



# 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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