

TITLE OF REPORT: Care, Wellbeing and Learning: Annual reports and plans for 2015/16

REPORT OF: Sheila Lock, Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval of a suite of annual reports and strategic documents for services for children, young people and families.

Background

2. This suite of action plans and annual reports is presented together to illustrate the considerable level of activity across services for adults, children, young people and families in Gateshead, and to fulfil the requirement for the Council to approve and publish a range of statutory annual reports.
3. The documents relate both to partnership activity led by the Children's Trust Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and to a range of Council services.
4. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is required to publish an Annual Report, and also refreshes the action plan for each year of the 3 year Business Plan.
5. Annual reports are also produced for the LSCB on the Independent Reviewing Officer function and around child protection.
6. The Council is also required to produce an annual report into its activities around fostering, adoption, and to publish a report into social care complaints.
7. The Council also published an annual report for Education Gateshead.

Proposal

8. The annual reports and strategies presented here provide both a look back at key activity in 2015/17 and an outline of plans for 2016/17 and beyond.
9. A summary of the key issues from each document is outlined below.

10. **LSCB Annual Report 2015-2016 and LSCB Action Plan for 2016-2017**

The LSCB Annual Report 2015-2016 details developments for both the LSCB itself and its partner agencies, of which Gateshead Council is one, in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the borough. Key areas include inspections of partner agencies (including the Ofsted inspection of the local authority), the Ofsted inspection of the Board itself and work to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation. The report also contains an analysis of data (including the increase in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans and continuing high numbers of unborn babies being made subject to child protection plans).

The LSCB Business Plan 2014-2017 sets the strategic direction for the LSCB and reinforces the specific role of the LSCB to lead, challenge and support learning and focuses on the specific role and remit of the Board. The action plan for 2016-2017 supports those three key priorities of leadership, challenge and learning including strengthening engagement, the redesign of Early Help services, reviewing Board effectiveness and learning from national best practice.

11. **Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2015-2016**

The Safeguarding Adults Board became a statutory partnership through the Care Act 2014 and this is the first annual report which the Board have had a requirement to produce. The report sets out how the Board has risen to the challenges of the prescribed in the Care Act 2014 and adopted an open and transparent approach to safeguarding adults that is person-led and outcome focused. The report also sets out progress in relation to the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan and relevant areas of performance data.

12. **Children's Services Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2015/16**

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 requires that Councils with Social Services responsibilities produce an Annual Report of their Statutory Children's Services Complaints Procedure. This annual report sets out details of the complaints and representations made during the period April 2015 – March 2016.

Information contained in the report provides the numbers and types of complaint received during this period and outlines changes or improvements to services as a result of complaints and other formal representations received. The report also provides statistical information regarding the issues received and the effectiveness of the Children's Services Complaints and Representations Procedure.

13. **Annual Report on Adults Complaints & Representations (Social Services) April 2015 – March 2016**

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 came into force on 1 April 2009. As part of the responsibilities set out in the Act, local authorities must produce an annual report on all complaints and representations received. This report fulfils Gateshead Council's

obligations and provides information on all representations received about the Council's Adult Social Care Services between 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016.

Information contained in the report provides a summary of the statistical information regarding the numbers and themes of complaints received together with a review of the effectiveness of the procedure. Some examples of service improvement are also included within the report.

14. Adoption Annual Report

The Adoption Service Annual Report 2015/2016 outlines the performance of the service during this period, detailing numbers of children adopted and adopters assessed and approved. The report also includes comments from the recent Ofsted inspection in relation to the performance of the Service and evidences that the service continues to perform well in relation to key areas such as adoption support, recruitment of adopters for children requiring adoption and the secure placement of children with their new families, with very low levels of disruption. . Recruitment of suitable adopters to meet the complex needs of waiting children will remain a priority as will the continuing provision and development of post adoption support. Ongoing reform including the regionalization of adoption services remains a central Government priority and the service will continue to adapt to meet evolving demands.

15. Fostering Service Annual Report

This is the Annual Report for Gateshead Council's Fostering Service covering the following areas for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016:

- Structure of the Fostering Service
- Payment for Skills
- Current foster carer population within Gateshead Council
- Referrals for fostering placements
- The use of Independent Fostering Agencies
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers
- Business undertaken by the Fostering Panel
- Service development

The report highlights the increased activities and work undertaken within the Service.

16. Independent Reviewing Officers Annual Report

The Statutory Guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers (2010) sets a clear framework for the production of the annual report.

The Independent Reviewing Officers' annual report 2015/16 outlines the performance of the service, the context and requirements within which it operates, the effectiveness and impact of the service and planned developments for 2016/17.

The service continues to have excellent outputs around the timeliness of reviews (99.1% held within timescale) and dissemination of plans and minutes have improved. The service continues to improve its practice in relation to the involvement

of children and young people and maintains the focus on establishing stable relationships between IROs and the looked after children and young people.

17. Child Protection Conference Chairs Annual Report

This report outlines the work of the Chairs of Child Protection Conferences. Although there is no statutory requirement to produce a report, this report is produced for the LSCB as part of its oversight and challenge role, and sets out the key performance data and outcomes from this part of the child protection system.

18. EducationGateshead (Learning and Schools) Annual Report

The Annual Report for educationGateshead assesses the performance of the Council's School Improvement Services using the following indicators:

- The performance of Gateshead children and young people in national assessments and examinations, ranging from the Early Years' Foundation Stage to Key Stage 5.
- The performance of schools in Gateshead in Ofsted Inspections.

All publically funded schools in Gateshead are considered within the report including academies and those locally maintained. The Annual Report identifies strengths and challenges for further improvement faced by the Schools and the Council's services working in partnership.

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Endorses the following reports
 - a. LSCB Action Plan 2016-17 and the annual report for 2015/16
 - b. Independent Reviewing Officers annual report for 2015/16
 - c. Child Protection Conference Chairs Annual report for 2015/16
- (ii) Approves the following reports:
 - a. Children's and Adult Services Annual Complaints Reports
 - b. Adoption Annual Report
 - c. Fostering Annual Report
 - d. EducationGateshead Annual Report

For the following reasons

- (i) To continue to ensure that the needs of children, young people and families continue to be met
- (ii) To ensure most effective use of resources and alignment of programmes to achieve the priorities in the council plan,
- (iii) To ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duties.

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report are consistent with Vision 2030, and in particular Creative Gateshead, Active and Healthy Gateshead and Sustainable Gateshead.
2. The proposals also directly support the delivery of the Council Plan, and Children Gateshead, the plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead.

Background

3. The Council and its partners remain engaged in the delivery of a wider range of activity to support children, young people and families across Gateshead.
4. There remain statutory requirements around children's trust arrangements, and in Gateshead partners have agreed to retain a plan as the basis for strategic action.
5. There is a statutory duty to publish annual reports of the activities of the LSCB, and around fostering and adoption, as well as an annual complaints report. All such reports are presented here for approval.

Consultation

6. The Cabinet Members for children and young people have been consulted. A variety of agencies have been engaged in the development of these strategies and annual reports, details of which are included in the reports themselves.

Alternative Options

7. The Council must produce annual reports into complaints, fostering and adoption. Therefore there are no alternatives to these reports being presented.
8. By publishing this suite of reports at the same time, partners and residents have the opportunity to review the wide range of activity across all themes.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that there are no financial implications as a result of this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – there are no specific implications arising from this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required.
 - c) **Property Implications** - there are no specific implications arising from this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required

10. **Risk Management Implication** - the development of effective strategies forms part of control measures for Care, Wellbeing and Learning.
11. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - each strategy and annual report has undertaken a Comprehensive Impact Assessment, and the outcomes from these have been built into each document.
12. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – there are a range of proposals in each strategy which seek to safeguard children and to reduce their risk taking behaviour where necessary. Specific issues are referenced in each document.
13. **Health Implications** – there are a range of proposals in the strategy documents which address tackling the causes of ill health and also reducing health inequality, both key elements in the Live Well Gateshead strategy.
14. **Sustainability Implications** - no major implications.
15. **Human Rights Implications** - proposals in the strategies support Article 6 – the right to education and article 8 – the right to a family life.
16. **Area and Ward Implications** - no specific implications