its services, and learning from compliments, complaints and feedback in order to improve those services.
- 2.2 This report presents an overview of complaints and feedback received for the six month period April 2020 – September 2020.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 Further, relevant reports, will be presented to Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis. This will ensure Members are provided with the most current information available to allow for the monitoring of themes and trends in a timely manner.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information provided regarding compliments, complaints and feedback received.

**Together for Children
Customer Feedback Six Month Summary Report
April 2020- September 2020**



HIGHLIGHT SUMMARY

What are our key achievements?

- We have received 140 compliments and 67 messages of positive feedback so far this year from children, young people, families and professionals.
- We have successfully helped 53 customers to receive satisfactory resolutions to their issues or concerns informally, without having to initiate a complaint.
- Overall the number of complaints received so far this year has reduced by 43% with many of our services seeing a decrease in the number of complaints.
- The number of complaints relating to our largest service area, child protection has decreased by 63% when compared with the same period in the previous year.
- We have reduced compensation payments in relation to upheld complaints.
- The amount of compensation being paid out by TfC has reduced as a result of fewer upheld complaints and a reduction in the severity/impact of those upheld situations.

What are our areas of focus?

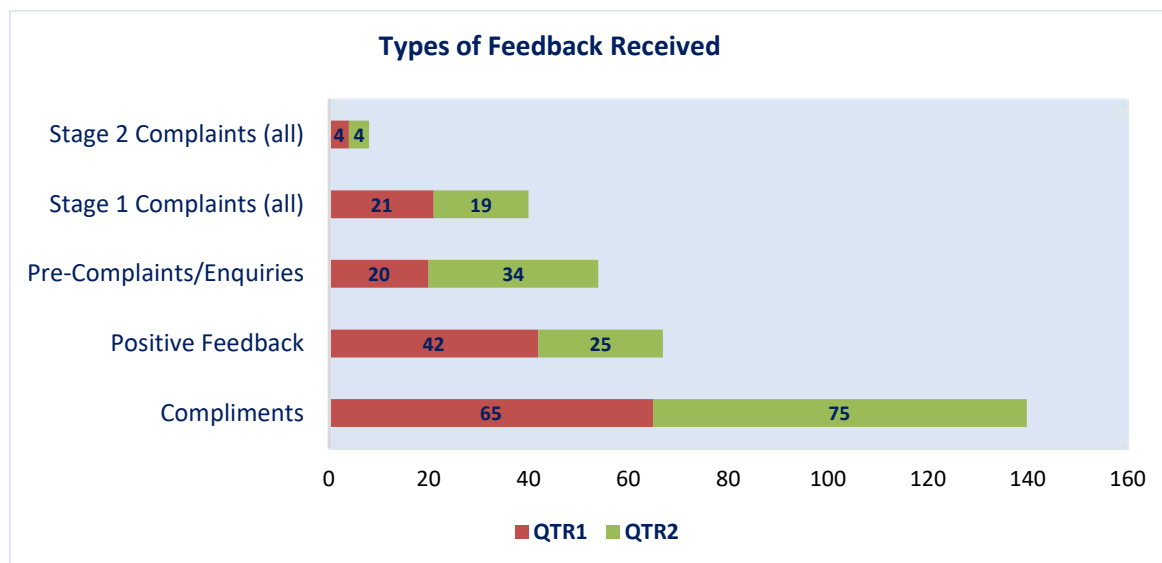
- Decreasing the number of non-statutory complaints.
- Continue to improve the timeliness of stage 1 responses to prevent complaints escalating to stage 2.
- Improving stage 2 investigation and adjudication timescales.
- Continue to address the causes of complaints relating to communication/contacts.
- Analysing in more detail, emerging complaint themes.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report covers the period 1st April to 30th September 2020. Together for Children (TfC) welcomes all forms of feedback as a way of improving service delivery to children, young people and families. The report provides an overview of customer feedback received in the last six months, identifying topics and trends in relation to complaints information and areas of organisational learning that have taken place in response to feedback received.

2. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

- 2.1. The Customer Feedback Team are responsible for receiving, recording and responding to feedback received from children, young people and families regarding services delivered by Together for Children. The following graph shows the different types of feedback received in quarters one and two.



3. COMPLIMENTS & POSITIVE FEEDBACK

- 3.1. We have received 140 compliments and 67 positive feedback comments in the last six months from children and young people, parents and other family members, foster carers, external professionals and staff within TfC. *(TfC define compliments as a comment that praises the actions of an individual or a team and positive feedback as comments that are more in depth, detailed or specific; relating to an activity or an event).*
- 3.2. Compliments are communicated to workers and management structures of the relevant teams and is used to congratulate workers and teams and to inform service developments and best practice. Compliments are also shared more widely with the Senior Management Team and the TfC Communications Manager, so all staff can be recognised for their dedication and hard work. Below are some examples of the compliments we have received in the last six months:

Business Support, Social Care

- “Just a quick email to say how wonderfully helpful our business support, XXX has been during the current situation we have found ourselves in with Covid 19. I have been under pressure to get court stuff in, cases transferred etc and she has went above and beyond, even keen to help on her days off. All too often we hear of when things haven’t went right, but XXX is an example of when people have went the extra mile and this has been a real support not only to me, but also the team”.

Cared for Children Service

- “I have been working with social worker, XXX since December 2019 with the E/H family. I would like to pass on some positive feedback for XXX. XXX has been a pleasure to work with and my work with her is exactly how joined up working should be. She shares information timely and is always contactable, this has ensured

this family have the support they need. I have observed XXX to have built positive working relationships with both XXXX (mum) and I know from their feedback that they have appreciated all of her hard work”.

Child Protection Service

- “We first met XXX on the (date) when the children were placed with us, she has always been available for advice, help and as we entered this uncertain times her help has been invaluable. She has kept in touch to check on the children and has gone by far above and beyond what anyone could expect. We wanted to contact you, cause at this time we are thanking nhs workers and felt we had to say a huge Thank you, for having someone doing her job in such a caring way. Both me and XXXX come from a corporate background and always found only time anyone contacted us was to complain. I worked in payroll for a large company for 16 years and had two "thank yous". Sometimes that's all we get in our job, so we wanted to email you to say how much XXX has helped us. The kids have an amazing amazing social worker!! “.

Fostering Service

- “I am completing the above FCR paperwork and currently going through my notes. I just wanted to share with you both that they were VERY complimentary of TfC. They reported a very good professional working relationship with XXX and the children’s current SW which they feel is very important for positive outcomes. They feel TfC has gone from strength to strength and are particularly enjoying the varied training on offer, XXX was very impressed with the Solihull training reporting that XXXX and XXXXX were amazing. Just thought it would be nice to share. 😊“.

Children’s Independent Reviewing Team

- “Hi (Team Manager) it is a little late and I should have sent you this before the lock down. I was in a ICPC meeting with XXX who was the Chair and it was one of the best Signs of safety meeting I had attended. It was quick, efficient and also extremely well managed. I hope you are well and hope you don't mind me emailing you but it is so good to attend meetings that are well managed. Keep well and safe”.

Early Help

- “Just wanted to drop a quick email to let you know of a conversation I had today with the mum of the above children, EH worker is XXX. It was such a refreshing call to hear how positive the mum is finding the support she is receiving from XXX. We frequently hear from families how professionals from an array of agencies, including social services, are not listening or supporting them. This was the complete opposite with XXX, she was described as, ‘absolutely brilliant,’ and the mum feels she can tell XXX anything”.

Children’s Homes

- “Just want to say a big thank you for all your support throughout the time XXX has been in the care of (Children’s Home). He has returned to his father’s care with the support of all the staff behind him through these very difficult times. He is doing really well and is so happy. Once again just a big thank you for your continued support with everything”.

Anti-Social Behaviour Service

- “I would like to thank you and XXX on behalf of Sunderland Home Grown CIC and the community which has benefited from XXX volunteering with us. He has provided a delivery service to the local community in Sunderland which without him being on site we would have found very difficult to do. As we work with predominantly with adults with disabilities and the more older community most of our customers have been given 12 weeks isolation. The opportunity to do deliveries has been greatly appreciated from all involved. This has made a huge contribution to many peoples good mental health in this very trying times. We have maintained all health and safety requirements throughout this period and continually monitor the current situation with Government guidelines. XXX continues to make a great contribution while we have lock down for the most vulnerable in the community. Thank you so much and I understand you will want him back at some point. I look forward to when everything is back to normal and you can visit us again, kettle will be on”.

SEND Service

- “Hi there.. Just wanted to say Thank you for your help in gaining the ehcp for XXX. It is much appreciated the time and effort that was put in by yourself and colleagues during this testing time. I am grateful and excited about what lies ahead for XXX and his chances to achieve and prosper and thrive within the school setting”.

Connexions Service

- “The work XXX has been doing to support the careers provision here at Washington Academy has been outstanding. As a new Careers Leader her input has been invaluable. XXX has been in constant contact with our targeted students which has enabled me complete our intended destinations quickly despite the current pandemic. I am certain that XXX has gone above and beyond her usual job role and hours to make sure we have everything we need”.

Children with Disabilities Service

- “To XXX, You have made such a difference in our lives. We will always be grateful. Your support & help kept our heads above water. Good luck for the future, Love XXXX and XXXXX”.

4. PRE-COMPLAINTS & ENQUIRIES

- 4.1. Pre-complaints are where enquiries, issues and or concerns presented by individuals are dealt with through informal resolution. Whilst customers are provided with information about the complaints process and their rights to complain, we aim to achieve informal resolution where appropriate and when in the best interests of customers. The table below shows the pre-complaint data for quarters one and two:

Pre-Complaints & Enquiries	Q1 (Apr – Jun)	Q2 (Jul – Sep)	Total	
Number Received	20	34	54	↓
Percentage resolved as Pre-Complaint or Enquiry	95%	100%	98.1%	↑
Percentage Escalated to Stage 1	5%	0%	1.9%	↑

- 4.2. We received 54 pre-complaints in the last six months. Through responding to issues or concerns at the outset, we have helped 53 of our customers to receive satisfactory resolutions informally with just 1 (1.9%) escalating to a formal stage one complaint. Overall, the number of customers contacting the service with pre-complaint enquiries has decreased by 23 when compared to the first six months of the previous year and the percentage of those customers who have received a satisfactory response through the pre-complaints process has increased by almost 5%.

5. COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- 5.1. The Complaints Process for Statutory Children’s Services follows the statutory guidance. This is a 3-stage process as follows:
- **Stage One** – the initial stage of the process is investigated by the appropriate Team Manager. The service must respond within 10 working days, however an extension up to 20 working days can be requested for more complex cases.
 - **Stage Two** – on receipt of the response to their stage one complaint, complainants have 20 working days to request their complaint is progressed to stage two if they are unhappy with the initial outcome. At this stage, an Investigating Officer will be appointed to investigate the complaint and it can take up to 65 working days to complete.

- **Stage Three** – if the complainant remains unhappy with the outcome of the stage two complaint, they have 20 working days to request their complaint progresses to stage three. The review should take place within 30 days of the request. At stage three, a review panel will be appointed to review the complaint. This will consist of three independent people who will make recommendations to the Director of Children's Services.

- 5.2. If the Complainant remains unhappy, they can raise their complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 5.3. Any complaints that do not relate to Statutory Children's Services, are handled under the Non-Statutory Complaints Procedure which consists of two formal stages. Non-statutory complaint figures are included in this report.

6. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

- 6.1. The table below shows the number of complaints we received across each stage of the complaints process:

Complaints Stage	Q1 (Apr – Jun)	Q2 (Jul – Sep)	Total	
Statutory:				
Stage One	18	10	28	↓
Stage Two	4	2	6	↓
Stage Three	1	2	3	↑
Non-Statutory:				
Stage One	3	9	12	↑
Stage Two	0	2	2	↑
Total	26	25	51	↓

- 6.2. Overall in the first six months of the year we received 51 complaints compared with 90 in the first six months of 2019-20 which shows a decrease of 43.3%. 37 were statutory complaints and 14 were non-statutory.
- 6.3. We received 40 stage one complaints compared with 72 in the same period of 2019-20 which shows a decrease of 44.4%.
- 6.4. 16 stage two complaints were received in the first six months of 2019-20 compared with eight this year which shows a decrease of 50%. Two statutory complaints progressed to stage three in 2019-20 compared with three this year.

Number of Complaints by Young People:

- 6.5. The table below shows the number of complaints from young people received in the first six months of 2020/21 at each stage of the complaints process. There were two complaints received in total which is five less than the same period in the previous year.

Complaint Stage	Q1	Q2	Total	
Stage One (all)	1	1	2	↓
Stage Two (all)	0	0	0	↓
Stage Three	0	0	0	→
Total	1	1	2	↓

7. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS

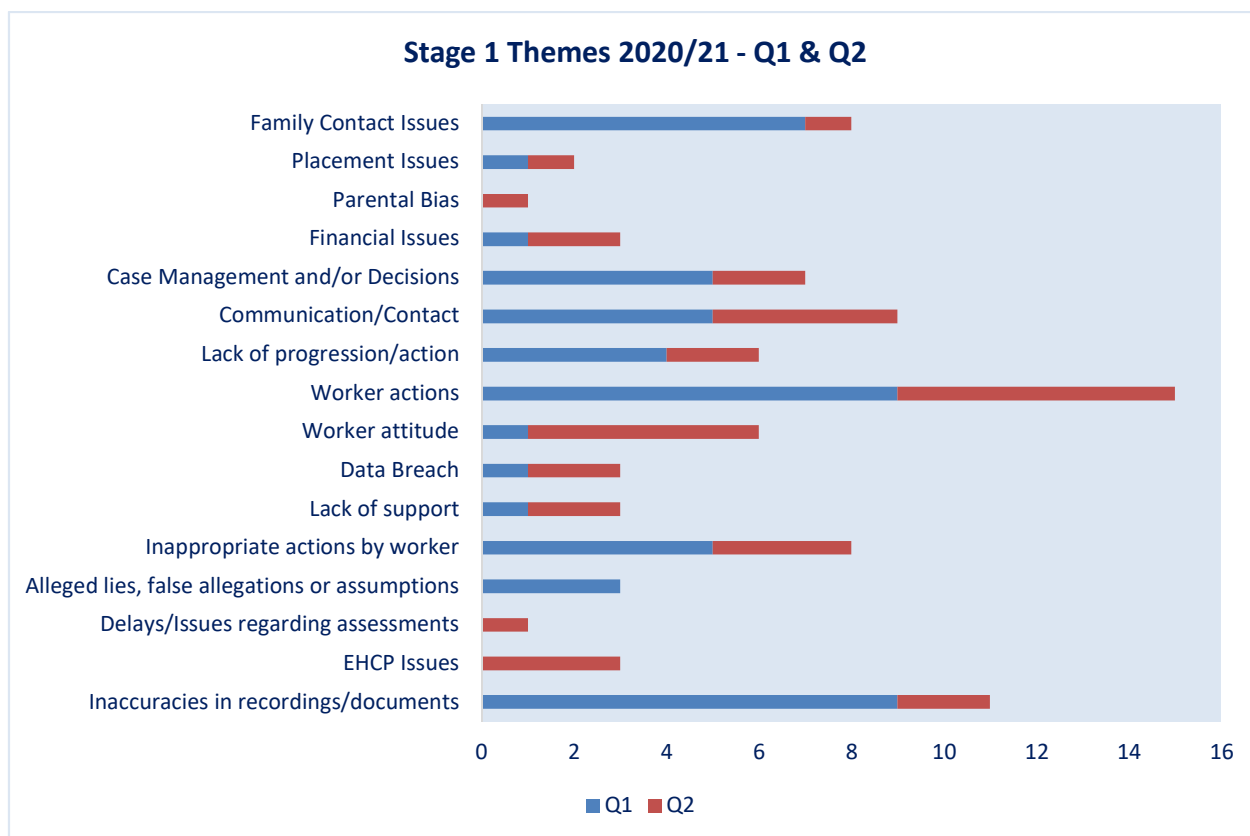
7.1. The table below shows the number of stage one complaints received by service area.

TEAM	Qtr1	Qtr2	Total	
Supported Lodgings	0	1	1	↑ (+1)
Connected Carers	1	0	1	↑ (+1)
Adoption Service	0	1	1	↑ (+1)
Assessment Service	6	5	11	↑ (+1)
Child Protection Service	6	6	12	↓ (-20)
Early Help Service	2	1	3	↑ (+2)
ICRT Service	2	0	2	↓ (-1)
Cared for and Permanence Service	1	0	1	↓ (-11)
Next Steps Service	1	1	2	↓ (-3)
SEND Service	1	2	3	↓ (-3)
Assessment Service and IRO Service	0	1	1	↑ (+1)
Assessment Service, Child Protection Service and ICRT	1	0	1	↑ (+1)
Early Help Service & Education	0	1	1	↑ (+1)
Children with Disabilities Service	0	0	0	↓ (-2)
Fostering Service	0	0	0	↓ (-2)
TOTAL	21	19	40	↓ (-32)

- 7.2. 30% of stage one complaints received in the first six months of this year relate to the child protection services. This is to be expected as child protection is the largest service area and due to the nature of work carried out within this service. There has however been a 62.5% decrease in the number of complaints relating to this service from 32 to 12 when compared with the same period in the previous year.
- 7.3. 27.5% of complaints received in the first six months relate to the assessment service equating to 11 which is an increase of one compared with the previous year. The number of complaints received in the Cared for & Permanence service has significantly decreased from 12 to 1 (91.7% decrease) when compared with the previous year and SEND (non-statutory) complaints have halved from six to three.

Themes:

7.4. The main themes of the complaints received at Stage one in 2020-21 are shown in the table below:



- 7.5. Complaints relating to worker actions, inaccuracies in recordings, and communication issues make up the top three themes across the first two quarters of 2020-21. This shows a slight difference when compared to the top three themes in the previous year (communication, lack of progression or action and actions taken by workers).
- 7.6. The number of complaints relating to worker actions are in line with number received the previous year, showing a slight increase from 14 to 15. This has now become the top theme at stage 1. The number of complaints relating to inaccuracies in recordings has increased from 8 to 11 when compared with the first six months of the previous year and this now appears in the top three themes, in position two.
- 7.7. Complaints relating to communication issues has shifted from being the top theme in the previous year to the third highest theme so far in 2020/21. The number of complaints regarding communication issues has reduced significantly with an 81% decrease. Complaints relating to lack of progression or action has also seen a significant decrease of 77.8% and has slipped out of the top three themes.
- 7.8. The reduction in the number of complaints overall together with a notable shift in the top three themes demonstrates the positive impact of learning from complaints and proactivity addressing emerging themes. In addition, having a stable workforce across all teams is allowing stronger and more trusting relationships to develop between families and their workers which is contributing to an overall reduction in complaint numbers.

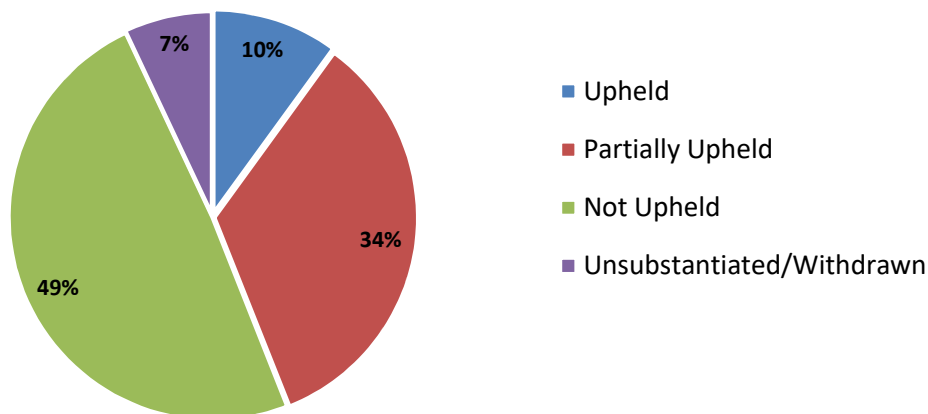
Timeliness of Response to Stage One Complaints:

- 7.9. In the first six months of 2019-20, the response time to statutory stage one complaints has increased to 54.8% responded to in timescale from 46.8% when compared to the same period in the previous year. The response time to non-statutory complaints in timescale has increased from 0% to 55.6% when compared to last year.
- 7.10. Quarter one saw the largest increase with statutory response times increasing by almost 17% and non-statutory increasing by 100%. Quarter two however has seen a reduction in timeliness to 38.5% for statutory complaints.

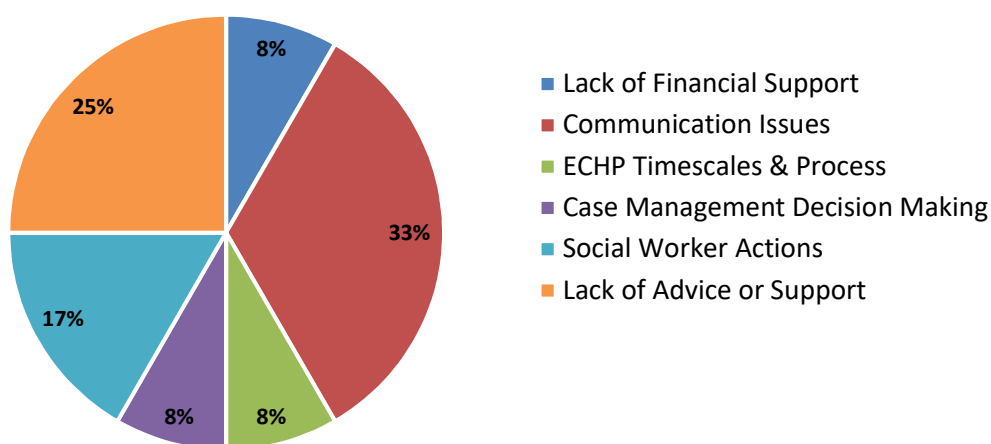
Complaint Stage	% of stage 1 complaints responded to in timescale		
	Q1	Q2	YTD
Statutory stage 1 complaints (Timescale 10-20 working days)	66.7% ↑	38.5% ↓	54.8% ↑
Non-statutory stage 1 complaints (Timescale 10-20 working days)	100% ↑	50% ↑	55.6% ↑

Stage One Complaint Outcomes:

7.11. There were 117 elements of complaint identified within stage one complaints that have concluded in the first six months of 2020-21. The outcomes of those stage one complaint elements are shown below.



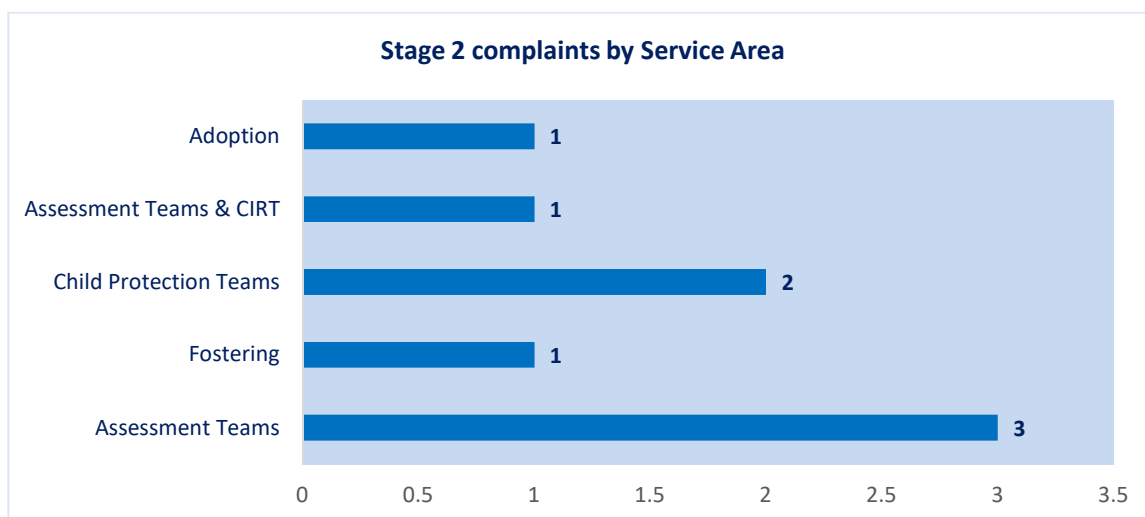
7.12. Most complaint elements equating to 49% were not upheld and a further 7% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn. 34% of elements were partially upheld and 10% were upheld. The chart below shows the main reasons for complaint elements that were upheld.



7.13. Of the 12 elements that were upheld, 33% related to lack of/poor communication between the service and family, 25% related to lack of advice or support whilst 17% related to social worker actions.

8. STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS AND STAGE THREE REVIEWS

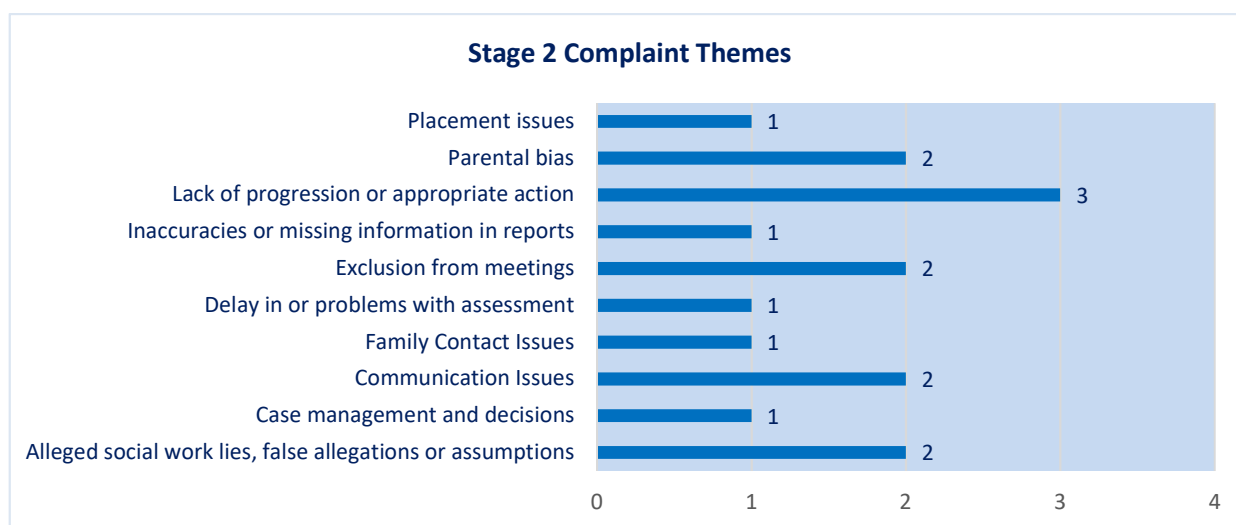
8.1. The table below shows the number of all stage two complaints received by service area in the first six months of 2020-21.



- 8.2. The majority of stage two complaints received so far in 2020-21 relate to the Assessment and child protection services. The two non-statutory stage 2 complaints relate to the Adoption Service and the Child Protection Service. Overall, we have received 50% fewer stage 2 complaints when compared with the previous year.

Themes:

- 8.3. The main themes of the complaints received at Stage two so far in 2020-21 are shown in the table below (*note one complaint can have multiple themes*):



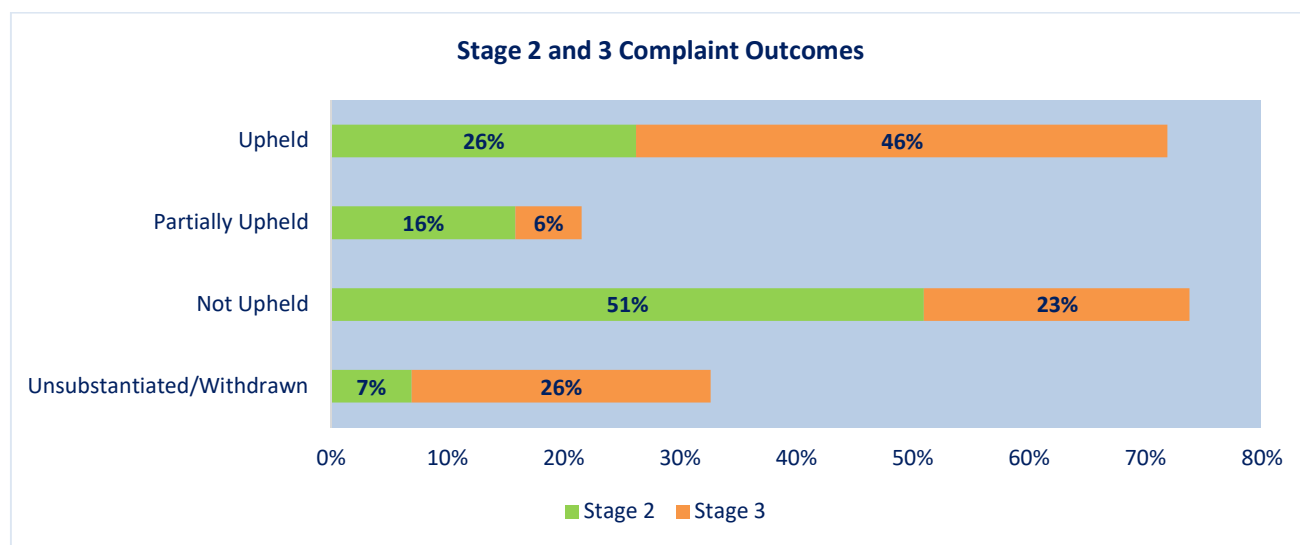
- 8.4. The majority of stage 2 themes identified relate to lack of progression or action, parental bias, exclusion from meetings, communication and alleged social work lies, false allegation or assumptions. It is worth noting that five of the eight stage 2 complaints are still being investigated by Independent Investigating Officers and for that reason the Customer Feedback service will not receive the finalised themes until the complaint's reports have been completed.

Timeliness of Response to Stage Two Complaints:

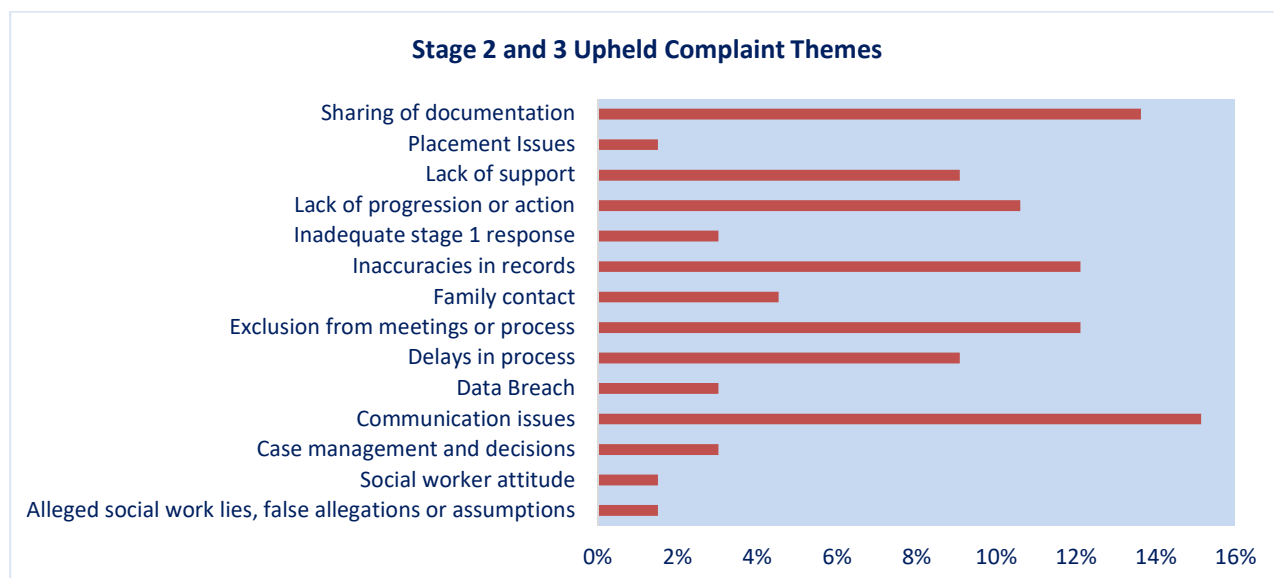
- 8.5. In the first six months of 2020-21, 12 statutory stage two complaints were concluded together with three non-statutory complaints (*figures differ to numbers received, as there were complaints open at the start of the year from 2019/20 and complaints that remain open moving into 2020-21*). One of the stage two complaints was completed within the 65-day timescale. The average days taken for investigation and adjudication of the 15 complaints was 129 days against a target of 65 days. The average number of days for investigating complaints was 75 and the average days for adjudication was 42.

Stage Two and Three Complaint Outcomes

- 8.6. There were 202 elements of complaint identified within all stage two complaints that concluded in the first six months of 2020-21 and 35 elements concluded at stage three (statutory). The outcomes of those stage two and three complaint elements are shown below.



- 8.7. At stage two, the majority of complaint elements equating to 51% were not upheld and a further 7% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn. 16% of elements were partially upheld and 26% were upheld.
- 8.8. At stage three a higher majority of elements were upheld equating to 46% with a further 6% partially upheld. 23% were not upheld and 26% were unsubstantiated or withdrawn.
- 8.9. Since April 2020, of the 35 elements that went to Stage three panels only one outcome was changed by the panel. The main subject areas of elements upheld at stage two and three are as follows:



- 8.10. Comparing upheld elements with the previous year, there are several themes that are reoccurring such as communication, inaccuracies in records and lack of progression or action. However due to the individualised nature of complaints it is difficult to say if the reasons for reoccurring themes are due to limited impact of recommendations or if it is due to other reasons. Sharing of documentation and exclusion from meetings or process are new themes when compared with the previous year. To assist with the analysis of themes, the upheld elements identified in both stage two investigations and stage three panels are reviewed regularly by

Children's Social Care Senior Management Team. The Customer Feedback Team identifies any reoccurring complaint elements and feeds this back to the relevant services.

9. OMBUDSMAN REFERRALS

- 9.1. There have been no complaints highlighted to the Customer Feedback Team by the Local Government Ombudsman so far this year.

10. COST OF COMPLAINTS

- 10.1. The total cost of investigating claims in the first two quarters of 2020-21 is £41,182 compared with £18,850 for the same period in 2019/20. The variance is due to a change in process whereby we request invoices for external Investigations at an earlier stage rather than waiting for the investigation to end before receiving an invoice. This change takes account of the investigations that could potentially continue for several months and will provide a more accurate financial position. Taking account of this change the overall expenditure for the year is expected to be on par with 2019/20.
- 10.2. So far this year the compensation costs paid in relation to upheld complaints has totalled £350 compared to £2,725 for the same period in the previous year as a result of fewer upheld complaints and a reduction in the severity/impact of those upheld situations.

11. ABUSIVE, UNREASONABLE PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS

- 11.1. There have been no recorded Abusive, Unreasonable Persistent or Vexatious Complainants in the first six months of 2020-21 although two customers have received letters regarding the content and frequency of their communications to our services.

12. LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT

- 12.1. Together for Children are committed to getting it right for the families in Sunderland. To do this we continue to drive improvement from learning from the complaints and compliments raised. An action plan is maintained by the Customer Feedback Team which includes actions and recommendations from stage two investigations and stage three panels. The action plan is closely monitored by the team. Reminders are sent to managers with responsibility for the recommendations each month and reported into Senior Management Team meetings to ensure that the learning is shared across the whole service.
- 12.2. In the last six months we have been making progress to address the recommendations in the 2019/20 Annual Customer Feedback Report. So far workshops have taken place with children's social care management to identify ways of improving the timeliness of responses to complaints at stages 1 and 2 and to address the top three themes for upheld complaints.
- 12.3. As a result of the first workshop we have started a pilot relating to the management of stage 1 responses whereby all stage 1 complaints will be managed by the Customer Feedback Team rather than individual services. We will be able to determine from the pilot if this change will improve the timeliness, quality and consistency of stage 1 responses. The pilot started towards the end of September and we be able to assess the impact of the change within the next few months.
- 12.4. Although the pilot is in its infancy, by discussing some of the challenges in relation to timeliness and sharing ideas regarding learning and improvement, we have seen in the first six months of this year a significant decrease in the number of complaints, particularly within individual teams. We have also seen a significant decrease in the top three themes at stage 1. We have further work to do to improve timeliness at stage 2 although there has been a slight improvement to date.

- 12.5. We will continue to work through the remaining recommendations set out in the Annual Report to identify further improvement activity and to explore more possibilities. From analysing the themes in the first six months of this year, it is apparent that some new themes are emerging. The Customer Feedback Service will proactively work with services to analyse these themes to identify learning and improvement opportunities.

Item 8

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 7 JANUARY 2021

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2020-2021

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report sets out for members' consideration the work programme of the Committee for the 2020/21 municipal year.

2. Background

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

3. Current position

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

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The work programme is intended to be a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2020-21.

5 Recommendation

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

Contact: Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator

REASON FOR INCLUSION	9 JULY 20	3 SEPT 20 (CANCELLED)	1 OCT 20	22 OCT 20	26 NOV 20	7 JAN 21	4 FEB 21	4 MARCH 21	APRIL 21 (DATE TO BE CONFIRMED)
Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses	Scrutiny Annual Report – 19/20 (JD)								Scrutiny Annual Report – 20/21(JD)
Scrutiny Business	Covid 19 – Update (Martin Birch)		Impact of Covid on Children and Young Families (Jill Colbert) Preparations of Schools in Response to Covid 19 (Simon Marshall)	Impact of Covid 19 on Young Carers and SEND (Carers Centre Parent Carers Forum)	Safeguarding Children Partnership Update (Sir Paul Ennals) Regional Adoption Agency (Jill Colbert)	Impact of Covid 19 on Child Mental Health (CCG)	Youth Offending Service ASB – Drugs and Alcohol Impact of Covid 19 on School Attendance	Operation of Assessment Services for CYP with ASC and ADHD	Apprenticeships
Performance / Service Improvement						Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Jill Colbert) Children Services Complaints Ofsted Improvement Plan – Update (Jill Colbert)			Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report
Consultation / Awareness Raising	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 20-21

Item 9

7 JANUARY, 2021

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

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
-

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
201015/532	To approve the Sunderland City Council Low Carbon Action Plan.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 8 December 2020 to 31 March 2021.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200914/515	To consider grant support for voluntary sector organisations.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 12 January to 28 February 2021.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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
200914/513	To approve the updated business plan for Siglion LLP and related matters.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201202/539	To approve the Third Capital Review 2020-2021 (including Treasury Management).	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201202/540	To approve the Third Revenue Review 2020-2021.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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201202/541	To recommend to Council to approve the Council Tax Base 2021-2022.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201202/542	To recommend to Council to approve Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021-2022.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201202/543	To approve the Revenue Budget 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 – Update and provisional Revenue Support Settlement.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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201124/544	To approve the disposal of land adjacent to Penshaw House, Station Road, Houghton-Le-Spring, DH4.	Cabinet	Y	12 January 2021	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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201116/536	To agree to dissolve partnership agreement with Homes England and trigger right of pre-emption to acquire land at Sunnyside.	Cabinet	N	During the period 12 January to 31 March 2021.	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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200813/494	To approve the establishment of a funding mechanism for the acquisition of residential properties.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 9 February to 31 March 2021	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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201109/536	Riverside Sunderland – To approve proposals for the detailed design, construction and letting of a new Development on the former Vaux site.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 9 February to 31 March 2021	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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200902/500	To approve the acquisition of Bridge House, Bridge Street.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 9 February to 31 March 2021	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
200907/510	To consider consultation responses and whether to proceed to a statutory proposal in relation to the proposed discontinuance of Hetton le Hole Nursery School.	Cabinet	Y	9 February 2021	N	Not applicable	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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201012/521	To approve the introduction of an E-Scooter Pilot Trial.	Cabinet	Y	9 February 2021	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201201/537	To give approval to progress with the three schemes (Sunderland Station and Car park, Holmeside bus rationalisation and A690 corridor cycle provision) funded by the governments Transforming Cities Fund.	Cabinet	Y	9 February 2021	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201201/538	To give approval to progress with the Emergency Active Travel Funded cycle scheme on the Sea Front from the former tram stop to Roker café.	Cabinet	Y	9 February 2021	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
201013/526	To seek approval to a proposal to Amend the Sunderland Council's Code of Conduct for the Issue of Penalty Notices Relating to Unauthorised School Absences.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 9 February to 31 March 2021.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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170927/212	To approve in principle the establishment of a new police led Road Safety Partnership (Northumbria Road Safety Partnership) embracing the Northumbria Force Area.	Cabinet	Y	23 March 2021	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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

***Other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision maker and requests for details of these documents should be submitted to Governance Services at the address given above.**

Who will decide;

Councillor Graeme Miller – Leader; Councillor Paul Stewart – Deputy Leader/Cabinet Secretary; Councillor Louise Farthing – Children, Learning and Skills; Councillor Geoffrey Walker – Healthy City; Councillor Linda Williams – Vibrant City; Councillor Rebecca Atkinson – Dynamic City.

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

Elaine Waugh,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

14 December 2020