

# Public Document Pack



## Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Lesley Little

**Email:** Lesley.Little@northumberland.gov.uk

**Tel direct:** 01670 622614

**Date:** Wednesday, 27 October 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held in **MEETING SPACE - BLOCK 1, FLOOR 2 - COUNTY HALL** on **THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2021** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally  
Chief Executive

**To Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee members as follows:-**

**C Ball, W Daley (Chair), L Dunn, D Ferguson, A Scott, G Stewart (Vice-Chair), M Swinburn, C Taylor and T Thorne**

**A Hodgson, L Houghton, D Lennox, P Rickeard and J Sanderson**

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>. Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting.

***Members are referred to the risk assessment, previously circulated, for meetings held in County Hall. Masks should be worn when moving round but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser regularly used and members requested to self-test twice a week at home, in line with government guidelines.***



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# AGENDA

## PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 2. MINUTES

(Pages 1  
- 6)

Minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 7 October 2021, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### 3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest) they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 4 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature (as defined under paragraph 17 of the Code Conduct) they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room. NB Any member needing clarification must contact the monitoring officer by email at [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

### 4. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

(Pages 7  
- 10)

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions for November 2021 to February 2022. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the committee.

### 5. PERFORMANCE & FINANCE REPORT (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

(Pages  
11 - 24)

Members are asked to consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference.

### 6. CHILDREN'S HOMES PLACEMENT & SUFFICIENCY

(Pages  
25 - 30)

The report outlines the key issues and challenges in relation to placement sufficiency for LAC. The sufficiency strategy is currently being reviewed and updated and will be presented to FACS in January 2022.

### 7. SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

(Pages  
31 - 38)

The report provides an overview of the challenges of and responses to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

- 8. NORTH EAST SUBMISSION TO THE CARE REVIEW** (Pages 39 - 44)
- The report provides an overview of the North East Association of Directors of Children's Services submission to the ongoing National Care Review and is presented to the Committee for information.
- 9. FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2021/22** (Pages 45 - 54)
- Members are asked to review and note the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report.
- 10. URGENT BUSINESS**

**IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:**

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussion or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

<b>Name (please print):</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>
<b>Date:</b>
<b>Item to which your interest relates:</b>
<b>Nature of Registerable Personal Interest i.e either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Annex 2 to Code of Conduct or other interest (as defined by Annex 3 to Code of Conduct) (please give details):</b>
<b>Nature of Non-registerable Personal Interest (please give details):</b>
<b>Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?</b>

**1. Registerable Personal Interests** – You may have a Registerable Personal Interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting:

a) relates to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined by Annex 1 to the Code of Conduct); or

b) any other interest (as defined by Annex 2 to the Code of Conduct)

The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either you or your spouse or civil partner:

(1) Employment, Office, Companies, Profession or vocation; (2) Sponsorship; (3) Contracts with the Council; (4) Land in the County; (5) Licences in the County; (6) Corporate Tenancies with the Council; or (7) Securities - interests in Companies trading with the Council.

The following are other Registerable Personal Interests:

(1) any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council; (2) any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management); or (3) any person from whom you have received within the previous three years a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

**2. Non-registerable personal interests** - You may have a non-registerable personal interest when you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to an item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described below to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision.

The persons referred to above are: (a) a member of your family; (b) any person with whom you have a close association; or (c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

### **3. Non-participation in Council Business**

When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that the criteria set out below are satisfied in relation to any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you must : (a) Declare that fact to the meeting; (b) Not participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; (c) Not participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting; and (d) Leave the room whilst the matter is being discussed.

The criteria for the purposes of the above paragraph are that: (a) You have a registerable or non-registerable personal interest in the matter which is such that a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest; **and either** (b) the matter will affect the financial position of yourself or one of the persons or bodies referred to above or in any of your register entries; **or** (c) the matter concerns a request for any permission, licence, consent or registration sought by yourself or any of the persons referred to above or in any of your register entries.

**This guidance is not a complete statement of the rules on declaration of interests which are contained in the Members' Code of Conduct. If in any doubt, please consult the Monitoring Officer or relevant Democratic Services Officer before the meeting.**

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## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at Meeting Space - Block 1, Floor 2 - County Hall on Thursday, 7 October 2021 at 10.00 am.

#### PRESENT

W Daley (Chair) (in the Chair)

#### COUNCILLORS

C Ball  
D Ferguson  
M Swinburn

L Dunn  
G Stewart  
T Thorne

#### CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

A Hodgson  
P Rickeard

D Lennox

#### TEACHER UNION REPRESENTATIVES

L Houghton

J Sanderson

#### OFFICERS

C Angus  
S Aviston  
A Kingham  
L Little  
C McEvoy-Carr

Scrutiny Officer  
Head of School Organisation and Resources  
Service Director - Education and Skills  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Executive Director of Adults and Children's  
Services  
Service Director - Children's Social Care

G Reiter

#### ALSO PRESENT

G Renner-Thompson

Cabinet Member

#### 16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Scott and C Taylor.

#### 17 MINUTES

Ch.'s Initials.....

The minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 2 September 2021, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

## 18 **DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Mr Rickeard advised a Church of England School was situated next to the former Richard Coates Church of England School.

## 19 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted that there were four items for pre-scrutiny at this Committee and they would be considered by Cabinet the following week.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan of key decisions for October 2021 to January 2022 be noted.

## 20 **PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE SEATON SLUICE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND WHYTRIG MIDDLE SCHOOL**

S Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources, provided an introduction to the Cabinet report. The report set out the request of the Governing Body of the Seaton Valley Federation to the Council to carry out informal consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Seaton Sluice Middle School and Whytrig Middle School on the current Whytrig and Astley Community High School site in Seaton Delaval or an alternative site, should one be identified as part of the site option appraisal. The proposal had arisen in the light of the capital project to re-provide new buildings for Astley and Whytrig Middle School on their current site, these two schools already being co-located on the high school's site in Seaton Delaval. Although the initial project was limited to the re-provision of new buildings for Astley and Whytrig, in the course of planning that project the federated Governing Body had identified a number of significant educational and financial benefits for all students within the Seaton Valley Federation to be co-located on one site in new buildings.

The proposal would also require the expansion of the capacity of the planned new buildings for Whytrig in order to accommodate students relocated from Seaton Sluice and this would also be included within the informal consultation.

If approved by Cabinet a six week period of informal consultation within term time would commence on 13 October 2021 and would conclude on 1 December 2021. As outlined in the report the capital building approval process would run parallel to the statutory process and alternative sites would be looked at in order to develop the proposals, but this information was not able to be shared at the current time due to commercial sensitivity.

Assurance was sought that the Federation were aware the amalgamation would result in the removal of a financial lump sum, and this had been factored into any financial modelling. The Committee were informed that this had been discussed with the Governing Body and they believed the benefits of amalgamation



would counterbalance the financial adjustment.

The Chair outlined the recommendations as outlined in the report which were unanimously agreed by Members of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that **Cabinet** be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

## 21 PROPOSALS FOR ATKINSON HOUSE

S Aviston, Head of School Resources and Organisation introduced the Cabinet report which set out proposals for Atkinson House Special School in Seghill, a secondary provision for boys with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs to relocate to a new site at the former Richard Coates CE Primary School in Ponteland and to change to co-educational provision. The proposals would be with effect from 1 September 2022. The nature of the proposals required that a statutory process would need to be undertaken prior to any final decision being taken by Cabinet.

The Committee enquired as to how the needs for girls with SMEH were currently being met. They were informed that the needs were currently being met in existing schools, but these schools were at capacity and the increase in places would help meet a growing need for SMEH support. In response to a question about how Northumberland compared nationally, it was confirmed that Northumberland were below the national average in the number of children requiring SMEH support; however, the catchment area would be solely in Northumberland with only surplus places being offered outside the County.

Co-opted members of the committee received an explanation on how NCC were looking long term and on the new strategies being developed that would come to FACS in the future for comment.

Assurance was sought on a number of areas such as transport, sustainability and safeguarding. Members were advised that the relocation would give the school a more central location and give residents in the West of the County greater access to these provisions, although support would continue to be provided to assist mainstream schools to be more inclusive. The Committee were reminded that all school transport plans were examined from an environmental and efficiency point of view. With regards to safeguarding, there would always be measures in place and it was anticipated that a working group with head teachers would be set up to look at any safeguarding and site operation issues that might arise.

The Committee were keen to ensure that in addition to teachers, parents and other organisations, students were also included in the discussions. Once the Gilbert Ward Academy opened it would be a decision for parents if they chose to move their child to the new provision and any decision would need to be in the best interests of the child. It would also give an alternative option for a child to remain in education in Northumberland rather than having to go out of County if they did not settle at one school.

The Chair outlined the recommendations and upon being put to the vote it was

unanimously:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

## 22 **SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN 2021-2024**

S Aviston, provided an introduction to the report which asked Cabinet to note the second iteration of the School Organisation Plan 2021-2024 for Northumberland. The report also requested Cabinet to approve the circulation of the plan to schools and academies for information and feedback prior to its subsequent publication. The plan would also be subject to an annual update in order to capture changing information or circumstances related to schools and academies as appropriate. A typographical error was noted in paragraph 3 which should read “A new School Organisation Plan for 2021-24...”

Members praised the team involved in writing this comprehensive and valuable plan which the Committee felt all elected members would benefit from reading. They suggested that in addition to schools, other partners and the Council’s website in recommendation 3, the plan also be circulated to all elected members.

The Chair outlined the recommendations as outlined in the report and following a unanimous vote it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be advised that the Committee welcomed the plan and supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

## 23 **UPDATE OF THE EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTION POLICY**

S Aviston provided an introduction to the report which asked Cabinet to approve an update to the Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy to increase the requested contribution towards SEND provision in the county to reflect the increased number of young people in the County requiring specialist provision.

Members welcomed reviews into developer contributions in education and infrastructure. After a discussion on S106 allocations and a reduction to the level of previously agreed contribution which had recently been approved, the Committee felt it would be beneficial for all members of the strategic planning committee to receive training on S106 funding and allocations.

The Chair highlighted a Task and Finish Working Group could be used to look at education contributions and how the funding was allocated if this was something Members wished to do.

The Chair outlined the recommendations and following a vote it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report.

## 24 **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT - APRIL 2021**

G Reiter, Service Director – Children’s Social Care provided an introduction to the report which would be used to inform the annual engagement meeting with Ofsted on 28 October and in advance of this would face challenge at the Regional Directors meeting. More detailed scrutiny of key areas within the self assessment are undertaken through both this Committee and the Corporate Parenting Group. The findings had shown progress however the service continually strived to improve and the document would assist in this and also outlined the key priorities for continuous improvement also taking into account national and regional developments and legislation. This also linked into Children’s social care case for change review being undertaken by Josh McAllister which the Council was feeding into. Detailed actions in the continuous improvement plan were monitored monthly by senior managers and the signs of safety framework would be used as a key driver for improvement.

Members welcomed the report and the way it had been presented and recognised that new ways of working developed through the pandemic would be embedded into the service to help drive improvements.

In relation to the progress on the building of the two children’s homes, the Committee was advised that one of the sites identified was not suitable and work was underway to identify an alternative site and planning permission had been granted in relation to the other. A bid had been made for DfE funding and the outcome was awaited to determine the next steps. There had been a reduction in the number of children who needed to become looked after and it was also expected the number of out of County placements would reduce in the coming months as a result of the young people’s ages and they would either return to the County or would be 18 and no longer need the placements. The biggest challenge was in relation to emergency placements. A report would be coming to this Committee in November on Children’s Home Placement Sufficiency.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

25 **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2021/22**

Members were reminded to contact the Chair or the Scrutiny Officer with any items that they would like to be added to the work programme. It was hoped to finalise proposals for new Task and Finish Groups within the next couple of weeks and the Chair reminded Members of the excellent work that could be undertaken such as that previously undertaken in respect of school exclusions and the impact this had.

Officers were currently looking at the impact of the rise in wholesale gas prices on schools and what the Government would do to support this and this would be reported once Officers were in a better position to do so.

In relation to green aspects of the new Astley school buildings four options would be put forward as part of the business case in relation to reducing carbon emissions as part of this development either embedded into the building or through reduced running costs. Three other schools had air source heat pumps installed through the summer holidays which had been 100 % funded by grants and would help with ongoing running costs for these schools.

P Rickeard advised that the Church of England were also working with the Council to reduce carbon emissions in one of their schools however there was a requirement for 3 phase electricity to be able to run the equipment which was not available in some of the more rural areas and this may need to be more widely investigated to assist residents.

Councillor Daley advised that the Leader, Councillor Sanderson had written to the Chancellor and Education Secretary regarding heating and fuel costs for schools.

**RESOLVED** that the information be noted.

**CHAIR**.....

**DATE**.....

## Forward Plan

### FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS NOVEMBER 2021 TO FEBRUARY 2022

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p><b>Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-26</b>                      This report provides an update on the development of the 2022-23 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2022 to 2026. This report also details budget proposals for 2022-23 to meet the budget gap, as a basis for budget consultation, prior to the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022-23 in December 2021                      (R. Wearmouth/ A. Elsdon 01670 622168)</p>	CSEG 8 November 2021	9 November 2021
<p><b>Northumberland Street Naming and Numbering Policy</b>                      The report seeks agreement to a policy determining how street names and numbering will be accepted by the Council. The report will set out what is acceptable and what is not, a policy in terms of names being used for deceased people and also what charges may be levied for the work involved in processing a request for a street name.                      (C. Horncastle/D. Wilson 01670 623704)</p>	C&P 27 October 2021	9 November 2021
<p><b>Revision of Morpeth Conservation Area Boundary</b>                      This report will seek approval to adopt revisions to the boundary of the Morpeth Conservation Area                      (C. Horncastle/ S. Rushton 01670 622650)</p>	N/A	9 November 2021

<p><b>Northumberland Waste Management Strategy – Outcome of Kerbside Glass Recycling Trial</b></p> <p>To report the key outcomes of the kerbside glass recycling pilot scheme which has been in operation since November 2020 and to recommend the next steps for this scheme and the estimated costs for rolling-out a kerbside glass collection service across the county. The report will also highlight how the roll-out and timing for this enhanced glass recycling service will be dependent upon the outcome of the latest consultation exercises undertaken as part of the Government’s new Resources and Waste Strategy and provision of new burdens funding by the Government. (J. Riddle/ P. Jones 01670 623432)</p>	C&P 27 October 2021	9 November 2021
<p><b>Northumberland Lottery Annual Report</b></p> <p>This report provides the annual update on the performance of the Northumberland Lottery which was launched on 25 April 2020 following approval by Cabinet on 6 August 2019. The lottery is open to members of the public and supports local community groups. (R. Wearmouth/P. Hindhaugh, 07976 886600)</p>	CSEG 8 November 2021	9 November 2021
<p><b>Green Homes Grant, Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 (LAD2) - Grant Funding</b></p> <p>To seek authorisation for the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Round 2 of £2.2m grant funding – for both receipt and spend of capital funding, and subsequent inclusion in the Council’s Capital Programme. (G. Sanderson/M. Roberts 07920 240699)</p>	CSEG 8 November 2021	9 November 2021
<p><b>Platinum Jubilee Celebrations in Northumberland – The County Council’s Role and Scope of Activity</b></p>	TBC	9 November 2021

<p>The report provides an overview of the national programme of celebrations to mark the historic Queen's Platinum Jubilee during 2022. The report also outlines the proposed role of the Council in both the high-profile national programme, and in the encouragement of communities to celebrate together across the County. The report requests a non-recurrent allocation of £60,000 to support delivery of a showcase event on Hadrian's Wall and £15,000 to provide additional capacity to coordinate the County's community beacon response. The report also requests a non-recurrent allocation of £70,000 to enable creation of a 'Jubilee Events Fund' to support community Jubilee events across the County during 2022.</p> <p><b>(Confidential Report)</b> (J. Watson/N. Walsh – 07789654472)</p>		
<p><b>Corporate Plan Refresh 2021-24</b></p> <p>The Report presents the Council's Corporate Plan for 2021-2024. The Plan for 2021-24 builds on the progress from the previous Corporate Plan and presents a refreshed vision, aims and priorities. This refresh takes account of the changing social and economic context as a result of the Covid Pandemic and the Council's priorities for leading recovery across the County in the coming months and years. The priorities in the Corporate Plan will be delivered through the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, Service Planning and Performance Frameworks.</p> <p>(G. Sanderson/P. Hunter – 07814298050)</p>	TBC	9 November 2021
<p><b>Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25</b></p> <p>The report requests approval to use Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25, a document designed to guide skills planning and the approach in designing impactful</p>	FACS 2 December 2021	7 December 2021

<p>vocational skills provision within the county to yield greatest impact for residents and the local economy. (G. Renner Thompson/N. Dorward - 07811 020806)</p>		
<p><b>Approval of the Council Tax Base 2022/23</b> The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base must be set between the 1st of December and 31st January. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula for calculation. Cabinet has delegated authority to approve the tax base. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 01670 624351)</p>	N/A	7 December 2021
<p><b>Wooler Neighbourhood Plan</b> To seek approval to formally 'make' the Wooler Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan passed independent examination in May 2020. Covid regulations delayed the holding of referendums until after May 2021. A local referendum held in the Parish of Wooler on 10 June 2021 returned a majority vote in favour of the County Council using the Plan to make decisions on planning applications. The Council is now obliged by statute to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considers that doing so would breach European Union obligations. Making the Plan has been delayed due to the need to take external legal advice on a matter raised by the Northumberland National Park Authority.  (C. Horncastle/S. Branningan - 07966 335 508)</p>	N/A	7 December 2021





## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 2021**

### **PERFORMANCE & FINANCE REPORT (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)**

**Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services**

**Cabinet Member: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson, Executive Member for Children's Services**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference.

#### **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee notes the current performance, how it compares to benchmarks, and identifies any areas for further scrutiny.

#### **3. Link to Corporate Plan**

This report relates to the Being Safe and Learning elements of the Corporate Plan.

#### **4. Key issues**

- Childrens' Services continues to perform well against national averages, although within the field of Education and Skills, the picture is partially outdated due to there being no comparable achievement outcome results for the last 2 academic years.
- There is a clear understanding of the underlying data for those indicators in need of improvement, and appropriate actions have been identified with a pandemic-sensitive lens.
- Key performance indicators and targets have been reviewed.

- The budgetary position continues to be challenging and a review of the delivery of savings has been undertaken.

This report is for discussion.

## **5. Background**

The Service Statements across the Council set out priorities for delivering the Corporate Plan together with a performance framework covering past performance levels and future targets. The performance measures are captured on a web-enabled system and current performance is updated regularly so that the most recent information is available to Members, officers and the public.

This report was originally required to be submitted in early September 2021 and therefore would have used the quarter ending June data for Children's Social Care and Education & Skills; however, as it was rescheduled for the November meeting, updates from August's and September's data are also included where available. The suite of indicators in Education and Skills and the associated targets have been reviewed and the changes are being implemented for the quarter 2 report. Those for Children's Social Care (CSC) were reviewed in the last year.

This report provides analysis of performance on those indicators that can be benchmarked against the national average, and if not, against the position the previous year, as well as the usual budgetary update. For details on all of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Children's Social Care and Education service statements, please refer to the quarter 4 report covering the whole Council produced by the Corporate Performance and Business Intelligence team. Members should note that in addition to this report, the Corporate Parenting Advisory Group receives bi-monthly performance reports on data relating to children looked after children (CLA) and care leavers, and the Audit Committee recently received an update on external inspection scrutiny that has taken place during the COVID 19 restrictions. Those reports are available on request.

### **Children's Social Care:**

With reference to Appendix A, the department is performing better than the national average (NA) on 9 of the indicators, and poorer on 6. Numbers of Children Looked After have reduced recently having been fairly static since June 2020, but we have seen challenges over the last year with home and school placement stability, and this continues to be scrutinised by the senior management team along with actions from a task and finish group.. Timescales from children entering care to being placed with their adoptive family are poorer than the national average but we have a good record of placing children who are harder to place which takes longer for them to be adopted and impacts on the timescales. Furthermore, far more children looked after are adopted than is the case nationally, and far more children looked after are placed close to their localities and within

the boundaries of the authority. In spite of the restrictions with COVID, we remain in touch with all of our care leavers, nearly all of whom are living in suitable accommodation.

Numbers of children subject to child protection plans have reduced further following a significant spike between February and April 2020, although they have fluctuated over the summer. Effective and creative early help and preventative work has ensured that statutory services have not been overwhelmed. Data on social worker caseloads from the last annual Department for Education (DFE) return indicate they are broadly equal to the latest national average of 16 per full time equivalent (FTE) social worker (in Northumberland they have ranged from 15 to 18 over the last 6 months).

Context and actions being taken for measures that are poorer than the national average are as follows:

**Rate of children and young people subject to child protection (CP) plans per 10,000 (10K) population** – Northumberland’s rate per 10K is higher than the NA. This figure had decreased in the quarter up to the end of June, but has increased since (June’s figure was 59, and at the end of September it was 62). Visiting children subject to CP plans has been maintained during the Covid-19 restrictions. The vast majority of CP plans that have ceased have stepped down to Child in Need (CiN), rather than the children and young people becoming looked after. We are monitoring the figures in Quality Performance Assurance Group (QPAG) senior management meetings. Previous audit and Ofsted inspection have found multi-agency decision making to be appropriate.

**Rate of Children Looked After (CLA) per 10,000 population** - whilst Northumberland’s rate per 10K is higher than the NA, it is the joint lowest in the north east region and has decreased significantly since the end of June (from 74 per 10K to 69 at the end of September). Up to the end of June, there had been a significant increase in the numbers of children placed at home under care orders, a feature regionally. An audit and subsequent action plan is ensuring that timely progress and discharge are in place appropriately, and this is reflected in the decrease seen since June. Overall, the number of children looked after is higher than two years ago, and we have managed the increase by flexibility and resilience of our in-house fostering service. Previous audit/Ofsted found decision making for children to become looked after to be appropriate and timely. We are monitoring the figures in QPAG senior management meetings.

**% of Children Looked After placed in foster care** - The relatively high number of children placed at home with parents impacts on this figure, and this is reflected in the revised target which strikes a balance between reality and challenge. Overall, approximately 85% of CLA placements are in family situations. We have undertaken a project to consider ways of further increasing the numbers of children in foster care and continue to refine and target our foster carer recruitment. A senior management restructure has aligned the management oversight of in-house residential and foster care.

### **% of Children Looked After who have had 3 or more placements in the last 12 months**

This figure has improved slightly in the context of placement pressures during the pandemic, but we would want it to be lower still, and it remains 2% poorer than the NA. Some of these placement changes are a positive move to a permanent placement. An analysis has been undertaken and we are progressing actions linked to the aforementioned project.

**% of Children Looked After who have been in care for 2.5 years or more, and who have been in the same placement for 2 years or more** – There had been a slight decline in June, and the figure of 66% was 2% poorer than the national average. Since the end of June, the position has improved and by the end of August, it had improved to 71%, which is now 3% better than the national average. Our record in finding suitable and stable placements in a family environment is good overall. We continue to place a high number of children in our provision. We are progressing the business case and actions from the above project to develop further support for foster carers and we have further developed our monitoring to support timely achievement of long-term placements where this is the plan for our CLA.

**Average time (days) between a child entering care & moving in with adoptive family** – While the figure had recently increased to the end of June (and has remained stable since), the cohort includes harder to place children and as the process takes a longer time for them, this impacts on the figure. The cohort size is small so one child moving in with their adoptive family can significantly influence the figure. Robust governance and oversight arrangements are in place to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the Regional Adoption Agency, ADOPT North East, in maintaining and improving our performance in relation to adoption since going live in December 2018.

### **Care leavers in employment, education or training (EET)**

Covid 19 has had an impact on appropriate EET opportunities. There is a clear link to mental/physical health that means that some young people are not in EET due to their disability. We continue to try and engage those young people in meaningful education options. Further developing the Council corporate parenting and opportunities for our care leavers not in EET is a corporate and member priority. Our figure for the 2020/21 year was equal to the national average of 53%, although we are ambitious for it to be 60% or more.

## **Education:**

With reference to Appendix B, due to Covid 19, some of the usual measures for Education do not have an update as key stage tests / exams were not comparable with previous years. However, all measures that could be updated, have been.

Appendix B shows that of the updated measures: 8 out of 14 are better than the NA, or, where there is no NA, better than the corresponding previous period; 3 are the same and 3 are poorer.

Consistently very strong performance is being seen in the areas of: first choice of school; permanent exclusions of primary pupils and of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) learners; and EHCP timeliness.

The percentage of children getting first choice school places is consistently over 97% for both primary and secondary and significantly exceeds the NA. The proportion of pupils in good or outstanding primary schools is now more in line with the NA and on target, but the position in secondary schools is below the NA; where there are concerns that schools may drop below good, an appropriate level of support is provided by the LA's improvement partners.

A small number of pupils are still being permanently excluded from schools, although fewer have been than over the corresponding previous period. Not all of the aspirational targets in this field are yet being met, but the Working Group has identified priority groups, e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils, and there have been no permanent exclusions of a pupil with an EHCP for 2 years. The main area of concern regarding exclusions relates to fixed term exclusions of SEN Support learners, where there has been a significant increase in the last 4 months of the school year. The position from September will be closely monitored. There are clear actions in place, and challenges are set to schools where exclusion is being considered. Positively, there has been a major improvement in the proportion of permanently excluded pupils who are quickly back into another form of education following a permanent exclusion.

Whilst better than the national average, preventing further increases in NEET and Not Knowns is likely to be a challenge as the impact of COVID 19 is felt by employers and training providers, and this is reflected in the slightly poorer figure for qtr 1.

For further details on the work done in this year of unprecedented impact on education services, please see the [Education Annual Report for 2020](#).

Context and actions being taken for measures that are poorer than the national average are as follows:

## **% of pupils who are in good or outstanding secondary schools -**

Although Northumberland's figure has recently increased, it remains poorer than the national average. It is the prime responsibility of the governing boards and head teachers of those schools to improve. The Council commissions School Improvement Partners (SIPs) to monitor and challenge those schools, one of the products being a termly SIP visit report which includes what judgement they conclude the school would receive if they were inspected at that point. Members should note the task of turning round this pattern of under-achievement usually takes at least 3 years based upon Ofsted inspection schedules, but as the inspection schedule has been put back 18 months by the Covid pandemic any full inspection could be up to 4 and a half years after the initial inspection.

## **Fixed term exclusions for EHCP and SEN Support learners**

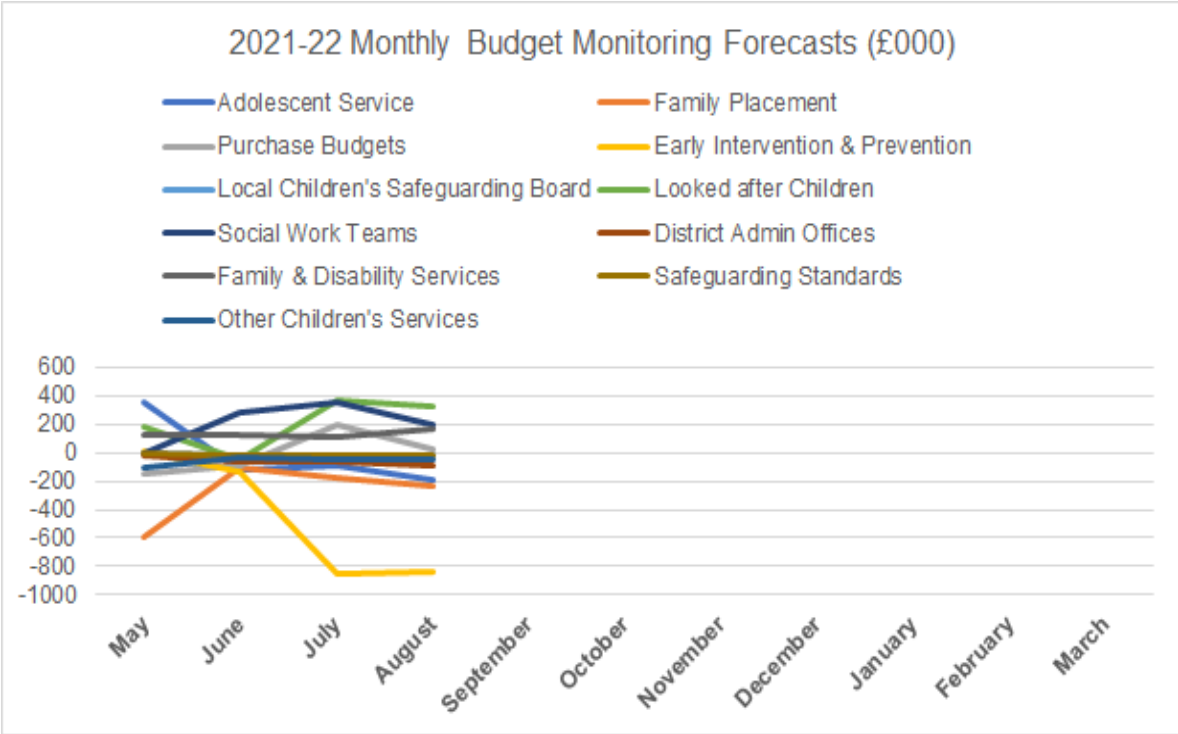
The number of fixed term exclusions (ftes) of learners with an EHCP or SEN Support increased in the 2020/21 school year compared to 2019/20. This is within the context that schools were fully open for longer in 2020/21. Nonetheless, the level of increase is disproportionately high with over 300 ftes of SEN Support learners occurring since schools fully reopened in March 2021.

Officers regularly meet to analyse this data, and schools who appear to disproportionately exclude are contacted and challenged. Overall, however, the long term trend for exclusions is encouragingly a downward one compared to the position three years ago.

## **6. Children's Services August 2021 position**

### **Children's Social Care**

The forecast position at the end of August is £0.727 million forecast underspend, of which £0.867 million overspend is a result of Covid-19. The following graph provides a trend analysis of the forecast outturn, over the year to date:



The main reasons for the forecast position for Children’s Services are as follows:

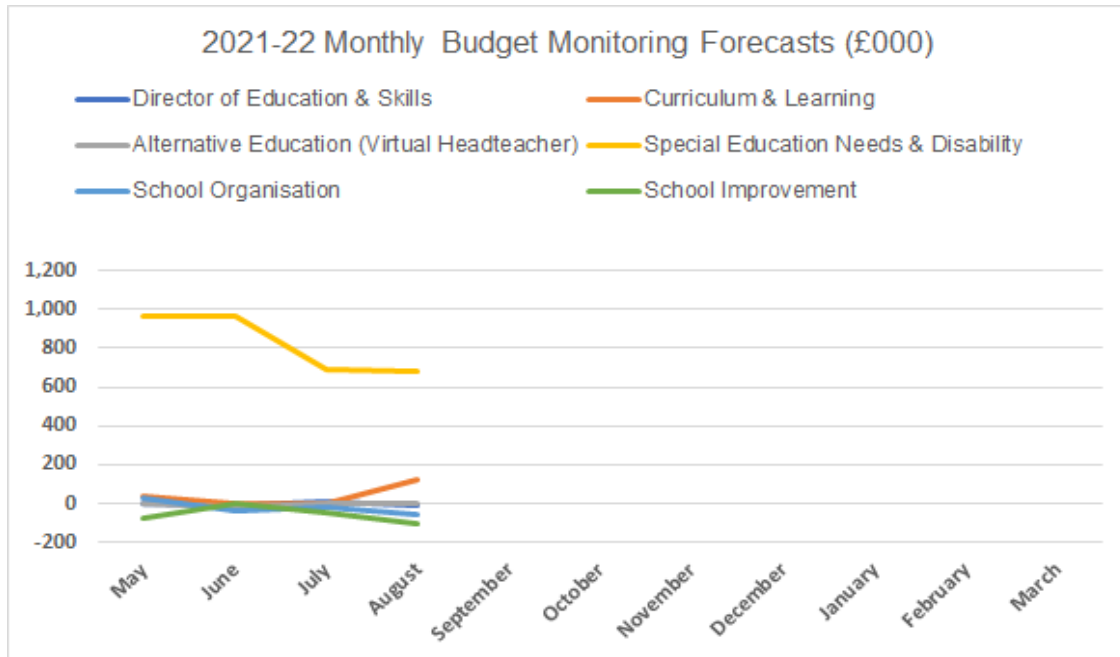
Placement costs are the major expenditure in CSC and have been supported by growth in this year's budget. Rigorous management decision making, and oversight ensures external placements are used only where this best meets the children's needs and for the time required. The service is on target to achieve the identified savings for this year 2021/22.

There are plans in place to increase in-house children's home residential capacity within the County both to increase local provision and to reduce the use and cost of external placements. We have submitted a match funding bid to DfE to further support this work and we will be informed of the outcome in November. There are several ongoing schemes at Kyloe House which are all funded by external grant, including the development of a new administration building.

**Education and Skills Service**

The forecast position at the end of August is £0.637 million forecast overspend, of which £0.513 million is categorised as business as usual and £0.124 million due to Covid-19.

The graph below provides an analysis of the forecast outturn, over the year to date:



The reasons for the forecast position for Education and Skills are primarily due to a forecast overspend of £0.683 million in Special Educational Needs and Disability.

### Dedicated Schools Grant

The forecast position at the end of August is a £0.965 million underspend across the High Needs block (£0.795 million) and Schools Block (£0.217 million) due to:

- a. Several high-cost placements at Independent Special Schools have ended in the Summer 2021 term reducing the forecast position by £0.434 million.
- b. Contain Management Outbreak Grant of £0.450 million is being utilised instead of High Needs Block funding to meet the costs of SEN Support Services as they support vulnerable learners on their return to school.
- c. Funding of £0.191 million has been returned to the authority relating to overfunding of school places at two Middle Schools turned Primary Schools as estimated pupil numbers were overstated.

### Capital Programme

Education and Skills' capital programme for 2021-22 was approved by full Council in February 2021. This now includes any budget re-profiling required from 2020-21 year end. There is currently no forecast variance.

### Department-wide



A recent review of the delivery of those savings for Education and Skills has been conducted and whilst the savings related to the Skills service and the School Meals service were not deemed a council saving, alternative savings have been identified and are expected to be achieved in full.

## 7. Implications

<b>Policy</b>	n/a
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Many of the measures included in the framework have a value for money component. At the end of August 2021, Children's Social Care has a forecast of an £0.727 million underspend, of which £0.867 million overspend is a result of Covid-19; while Education and Skills forecast £0.637 million overspend, of which £0.513 million is categorised as business as usual and £0.124 million due to Covid-19.
<b>Legal</b>	The report refers to the time scales for care proceedings.
<b>Procurement</b>	n/a
<b>Human Resources</b>	Having enough experienced social workers is essential for a high performing Children's Social Care service.
<b>Property</b>	n/a
<b>Equalities</b>	n/a
(Impact Assessment attached)	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	n/a
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	The performance framework includes measures on offending.
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	The framework includes a number of measures relevant to providing services to customers

<b>Carbon reduction</b>	n/a
<b>Wards</b>	All

## 8. Background papers:

Details of the County Council's performance management arrangements including access to the Northumberland web-enabled performance system can be found at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Policy/Performance.aspx#corporateperformancemanagementarrangements>

## 9. Report sign off

Monitoring Officer	Neil Masson
Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

## 10. Author and Contact Details

This report has been prepared on behalf of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services. For further information, contact Alan Hartwell at [Alan.Hartwell@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Hartwell@northumberland.gov.uk).

## Appendix A - Children's Social Care

### June-September 2021 benchmarking



#### Children's social care

Latest National Average (NA) represented by black bar | with the actual NA figures to the right of the bars

Where the Short Term Trend is blank, there is no Short Term Trend available

Theme	Measure	NCC v Eng	Latest NCC fig.	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Actual NA
Care Leavers	% care leavers in higher ed (beyond A level)	Better	10.7		↑	6.0
	% in education, employment or training	Worse	50.0	↓	↓	53.0
	% living in suitable accommodation	Better	97.0	+	+	85.0
	% who we are in touch with	Better	100.0	+	+	80.0
Child Protection	Rate per 10K subject to child protection plans	Worse	62.0	↓	↑	43.0
Children Looked After (CLA)	% of CLA in a "children's home"	Better	12.0	+	+	13.0
	% of CLA living with foster carers	Worse	65.0	+	↓	72.0
	% of CLA who moved placement 3 times or more	Worse	13.0	↑	↓	11.0
	% of long term CLA who lived in the same placement for the previous 2 years	Better	71.0	↑	↑	68.0
	% of new placements under 20 miles and inside LA boundary	Better	64.4		↑	50.0
	% who left care to be adopted	Better	19.0		↑	12.0
	Average no. days to move in with adoptive family	Worse	490.0	↑	+	363.0
	Average no. of weeks for care proceedings	Better	40.0	↑	↓	43.0
	Rate per 10K of Children Looked After	Worse	69.0	↑	↑	67.0
Youth Justice	Re-offending	Better	15.1	↑	↑	33.0

**Appendix B – Education June / July 2021 benchmarking:**

Latest National Average (NA) represented by black bar | with the actual NA figures to the right of the bars

For indicators with an asterisk\* the black line is the previous year's figure, as there is no national average to compare against.

Theme	Measure	NCC v Eng	Latest NCC fig.	Short Term Trend	Long Term Trend	Actual NA
Early Years	% take up of early education for eligible 2 yr olds	Better	87.0	↑	↑	69.0
Post-16	% of 16-17 year olds NEET or Not Known	Better	4.9	↔	↔	5.5
Primary	% of pupils in good or outstanding primary schools	Same	87.3	↔	↔	87.3
	Number of permanent exclusions in academic year*	Better	0.0		↑	3.0
School Organisation	% getting their first choice of primary school	Better	98.4	↔	↔	90.2
	% getting their first choice secondary school	Better	97.6	↔	↔	82.2
	Permanently excluded pupils back in education within 6 days*	Better	97.6	↔	↑	72.2
Secondary	% of pupils in good or outstanding sec. schools	Worse	66.1	↔	↔	79.0
	Number of permanent exclusions in academic year*	Better	44.0		↑	47.0
SEND	% of EHCPs completed in 20 weeks (monthly fig)	Better	100.0	↔	↑	58.0
	Number of fixed term exclusions for SEND support pupils*	Worse	592.0	↓	↑	391.0
	Number of fixed term excursions for SEND EHCP pupils*	Worse	158.0	↓	↑	111.0
	Number of SEND EHCP pupils permanently excluded*	Same	0.0	↔	↑	0.0
	Number of SEND Support pupils permanently excluded*	Same	12.0	↔	↑	12.0

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## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

**TITLE OF REPORT: Children's Homes Placement Sufficiency**

**Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services**

**Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson**

**Report prepared by Liz Spaven Senior Manager for Residential & Family Placement Services.**

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#### **Purpose of report**

This report is presented to outline the key issues and challenges in relation to placement sufficiency for Looked After Children. The sufficiency strategy is currently being reviewed and updated and will be presented to FACS in January 2022.

#### **Recommendations**

To note the contents of the report and make any comments for inclusion in the 2022/24 Sufficiency strategy update.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report links to the Living priority of the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2022

#### **Key issues**

1. To ensure that NCC is meeting its sufficiency duties.
2. To ensure that key actions are in place that will support the provision of placements for looked after children and care leavers.
3. Placement sufficiency and availability is a key element of the independent review of children's social care with an interim report noting that the challenges and shortfalls of the current system in providing timely placements for some children.

#### **Background**

Northumberland County Council's (NCC) Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019 - 2022 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation to children in care and care leavers.

We aim to provide the right service at the right time for the right families recognising that at times families require additional support to help them stay together. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that we do. If it is

not safe for children to stay at home then we will intervene to ensure they are given the care, support and stability that they deserve.

As corporate parents, underpinned by our leadership pledge, we will strive relentlessly to provide the best quality care and support to our looked after children and care leavers that we can. We recognise the importance of safe and secure placements to ensure children in our care live happy, healthy lives and achieve the best possible outcomes that they can. This is provided through well supported placements that meet the child's needs. We will place our children in a family setting wherever we can, unless their needs are better met in residential or other care settings.

We offer a range of placements tailored to meet the individual needs of children. This can include special guardianship (SGO), foster care, children's homes, adoption or supported accommodation.

We know we are faced with several challenges which are highlighted below and we detail some of the actions that we are putting in place to address them. The sufficiency strategy once it is completed will give a much more detailed overview of the range of needs and the actions we will take and how we will measure our success.

### Sufficiency Duty

The duty to provide or procure placements for Children Looked After (Children in Care) is explicit in the Children Act 1989. These regulations require a strategy to be in place that describes how local authorities intend to provide sufficient care placements for its children in care. The introduction of Sufficiency Statutory Guidance (2010) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations has provided further clarity on the implementation of section 22G of the Act.

The Statutory Guidance sets out a requirement for local authorities to work with key partners to be able to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area.

### Placement of children in care

Northumberland's children in care population as at the end of September 2021 was 399 (rate of 70 per 10,000 of under 18 population). The placements of these children are:

<b>LAC at year end by placement (31st March)</b>	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Current (Sep-21)
<b>Foster placements</b>	73.0%	71.4%	65.5%	66.0%
Placed for adoption	5.0%	3.0%	5.5%	5.0%
Placement with parents	6.0%	8.3%	13.9%	12.0%
Other placement in the community	x	3.9%	2.7%	3.0%
Children's homes, secure units and hostels	11.0%	9.9%	7.7%	9.0%
Other residential settings	2.0%	2.8%	3.6%	4.0%
Residential schools	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.8%
Other placements	x	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%

The number of children in care has reduced over the last 6 months (as at 31/03/21 the number of children in care was 444). This reduction is due to several factors including the number of children placed at home being reduced due to the discharging of a care order, special guardianship or adoption order being granted. However, the overall percentage of



children looked after who are placed in foster care has been impacted by the increased numbers of children who have been placed with parents.

NCC have continued to maximise the in-house provision of foster carers with the reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements remaining low. Despite the ongoing challenges due to the pandemic, the fostering team have been creative and resourceful in securing children with in house foster carers and recruitment activity has been positive. Foster carers have also worked collaboratively through the pandemic challenges and showed great resilience and commitment to children in care.

The COVID-19 pandemic did impact on the timeliness of care proceedings with, for example, a delay in proceedings concluding, adoption hearings being deferred. As new ways of working have become established this has enabled cases to conclude and the court is progressing through delayed cases.

An increase in the number of children accommodated in residential provision is due to the complex needs of some children whose needs could not be met in a family environment. Meeting the placement and support needs of these young people in a timely way remains the biggest challenge for our placement provision and this is reflected nationally through the independent review of children's social care. Further to this, the availability of emergency accommodation particularly for children and young people with complex needs also remains a challenge on the occasions when this is needed.

As of the 04/10/2021 52 children are living in children's homes. Of these, 11 live in 3 provisions operated by NCC and are located within the County. Children placed within our in-house children's homes continue to thrive. The staff teams within the homes have positively managed the pandemic and continued to support and deliver a high and robust level of care to the children in placement. The remaining 41 children live in children's homes operated by independent providers of whom 18 are located within Northumberland

The average duration of a residential placement operated by NCC over the previous four years is 845.5 days, compared to 457.5 days of a non NCC operated home. As permanence supports children having a sense of security, continuity, commitment, and identity to support them through childhood, this 84.8% increase in placement stability reinforces that placements operated by NCC offer a greater resilience and commitment to our children therefore, providing evidence to support plans to develop our NCC provision for our most vulnerable children. (see section below)

The Kinship Assessment and Support Team (KAST) have progressed a number of key areas regarding support to special guardians. Virtual monthly training sessions are taking place, a support and advice line and support is also commissioned from SGO Support Service, Family Action.

The Accommodation Service within NAS takes the lead in securing appropriate accommodation for young people open to services and works jointly with children's commissioning, housing and framework providers to source appropriate accommodation. A new accommodation framework has been in place in January 2021 increasing the availability of appropriate accommodation for this group of young people.

Work continues to take place to promote staying put as a positive option for young people including the development of a new in-house staying put policy, living together agreement and future awareness raising sessions for current foster carers.

### **Future Actions**

Northumberland is collaborating with the 11 other local authorities in the North East (NE) Region to implement the Mockingbird programme. The Mockingbird programme is an innovative method of delivering foster care using an extended family model which provides sleepovers and short breaks, peer support, regular joint planning and training, and social activities. The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families. This model will help to reduce the current pressure by supporting placement stability and foster carer retention at scale and compliments the strategic aims of NE LA's to grow in-house fostering provision and keep children close to home.

Strengthening support to our in house foster carers is also being progressed by the delivery of training that will use the foundations of a Non-Violent Resistance Parenting Approach and will include attachment based parenting principles to support connection and co-regulation. This will impact positively on placement stability regarding more complex children that have experienced trauma and loss and as a result can present with challenging behaviours.

In 2018, a business case was submitted and agreed with the proposal being to build 2 new four-bedroom children's homes within Northumberland, which will provide medium to long term care for children aged 6 - 17 years old. This was to be funded from the Childrens Homes Provision in the MTFP. Due to various complicating factors the progression of the new builds has been delayed. A bid has also been made to the DfE to match fund the project of the total build costs. This will give the local authority the opportunity to further maximising opportunities for meeting its sufficiency duty.

To achieve best value, the designs have been altered to accommodate 5 children in each of the new builds. In order to maximise sufficiency a review of our current children's homes was carried out. During this review it was established that one of the homes would be suitable to provide a 2-bedroom extension. This will improve our sufficiency in Northumberland by 12 residential placements, reducing our dependency on independent providers.

New legislation came into force in September 2021 in relation to placing vulnerable children under the age of 16 in unregulated accommodation as part of a series of reforms to drive up standards in children's social care. Children in care under 16 years of age will no longer be allowed to be accommodated in unregulated independent or semi-independent placements. Northumberland have not placed any children under 16 in bespoke accommodation in this year. While the aim of this legislation is to ensure the most vulnerable are cared for in settings that best meet their needs, this places even more pressure on already scarce resources needed to accommodate young people who need emergency accommodation and where authorities have used this, it is in the absence of any alternative placement options.

National standards are likely to be introduced for unregulated settings that are accommodating 16 and 17-year-old children in care and care leavers, to raise the bar for the quality of this provision and ensure consistency across the country. This will create further challenge for NCC when all registered placement provision options have been exhausted when a child needs to be accommodated. Opportunities to develop emergency provision are underway with consideration being made to a 2 bedded emergency home.

### **Conclusion**

Updating the Sufficiency Strategy is a priority to ensure this reflects Northumberland’s vision and priorities for children in our care. This should be seen alongside our continuous improvement plan and our corporate parenting strategy and action plan. Once the Sufficiency Strategy has been updated, it will be presented back to the committee in January 2022

### **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Capital funds have been agreed corporately in relation to children homes new builds. Revenue for staffing the new builds has been proposed through an invest to save proposal.  All budgets are closely monitored to ensure value for money regarding the placements and provision it provides.
<b>Legal</b>	Statutory responsibility as corporate parents
<b>Procurement</b>	
<b>Human Resources</b>	HR implications for staffing new residential units
<b>Property</b>	
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached)  Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	This report is part of the Risk Management systems in place to check on the standards and service provision for looked after children and care leavers
<b>Crime Disorder &amp;</b>	

<b>Customer Consideration</b>	
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Improvements to the health and wellbeing of our children in care and care leavers
<b>Wards</b>	All

**Background papers:**

**Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Helen Lancaster
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

**Author and Contact Details**

Report Author: Liz Spaven, Senior Manager, Residential & Family Placements  
 (01670) 626262 [liz.spaven@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:liz.spaven@northumberland.gov.uk)



## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

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#### **TITLE OF REPORT: Social Worker Recruitment and Retention**

**Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services**

**Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson**

**Report prepared by Adele Wright, Head of Service Social Work and Safeguarding**

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#### **Purpose of report**

To provide an overview of the challenges of and responses to the recruitment and retention of social workers.

#### **Recommendations**

- To note the contents of the report
- To identify any issues for further scrutiny

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the Living and Learning priority in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021

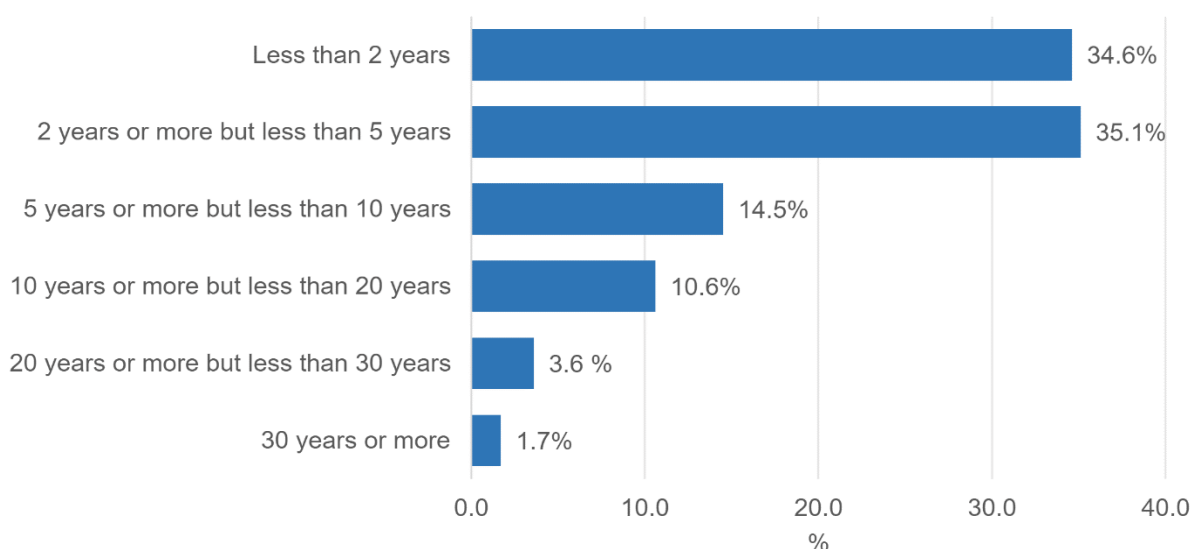
#### **Key issues**

1. Social work recruitment and retention presents a perennial challenge nationally, regionally and in Northumberland and has been further compounded by the covid pandemic. It is one of the key areas of focus in the national independent review of children's social care currently taking place.
2. Locally, the issue is recruiting sufficient numbers of experienced social workers and ensuring retention of those that we develop in the academy, once they move into safeguarding teams.
3. The academy continues to be a supportive model attracting newly qualified workers and the team management group is stable and recruited from within existing staff.
4. Gaps in particular teams increases pressure on existing staff, impacting staff wellbeing and sickness absence.
5. Innovative approaches to recruitment need to be applied and creative opportunities to retain staff need to be further developed.

## **Background**

Recruitment of qualified children’s social workers into Local Authority safeguarding teams is a challenge across the country. The Department of Education 2020 children's social work force return informs us that in 2020 31,854 FTE children and family social workers were employed by Local Authorities. In the same year, 4,294 left the profession resulting in a turnover rate of 13.5%. Of those staff who left the profession nearly 70% had been in the role for less than 5 years. As indicated above, the national review of children's social care has workforce as one of its priority areas.

### **Percentage of FTE leavers in the year by time in service, England 2020**



A healthy and stable workforce underpins effective support for children and their families. Good social work is relationship based and therefore minimising the number and changes of social workers that children and families work with is important in achieving this.

Covid has exacerbated concerns about staff morale and turnover. A longitudinal study of children and family social workers published by the Department of Education and updated in 2021 highlights

***The impacts of Covid-19 on social workers’ experiences have been challenging in terms of increased feelings of stress and anxiety, more complex cases, and depleted relationships with colleagues and to a lesser extent, service users. ASYEs in particular report higher levels of stress and anxiety as a result of Covid-19, than more experienced social workers***

***Key features of working culture which could influence decisions to leave or to stay emerged in the qualitative interviews as: a supportive working environment; being treated well and feeling valued both by immediate line managers and the organisation as a whole;***

Within the North East region, the issues are acknowledged by all 12 Local Authorities who work collaboratively to create solutions and attempt to manage the social work market. A successful example of this over recent years has been the Memorandum of Understanding relating to agency worker pay rates which were escalating as Authorities competed to secure the agency workers available, by offering increasingly higher pay rates. In spite of the co-operation social workers are very mobile within the relatively small region and staff are frequently attracted by opportunities in other Authorities. As the most northerly Authority geographically Northumberland has the additional challenge of attracting people to travel to the upper limits of the region.

### **The Northumberland Position**

Over the last 12 months in Northumberland, the turnover rate for social work qualified staff in front line roles has been 16.99% with 35 social workers leaving the Authority. This compares to 14.71% in the previous 12 months. Analysis of the reasons for leaving indicates that approx. 40% moved to a different social work role in another Authority or the voluntary sector. 20% went to work for an agency, a further 20% stopped working due to ill health or caring responsibilities and the remainder moved out of the area or were on temporary contracts.

We have employed 20 agency staff over the period, which is a rate of 9.7%, compared to 9.4% in the previous 12-month period.

The sickness rate amongst this group (% days lost to sickness in the last 12 months) is 4.93%, compared to a rate of 3% last year and an NCC target of 3.5%. The rate of 4.93% is more in line with the 2019 pre covid rate of 5.14%

We have developed a workforce strategy that has recruitment, retention and staff wellbeing at its core in an attempt to redress the increasing turnover, recruit newly qualified and experienced staff and retain them once in our employ by offering a supportive, learning environment in which to progress their career.

### **What has been working well**

- Northumberland have a well-established and successful social work academy which is currently supporting its 7<sup>th</sup> cohort. Newly qualified social workers join the academy on completing their social work degree and spend the first 6 months of their careers being nurtured and supported into the role with learning opportunities and protected caseloads. The Northumberland academy model is well regarded in the region and has been replicated by other Local Authorities and competition for the available places is strong. This means that we are able to recruit the best newly qualified social workers available and 'grow our own' staff.
- Although we have had some turnover from within the academy staff group this was predominantly from cohort 1 and we have learned from the feedback from this cohort and now manage the transition between the academy and social work teams more gradually. Turnover from later cohorts has been much lower. We have links with the University and can feedback about the requirements for training for qualifying social workers to prepare them for the role.

- Northumberland have a strong front line team manager group. Most have been promoted from within our own staff group and are committed to the organisation. We have been able to support and train these team managers with external training opportunities offered by the Department of Education and the Firstline leadership programme but also with training packages created internally. Recently the teams were restructured to ensure that each manager has a smaller staff group to supervise to enable them to offer additional support and be able to quality assure the practice better.
- Children's social care have adopted a new practice model known as 'Signs of Safety' which has been embedded with extensive training and support for staff as they familiarise themselves with a new approach. The model requires much closer working with families and the feedback from staff is that they enjoy this way of working which fits with their professional ethics. This offer has attracted some new staff to join Northumberland as they are aware of the model in place and support available.
- Practice days are undertaken by senior managers on a monthly basis focusing on a specific service area each month. On these days staff are spoken to with the aim of understanding the culture and the level of support and supervision on offer in the teams. Without exception staff relay that they feel well supported by their line managers and by the organisation and that they enjoy a positive working environment. They particularly appreciate the relationships that they have with colleagues and peers which is facilitated by working from an office base. Exit interviews are undertaken whenever staff leave and generally staff also report that Northumberland is a supportive organisation to work for and they have been positive about their line managers.
- Front line social work staff have continued to work during the Covid pandemic. They have continued to visit and support families face to face and have run complex meetings and court hearings virtually. This has been without the usual support of their colleagues and managers on hand in the office. In spite of the restrictions social workers and managers have devised creative methods to keep in touch and offer support to each other. Nationally the efforts and resilience of social workers has received minimal recognition but in Northumberland they have done an excellent job of continuing to offer services to children and families in the challenging circumstances.

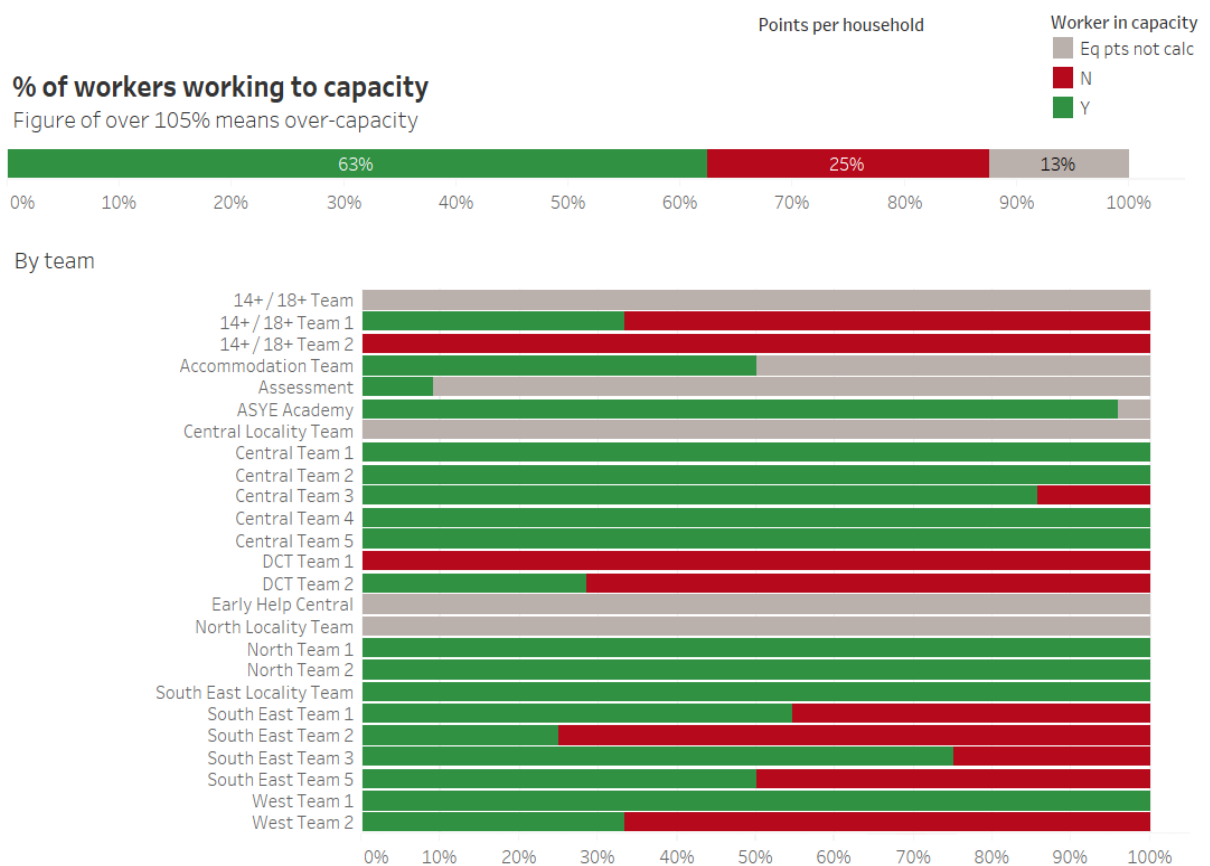
### **What are we concerned about**

- Although we can successfully recruit newly qualified social workers it is much more challenging to fill vacancies with experienced social workers. We need to ensure that we retain the newly qualified workers that we are investing in so that we can replenish the workforce in a sustainable way. We have experienced some turnover in the newly qualified group and we look carefully at the reasons when one of these workers leaves. Usually, it is due to ill health or a realisation that the role is just not suitable for them. 6 out of the 68 staff have left for this reason. We have only had 2 out of 68 staff leave to work in a similar role for another Local Authority, 2 have left to work for an agency 1 has gone travelling around the world. The concern is that if we are not able to retain the newly qualified staff or recruit sufficient numbers of experienced workers, we will have teams filled with inexperienced workers with



insufficient numbers of staff who could coach or mentor the new starters as they learn the role.

- The challenges around recruitment and retention are particularly difficult in one or two of the teams. This does change from time to time but at the moment the issues are pressing for the South East locality team based in Blyth and also the Disabled Children’s and 14+ teams. Staff vacancies and sickness absence places additional pressure on workers in the teams as the cases need to be managed. Teams do work cooperatively to share work wherever possible but inevitably caseloads will increase. The table below illustrates the current caseloads for the social work teams. Those highlighted green are operating within the recommended caseload, the staff in red are above the recommended capacity. SE, 14+ and DCT are clearly the teams with higher vacancy rates and consequently staff in these teams are carrying more cases.



- A consequence of unfilled vacancies and increased caseloads can be work related stress resulting in sickness absence. Work related stress and anxiety is the major reason for sickness absence in children’s social work teams. This is managed well by team managers in conjunction with HR but the pattern is obvious when looking at absenteeism rates in particular teams. At the beginning of the Covid lock down we experienced a reduction in sickness levels as staff were benefitting from an improved work life balance whilst working from home, however the sickness rate has returned to its pre Covid level and we need to continue to address the issue of burn out and stress in the workforce whilst ensuring service delivery continues.

- In spite of efforts to improve our advertising of vacancies with ‘talking heads’ of social workers and promotion of the benefits of working for Northumberland the number of applications submitted to our rolling recruitment campaign is minimal.

### **What are we doing to address the challenge**

- A work force steering group has been established with representatives from HR and children’s social care to implement the workforce strategy.
- Work force is a key priority in the improvement plan which also aligns with the strategy and focuses attention on delivery against the actions.
- We continue to learn from feedback from exit interviews and other staff about how we can shape and improve the support that we offer.
- We have adapted the transition from the academy to the safeguarding teams to continue to offer support to the workers, so they do not experience a ‘cliff edge’ when they leave the academy environment.
- A facilitated development session is planned for early November how we could improve and invigorate our recruitment programme.
- We are creating a mixed economy of new starters with a well-established apprenticeship programme and the step up to social work to further enhance the quality of the academy recruits.
- We continue to promote the health and wellbeing of staff using the corporate offer and other team initiatives.
- The advertising literature continues to be refreshed to emphasise the benefits of working for Northumberland e.g.: care lease scheme, flexible working, active Northumberland membership.
- Promotion of the excellent CPD offer available and encouraging staff to take advantage of the training opportunities available.
- Continue to work with the regional work force group and particularly with the newly formed regional recruitment and retention group which is chaired by the Northumberland Service Director.

### **What do we need to do more of**

- The workforce steering group needs to be consolidated and develop a performance dashboard to track progress against the objectives.
- Implement learning and actions identified from the development session planned for November.
- Review the academy to determine how the resource could be used to support other teams/staff who may be struggling with capacity.
- Consider creation of specialist teams and posts that may be attractive to experienced staff and retain current workers and/or attract new and experienced social work staff.
- Use the regional resources more collaboratively to attract experienced workers to the region
- Work closely with the Universities to ensure that the newly qualified workers are as prepared for the role that they will undertake as possible to manage unrealistic expectations.

## **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	Supports the children's social care work force strategy
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Improved recruitment and retention of social workers reduces agency staff costs
<b>Legal</b>	Related to statutory responsibilities undertaken by social workers
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	Supports workforce strategy
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Reputational risk associated with Ofsted judgement which considers work force capacity and planning
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Recruitment and retention critical for delivering best service to children and families.
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Sufficient recruitment and retention has an impact on workloads health and wellbeing of the employed staff group.
<b>Wards</b>	County wide

## **Background papers:**

### **Report sign off.**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Helen Lancaster
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

**Author and Contact Details**

**Adele Wright Head of Service, Social work and Safeguarding 01670 623695**



## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**4 NOVEMBER 2021**

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#### **North East Submission to the Care Review**

Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Guy Renner Thompson

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#### **Purpose of report**

This report provides an overview of the North East Association of Directors of Children's Services submission to the ongoing National Care Review.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report and the North East submission.
2. Identify if any issues need further scrutiny.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to all priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

#### **Key issues**

1. The report from the North East region was the only one of its kind submitted to the National Care Review.
2. There are two Big Asks:
  - The Care Review must pass Government to develop an ambitious, cross departmental strategy to reduce and then end child poverty as part of its levelling up agenda.
  - The Care Review must also recognise the impact of reduction in Local Authority funding and press for significant investment to reverse the loss of early help

capacity in local areas.

3. There are also six headline recommendations covering:

- partnership approach to working with families
- statutory duty to collaborate around early help
- diverse and skilled workforce
- care provider market overhaul
- regulatory review of care settings
- collaboration across the current system

4. The North East data is stark:

- lowest life expectancy at birth
- higher level of economic inactivity
- lowest gross weekly pay
- poorest health outcomes
- highest proportion of children eligible for Free School Meals
- steepest increase in relation to child poverty for 14/15 (20%) to 19/20 (37%)

5. The demand data in the North East is also significant:

- highest rate of referrals to children's social care
- highest rate of statutory involvement with children's social care
- highest rate of children in care
- mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues in assessment factors are higher than the national average.

6. Key themes identified which link to the recommendations:

- Early help
- Partnerships and integration
- Children's workforce
- Care Markets
- Ofsted and regulatory framework
- Current system and family justice

## **Background**

Earlier this year the Government announced the long-awaited manifesto commitment to review the children's social care system to make sure children and young people get the support they need. The review is being led by Josh McAllister and there has been a recent update published called 'Case for Change'.

The North East region via the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) mandated a regional response and appointed 3 ex Directors of Children's Services, who were external to the region, to undertake the work.

The work included:

- A North East region submission to the Independent Care Review was completed in 12 weeks (from April to July). No Local Authorities are individually named.
- Directors led 'deep dives' into each of the agreed themes and held the ring on development of the report. Strong engagement of regional groups, many other stakeholders and the regional project team gave exceptional support to the work and ensured a wide range of contributions.
- Three Check and Challenge sessions were held, bringing an external and national perspective.
- All key stakeholders were kept informed through regular bulletins describing plans and progress and inviting contributions.
- 'Road-testing' with wide consultation including:
  - Attendance and presentation at LA7 and Tees Valley Chief Executive and leader meetings.
  - Attendance and presentation at regional Lead member meetings.
- Chief Executive consideration and sign off by Directors.

The report has two Big Asks relating to levelling up and poverty along with ensuring appropriate funding for children's services. It also has 6 high level recommendations and 15 additional themed ones included in the report.

The report has now been submitted to the Review and there was significant media interest at the time both from local sources and national professional publications.

The North East Association of Directors of Children's Services group was the only region to submit a report and Josh McAllister is coming to a regional branch meeting in October to further delve into the issues raised.

A link to the report is provided on the electronic version of this report on the Council's website.

## Implications

<b>Policy</b>	This report seeks to influence national policy in relation to the National Care Review.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There are no immediate financial implications, but the report seeks to highlight the need for additional national funding.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications.
<b>Procurement</b>	N/A
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A
<b>Property</b>	N/A
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) <b>No</b>	This report is targeted and highlighting the needs of the most vulnerable children and families in our region.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	N/A
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	N/A
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	N/A
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	N/A
<b>Wards</b>	N/A

## Report sign off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner Thompson



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# **Northumberland County Council**

## **Family and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2021 - 2022**

Page 45

Chris Angus, Scrutiny Officer  
01670 622604 - [Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk)

22 October 2021 - CA

Agenda Item 9

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:

- Early Years
- Education and Schools
- Special education needs and disability
- Adult and Community Education
- Training and Vocational Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Youth Offending
- Social Services for Children and Young People
- Children's Health
- Teenage Sexual Health
- Looked After Children
- Safeguarding – Children
- Youth Services
- Family Services
- Children's Centres

(b) To oversee and monitor school improvement, as follows:

- (i) To receive feedback on the Ofsted inspection of schools.
- (ii) To support the work of the County Council and the progress of schools on the School Intervention and Support Programme in specified categories.
- (iii) To receive an annual report about the number of schools that have been on the School Intervention and Support Programme, the reason(s) for their inclusion, the support given by the Council and the success of this support.
- (iv) To receive an annual report on the performance of schools.

## ISSUES TO BE SCHEDULED/CONSIDERED

### **Regular updates:**

Safeguarding Activity Trends Report  
Finance and Performance Six Monthly Report  
Children Permanently Excluded from School/Elective Home Education  
Schools performance  
Joint Targeted Area Inspection

### **Issues to be raised:**

### **Themed Scrutiny:**

### **Issues to be scheduled:**

School Capital Investment  
Children Permanently Excluded from School/Elective Home Education  
Education (Guidance about the cost of School Uniforms) Act 2021

**Northumberland County Council  
Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme 2021 - 2022**

4 November 2021

Page 48	Placement Sufficiency	Report on the number of places in homes for looked after Children
	Finance and Performance report	Regular report into the financial position and performance metrics of the service. The Committee is to receive assurance and identify any further areas for scrutiny.
	NE submission to the Care Review	For info
	Social Worker Recruitment	

2 December 2021

	Northumberland Skills Pathfinder - Curriculum Research	The report asks Cabinet and FACS to review and endorse a sample of content and findings from a suite of reports resulting from a range of internal and externally commissioned skills and employment based research activities conducted on the subject of curriculum development priorities within Northumberland County.
	<b>Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25</b>	The report asks Cabinet and FACS to review and approve for publication Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-25. The strategic skills plan is the conclusion of research undertaken related to Northumberland curriculum development opportunities, aligns to Northumberland Economic Strategy

	CYPS Waiting Times	2019-24 and sets out the approach to delivering the skills elements of the economic vision, economic priorities, and the mechanism to translate ambition into impact in terms of skills, employment and inclusive growth.
6 January 2022		
	Schools Forum Summary of Decisions taken: Autumn Term	Report into the decisions taken by school's forum during the Autumn term. Request by the Committee
3 February 2022		
Page 49	<b>PRE-SCRUTINY:- School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2023/2024 Academic Year</b>	Annual pre-scrutiny report on school admissions arrangements. The Committee's comments will be presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 8 February 2022.
	Adult Learning Service Annual Report: Learning and Skills Service	The annual report for Learning and Skills Service is provided to report the performance against the Education Inspection Framework; present the work of the Careers Guidance Team and understand the role and impact of the Employability and Skills team within the wider service. The Learning and Skills Service leads a number of specialist areas and provides training for young people age 16-19, adults and apprentices across eight campuses in Northumberland as well as training in the workplace
3 March 2022		

	<p>Director of Education Annual Report: Key Educational Outcomes (2020-2021 Academic Year)</p> <p>Safeguarding Activity Trend</p> <p>CIS Benchmarking Annual Report</p>	<p>Annual report on the key educational outcomes of the previous academic year. The Committee will be asked to identify any further areas for scrutiny.</p> <p>To provide analysis of social work activity trends and case allocation as well as highlighting national developments regarding the Department for Education safeguarding indicators.</p> <p>To inform members of how Northumberland compares with other areas in 2020/21 based on provisional data in the field of children in need and child protection.</p>
7 April 2022		



**Northumberland County Council**  
**Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2021-2022**

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
Page 51	17 June 2021	Impact of COVID pandemic on SEND services	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted and the support provided over this period be recognised.	Further report to come to the committee on CYPS, waiting times and impact of COIVD of children's mental health.
2	17 June 2021	Winter Support Grant Update	<b>RESOLVED</b> that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The content of the report and the successful implementation of the initiatives undertaken with the funding from the Winter Support Grant be noted.</li> <li>2. The strategy, roll-out and benefits of the activities for children and young people organised through the Holiday Activity Fund across Northumberland during the Easter Holiday be noted.</li> </ol>	No further action

3	2 September 2021	Schools Forum Role and Decision Making Powers	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the report be noted	No further action
4	2 September 2021	SEND Revisit	<b>RESOLVED</b> that:  1. The information be noted;  2. A regular update be provided to allow the Committee to provide advice and support.	A further update to return to the Committee at a later date.
5	2 September 2021	Peer Review For Care Leavers Service Update	<b>RESOLVED</b> that:  1. Members were assured that there was an action plan to take forward improvements to services for care leavers as part of continuous improvement planning in children's social care; and  2. Members would continue to have an overview of the Northumberland offer for care leavers and understand their role as corporate parents for care leavers.	A further update to return to the Committee at a later date.
6	2 September 2021	Complaints Annual Report 2020/2021 – Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, And Continuing Health Care Services	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted.	Report to be split between Adults and Children. Report on Adult's Social Care only to return to the Committee in a year.
7	7 October 2021	<b>Seaton Valley Federation</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that <b>Cabinet</b> be advised that the Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 12 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments

8	7 October 2021	<b>Proposals for Atkinson House</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 12 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments
9	7 October 2021	<b>School Organisation Plan for 2021 – 2024</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that the Committee welcomed the plan and supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 12 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments
10	7 October 2021	<b>Education Infrastructure Contribution Policy</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 12 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments
11	7 October 2021	Children's Services Self-Assessment	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted.	A report to be brought on Home Placement Sufficiency.

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