



FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Thursday, 3 March 2016 at 1.30 pm in the Bridges Room - Civic Centre

From the Chief Executive, Jane Robinson

Item Business

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Minutes of last meeting** (Pages 1 - 6)

The Committee is asked to approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 January 2016.

3. **Review of Child Protection in Gateshead - Evidence Gathering** (Pages 7 - 16)

Report of Interim Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

4. **Annual Conversation with Headteachers of Special Schools** (Pages 17 - 22)

Report of Interim Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

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Date: Wednesday, 24 February 2016

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GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 21 January 2016

PRESENT: Councillor M Brain

Councillors: B Oliphant, J Adams, B Clelland, J Graham,
K McCartney, D Robson, S Ronchetti, C Simcox, J Turnbull
and John Wilkinson

F28 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hawkins, S Craig, Caffrey, Geddes, Thompson, McNally and Co-opted members Malcolm Brown and Sasha Ban.

F29 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED - The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2015 be agreed as a correct record.

F30 **LIAISON WITH GATESHEAD YOUTH ASSEMBLY**

The Committee received a presentation from the Gateshead Youth Assembly (GYA) Chair, Ewan Taws, and Secretary, Jake Guthrie. It was noted that a weekend in November was used to plan priorities for the new year, which are;

- Emotional wellbeing
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child poverty
- Religious and racial harmony
- Staying safe

In terms of emotional wellbeing, work is ongoing to reprint posters and develop myth buster factsheets. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) continues to be big news and will be included on the myth buster factsheets, police cadets will also be invited to deliver their CSE presentation to the GYA to inform members on the issue. The GYA have been working with the North East Child Poverty Commission for three years and working with Gateshead Foodbank to provide Christmas presents and selection boxes to children and young people living in poverty. Part of the GYA's work this year will be to develop a poster around 'what poverty looks like', not just focused on financial poverty but also poverty of experience and opportunity, as poverty is often hidden it is important to raise awareness. In addition, work will be held with schools to map what action they take to alleviate the effects of poverty on their students.

Speakers will be invited to address the GYA around religious and racial harmony,

schools and youth clubs will be lobbied to follow suit. In terms of the staying safe priority, a campaign will be developed around risks, personal safety and how young people can make others feel by their behaviour.

It was noted that the GYA only have limited time and money and therefore only five main priorities were identified, however a position statement was provided which shows what the GYA stands for and what it wants to achieve going forward. It was confirmed that the group has become smaller as a lot of members have left, however the GYA continues to work on issues important to Gateshead and its young people.

It was queried why the group has lost members. It was confirmed that Valerie Ender, Youth Support Worker, now only works one day per week and the group has reduced to 24 from 62. It was suggested that this may be due to Val being less able to engage fully with schools, therefore not as many new members are being recruited.

It was questioned what funding avenues have been explored. It was noted that numerous bids have been submitted and work continues to look for funding opportunities, however as this is a Gateshead charity opportunities are limited and aimed at national based organisations.

It was also questioned how young people outside of education are engaged with. It was noted that a lot of awareness raising work is done through social media.

In terms of the position statement, clarification was sought on the rationale around requesting the voting age to be lowered. It was acknowledged that there will be a campaign for the voting age to be lowered to 16 as in some respects 16 year olds are treated as adults, for example are no longer eligible for a child's bus fare. The GYA feel that there is nothing that happens between the ages of 16 and 18 which makes 18 year olds better able to vote.

The point was made that excellent work has been carried out by Bede Primary School, as discussed at the last OSC meeting, around emotional health and wellbeing and it was suggested that this information be shared so work between the schools and GYA can be better aligned.

It was questioned whether the GYA has been involved in the consultation around the re-provision of the children and young people's mental health service. It was noted that the GYA have not been involved in the consultation, the Committee suggested that the group look at feeding into that consultation.

It was noted that the GYA's budget has been cut by two thirds, previously there were three workers, two full time and one part time, however now there is only one part time worker. This reduction in staffing has impacted on the work of the youth assembly and ambitions have had to be lowered. It was stated that if a worker could be employed for one additional day this would enable more bids for funding to be secured.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the information presented.

REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION IN GATESHEAD - EVIDENCE GATHERING

The Committee took part in an evidence gathering session on the review of child protection in Gateshead. The session was led by Yvonne Bartlett, Team Manager Referral and Assessment, and focused on one particular family, following the child and family's journey through the system, from initial contact and referral to a (strategy discussion) and eventual section 47 Child Protection Enquiry.

If concerns about the welfare of a child are raised during a Child in Need Assessment (CiN) it would be decided whether a strategy meeting is required. A strategy meeting will then be held within three working days, unless the case is complex. The strategy meeting will be held between the social care, police, health and any other appropriate agencies. The discussion will identify the level of risk and is an opportunity for agencies to share information they hold on the family. Following this meeting, if concerns are substantiated the case will progress to a section 47 enquiry, if unsubstantiated the case will either be closed or will continue under CiN.

Sgt Andrea Hall gave a police perspective on the process. A police officer from the Child Protection Unit will attend a strategy discussion, this will occasionally be done over the phone in emergency situations. The role of the police officer during these discussions is to provide information on the family, including convictions, address history and will look at the information shared by other agencies present at the meeting. The police will take the lead on an investigation if it is needed. In some cases an urgent joint response is required. During the strategy discussion it will be decided what not to share with the family, for example if certain information may jeopardise an investigation.

John Clark, local authority Solicitor, provided a legal overview of the process. A solicitor would be called to join a strategy meeting, normally they would not have any information about the family, their role is to help assess risk and advise on the criteria for section 47 and how the case would fair if it went to court. The strategy meeting would need to decide if the child had suffered significant harm or was likely to suffer significant harm due to the level of care provided to the child.

The Committee received information on a family where one child had suffered unexplained injuries, a decision was made that the children should be removed. There are three routes to remove a child; through agreement with the parent (section 20), to house the child with another family member. In this case the social worker must take care to ensure the parents are aware of what the agreement involves. In Gateshead parents receive a proforma which spells out the issues around section 20 agreements, a mini booklet has also been developed which sets out the parent's rights. Alternatively, a child can also be removed through police protection under section 46 or an application can be made to court for an emergency protection order (section 44).

During the strategy discussion it must be confirmed by a medic that any injuries sustained are non-accidental. If it is decided that a child requires police protection there must be reasonable cause to believe that a child would otherwise suffer

significant harm. An initiating officer will take steps to inform the parents or anyone who has parental responsibility, the officer will take the child and hand them to social services to provide suitable accommodation. When police protection is required there will be a named Designated Officer who will be responsible for holding paperwork and receiving updates on the case. Police protection lasts for no longer than 72 hours, until safe accommodation can be provided for the child, this is an emergency power, it does not give police officers parental rights for the child.

Most investigations are undertaken jointly, however police do some work alone. The police have facilities to interview children, under 10's are interviewed with intermediaries present. There is the facility to medically photograph a child and if there are allegations of sexual assault an on call paediatrician will be available to examine the child. Offender interviews are not done jointly, these are undertaken by the police and need to be done under caution.

When a child is removed from its family, the Social Worker must look for a place of safety for the child, this can be with family members following a regulation 24 assessment of that family member(s).

Following a strategy meeting if it is decided to initiate section 47 enquiries this will assess whether the risk of harm is still there. In Gateshead, during section 47 enquiries, on average the Social Worker will speak to 21 agencies in relation to a family. The outcomes of a section 47 assessment can be that the concerns are not substantiated or the child is not likely to suffer significant harm. If concerns are substantiated and the child is likely to suffer harm, an Initial Child Protection Conference will be held. All section 47's are signed off by a manager and at day 10 it will be decided whether care proceedings are to be progressed.

It was noted that throughout the process the views of the child are important, support workers are assigned to undertake direct work with children, who are of an age where they can speak, to get their views. This is an integral part of the process and examples of some children's views were provided to the Committee.

The difference between police protection and emergency protection orders was queried. It was confirmed that this depends on the level of risk, for an emergency protection order the court would be contacted to establish how quick it could hear an application, this could be within hours. It was noted that the circumstances of the particular case would need to be looked at as an emergency protection order lasts for seven days and police protection for 72 hours.

It was questioned whether section 47 enquiries are only initiated when there is a threat or if this also includes neglect. It was confirmed that section 47 will be initiated if there is a risk of significant harm regardless if this is due to neglect or physical, sexual abuse etc.

It was also queried what level of proof of non-accidental injury is required in order to initiate an investigation. It was noted that a doctor would need to confirm that it is more probably than not that an adult is responsible for the injury and it must be beyond reasonable doubt in order for police protection to be initiated.

It was questioned as to how easy the section 20 proforma and booklet is for parents to understand. It was confirmed that previously the format was less understood and was reliant on the social worker to verbally advise parents. However, this has been developed further and the proforma provides very clear explanations. It was noted that social workers will always speak to parents and ensure they seek legal advice, a social worker will review throughout the process and reiterate understanding with parents. It was acknowledged that parents do have the right to withdraw from a section 20 agreement at any time.

It was queried how investigation progresses to establish who caused an injury to a child, when it is apparent that it is not accidental. It was noted that if it is an unexplained injury it will be reviewed with the doctor once more information is known. The timeline of who has had previous care of the child will be looked at and the probable start time of the injuries.

It was suggested that Sunderland Council's recent Ofsted inspection report should be looked at by the Committee. It was agreed that other regional Ofsted report would be referenced when Gateshead's report is finalised and brought to Committee.

It was questioned as to what checks are in place through the process. It was confirmed that management oversight is fundamental throughout the process, the service is judged on this by Ofsted and Legal Gateway meetings are held.

The point was raised that there are different priorities and roles of each agency which could lead to conflict at times, it was questioned how this is resolved. It was confirmed that there is an agreement that information be anonymised if necessary and any conflicts are resolved without any major difficulty.

RESOLVED - That the comments of the Committee on the evidence heard be noted.

F32

REVIEW OF REVISED MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING OSC

A report was presented confirming the previously agreed appointment of non-voting members to the Corporate Parenting OSC. The Committee previously agreed to appoint representatives from various sectors; parent governor, foster carers association, third sector, The Gateshead Housing Company, a care leaver; and review the position 12 months after appointments. It was noted that to date a care leaver has not been appointed, therefore work is ongoing to find another care leaver representative. The Committee was asked to formally approve the current appointments for three years.

RESOLVED - (i) That the Committee agreed the next steps outlined in the report.

(ii) That the Committee agreed to a further review of these arrangements in 12 months' time.

F33 **ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL INSPECTIONS - AUTUMN TERM 2015**

The Committee received a report outlining the inspections that were carried out in the autumn 2015 term. It was noted that a new Ofsted framework has been implemented since September 2015,

During the autumn term three schools were inspected. Ryton Junior School has now been judged as 'good', this school was previous rated as 'inadequate' and was in special measures, however the school has been supported in its improvement. Ryton Infant School has been judges as 'requires improvement', this was due to the school going into the inspection with poor pupil performance data. Sacred Heart RC Academy was previously judged as 'requires improvement' and has now been rated as 'outstanding'.

It was reported that Ryton Infant and Ryton Junior Schools are currently developing a soft federation and appointing a single Headteacher from September 2016. It was confirmed that a soft federation is the coming together of two schools who agree to work closely together under a memorandum of understanding. This only stands for a couple of years before the schools must agree to separate or go to a hard federation, which means they will be locked together legally, this was previously known as an amalgamation.

It was noted that there are currently no inadequate schools, however two secondary schools; Thomas Hepburn Academy and Charles Thorp Academy, which have not been inspected since converting to Academy status. Therefore, technically there are two schools without grading.

RESOLVED - That the Committee note the position of schools in relation to Ofsted inspections.

F34 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair confirmed that this would be the last meeting for co-opted members Malcolm Brown and Ray Tolley, as their term of office has ended. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for their work on the Committee and wished them well for the future.

3 March 2016

TITLE OF REPORT: Child Protection in Gateshead – Fourth Evidence Gathering session

REPORT OF: Alison Elliot, Interim Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning

SUMMARY

Council has agreed that this committee should review how the child protection system operates in Gateshead. The review will examine each stage of the process and will explore the way decisions are taken, risks are managed, and the involvement of partners. The review will explore how Gateshead undertakes its safeguarding responsibilities in conjunction with partners within the policy context and legal frameworks for Child Protection.

The review will provide the committee with an overview of how the child protection process works in Gateshead and provide examples of how Gateshead children's social work service operates in conjunction with partners to ensure children's safety. It will focus in particular on the ways in which services operate collectively, review the evidence and contribute to the future development and delivery of child protection within Children's Social Care Services.

Fourth Evidence gathering

1. This fourth evidence gathering has been developed to provide the committee with an overview of how multi agency decisions are made regarding whether a child needs to become subject to a child protection plan and under what category. The session will consider decision making during Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) and how these decisions are reviewed at subsequent Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC).
2. The session will enable Members of the committee to have an overview of the process, quality assurance, the role of the Chair and the role of the agencies involved.

Purpose of an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

3. Following a Section 47 investigation, an ICPC brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), with the supporters, advocates and professionals most involved with the child and family, to make decisions about the child's future safety, health and development.

If concerns relate to an unborn child, consideration should be given as to whether to hold a child protection conference prior to the child's birth.

4. The conference should take place within 15 working days of the last strategy discussion. Government guidance for convening child protection case conferences is contained in '*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*' and outlined in Gateshead LSCB Child Protection Procedures <http://proceduresonline.com/gateshead/lscb>

Conference responsibilities include:

5. To bring together and analyse, in an inter-agency setting, all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. It is a shared multi-agency responsibility of conference participants to make recommendations on how agencies work together to safeguard the child in future.
6. To consider the evidence presented to the conference and taking into account the child's present situation and information about his or her family history and present and past family functioning, make judgements about the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm in the future and decide whether the child is continuing to, or is likely to, suffer significant harm; and
7. To decide what future action is needed to safeguard the child and promote his/her welfare, how that action will be taken forward, and with what intended outcomes.
8. The Safeguarding Children's Unit based in the Civic Centre has a key responsibility in chairing child protection conferences ensuring that accurate minutes are recorded and all agencies involved including family members are provided with a record of the decisions made and where a child protection plan had been agreed a copy of that plan .
9. In Gateshead Child Protection Conferences are chaired suitably trained social workers experienced in child protection. In Gateshead the role is carried out by the same staff who undertake the role of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs). However in their capacity as Child Protection Chairs they are directly accountable to the Director of Children's Services whereas in the role of IRO they are personally responsible for monitoring the performance by the local authority of their functions in relation to a child's review and their case and as such have direct recourse to Cafcass if deemed necessary.
10. Child Protection Chairs should;
 - a. where possible be a consistent Chair for the case; the same person should chair subsequent child protection reviews (RCPCs);
 - b. Independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case; and
 - c. Should meet the child and parents in advance to ensure they understand the purpose of the process.

11. The Decision Making Process. All involved professionals should:

- Contribute to the information their agency provides ahead of the conference, setting out the nature of the agency's involvement with the child and family;
- Consider, in conjunction with the police and the appointed conference Chair, whether the report can and should be shared with the parents and if so when; and
- Attend the conference and take part in decision making when invited.

The conference should examine the following questions when determining whether the child should be subject to a Child Protection Plan.

- Ensure the child is safe from harm and prevent him or her from suffering further harm;
- Promote the child's health and development; and
- Support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child, provided it is in the best interests of the child.

12. The Conference Chair must ensure that the decision about the need for a Child Protection Plan takes account of the views of all agencies represented at the conference and also takes into account any written contributions that have been made. This discussion will normally take place with the parents/carers present.

13. The decision will be taken by professionals attending the conference, i.e. those eligible to be counted for the purposes of establishing a quorum this will not include the child, parents, carers, supporters although they may be asked to comment on the strengths, concerns, risks, future plans and protection. Where there is no consensus, the decision will normally be made by a simple majority. Where a majority decision cannot be reached, the Conference Chair will make the decision.

14. The Conference Chair must ensure that all members of the conference are clear about the conclusions reached, the decision taken and recommendations made, and that the record of the conference accurately reflect the discussions, the decision and, where relevant, the reasons for the Conference Chair exercising their decision-making powers. Any dissent by professionals at the conference must be recorded in the conference record. If parents/carers disagree with the decision, this also must be recorded in the record of the conference and the Conference Chair must discuss the issue with them and explain their right to and the process for challenge.

15. The attendees at the conference will pull together an outline of the Child Protection Plan to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and

decide who will form the Core Group Meetings. A date must also be decided upon for a review conference.

Categories of Significant Harm

16. If the decision is that the child is at continuing risk of Significant Harm and is therefore in need of a Child Protection Plan, the Conference Chair should determine the category of significant harm which the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering.
17. The following definitions are taken from Appendix A of *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015*.

- **Physical Abuse** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional Abuse** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.
These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (**including** cyber bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual Abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **Neglect** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Core Groups

18. The Core Group is a group of individuals identified responsible for implementing and progressing the Child Protection Plan. The Core Group is the forum for inter-agency collaboration and should facilitate good communication to achieve the objectives detailed in the Child Protection Plan. Members of the Core Group are jointly responsible for sharing information, undertaking tasks, reviewing and refining the plan with a focus on achieving improved outcomes for the child.
19. Membership of the Core Group is identified at the ICPC and is reviewed at subsequent review conferences. A lead social worker will be identified to lead the Core Group and parents will be key members along with professionals who have direct contact with the family. Although the lead social worker has the lead role, all members of the Core Group are jointly responsible for the formulation, implementation, and review and monitoring of the Child Protection Plan. Core groups are an important forum for working with parents, wider family members and children of sufficient age and understanding
20. The first Core Group should be held within 10 working days of the Initial Child Protection Conference. Thereafter Core Groups should be held on a six weekly basis or more frequently if necessary. Dates for subsequent Core Groups should be agreed at the first meeting.
21. Core Group meetings will focus on sharing information and progress, measuring any changes in the family's behaviours or the family's capacity to change and what resources are required to help the family achieve or sustain any changes. The core group will measure progress against the planned outcomes.
22. An effective Core Group promotes good inter-agency co-operation and provides the framework in which professionals and family members can work in partnership towards achieving the aim, objectives and desired outcomes contained within the Child Protection Plan

Purpose of the Child Protection Review Conferences (RCPCs)

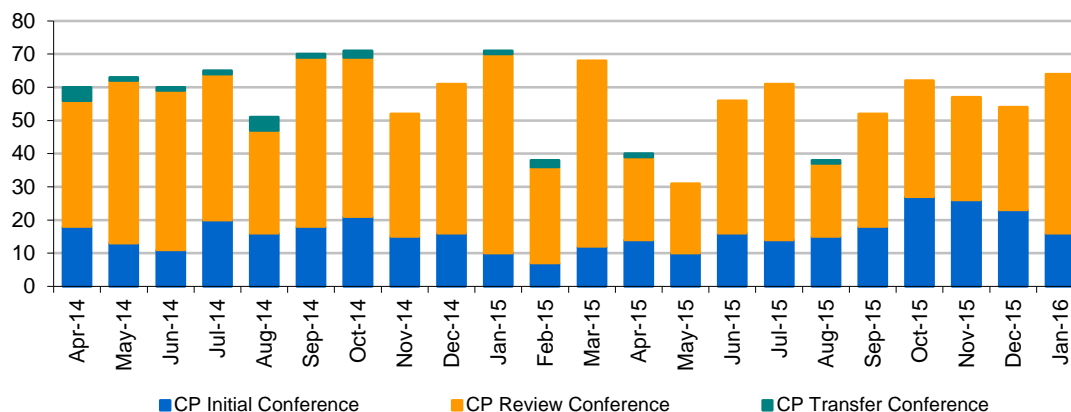
23. The review conference procedures for preparation, decision-making and other procedures should be the same as those for an initial child protection conference.

- To review whether the child is continuing to suffer, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and review developmental progress against child protection plan outcomes.
- To consider whether the child protection plan should continue or should be changed.
- The SCU ensures best practice through the engagement of children and their families in the conference and reviewing service making sure their views are fully represented in planning, service delivery and decision making.

Performance Data April 2014- January 2016

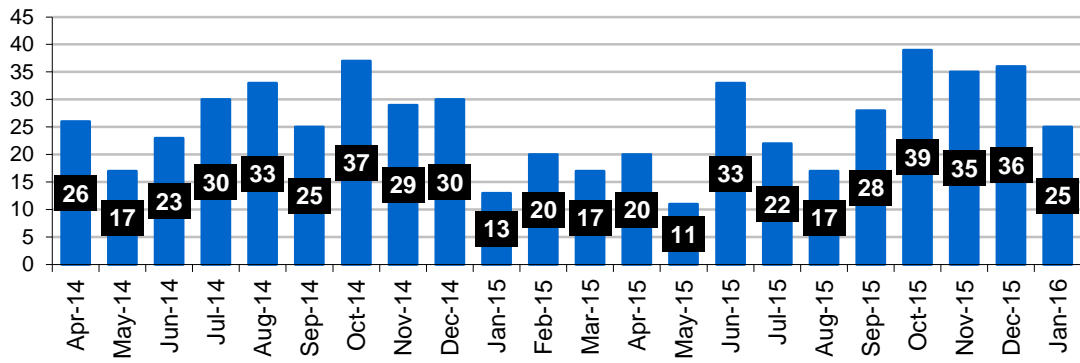
24. Between April 2014 and January 2015, a total of 618 CP conferences took place (157ICPCs/446 RCPCs /15 Transfers). Between April 2015 and January 2016, a total of 508 CP conferences took place (178 ICPCs/328 RCPCs/2 Transfers). This represents an 18% decrease overall in the number of CP conferences taking place, despite there being a 13% increase in ICPC's.

CP Conferences held by month

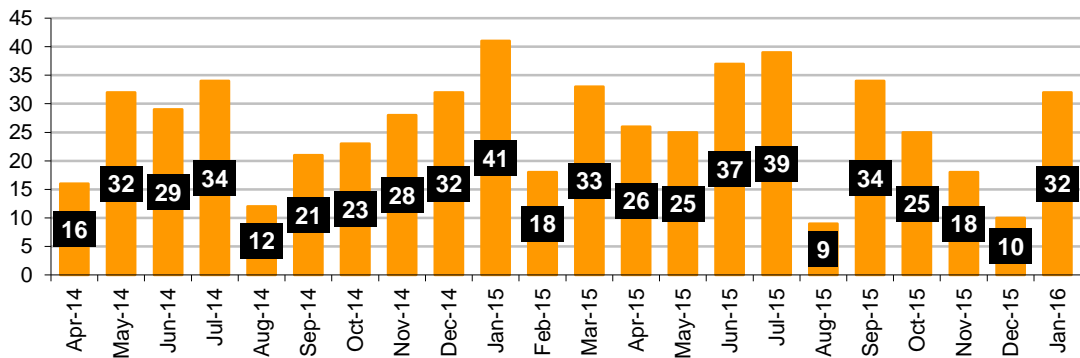


25. While there has been a decrease in the number of conferences held in the period April 2015 to January 2016 April compared with the same period last year during the last 4 months the numbers of conferences per month is more in line with the picture form 2014 -2015.

CP Plans Started by Month



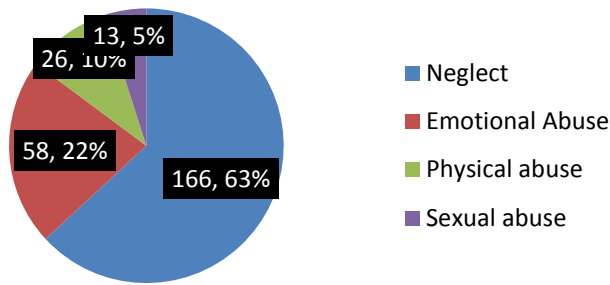
CP Plans Ended by Month



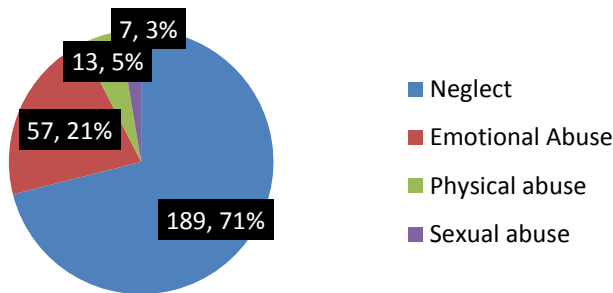
26. Between April 2014 and January 2015, 263 children became subject to CP plans, and 268 children became de-registered (an overall change of -5). 63.1% (166) of those children became subject to a plan under a category of neglect, 22.1% (58) became subject to a plan under a category of emotional abuse, 9.9% (26) became subject to a plan under a category of physical abuse and 4.9% (13) became subject to a plan under a category of sexual abuse.

27. Between April 2015 and January 2016, 266 children became subject to CP plans, and 255 children became de-registered (an overall change of +11). 71.1% (189) of those children became subject to a plan under a category of neglect, 21.4% (57) became subject to a plan under a category of emotional abuse, 4.9% (13) became subject to a plan under a category of physical abuse and 2.6% (7) became subject to a plan under a category of sexual abuse.

**New Child Protection Cases by Initial Category
- 01/04/2014 - 31/01/2015**



**New Child Protection Cases by Initial Category -
01/04/2015 - 31/01/2016**



28. Gateshead continues to have high numbers of children with child protection plans. The majority of those children continue to be registered under the category of neglect.

29. 100% of plans are distributed within 1 day of the ICPC and during the last 12 months significant work has been undertaken to ensure that Chair's reports following conference have been distributed within the required timescale of 20 days. Since February 2015 we have been able to demonstrate 100% compliance with timescales.

30. Ensuring the right people are represented at the conference has also been subject to performance improvement during the last 12 months. Specifically, ensuring that GP information and police information is available to the conference to ensure decisions can be made with a complete picture of the circumstances surrounding the child.

31. Concerns were expressed about the availability of GP reports at both ICPC's and RCMP's. Despite an improvement in reports being shared when practices were reminded these improvements were not able to be sustained. In order to support Health to meet statutory performance targets and improve practice work was undertaken with the named GP visiting a range of GP Practices, and holding sessions with both GP and Practice Managers to review administrative processes and organisational issues and the key lessons learnt for both Health and the SCU from the Baby T SCR. As a result there has been a significant improvement in communication and an improvement from 22% of conferences having GP reports to 71% of conferences having GP reports.

Recommendations

32. Committee members are invited to
 - a. Comment on this fourth evidence gathering
 - b. Make recommendations in relation to the Child Protection Process

CONTACT: Ann Day/ Joanna White

Extension 3484/8011

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TITLE OF REPORT: Special School Provision and Developments

REPORT OF: Strategic Director Learning and Children and
Director of Children's Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update relating to the changes and developments to special school provision. This is following the recommendations from last year's review that an annual conversation be held with special schools.

1. Background

Special school provision is constantly evolving because it is affected by changes in mainstream provision, nature of special educational needs and disabilities and local and national policy. Partnerships, such as Health and Social Care, are fundamental to the delivery and support to children's special educational needs and this report will outline some of the joint work currently in place.

2. Current Context

There are 6 special schools in Gateshead, Dryden and Hill Top schools are a hard federation and the Executive Headteacher is Jane Bryant. Furrowfield and Eslington are a soft federation and the Executive Headteacher is Michelle Richards. Gibside school's headteacher is Judith Donovan and The Cedars headteacher is Martin Flowers and is an Academy.

All of the schools have been rated by Ofsted as at least good with Dryden, Eslington and Gibside schools outstanding schools. This supports the view that Gateshead has high quality special school provision in place.

3. SEN Strategy Group vision for schools

The SEN Strategy group are currently working on a new vision to give a context to future developments for schools including special schools and the future SEN provision for the local authority. The vision set out below ensures that health and social care providers with other service users are in partnership to deliver high quality provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Vision

Working in partnership with education, health and care providers and service users:

- To develop and deliver cohesive education, health , care services and support systems which give children and young people the best opportunity to engage, achieve, succeed, and progress
- To agree arrangements and protocols that enable a partnership approach to:
 - Structured information gathering and sharing
 - Joint or collaborative service planning
 - Joint or collaborative commissioning
 - Efficient delivery
 - Effective monitoring
 - Evaluation and analysis
- To develop and maintain comprehensive, accurate data and information to understand need and inform service planning, development and delivery
- To ensure that children, young people and families have access to timely assessment that enables intervention at the earliest opportunity
- To establish and maintain co-ordinated information and advice services that are accessible and support decision making and choice
- To co-ordinate services so that transitions are smooth and support is continuous
- To provide opportunities for children, young people and families to contribute to the design, delivery and evaluation of services
- To adopt best value principles in directly provided and commissioned services

4. Data

January 2016 - DfE - A total of 530 pupils were being taught in special schools

Primary SEN need	Number
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	136
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	122
Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)	104
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	93
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	32
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	21
Physical Disability (PD)	7
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	7
Other (OTH)	4
Visual Impairment (VI)	2
Hearing Impairment (HI)	1
Multi Sensory Impairment (MSI)	1

The table below outlines the 2016 picture of each individual school and the range of needs they are supporting.

	MLD	ASD	SLCN	SLD	SEMH	PD	SpLD	VI	PMLD	MSI	HI	O	Tot.
The Cedars	67	24	15	13	7	6	2	2	0	1			137
Dryden		7		34					10			1	52
Eslington					49								49
Furrowfield					66								66
Gibside		70		37					11				118
Hilltop	37	35	16	9	1	6	5	0	0	0	1	3	108

*O is for other need

In **January 2015**, 1.6% of Gateshead's whole school population were being taught in special schools. (Jan 2015 school census data).

Below is an excerpt from the updated SEND Needs Assessment which shows the overall number of pupils in special schools broken down by category of need. The data is from the January 2015 School Census.

In January 2015 there were 492 pupils with either a statement of SEN/EHC Plan or at SEN Support being taught in special schools in Gateshead. The table below highlights the number of pupils being taught in special schools by primary special educational need in January 2015.

Primary Special Educational Need Category	Number of pupils <i>(Jan 2015 School Census data)</i>
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	120
Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH)*	112
Moderate Learning Needs (MLD)	98
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	98
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	24
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	20
Physical Disability (PD)	10
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	4
Other	4
Hearing Impairment	2

Comparing the 2015 and 2016 data in relation to special schools shows that:

- The numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) has significantly increased in 2016. This has particularly impacted on Gibside school and is about 60% of the school population. The Cedars also has greater numbers of ASD than previous years.
- Pupils with Social, Emotional, Mental Health needs (SEMH) is also increasing which is adding pressure to the numbers for both Eslington and Furrowfield schools.
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) is also increasing on the previous year. While Profound, Multiple, Learning Difficulty (PMLD) has stayed about the same.

Conclusion on data

The conclusion being that the SEN strategy group are needing to review the current capacity and what will be needed for future provision.

Gibside school, from early years information, is predicting the need to expand further. It currently has a base of two classrooms in Blaydon Children's centre to accommodate previously required additional numbers. However, new information in early years is highlighting increasing numbers and the school have identified will require more classroom space for September 2016. The local authority is checking recent data and the governing body of the school are in discussions with the local authority on how it could increase numbers and find more classroom space to be prepared for September 2016.

5. Eslington Developments

A report to cabinet 24 February 2015 outlined proposed new developments for Eslington Primary school for an extra 30 places to make 68 places in total (including 8 additionally resourced places) and to extend the intake age range from 5-11 to 2-11 year olds with effect from 1 September 2015. The report also requested that the council convert the Redheugh block at Tyne View Children's Centre to create a split site school.

This proposal was because it had been identified that the number of children with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) needs requiring specialist educational support was rising and it is anticipated this will continue to increase in the future. A number of pupils were placed in mainstream schools due to a lack of places in specialist provision like Eslington which was deemed the best placed to meet their needs.

The new facility at Tyne View opened September 2015 and 4 classrooms (accommodating 7 pupils in each, allowing for 30 pupils in total) are in place. The cost of the Tyne block conversion fit out was met from the Council's capital

programme on the basis that the project will generate revenue savings for the Council.

Eslington Primary School currently admits children from 5 to 11 years of age. The early education and intervention for two year olds and reception aged children, in response to views received during the informal consultation exercise carried out. This will increase the number of specialist placements available for 2 year olds which will assist in meeting the objectives of the government's initiative to provide 2 year olds with free education if they meet certain criteria, including if they have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. However, places at the moment have been taken by over 5 year old pupils.

6. Nurse attached to Special Schools in Gateshead

A nurse was appointed for the Gateshead Special Schools, in September 2015. Her post is described as a Registered Child's Nurse for special schools.

She is working with the Children's Disability Nursing Team and is line managed by them. The post is based at Low Fell Clinic though the schools had preferred it would be in one of the schools. The reason given for this not been possible was that the nurse needed a computer linked to the NHS system. However, though the nurse was given a computer by Gibside school the nurse does not yet have access to the NHS system unless she is at the clinic. This, therefore, means that much needed time in schools is lost because twice a day the nurse goes to the clinic to check emails and collect information.

Hopefully this is a temporary situation but the schools are concerned that the amount of time they had expected to have is not in place. However, the support given, for example, such as feeding clinics, has been helpful. The nurse is also writing or updating the health care plans in line with the single plan reviews, though, this happens away from the schools as they are written at the clinic and opportunities are missed for the staff to share information. The nurse then has to print out information and can only amend on return to the clinic.

The special schools have recognised that they need to track and clarify the work of the nurse with the Children's Disability team whether it is training, for example, around gastro feeds and toileting or Education Health Care Plans so that all managers' expectations are met particularly for this specific role of the nurse. They hope, therefore, to achieve more consistency and liaison to move this opportunity further to meet school needs.

7. Recommendation

It is requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive an annual report on Special schools and provision.

Ann Muxworthy, Inspector SEN and Inclusion

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