



**North Tyneside Council**

# Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee

7 July 2017

To be held on **Monday 17 July 2017 in room 0.01**, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY **commencing at 6.00pm.**

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Apologies for absence</b> To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.	
<b>2. Appointment of substitutes</b> To be informed of the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.	
<b>3. To receive any declarations of interest</b> You are invited to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.  You are also requested to complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.  You are also invited to disclose any dispensation from the requirement to declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
<b>4. Minutes</b> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017.	<b>3</b>

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5.	<b>Child Sexual Exploitation</b>	8
	To receive an update on any developments relating to child sexual exploitation in North Tyneside since the last report in March 2017.	
6.	<b>Ofsted Inspection</b>	11
	To receive a report on the outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection of Children’s Services.	
7.	<b>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning</b>	-
	Councillor I Grayson will address the committee on the year ahead for his portfolio area.	
8.	<b>Signs of Safety</b>	19
	To introduce the Signs of Safety practice model for working with children and their families.	

**To all Members of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee**

Councillor Alison Austin  
 Councillor Pamela Brooks  
 Councillor Joanne Cassidy  
 Councillor Karen Clark  
 Councillor Muriel Green  
 Councillor Karen Lee

Councillor Andy Newman  
 Councillor Pat Oliver (Deputy Chair)  
 Councillor Margaret Reynolds  
 Councillor Matthew Thirlaway (Chair)  
 Councillor Alison Waggott-Fairley  
 Councillor Frances Weetman

**Parent Governor Representatives**

Mrs Michelle Ord

**Churches Representatives**

Rev. Michael Vine, Church of England

Mr Gerry O’Hanlon, Roman Catholic Church

## **Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee**

**19 June 2017**

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)  
Councillors A Austin, J Cassidy,  
K Clark, M Green, K Lee, A Newman, P Oliver,  
M Reynolds and L Spillard.

Mrs M Ord                      Parent Governor Representative

### **CES01/06/17          Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brooks and A Waggott-Fairley and Mr G O'Hanlon and Rev. M Vine Church Representatives.

### **CES02/06/17          Substitute Members**

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor L Spillard for Councillor P Brooks.

### **CES03/06/17          Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

### **CES04/06/17          Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CES05/06/17          Work Programme 2017/18**

The sub-committee received a report which detailed its proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The sub-committee was informed that the process of establishing the 2017/18 work programme had begun in February 2017 with an email to Cabinet Members, Councillors and Tier 1, 2 and 3 managers seeking suggestions for topics in relation to policy development for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees to examine for the year ahead. An article was also placed on the Authority's web site and communication platforms inviting members of the public to raise issues that they thought would be suitable for scrutiny to investigate. The Scrutiny Chairs and Deputies also discussed the ideas which had been put forward.

As a consequence of this work a draft work programme with a range of scrutiny activities and topics for regular monitoring for the year ahead had been developed and discussed

with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee at a pre-agenda meeting. Members of the committee had also been requested to put their suggestions forward.

The Chair and Deputy Chair had agreed that the sub group examining the transition process between children and adult services for disabled young people established at the January 2017 meeting of the sub-committee (previous minute CES46/01/17) should continue into the 2017/18 municipal year and once this work was completed the committee would decide upon a new subject for an in-depth review.

During discussion on the proposed work programme Members made additional suggestions for the work programme which included an update on the information provided in January 2017 on Dyslexia Services; the special education, additional needs and disability (SEND) service; school funding; eating disorder provision; and the impact of the changes to the school nurses provision and organisation.

It was also requested and agreed by Members that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning be invited to the July meeting to explain to the committee his vision for the year ahead and to answer any questions.

**Agreed** (1) to approve the proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year with the inclusion of the additional topics detailed above to an appropriate meeting in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee; and  
(2) to invite the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning to the next meeting of the sub-committee to present his aims and aspirations for the 2017/18 municipal year and to answer questions from the sub-committee.

## **CES06/06/17 Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18**

The sub-committee received an end of year report on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children and Young People's Plan provided the strategic framework for the integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services in order to improve the lives of children and young people in the borough. The Plan was produced and owned by the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership. The Plan also served as the borough's Child Poverty Strategy, setting out how partners would work together to address the underlying causes of deprivation.

The Plan's priorities were aligned with the 'Our North Tyneside Plan', the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Safer North Tyneside Plan and set out three priorities and associated outcomes, which were:

### **1. Ready for School**

- a) A healthy early childhood.
- b) Children are ready to start school.

### **2. Ready for Work and Life**

- a) Narrow the gap in educational outcomes.
- b) Ready for employment.

### **3. Safe, Supported and Cared For**

- a) The most vulnerable children and young people are protected.
- b) Improved outcomes for looked after children.
- c) The right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

The Policy, Performance and Research Manager attended the meeting to present the report and answer any questions.

Under Ready for School the percentage of pupils reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased since 2013 from 48.3% to 69.7%. It was well understood that there were gaps in attainment within the Borough and the Plan was focused on reducing those gaps; the gap within North Tyneside overall had reduced to 12% and an improvement had been seen amongst pupils living in Riverside and Chirton. Currently the assessment of the readiness to learn of children between the ages of 2 and 2 ½ was carried out by health visitors and nurseries and the data focused on the number of assessments carried out. A more local measure was to be developed to highlight and monitor concerns identified by it. A gap did exist between boys and girls and this was to be the focus of schools and the School Improvement Service in the coming year.

Under Ready for Work and Life one of the aims was to narrow the gap in educational attainment between boys and girls. The gender gap in North Tyneside was generally smaller than national (8.2% gap) and although the gap varied between schools, attainment in Basics for both boys and girls in North Tyneside was significantly better than national attainment for each gender. North Tyneside girls exceeded the national attainment by 3.7% and North Tyneside boys exceeded the national attainment level by 6.3% and the attainment for both boys and girls had improved since 2013.

It was noted that in 2012/13 the gap was 7%, rose to 11% in 2013/14 and dropped again to 7% in 2014. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager agreed to investigate whether the cause for this change was known and to provide an answer to the sub-committee in writing.

Ensuring that young people in North Tyneside had the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the job market was important for their happiness and the regions' prosperity. 88% of young people progressed to Key Stage 5 (A level), of those, 90% progressed into a positive destination after Key Stage 5. Young people were proceeding to a positive destination at an increasing rate and had continued the trend from the past few years. This continued to be a higher than national rate for this measure.

Alongside supporting local businesses to create jobs, the Plan also aimed to support local people to have the right skills to access these jobs. A measure highlighted the gap that was recorded from local employers about their perception of the skills gap with the aim being to reduce the gap recorded; this had increased from 5.6% in 2011 to 26.2% in 2015. It was important to note that this information was based on a national survey and the results were based on a small sample of North Tyneside businesses therefore further work was required to better understand the issue locally and a revised measure was being considered. Almost all of the skills shortage vacancies in between 2013 and 2015 were in skilled trades and machine operatives, with a smaller increase for caring, leisure and other services. These occupations accounted for 78% of the skills shortage vacancies in 2015 but for only 27% of those people employed in North Tyneside.

Businesses in the engineering and manufacturing sectors had indicated that they were facing skills shortages in particular niche and technically skilled roles. To help address this shortage and support replacement demand within the sectors a wide range of activities to promote these sectors amongst schools pupils and young people had been developed, for example Primary and Secondary Engineer. In addition the engineering and manufacturing sectors now represent the third highest sector for apprenticeship starts in North Tyneside

with 480 out of a total of 2,610 starts in 2015-16. This year's 'Get up and Go' apprenticeships fair featured around 35 employers and providers who were actively seeking to employ and support apprentices within their business. Kier North Tyneside, who now have 16 apprentices working across trade and business support, attended as well as Accenture, Capita, Owen Pugh, Northumbria Healthcare and North Tyneside Council.

It was noted the number of apprenticeships dropped 90 places from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and the Policy, Performance and Research Manager agreed to investigate if the cause for this change was known and provide the answer to the sub-committee in writing.

Under Cared for, Safeguarded and Healthy a key aim was to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough were protected. The data showed that the rate of contacts into children's social care had held steady with 23.5 in 2015, 22.8 in 2016 and 22.4 in 2017; it had been 28.3 in 2013. At the end of January 2017, there were 164 children on Child Protection Plans and 300 looked after children. Work was ongoing to understand the drivers behind the contacts with social care and to ensure that a partnership response was in place to improve outcomes for these children.

During discussion of the Plan comments were made about how schools used Pupil Premium funding and it was enquired whether any national studies had been undertaken on the benefits of free school lunches and what they showed. It was explained that each school decided how to spend the Pupil Premium funding and had to demonstrate the benefit of these decisions for the children; a number of schools did use it for breakfast clubs. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager stated that there were no local studies but he would look to see if any had been done elsewhere and provide the answer to the sub-committee in writing.

It was also enquired whether any assessment of the impact of leaving the European Union (Brexit) on local businesses' ability to recruit staff had been undertaken. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager stated that a lot of work was currently being undertaken to understand the profile of North Tyneside and its businesses and what exports and imports were required/provided by them so when the terms upon which the United Kingdom could trade with European Union member states after Brexit was agreed, the implications for the borough could be understood.

**Agreed** (1) to note the information on the mid year progress of the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan; and  
(2) that the Policy, Performance and Research Manager provide answers, in writing, to the various questions posed by Members and detailed above before the next meeting of the sub-committee.

## **CES07/06/17          Elective Home Education**

The sub-committee was informed that Cabinet on 12 June 2017 had agreed its response to the recommendations from the Elective Home Education Sub Group which had undertaken a review into current practices and the Local Authority role in relation to home educating.

Following discussions with officers and consultation with elective home educating parents, the sub-group had made eight recommendations. These recommendations included lobbying for a change to the powers of local authorities in relation to accessing electively home educated children and also to make some small changes to the way the authority currently engaged with parents to provide more efficient and effective support.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning had thanked the Sub Group for the report and all of the eight recommendations had been accepted. An Action Plan had been produced with timescales for when the recommendations would be implemented by.

**Agreed** to note Cabinet's response to the Elective Home Education Sub Group's report and receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the new year.

**Meeting:** Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

**Date:** 17 July 2017

**Title:** Child Sexual Exploitation Update

**Author:** Majella Tallack  
Senior Manager, Safeguarding and Children's Services  
Tel: (0191) 643 7982

**Service:** Children, Young People and Learning

**Wards affected:** All

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## 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and overview of the current local picture in relation to work being undertaken with respect to child sexual exploitation CSE. The report also updates on questions raised at the March 2017 committee meeting.

The report will set out local activity at 3 levels:

- What we are doing in relation to individual cases
- What we are doing across the Council and through wider partnership working

## 2. Recommendation:

The Committee is requested to consider the report, offer comment and advice of any recommendations for consideration.

## 3. Update on questions raised on 20/03/17

- 3.1 The committee asked for an update regarding 'hotspots for sexual exploitation (adults); the areas identified in a mapping exercise were St Mary's Whitehouse, East Howden Park, Killingworth Shopping centre, coastal seafronts; Cullercoats, Whitley Bay and the Meadowell in North Shields. The police and partner agencies are aware of these areas and target services there. There are no identified hotspots for children however it is known that young people at risk of CSE can gravitate to Newcastle city centre; again this is known information and there is clear communication through the Sanctuary team.
- 3.2 North Tyneside Children's Services have committed to funding the social work secondment post to the Sanctuary post up to March 2018 when it will be reviewed.
- 3.3 Taxi drivers have to complete the e- module before they are granted a licence; if they do not have access to this on their own tablet/device they can access this using a Council iPad in the Licensing office. If an applicant was not confident/ competent in the use of IT they can be supported in complete one to one. To date this has never has been an issue.



- 3.4 CSE training is delivered to Engie, Capita and Kier.
- 3.5 The Sexual Exploitation group is exploring CSE awareness raising with Tyne Met College, the Children with Disability team and SCARPA around raising awareness to young males, BME groups and young people with a disability. Contact has been made with South Tyneside to gain advice and support on some of the work they have undertaken with BME groups. This is an area of ongoing development. This will be reviewed at the next Sub Group on 21/07/17.

#### **4. What we are doing in relation to individual cases.**

- 4.1 There are currently 10 young people in North Tyneside who are identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation; this is reviewed on a weekly basis by a senior manager and where the risk is high are reviewed at the MSET panel monthly. (Missing , Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking).
- 4.2 There have been issues with a group of young people going missing on a regular basis; this has prompted a multi agency approach to disruption and distraction. Children services have been working with Early Help locality teams, Housing, Youth Offending Service, Police and schools to address this.
- 4.3 Practitioners within NT continue to use the new risk assessment tool and this is working well.

#### **5. What we are doing across the council and through wider partnership working.**

- 5.1 In the recent Ofsted inspection the report identifies that responses to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those that go missing are well developed and effective. The report further adds:

*Individual children at risk of child sexual exploitation or missing receive timely and robust multi-agency consideration from the missing, sexual exploitation and trafficking group (MSET). Good partnership working and coordinated information sharing mean that risks are promptly assessed and inform safety planning to reduce risk and keep children safe. Intelligence is effectively shared across the multi-agency group to inform local understanding of high-risk areas to influence disruption activities. Social workers have a good understanding of risks associated with child sexual exploitation, resulting in focused and comprehensive support packages to reduce risk.*

(Page 12, para 21)

- 5.2 Sanctuary post update.

The social worker on secondment has undertaken the following work:

- Completed one to one work with young people in relation to CSE, risk taking and missing
- Completed training for Moorbridge school in relation to CSE and Missing.
- Completed training in relation to GP through 'Excellence through collaboration'
- Completed training with agency foster carers in relation to CSE
- Liaised with police in relation to response to missing young people, their risk level, disruption plans and intelligence picture.

- Attend MSET panels to gather intelligence on missing young people and co-ordinate a response
- Information sharing between LA's and police in relation to NTC young people.
- Attended specialist training in CSE provided via Sanctuary budget
- Supported the police and Children's Services in relation to CAWN's being served on adults who are harbouring young people
- Liaised with third parties attached to Sanctuary to ensure that counselling services are in place for young people affected by CSE
- Liaised with Schools in the NTC area to support with pupils who are at risk of CSE or displaying risk taking behaviour
- Involved in complex abuse meetings in relation to trafficking cases. (forced labour-Adults)

5.3 The Local authority has been working with the performance team in order to develop reporting data for children who are at risk of child exploitation and missing. This data will enable the local authority and partner agencies to understand and analyse the risk and needs of this cohort of young people and develop resources and strategies to respond. This report will be produced for Sexual Exploitation group on a 6 monthly basis. The report identifies risk according to age, status of case(CIN, CP, LAC) age and gender)

5.4 CSE Training update since April 24:

- 24 Internal staff
- 33 Taxi drivers
- 16 external- Kier, Engie and Capita

## 6. Appendices

None

## 7. Background Information

- 'North Tyneside Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' and 'Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board' June 2017. A full copy of the report can be found here:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/north-tyneside>

**Meeting:** Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee  
**Date:** 17 July 2017  
**Title:** The findings of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

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**Authors:** Jacqui Old - Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding  
Tel: (0191) 643 7315

**Service:** Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding

**Wards affected:** All

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## 1. Purpose

To provide Committee Members with an overview of the recent 'OFSTED' Inspection; the key findings and next steps.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Between 27 February 2017 and 23 March 2017 North Tyneside Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers were inspected by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as part of their national inspection programme. Concurrent to the inspection of services for children, Ofsted also undertook a review of the effectiveness of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB).
- 2.2. The inspection of North Tyneside Council by Ofsted was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The review of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB) was carried out under section 15A of the Children Act 2004.
- 2.3. This was the first inspection of North Tyneside's services since March 2012. The previous inspection of the Authority's services for safeguarding and looked after children was in March 2012. The inspection judged the Authority's services in March 2012 to be 'Good'.
- 2.4. The 2017 inspection took place over a four week period. The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted and three additional inspectors. The inspection team consisted of:
  - Lead inspector: Neil Penswick
  - Deputy lead inspector: Lisa Summers
  - Team Inspectors: Shabana Abasi, Fiona Millns, Lorna Schlechte, Pam Blackman, Graham Reiter
  - Senior data analyst: Peter McLaughlin
  - Quality assurance manager: Christine Williams
- 2.5. The inspection team were onsite for fifteen working days and read case files, observed staff working with children and families and other professionals and discussed with

staff and safeguarding partners the help and care given to children and young people. They also talked directly to children, young people and their families.

2.6. The Inspection focused on the overall effectiveness of services based upon judgments about:

- the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection;
- the experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence; adoption performance;
- the experiences and progress of care leavers; and
- leadership, management and governance.

### **3. Outcome of Inspection**

3.1. Ofsted published their findings by way of Report on 13 June 2017. There was some delay to publication as a result of the restrictions placed on Government Departments in relation to announcements, also known “purdah”, immediately before the General Election.

3.2. Ofsted report that it judges the overall effectiveness of children’s services in North Tyneside to be ‘Good’. Ofsted define this grading as being achieved when inspectors find work of good quality, with some outstanding elements and which is delivering measurably improved outcomes. This overall judgment was based on the following findings:

- the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection were judged to be ‘Good’;
- the experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence were judged to be ‘Good’;
- adoption performance was judged to be ‘Good’; and
- leadership, management and governance was judged to be ‘Good’.

3.3. Of note, Ofsted judged the experiences and progress of care leavers in North Tyneside to be ‘Outstanding’. Ofsted define this grading as being achieved when inspectors find work of the highest quality which is delivering improved outcomes that exceed expectations.

3.4. A comparison with the graded judgments of the 130 other local authorities that have been inspected to date by Ofsted establish that North Tyneside Council is within the top ten performing Children’s Services within the country. Within the North East Region, of the ten local authorities to be inspected to date, North Tyneside is the top performing Children’s Services. Ofsted made seven recommendations for areas of development. All areas were known to Officers with improvement work on-going at the point of inspection. The Authority is required to provide an Action Plan for approval by Ofsted.

3.5. The North Tyneside Safeguarding Children’s Board (NTSCB) was concurrently inspected. The Inspection focused on the effectiveness of the NTSCB in meeting its statutory functions. Ofsted report that it judged the overall effectiveness of the NTSCB to be ‘Good’. Ofsted define this grading as being achieved when the characteristics of a good Local Safeguarding Children’s Board are widespread and common practice. A comparison with the graded judgments of the 130 other Safeguarding Children’s Boards that have been inspected to date by Ofsted establish that the NTSCB is one of

43 graded 'Good' within the country. Only a third of Boards have been graded 'Good'. Within the North East Region, of the ten Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to be inspected to date, the NTSCB is one of only three graded 'Good'. Ofsted made three recommendations for areas of development. The NTSCB is required to provide an Action Plan for approval by Ofsted.

#### **4. Key Findings from Inspection of Children's Services**

These findings are taken verbatim from the full Report (available on request).

##### **4.1. Help and Protection:**

- There is a broad and developing early help offer, which is of good quality and supports families, preventing children from needing to be referred to children's services.
- Significant harm is identified and responded to well. Assessments are timely and comprehensive, although in a small number of cases not always updated to reflect the changing needs of children.
- Planning for children is effective and driven by social workers who know children well and supported by effective operational partnership working, providing a wide range of services to support and protect children.
- Responses to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those who go missing are well developed and effective.
- A good range of accommodation informed by a prompt assessment is provided for 16- and 17-year olds who present as homeless.
- Awareness raising of private fostering is good, but the social work response following notification is not always prompt.
- The designated officer coordinates agencies well when issues are raised about professionals who may be behaving inappropriately towards children. However, the completion of investigations is not always timely.

##### **4.2. Looked After Children:**

- North Tyneside Council is a highly ambitious and nurturing corporate parent for all of its children and ensures that there is an excellent range of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.
  - Edge of care services work well to support children to stay at home. Children only become looked after when it is in their best interests, and, in these instances, the response is timely and appropriate.
  - A good range of permanence options combined with a wide range of local accommodation, including foster carers' and children's homes, means that most children maintain their local support networks. This promotes stability and security for children.
  - Effective services from health, education and specialist support promote good outcomes.
  - The caseloads of independent reviewing officers (IROs) who chair child protection conferences and children looked after reviews are high, and this impacts on their ability to monitor progress between meetings.
  - Children and carers who met inspectors reported that they have too many changes of social worker.
  - Achieving permanence for children is a key priority in North Tyneside.
- Adoption:

- There is strong oversight of children to ensure that children find their 'forever homes'. Although it has taken a long time to secure permanence through adoption for some children, this is due to the additional time required to find adoptive families for older children and sibling groups. Overall, adoption timeliness is improving.
- There is a wide range of effective post-adoption support available, including therapeutic assessments of attachment to enhance adopters' understanding of children's needs.
- Life story work and later life letters, however, take too long to complete and are of variable quality.
- Adopters who met inspectors reported that they feel extremely well supported and prepared throughout the process.

#### 4.3. Care Leavers:

- The services for care leavers are outstanding. This is because council leaders and senior managers have high aspirations for all care leavers and consistently listen to the views of young people and value their contribution.
- The care leavers' team has an excellent focus on working proactively with the young people. As a result, all care leavers are in touch with their workers, live in suitable and safe accommodation, take increasing responsibility for their health and have excellent support to continue their training and to find jobs.
- They benefit from highly effective individual support, including through their pathway plans, and many of them have benefited from apprenticeships with the council. The result is that the vast majority have the skills and knowledge that they need to become successful adults.

#### 4.4. Leadership, Management and Governance:

- Children have benefited from high-quality social work and well-coordinated partnership working.
- There is an excellent focus on seeking the views of children to shape services and to ensure that individual targeted services meet their needs.
- Strong political and senior manager leadership ensures that improving outcomes for children and young people is at the heart of North Tyneside Council. This shapes its strategic priorities and effectively influences partners in sharing their ambition and commitment to improve children's lives.
- Engagement and participation are a particular strength and children are not only heard, but their views are shaping and driving service improvement.
- Good workforce development, commissioning of services and performance monitoring contribute to delivering effective services and solid social work practice.
- At the last Ofsted inspection in 2012, safeguarding and services for children looked after were judged to be good. The quality of those services has continued to be developed and improved
- Inspectors saw evidence of robust social work practice that is improving the lives of children in North Tyneside.
- Despite much good work across children's services, the recording of social workers' involvement with children is inconsistent. There are variable approaches to social work recording and completion of key documentation.
- The quality of supervision notes is also variable and, for a small number of cases, this means that it is not always possible to evidence reflective and directive management oversight.

- These issues are due to an electronic client database, which is barely fit for purpose.
- The local authority is well aware of the issues and is procuring another system, which will become live in 2018. In the interim, it has put in additional support to address current deficits and to ensure that the problems with recording do not impact on the high quality of support that social workers provide to children and their families.

## **5. Formal Recommendations resulting from the Inspection to North Tyneside Council**

The Authority is required to submit copies of the post inspection action plan to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector no later than 20 September 2017.

These recommendations are taken verbatim from the full Report:

1. Ensure that assessments are regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of children and that they fully consider children's identities, contingencies and research.
2. Ensure that support to children who are privately fostered is timely, managed well and effectively meets the needs of children.
3. Improve the timeliness with which designated officers complete investigations.
4. Improve the oversight of IROs of the progress of plans between child protection conferences and between children looked after reviews, and evidence this on the child's records.
5. Ensure that life story work and later life letters are of consistently good quality and completed in a timely way to ensure that children and their adopters have a clear understanding of a child's history in preparation for placement and for later life understanding.
6. Ensure that supervision for all staff is consistently of good quality because it is reflective, directive, regular and well recorded.
7. Ensure that actions identified as a result of audits are specific and measurable and have timescales.

Each of the seven recommendations has been allocated to a nominated Lead Officer who has been asked to respond with SMART plans by 21 July 2017 to the Senior Manager for QA. A Draft Action Plan will then be presented to SMT on 31 July 2017 for ratification. A copy of the draft Action Plan will also be sent to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub - committee for information once completed.

## **6. Key Findings from Review of North Tyneside Safeguarding Children's Board**

These findings are taken verbatim from the full Report:

- The North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB) is an efficient and reflective Board, meeting its statutory requirements, and effectively coordinating and assuring itself of the quality of multi-agency safeguarding work.

- Governance arrangements are strong, and constructive working relationships between senior partnership managers ensure multi-agency ownership and prioritisation of safeguarding.
- The chair of the NTSCB is central in developing a culture of openness and challenge, along with the business manager, who has ensured that efficient board processes are in place to support effective board functioning.
- Focused multi-agency performance information, audit activity and specific reports mean that the Board is appropriately sighted on all areas for which it has responsibility, and this supports the effective prioritisation of board activity.
- There is positive identification and dissemination of learning and a wide-ranging flexible training programme is linked to board priorities. However, clear actions with timescales, including ways in which the impact of learning will be evaluated, are not consistently in place to further support improvements in frontline practice.
- The voice of children and young people is evident in discrete areas of work, but does not sufficiently inform wider board activity and developments.
- The Board is influential in multi-agency service planning, through rigorous scrutiny of plans and evaluation of practice. This ensures that safeguarding practice is not compromised and the implementation of strategic developments is effectively supported.
- The annual report 2015–2016 comprehensively describes services. However, further improvements could be made in the Board’s evaluation of their effectiveness.

## **7. Formal Recommendations resulting from the Inspection to North Tyneside Council**

The Authority is required to submit copies of the post inspection action plan to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector no later than 20 September 2017.

These recommendations are taken verbatim from the full Report:

1. Ensure that the outcomes of all learning activities are supported by clear actions with timescales, including ways in which the impact of the activity will be evaluated.
2. Ensure that the voice of children and young people effectively informs wider board activity and developments.
3. Ensure that the annual report rigorously and succinctly reflects the evaluation and effectiveness of safeguarding services in North Tyneside.

## **8. Communications Activity**

- 8.1. A detailed Communication Plan was developed (April 2017) and has been implemented by the Authority’s Communications and Marketing Team from 13 June 2017.

The objectives of the Plan have been to:

- Clearly communicate the Ofsted result - and any related implications - to all stakeholders (detailed below)
- Thank staff in Children’s Services, and supporting services across the



Authority, for their hard work during the inspection and in delivering Children's Services on a day-to-day basis

- Raise awareness of the positive and/or best practice delivered by Children's Services in North Tyneside
- Reiterate positive messages about living in North Tyneside, specifically around the safety of children

8.2. The target audiences for communications have been:

- Children's Services staff
- Key contacts at partner organisations
- All North Tyneside Council staff
- Councillors
- Schools/Head Teachers
- Children in Care Council
- Local media
- National and trade media

8.3. Key messages which have been communicated are:

- North Tyneside's support for care leavers has been judged as outstanding by Ofsted
- Children's Services overall were rated good and deemed to have a direct impact on improving the lives of children in the borough
- The Authority was praised for supporting care leavers with work experience and apprenticeship opportunities in its own organisation
- Children and young people are listened to by the Authority and are directly involved in shaping and improving services
- Social workers were commended for their dedication and knowledge, while the Authority's support for adopters was also highlighted
- These results place North Tyneside amongst the best performing children's services departments in the country, and make it one of the highest rated councils in the North East

## 9. Conclusion

Committee members are requested to note:

1. the positive findings of the Ofsted Inspection of the Authority's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, in particular that children have benefited from high-quality social work and well-coordinated partnership working to improve their lives;
2. that the findings of the Ofsted Inspection place the Authority within the top ten performing Children's Services within the country;
3. the finding and commendation by Ofsted that 'improving outcomes for children and young people is at the heart of North Tyneside Council'; and
4. the areas for development identified by Ofsted and the commitment by the Authority Area to address these and to continue to improve and develop services for children and young people, parents and carers.

## 10. Background Information

'North Tyneside Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' and 'Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board' June 2017.

A full copy of the report can be found here:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/north-tyneside>

**Meeting:** Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

**Date:** 17 July 2017

**Title:** Signs of Safety

**Author:** Victoria McLeod  
Senior Manager Safeguarding Tel: 643 5914

**Service:** Children, Young People and Learning

**Wards affected:** All

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## **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide details in relation to Signs of Safety which is a model being adopted within North Tyneside Local Authority and partner agencies. The report will provide a basic overview of what Signs of Safety is, the implementation of Signs of Safety and the current position in respect of training.

## **2. What is Signs of Safety?**

2.1 Signs of Safety was created in Western Australia during the 1990s by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards; it is based on the use of Strength Based interview techniques, and draws upon Solution Focused Brief therapy (SFBT). It aims to work collaboratively and in partnership with families and children to conduct risk assessments and produce action plans for increasing safety, and reducing risk and danger by focusing on strengths, resources and networks that the family have. The model has evolved since the 1990s and has been built on the experiences and feedback of case workers adopting the approach in the field. In practice the model can be used from the first stages of gathering information about an allegation through to case closure and has broad applicability to child protection work. There is no set period of intervention and it can range from a number of brief sessions to long term work with service users. The model has also been used widely in early intervention work and its application in practice extends beyond child protection. As well as incorporating techniques from Solution Focused Brief Therapy the model has a number of key core principles and practice elements. It also has a clear set of assessment tools for measuring risk and for working with children.

### **2.2 Turnell (2012) summarises three core principles of the approach:**

- i) Establishing constructive working relationships and partnerships between professionals and family members, and between professionals themselves.
- ii) Engaging in critical thinking and maintaining a position of inquiry.
- iii) Staying grounded in the everyday work of child protection practitioners.

All of the three principles emphasise the need to move towards a constructive culture around child protection rather than a paternalistic model where the professionals adopt the position that they know what is wrong and they know specific solutions.

### **3. Implementation of Signs of Safety:**

- 3.1 North Tyneside Council are working in partnership with the Regional Director for Signs of Safety, Viv Hogg. She is supporting us in developing our workforce and identifying those who will be Signs of Safety Practice Leads and responsible for providing future training and briefing sessions to staff within the Authority.
- 3.2 It is anticipated that fully implementation will take five years, however it is expected that with two years of strong and focussed activity in Learning, Leadership, Organisational alignment and meaningful measures including quality assurance and data systems we will have a positive level of confidence in our practice as an organisation.
- 3.3 We have established a Steering Group and within this devised a Project Plan with time frames for implementation of various aspects of the Signs of Safety Model.
- 3.4 We have currently completed seven, two day basic training courses which has been attended by a variety of professionals including police, health, education and CYPL staff. There are a further two, two day sessions over the course of the next three months.
- 3.5 Members of the Senior Management Team, including the DACS (Director of Adult and Children Services) has attended the advanced five day training. This has ensured that we have commitment from all levels to the model and implementation.
- 3.6 There will be three advanced training events taking place over the course of the next six months. This will allow those identified as Practice Leaders to develop their skills in utilising the model and to training others so they are fully updated in the model.

### **4. The Current Training Position**

The most recent data indicates that we have so far trained 297 people with 70 people still to attend the upcoming two day training events.