

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Mhairi Doyle	Children Services	January 2023

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- We are seeing a significant increase in the senior management oversight and supervision across cases. We are now working on making this more effective regarding practice improvement.
- The QA framework embedding and having an impact on identifying where practice needs to improve. Team managers are completing audits and we are seeking views from families.
- Performance data is still progressing, but we need to get smarter as to how this is presented and how it is used to improve practice.
- Our Academy continues to develop, and we are seeing improved practice in this service area. Staff report feeling supported and allowed to undertake thorough work with families.
- We are due to begin our team management training which is supported by our partnership with Leeds. This will help support our managers to create better assessments and plans with families.
- We have been successful in permanent recruitment to the Practice Improvement Manager posts. These are critical roles regarding our journey to improve practice and outcomes for children.
- We have had our second monitoring visit which focussed on CIN and CP and our work with Children with Complex Needs.
- We have successfully recruited to both our Family Group Conferencing team and child exploitation offer (MyS.P.A.C.E). Both are examples of good partnership working and we are aiming to launch both services in mid-March.
- We have reviewed a few key policies to support both our care experienced and cared for young people. This includes our policy to support post graduate education.
- Our relatively new Family Support team within Children with complex Needs continues to offer a different option for families. We are seeing good practice from this team and we are considering additional resource.
- The realignment of Early Help continues with a date of 7th April set for the transition. We have organised a transition team including senior leaders and frontline workforce to ensure transparency and stability.

- Our Making a Difference Group and Youth Ambassadors continue to work on their three key priorities which includes how we organise children in care reviews.

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE (YJS)

Performance

Performance remains good against the current metrics of reducing reoffending and the number of first-time entrants which marginal reductions. One child has been convicted of a very serious offence and is expected to receive a custodial sentence in March, therefore performance against reducing the use of custody will be compromised.

The YJS are currently trialling data collection against new Key Performance Indicators which commence in April. These are extensive however will provide a richer context for performance.

In addition, we continue to undertake thematic audits and share findings to improve practice. A joint audit on Transitions was completed with Probation, an outcome was that the Transitions Panel will discuss all 17 years olds and record the decision-making rationale relating to whether they transition to Probation at 18yrs, or not. A further audit for Out of Court Disposals is nearly complete and a date is arranged to share and discuss findings.

Youth Justice Partnership

At the recent Partnership Board (31st January) we delivered a case study relating to risk of serious harm to others and violence offences. The case study revealed common characteristics in the children studied which led to challenging discussions about how services could be more effective and how characteristics may manifest in a sequence, which could be identified at an earlier stage. An extraordinary partnership has been arranged for 19th April to engage in deeper discussion with partners to determine actions and matters to escalate.

Prevention Projects

The new prevention strand is operational through the Turnaround and Community Connector Projects. Staff have been recruited to deliver the externally funded projects. Nine children have already been referred to the Turnaround Project which is aimed at preventing children from engaging in criminal and risk-taking behaviour. We are working with a local provider to deliver bespoke diversion activities. The Community Connectors project will work with schools to support girls 8-15years old who are engaging in or are on the periphery of criminality and have mental health concerns. This is in direct response to concerns the YJS had regarding mental health of girls who were working with the service.

Education

APPENDIX A

The YJS is working closely with education colleagues to challenge schools when children are not accessing their statutory 25 hours offer of education. In addition, Education have funded 5 Education Psychology Assessments to identify concerns and enable YJS colleagues to support children to engage with their learning environment.