

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 July 2022

<i>COUNCILLOR</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>PERIOD OF REPORT</i>
Mhairi Doyle	Children's Social Care	June 2022

Children's Social Care

- The permanent director for Children's Services and the Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance have come into post.
- All staff within Children's Services (including Education) are in the process of moving into one building (Magdalene house), which will provide a greater line of sight and support to staff within the service
- Recruitment across all areas of the service is ongoing. However, we have successfully recruited into 5 vacant Service Manager posts within the last 4 weeks and a further 3 are currently out for advert
- A diagnostic by Sunderland 'Together for Children' was completed on the MASH. The report and associated recommendations has been provided and is in the process of being developed into an action plan. Further diagnostic is planned to look at Liquid Logic system and how it can better support staff who are using it.
- The Children's Services improvement plan is being completed and will be provided to Ofsted in August. Service plans across all parts of the service are also currently being devised with the support of strategic support.
- Additional resource and capacity has been put in to parts of the service including, MASH, Family Support and Safeguarding Teams (overseeing child in need, child protection and care proceedings) and Care Experienced Children.
- Currently receiving support and training through an experienced Department of Education (Dfe) consultant, on our support and offer to care experienced children and those who are transitioning into adulthood.
- A review of cases within the service including; children with a disability, children subject to section 20, children who are in external placements.
- Refresh and launch of the quality assurance framework
- Launch of the Social Work Academy, which is supported by the Dfe. The Social Work academy will have approximately 30 newly qualified Social Workers who will be supported in their first year of employment. This will support the ongoing recruitment and retention of a staffing group that has been difficult to recruit to.
- Working with a company on international recruitment of Social Workers. We hope to achieve 20 experienced qualified Social Workers to come into post from Africa at the beginning of 2023.

- Appointment of a Service Manager who will be responsible for developing and opening more Children's Homes within Sefton

Youth Justice Service

Sefton Youth Justice Service produces a biannual Cohort Profile, which highlights the following:

- Custody- Sefton's custody rate remains at zero. There were two cases heard at court within the last week in April and first week in May which could have resulted in custodial sentencing due to their serious nature. Youth Justice staff completed robust pre-sentence assessments and associate reports that supported the Judge's decision to award community sentences and prevent two vulnerable young people from entering custody.
- The percentage of young people living in areas of deprivation has increased. 42% of the cohort live in South Sefton.
- Possession of weapons has increased as an offence reason and features in the top 3 offences for the first time.
- 52% of the cohort are being supported by Children Social Care.
- 24% have been referred to Early Help in the last 12 months.
- The cohort shows an increase in high-risk safety and wellbeing and risk of re-offending.
- NEET figures have increased within the cohort.
- It is positive to see 7 of the young people are in employment
- Mental health needs across the cohort remain a concern

There are developments to support children with mental health concerns. The Youth Justice Service Manager is working with health colleagues to develop the Framework for Integrated Care Vanguard, which will deliver clinically formulated plans with tailored mental health interventions, to the most vulnerable children.

Reframe – a New Intervention

Sefton Youth Justice Service are taking part in a pilot project with the Police, and We Are With You (WAWY) to support young people in possession of drugs. Sefton Youth Justice Service was selected based on good pre-existing relationships with both WAWY and Merseyside Police. Three other areas are taking part in the trial in Cornwall, Kent and Lancashire. Merseyside Police are central to the success of the project, being the gatekeeper to referrals.

The three-year project 'Re-Frame' is funded by The Youth Endowment Fund and aims to reduce the criminalisation of children (aged 10-17) by diverting them from the criminal justice system. When a young person comes to the attention of the police for possession of a Class B or C substance, they can meet with a trained WAWY worker to access a diversion scheme. If they consent the young people diverted will have the opportunity to engage in consultation with a researcher from Kent University. The University of Kent will evaluate the project, undertaking a randomised control trial. There is currently a lack of robust evidence in the UK to understand what works when diverting young people from violence and the criminal justice system. The partnership with Re-Frame will help fill this gap.

Specifically, Re-Frame aims to:

- Encourage the view of drug use as a health and social rather than criminal justice issue
- Promote early intervention, to offer support rather than punishment to vulnerable young people

- Connect young people with a trained drug and alcohol worker for restorative sessions. The sessions will help the young people consider the consequences of their actions, reflect so they can make changes in the future and educate about substances.