



North Tyneside Council

Cabinet

11 February 2021

Monday, 22 February 2021 commencing at 6.00pm. The meeting will be held virtually and will be live streamed at the following link: <https://youtu.be/Fb4TDoyqt-4>

Agenda Item	Page(s)
1. Apologies for Absence	
To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.	
2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted	
You are invited to verbally declare any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to disclose any dispensation in relation to any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
3. Minutes	
To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 25 January (Ordinary meeting), 1 and 8 February 2021 (Extraordinary meetings) – (previously circulated).	
4. Report of the Young Mayor	
To receive a verbal report on the latest activities of the Young Mayor and Young Cabinet.	

Members of the public are welcome to attend this virtual meeting by clicking on the above link.

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For further information about the meeting please email democraticsupport@northtyneside.gov.uk

Agenda Item	Page(s)
<p>5. Report of the Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group</p> <p>To present the recommendations of the Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee's study, on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, into Children's Readiness for School in North Tyneside.</p>	5 - 20
<p>6. Determination of School Admission Arrangements September 2022</p> <p>To seek approval for the proposed admission arrangements for all Community Schools in North Tyneside for the 2022/2023 academic year including the co-ordinated admissions schemes.</p>	21 - 64
<p>7. Equality and Diversity</p> <p>To seek approval to the updated Equality and Diversity Policy for the Authority; and the Corporate Equality Objectives for the period April 2021 to March 2022.</p>	65 - 88
<p>8. Procurement of Care Home Provision</p> <p>To seek approval to proceed with procurement exercises for the award of contracts for care homes provision for all client groups (older people, learning disability, mental health and physical disability).</p>	89 - 96
<p>9. Children and Young People's Plan 2021 - 2025</p> <p>To seek approval to the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2025.</p>	97 - 122
<p>10. Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021 - 2023</p> <p>To seek approval to the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy for the period 2021 – 2023.</p>	123 - 142
<p>11. Unified ICT System for Housing, and interim system</p> <p>To seek approval to the modification of the current contract for the Northgate Housing system to March 2023 and to note the strategic review of the Housing, Asset and Repairs ICT systems.</p>	143 - 148
<p>12. North Tyneside Council Customer Service Programme</p> <p>To seek approval to the proposed second phase priorities for the Customer Service Programme in North Tyneside.</p>	149 - 160
<p>13. Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>Monday 6 April 2021 at 6.00pm.</p>	

Circulation overleaf ...

Circulated to Members of Cabinet: -

N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)
Councillor B Pickard (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor G Bell
Councillor C Burdis
Councillor S Cox
Councillor S Day
Councillor P Earley
Councillor R Glindon
Councillor C Johnson
Councillor M Hall

**Young and Older People's Representatives and Partners of
North Tyneside Council.**

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North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Report of the Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member(s): Cllr P Earley
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Report from: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee's study, on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, into Children's Readiness for School in North Tyneside.

The recommendations are set out in paragraph 1.5.4 below.

In accordance with section 9F of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response to the recommendations presented to them as a result of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's study into Children's Readiness for School.

1.3 Forward Plan:

The report was included in the Forward Plan published on 22 February 2021 under the heading "Matters arising from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees".

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The report relates to the following priority in the 2020/2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People Will:

Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

1.5.2 In September 2019, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee agreed to review the early intervention support available for parents in North Tyneside to enable children to be ready for school and identify if any improvements could be made to the support available to ensure the outcomes were improved for families and children. At this meeting it was decided that a Sub-Group be established to carry out a review.

1.5.3 The Sub-Group felt that it was important to consult directly with schools and a questionnaire was circulated to all First and Primary Schools in North Tyneside. From January until March 2020, before the national lockdown, the Sub-Group met with officers in the Early Help Services Team and the Health Visiting and School Nurse Service to gather information on the role that the Council has in relation to children's readiness for school. The Sub-Group also met with staff in private Nurseries in North Tyneside.

1.5.4 The Sub-Group has made a total of 6 recommendations for Cabinet's consideration:

1. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services considers improving communication between the Council, schools, and private nurseries in relation to early help and being ready for school.
2. Cabinet requests the Director of Children's and Adult Services to consider simplifying the early help assessment process, so it is less time consuming and bureaucratic for schools and private nurseries or provides adequate help to schools and private nurseries in completing the early help assessment process.
3. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help to schools and private nurseries for toilet training, including for children without special needs.
4. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help and encouragement for parents and carers in accessing early help information and services, including help for toilet training, language development, and accessing online educational material for children.
5. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services consults with parents, schools, and private nurseries about early help and being ready for school, including a focus on the size and distribution of any problems in North Tyneside. The findings of this consultation are to be shared with Cabinet and all Elected Members.
6. Cabinet requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Education asking for more funding and resources for local government for early help to ensure all children are ready for school.

1.5.5 The full report and recommendations of the review is attached at Appendix 1

1.5.6 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received the report on 2 February 2021 and approved the recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above and provides a response to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at the meeting.

Option 3

Cabinet may accept part of the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. Option 1 is recommended as this option allows Cabinet to consider and formulate a response to the recommendations

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Report of the Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group.

Appendix 2 - Acknowledgements

1.9 Contact officers:

Nik Flavell, Senior Manager CYPL Tel. (0191) 643 7219

Maria Parkinson, Democratic Services Officer Tel. (0191) 643 5030

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group Report
- (2) Minutes of Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee meetings held on 12 September 2019 and 14 January 2021.
- (3) Minutes of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The financial implications associated with each recommendation will be included in Cabinet's response to this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications at this stage.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Sub-Group consulted with Primary Schools and held discussions with relevant officers.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Sub-Group met with representatives from private nursery providers in Tynemouth, Wallsend and North Shields.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct issues relating to human rights arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no direct issues relating to crime and disorder arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no direct issues relating to environment and sustainability arising from this report.

PART 3

- Chief Executive
- Head(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service

Overview and Scrutiny Report

Children's Readiness for School

November 2020



2. Reason for the study

- 2.1 At its meeting in September 2019, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee agreed to review the early intervention support available for parents in North Tyneside to enable children to be ready for school and identify if any improvements could be made to the support available to ensure the outcomes were improved for families and children.

- 2.2 The topic linked to the Be Ready for School Priority of the Our North Tyneside Plan – “Giving our children and their families the best start in life”.

3. Remit and method

- 3.1 At a Scoping meeting the Sub-group agreed to consult with First and Primary Schools and ask the following questions:

- What is your understanding of “being ready for school”?
- What is involved in developing children’s school readiness including for example self care, literacy, language and socialisation?
- What are the reasons for children not being ready for school?
- What is your approach to children being ready for school?
- How do you engage with parents/carers?
- Have you seen an improvement in children being ready for school?
- Who is involved in improving children’s school readiness and do you work together to achieve this aim?
- Would you be interested in providing information/speaking to the Sub Group?

- 3.2 The following Members volunteered to serve on the group:

- Councillor Matthew Thirlaway (Chair)
- Councillor Pat Oliver (Vice-Chair)
- Rev Michael Vine

- 3.3 The Sub-group felt that it was important to consult directly with schools and a questionnaire was circulated to all First and Primary Schools in North Tyneside. The Group met with officers in the Early Help Services Team and the Health Visiting and School Nurse Service to gather information on the role that the Council has in relation to Children’s Readiness for School. The Sub-group also met with staff in Private Nurseries in North Tyneside.

4. Findings and evidence

4.1 Consultation with Schools

- 4.1.1 A number of Primary Schools reported that they were seeing an increasing number of children who were not ready for school with children not being toilet trained, the over use of dummies and nappies and children being transported in buggies, poor speech acquisition and inability to interact with others, child protection issues, poor social skills, poor language and communication skills, children allowed unlimited access to electronic devices and children with low literacy skills and no knowledge of stories and rhymes.

- 4.1.2 A number of reasons cited were parents with a lack of skills, knowledge and vocabulary/academic ability, parents with social issues not parenting appropriately, working parents being too busy, helicopter parenting with parents doing everything for their child, lowering their child's self help skills and sense of independence
- 4.1.3 A school in Benton noted that toilet issues took staff away from teaching and they reported that they were completing more referrals for speech and language therapy which added to staff workload.
- 4.1.4 Schools had different approaches to improving children's readiness for school. One school in Howdon offered pre start toileting sessions and shared expectations and support in the school's induction pack.
- 4.1.5 Another school in Longbenton had opened up two year old provision to allow children an even earlier chance to receive care and instruction from qualified staff. They completed Early Help Assessments with families entering two year old provision as a means of identifying and offering support as quickly as possible. They employed a school nurse one day per week to support parents and offered workshops, drop ins and appointments across the whole school. However the Workshops had not been well attended despite being timetabled to coincide with school drop off and pick up times.

The children who had attended the two year old provision were much more settled on entry to nursery and children attending the nursery transition into reception class had increased communication and social skills compared to those who had not.

- 4.1.6 A school in Shiremoor with a two year old and a rising three nursery prior to nursery immersed children in vocabulary, stories, songs, experiences and development in all areas and ensured that they learned boundaries. They kept parents well-informed and engaged with parents/carers by organising lessons with the children, singing events, wellie walks, performances, visits out of school to a farm and the beach. They also tweeted books of the week and daily learning. They held book bonanza or pyjama story days and sessions to learn about how to share stories and they gave out packs with ideas for learning

The School noted that 88% of the children lived in the four most deprived areas and engagement with parents was an on-going challenge.

- 4.1.7 Another School in North Shields encouraged children to develop key attributes and attitudes and develop a sense of self as 'a positive learner' with an 'I can do' approach and involved parents to increase their own confidence. They stated that they did not have a problem with children being ready for school who had been through the 2 and 3 year old Nursery. However, there was a difference with those children who had attended other childcare providers.

4.2 Meeting with **Early Help Services**

4.2.1 At the service based at Riverside, the staff worked with parents to assist them to prepare children for school as schools in the Riverside area had raised that this was a problem. Family Partners in the Early Help Service undertook one to one work, early help assessments and whole family partnership work.

4.2.2 Health Visitors and School nurses would go out to families if health was an issue and issues would be picked up by Health Visitors at clinics to support parents.

4.2.3 Schools who had raised readiness for school as an issue could log with the early help pathway and start early help assessments.

4.2.4 Early Help had an approach to engage with families with ready for school workshops and they undertook door knocking to encourage parents to take up the 2 year old offer. The Service also organised stay and play drop ins. The approach was to encourage parents to participate and not be judgemental. At these sessions, the team discussed the importance of morning and bed time routines and story time and song time and reinforcing positive messages. Some parents used ipads instead of traditional toys and intensive work was undertaken to involve families in learning and fun days and the importance of talking to children.

A Parenting course had been held at a School in North Shields which had been well attended and the intention was to run another course.

The Early Help Service worked with the Children, Adolescent and Mental Health Services Team and families were referred to Early Help to see what level of support they needed and to upskill and the Team supported the parents in the family home.

4.2.5 Members asked how many early years children there were in the Borough who were not ready for school and where there were development issues and neglect was raised as an issue

The Team said that the neglect referrals they received were not solely down to children not being ready for school, as the neglect category covered a much broader remit/range of issues.

4.2.6 In terms of hotspot areas where there were higher numbers of children who were not ready for school these were mainly in areas of multiple deprivation.

4.2.7 The tables below show the percentage number of parents who accessed the 2 year old offer and 3 and 4 year old offer in 2019:

Take up of 2 Year Old entitlement – Early Years Census

	2019
North Tyneside	84%
North East	82%
National	68%

There was a very high take up, and those who did not take up the offer at 2 years, did by 3 years

Take up of 3 and 4 Year old entitlement – Early Years Census

	2019
North Tyneside	101%
North East	99%
National	94%

The take up was 101% as children from other Local Authorities accessed the provision also

The Sub-Group recognised the work that was being done in North Tyneside to achieve the high take up of the Early Years offer.

4.3 Health Visiting and School Nurses Service

4.3.1 The Service provided support to parents. Readiness for school started very early and the Service supported mums during the ante natal period and all women were offered an ante natal contact and a very early health needs assessment. Dads were encouraged to be present so the Team could build up a relationship with the family. The mums who did not engage were either still at work or had to cancel their appointment which was re arranged or mums were contacted by telephone to go through ante natal information and information was sent out in the post.

4.3.2 All families had universal contact including ante natal contact, new baby visit, assessment at 6-8 weeks, one year old assessment and 24-28 month assessment. There was 98% compliance within North Tyneside for the new birth visit by Health Visitors to families and non compliance was usually due to baby being in special care.

Under the Healthy Child Programme children had a development review at two years however the Service offered advice up until the age of five years. The National Child Measurement Programme was for children in reception class.

4.3.3 The Service had seen a rise in children who had not been toilet trained as using nappies was convenient and it was not always a priority for parents. The Service had offered a drop in session to help with toilet training at a Primary school in North Shields in April 2019 in order for children to be trained before the beginning of the school term in September, however the take up for the session had been low. Engagement with parents was sometimes difficult, and the Service had recruited community nursery nurses and it was hoped they could assist in readiness for school support.

4.3.4 There were higher levels of children not meeting assessment thresholds in the Riverside and Howdon areas and the vulnerable parent pathway pilot would target resources to parents in these areas and then be introduced to other areas where there were pockets of deprivation.

Social media would be used more regularly to promote health messages to parents and young people.

- 4.3.5 Baby clinics were held in libraries and leisure centres and Bounce and Rhythm and Stay and Play sessions were promoted together with peer support sessions for breast feeding.
Parents in the coastal area had set up a social media group to offer support and continued to meet to support each other.
- 4.3.6 In families where there was a drug or alcohol problem and a chaotic lifestyle there was an impact on the development of a child and any safeguarding concerns would be escalated and parental support offered.
- 4.3.7 The School nurse team was small and undertook a whole system approach. A pilot was being undertaken by school nurses to give out a toothbrush and toothpaste kit to parents to roll out the cleaning teeth public health message. A chat health online forum had been introduced for young people to email questions to a school nurse and young people were signposted or referred for support.
- A safety equipment pilot had been introduced in the North Shields locality to reduce childhood accidents and the impact would be shared with other wards in the Borough.
- 4.3.8 The move from the NHS to the Council's Public Health Team had enabled the Team to improve links with the Special Educational Needs Team and to provide advice to parents whose children had special educational needs and a market place event at the Parks had enabled the Team to build links and partnerships with the community and voluntary sector.
- 4.3.9 During discussions with the Health Visiting Service the Sub-Group asked if schools flagged the issue of children not being toilet trained with the Service and it was noted that few cases had been reported to the Service.
The Sub-Group noted that in schools, there was an impact on the child and other children in the class.
The Sub-Group recognised the need to strengthen communication between Schools and the Health Visiting Service and acknowledged that it was the responsibility of many services for children's readiness for school.

4.4 Private Nurseries

- 4.4.1 The Sub-Group met with representatives from private nursery providers in Tynemouth, Wallsend and North Shields
- 4.4.2 The representative from the Nursery in Tynemouth discussed how the Nursery had a Pre School Room and how they supported the childrens' social and emotional development and prepared children for transition to school and learning.
- 4.4.3 The representative from Wallsend stated that some children were not emotionally or socially ready for school and an example was highlighted where some children at the Wallsend Nursery could not sit still at the table at

meal times. The Nursery had children with toileting and behaviour problems and had applied for Leaps funding.

- 4.4.4 The representative from North Shields advised that the Nursery worked with children from deprived areas whose parents were out of work and also with children whose parents had busy working lifestyles who did not invest time with their children.

In Wallsend the deprivation issues were related to parenting and some unemployed parents did not appreciate the value of early education and it was about cultural change.

- 4.4.5 Links with reception classes

The representative from Tynemouth Nursery confirmed that the links with the reception classes and Nursery schools were very positive in North Tyneside.

- 4.4.6 Readiness for school Initiatives

It was acknowledged that preventative measures undertaken by Sure Start were a big miss such as free childcare courses undertaken by the Adult Learning Alliance which built a relationship with the community and were not seen as a threat.

Families had engaged with projects which included cooking and reading with children and clothes exchanges and the children flourished.

The Nurseries stated that they offered elements from Sure Start such as “Stay and Play” for parents but funding was tight.

- 4.4.7 The representative from North Shields stated that they used the Solihull Parenting Programme “Cool for Schools” where parents were trained to be buddies and which included useful activities.

- 4.4.8 The North Shields representative stated that the Nursery had invested in an online learning journal to send out tips and relevant literature and this was a useful way to engage parents.

- 4.4.9 The Tynemouth representative noted that the online learning book was a useful way to engage with parents and presentations to parents at a parents evening were beneficial.

- 4.4.10 The Nursery in Tynemouth undertook some home visits.

- 4.4.11 The Wallsend representative noted that the Nursery had previously given out written newsletters but they now used Facebook to engage with parents and post information and this was a useful platform to use for the community.

- 4.4.12 The Nursery representatives discussed the support offered from the Council.

The representatives noted that additional support for an individual child via Early Years Inclusive Funding or Leaps funding involved a huge amount of paperwork which was time consuming and difficult to navigate.

4.4.13 The North Shields Representative noted that the Council's ready for school offer was very useful and a mock Ofsted and checking of Policies and Procedures was undertaken but sometimes disheartening when the recommendations were not always affordable. The Nursery had a service level agreement with the Council for training. It was noted that this training was optional for Nurseries to buy into and that unless the Nursery had a child with special needs there would be very little communication with the Early Years team. They stated that the early help assessment was a lengthy process in order to coordinate speech and language, physiotherapy and childcare specialisms.

4.4.14 It was acknowledged that the training sessions undertaken by the Council's Commissioning Team were very worthwhile.

4.4.15 During discussions with Private Nurseries it was highlighted that the early help assessment process was very lengthy and bureaucratic and applying for additional support for an individual child via Early Years Inclusion or Leaps funding involved a huge amount of paperwork which was time consuming and difficult to navigate.

The Sub-Group felt that the Local Authority should consider simplifying the early help assessment process.

Nursery Representatives commented that further support from Health Visitors on toilet training would be beneficial.

4.5 Consideration by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

The Report was considered by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 2 February 2021 and the Committee agreed to refer the Report to Cabinet

The Committee were concerned about the lack of engagement from schools and nurseries, which obstructed the ability to scrutinise fully.

They acknowledged the full engagement from council officers and proposed an alternative approach to schools to gain greater engagement through Head Teacher briefings which might gain greater engagement.

5 Conclusion

When we came to the end of our evidence gathering for this piece of investigatory work, the coronavirus outbreak was only just in its infancy. Words like "lockdown" and "social distancing" were not yet a part of our vocabulary. Ironically, this piece of work focuses on an issue that can only have been worsened by the pandemic. Ensuring young children are ready for school is vital to their development and has an impact throughout their life.

During this piece of work, we were adamant in our belief that parents and carers are, first and foremost, responsible for ensuring their child is ready for school. We acknowledged, however, that most parents will want or need additional support. North Tyneside Council, and other agencies, therefore, have an important role in supporting parents and carers so that all children in

the borough have a good start in life. The Council also has a distinct duty towards our looked after children.

Concerns were raised at several meetings of the Children, Education, and Skills Sub-Committee about reports in the national media about children not being ready for school because of issues such as poor language development and the lack of toilet training. The Sub-Committee established an investigation into the size of the problem in North Tyneside.

The Sub-Group began by sending a questionnaire to all First and Primary Schools in North Tyneside about their experiences, however, we received a very small return. While the feedback was consistent the Sub-Group felt the amount of evidence prevented us from drawing any conclusions about the size of the problem in North Tyneside. We, therefore, believe it is crucial that the Council consults with parents, schools, and private nurseries about children being ready for school with a focus on the size and distribution of the problem in North Tyneside.

The Sub-Group also met with staff from private nursery providers, council officers, and health workers. It became clear during these meetings that there was a problem with some children not being ready for school. While we were impressed with the support available to parents and carers, the Sub-Group agreed on a number of important recommendations.

We would like to thank all those people who assisted us during this piece of work as well as those Council staff who help, support, and protect children in North Tyneside on a daily basis throughout the year.

6 Recommendations

The Sub-Group makes the following recommendations:

6.1 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services considers improving communication between the Council, schools, and private nurseries in relation to early help and being ready for school.

6.2 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests the Director of Children's and Adult Services to consider simplifying the early help assessment process, so it is less time consuming and bureaucratic for schools and private nurseries or provides adequate help to schools and private nurseries in completing the early help assessment process.

6.3 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help to schools and private nurseries for toilet training, including for children without special needs.

6.4 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help and encouragement for parents and carers in accessing early help information and services, including help for toilet training, language development, and accessing online educational material for children.

6.5 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services consults with parents, schools, and private nurseries about early help and being ready for school, including a focus on the size and distribution of any problems in North Tyneside. The findings of this consultation are to be shared with Cabinet and all Elected Members.

6.6 Recommendation :

Cabinet requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Education asking for more funding and resources for local government for early help to ensure all children are ready for school.

7.0 Acknowledgements

The Sub Group would like to place on record its thanks and appreciation to those officers and representatives of external organisations for their assistance in providing the evidence on which this report is based. A full list of all those individuals who helped the Sub Group with its work is set out in Appendix 1.

8.0 Background Information

Our North Tyneside Plan

North Tyneside Council

Lesley Davies, Senior Manager Prevention and Early Help

Nik Flavell, Senior Manager for Quality Assurance

Nichole Garner, Early Help

Julie Connolly, Early Help

Karissa Williams, Early Help

Alison Ashley, Early Help

Jo Connolly, Senior Manager/Professional Nursing Lead

Kelly Grey, Health Visitor

Sarah Mann, Locality Nurse Manager

Pamela Winn, Health Visitor

Veronica Hetherington, Locality Nurse Manager

Denise Dobson, Locality Nurse Manager

Helen Smith, Lead Safeguarding Nurse

Graham Cowie, Commissioning Manager

Louise Guthrie, Headteacher Denbigh Community Primary School

Karen Glass, Deputy Headteacher Benton Dene Primary School

Judith Driver, Headteacher Balliol Primary School

Barbara Middleton, Headteacher Shiremoor Primary School

Rachel Woods, Headteacher Whitehouse Primary School

Maria Parkinson, Democratic Services Officer

External Contributors

Rebecca Sanderson – Tynemouth Nursery, Tynemouth

Kelly Rogers – The Family Tree Nursery, Wallsend

Louise Cervantes – Linskill Nursery, North Shields

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North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Determination of School Admission Arrangements September 2022

Portfolio(s):	Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Peter Earley
Report from Service Area:	Commissioning and Asset Management		
Responsible Officer:	Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Asset Management (Tel:(0191) 6438089)		
Wards affected:	All		

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

This is an annual report submitted to Cabinet to meet a statutory requirement to determine school admission arrangements before publication. This report is to approve the proposed admission arrangements for all Community Schools in North Tyneside for the 2022/2023 academic year including the co-ordinated admissions schemes.

The Authority has a duty to consult on all aspects of its proposed admission arrangements if there are any proposed changes to the arrangements.

There are no changes proposed.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (1) approve the 2022 proposed admission arrangements and limits for Community Schools, as outlined in Appendices 1 to 5, subject to the appropriate publication of Statutory Notices;
- (2) authorise the Head of Commissioning and Asset Management to proceed in administering admission arrangements for the 2022/2023 academic year, subject to the publication of Statutory Notices and compliance with obligations required by the Secretary of State in accordance with the timescales set; and
- (3) authorise the Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning, to formally seek approval, as necessary, from the Schools Adjudicator in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014 for any necessary variations to the determined arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year should these arise.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 4 December 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:

- (1) Our People will be ready for school- giving our children and families the best start in life.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Co-ordinated Admission Schemes (The Scheme)

All Local Authorities are required to formulate and consult on a scheme for each academic year for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all maintained schools within their area. This requirement includes maintained boarding schools but excludes maintained special schools and maintained nursery schools. Co-ordinated schemes are intended to simplify the admission process for parents whilst reducing the likelihood of any child being left without a school place. Co-ordination establishes a mechanism that ensures that, as far as is practical, every child living in a Local Authority (LA) area who has applied in the normal admissions round receives one, and only one, offer of a school place on the same day. While it is for each LA to decide the scheme that best suits its residents and its schools, authorities must ensure that they:

- a. comply with law and regulations, including all the process requirements (for example, the common application form allowing at least 3 preferences, information sharing with other Local Authorities, sending out not more than one offer to all seeking places at its maintained schools or academies on the same day); and
- b. do not disadvantage applications to their schools from families resident in other Local Authority areas.

The Scheme applies to applications received from September 2021 for entry into maintained schools in September 2022. The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) require the LA to exchange specified information on applications with neighbouring Authorities.

The purpose of the Scheme is to co-ordinate admissions into all mainstream maintained first and primary, middle and high schools in North Tyneside. The Regulations also place a duty on all Local Authorities to make arrangements within their Scheme for cross-Authority border co-ordination of admissions.

The Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes are shown in Appendices 1 and 2.

1.5.2 Admissions Numbers

All schools must have an admission number for each 'relevant age group'. This is defined in law as 'an age group in which pupils are or will normally be admitted' to the school in question. Admission Authorities of maintained schools must set admission numbers with regard to the capacity assessment for the school under the Regulations.

The Planned Admission Numbers are shown at Appendix 3.

1.5.3 Admission Policies

Pupils will be able to go to their preferred school unless there are more applications to that school than there are places available. If there are more applications than places available at a school, oversubscription criteria will be used to allocate places after any children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan have been provided for where the Statement or the Education, Health and Care Plan names a specific school.

Admissions Policies for admission to North Tyneside Community Schools and Nurseries for which the LA is the Admissions Authority are shown at Appendices 4 and 5.

1.5.4 Oversubscription Criteria

The oversubscription criteria used by the LA where there are more applications than places available are set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of this report.

1.5.5 Admissions to Year 12 (sixth form)

Where a secondary school operates a sixth form and admits pupils from other schools at age 16, for instance, an admission number will be required for Year 12 as well as for the main year or years. Admission numbers must refer to pupils being admitted to the school for the first time and not transferring from earlier age groups. The entry requirements for sixth form are largely dependent on the course of study that a student wishes to access. Details of specific requirements and courses available may be obtained for individual schools. All schools publish information about their post 16 provision.

1.5.6 Community Schools

The Authority is responsible for consultation and determining the admission arrangements for community schools in the North Tyneside area in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014.

1.5.7 The Learning Trust Schools

The North Tyneside Learning Trust was established in September 2010 and currently comprises 44 schools. The governing bodies of these schools are responsible for determining their arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. Five of the schools in the Learning Trust are Special Schools and these arrangements do not apply to them.

1.5.8 Voluntary Aided Schools

The governing bodies of these schools are responsible for consultation and determining their own admission arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014.

1.5.9 Academies

There are four academies in North Tyneside. The governing bodies of these four schools are responsible for consultation and determining their own admission arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014.

Any school which subsequently changes their status and becomes an academy will be responsible for determining their own admission arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014 following the change.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report.

Option 2

Do not approve the recommendations set out in section 1.2 of the report and request Officers undertake further work to change proposed admission arrangements.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

There are no changes to the admission arrangements.

The recommendations contained in this report are made to secure compliance with statutory requirements as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.

If the recommended option is not approved, the Authority may not be in compliance with statutory requirements as outlined in Section 2.2 of this report.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme First and Primary Schools 2022

Appendix 2: Proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Middle and High Schools 2022

Appendix 3: Proposed Admissions Numbers Community First and Primary Schools
September 2022

Appendix 4: Proposed Admissions to Nursery Policy September 2022

Appendix 5: Proposed Admissions to Community First and Primary Schools Policy
September 2022

1.9 Contact officers:

Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Asset Management tel: 0191 643 8089

Barbara Patterson, Senior Manager – Facilities and Fair Access tel: 0191 643 8340

Val Johnson, Access Manager, tel: 0191 6438721

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report:

(1) [School Admissions Code December 2014](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The School Admissions Code 2014 (the Code) applies to admissions to all maintained schools and sets out certain mandatory requirements and prohibited practices according to the relevant law. The LA's determined admission arrangements must comply with the mandatory provisions of the Code. The Code is made under s.84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The LA is only required to consult on the admission arrangements for those schools for which it is the Admissions Authority by 31 January 2021 if there are any changes to the previously agreed arrangements. The admission arrangements for 2022 must be determined by 28 February 2021.

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the regulations made under that Act in relation to responsibility for functions, Cabinet is responsible for determining this matter.

Each year, the LA is required to have in place a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for maintained schools in the area (s.88M of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998). There is no requirement to co-ordinate applications for places in any other year groups including school sixth forms/year 12.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Cabinet Member responsible for Children, Young People and Learning has been consulted in relation to the proposals.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

No consultation required

2.4 Human rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 confers a right of access to education. This right does not extend to securing a place at a particular school. Admissions Authorities, however, do need to consider parents' reasons for expressing a preference when they make decisions about the allocation of school places, to take account of the rights of parents under the Human Rights Act 1998, though this may not necessarily result in the allocation of a place. These might include, for example, the parents' right to ensure that their child's education conforms to their own religious or philosophical convictions (so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure).

2.5 Equalities and diversity

Under Section 85 of the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for any education provider, including a private or independent provider, to discriminate between pupils on grounds of

disability, sex, race, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief. Discrimination on these grounds, which are known as 'protected characteristics', is unlawful in relation to admission arrangements. There are exceptions to these requirements set out in Schedule 11, including in respect of admissions to single sex schools, schools with a religious character and in respect of other types of education providers such as further and higher education. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 introduces the following duties on the responsible bodies of schools:

- (a) A duty not to harass a pupil or a person who has applied for admission (on the basis of protected characteristics, sexual harassment or less favourable treatment);
- (b) A duty not to victimise a person in its admission arrangements;
- (c) A duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of the admission of prospective pupils who may be disabled and not to discriminate in respect of the same.

The arrangements that North Tyneside Council has in place are fully compliant with Section 85 of the Equality Act 2010. In addition, all maintained schools are also fully aware of their responsibilities associated with the Act.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☒
- Head(s) of Service ☒
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☒

Proposed

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for First and Primary Schools in the area of North Tyneside Local Authority 2022

Introduction

1. This Scheme is made by North Tyneside Council under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Primary) (England) Regulations 2008 and applies to all First and Primary Schools in North Tyneside.

Interpretation

2. In this Scheme -

"The LA" means North Tyneside Council acting in their capacity as Local Authority;

"The LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA is the Local Authority;

"Primary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996;

"Primary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996;

"School" means a community, foundation or voluntary school (but not a special school), which is maintained by the LA;

"VA schools" means such of the schools as are voluntary aided schools;

"Trust schools" means such of the schools have a trust status;

"Academy" means such of the schools have academy status;

"Admission Authority" in relation to a community school means the LA and, in relation to Trust and VA schools means the governing body of that school and in relation to an Academy means the Academy Trust of that school.

"The equal preference system" the scheme operated by North Tyneside Council whereby all preferences listed by parents/carers on the common application form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil may be offered a place at more than one school, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the one ranked highest on the common application form;

"The specified year" means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September 2022;

"Academic year" means a period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July.

“The determination year” in relation to the proposed admission arrangements for a school, means the academic year beginning two years before the academic year to which the arrangements relate.

"Admission arrangements" means the overall procedure, practices, criteria and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places and refers to any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered;

“Parent/Carer” means any person who holds parental responsibility, as defined under the 1989 Children Act, and with whom the child normally resides;

“Direct distance” means the distance measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council’s Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority;

“Appropriate school” means the nearest school identified by the authority in accordance with the home to school transport policy;

“Home” local authority means the local authority in whose area the parents live;

The Primary “National Offer Day” is 16 April or the next working day;

“In year “admission means any application for a place other than the normal year of entry;

School Admissions Code refers to the code published on 19 December 2014;

“Eligible for a place” means that a child has been placed on a school’s ranked list at such a point, which falls within the school’s published admission number.

Commencement and extent

This scheme applies in relation to the admission arrangements for the schools for admission year 2022-2023 (the specified year).

The LA will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in Schedule 1 to this scheme, or provisions having the same effect.

The governing body of each of the Academies, VA and Trust schools will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in the Schedule, so far as relevant to that school, or provisions having the same effect.

The Scheme

1. The Scheme shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
2. The scheme shall apply to every school in the LA area as identified in Appendix 1 (except special schools).
3. The Scheme will also include applications from parents seeking admission to North Tyneside schools who live within the following neighbouring LA’s:

- Newcastle Local Authority
- Northumberland Local Authority

We will also co-ordinate our admission process with any other Admission Authorities where relevant.

SCHEDULE 1

PART I -THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form.
2. The Common Application Form will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of First and Primary education in the specified year, and for applications made outside the normal year of entry i.e. 'In year' admissions leading up to, and during, the academic year 2022/2023.
3. The Common Application Form must be used as a means of expressing up to 3 preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child-
 - a To be admitted to a school within the LA area (including Academies, VA and Trust schools);
 - b To be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including Academies, VA, and Trust schools)
4. **The Common Application Form will -**
 - a Allow parents to express up to 3 preferences, including, where relevant, any schools outside the LA's area, in the rank order in which they wish their child to receive an offer of a place at the respective schools,
 - b Specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned in accordance with paragraph 10.
5. **The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:**
 - a That the Common Application Form is available on request from the LA and on-line at www.northtyneside.gov.uk/schooladmission until the closing date and
 - b. That the Common Application Form is accompanied by a written explanation of the key features of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.
6. **The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:**
 - a Every parent resident in the LA area who has a child attending a nursery class or early years setting and is eligible to commence primary education receives a written explanation of how to apply either online or paper copy (on request only); and
 - b Every parent whose application falls within the category of an 'In Year' transfer receives a copy of the Common Application Form (and written explanation), on request, and understands the process.

Parents will be advised that they will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:

- (i) If more than one school is nominated and two or more preferences can be offered the parent will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the order appearing on the form (the first-mentioned being ranked the highest); and
 - (ii) Places at any oversubscribed school will be offered on the basis of equal preference rank order and that where an offer is made it would be for the highest ranked school.
 - (iii) If a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school.
7. The Common Application Form will include an extra section to be completed by parents who express a preference for a Voluntary Aided School to enable them to provide additional relevant information.
8. Where a school receives a supplementary information form from a North Tyneside resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a Common Application Form and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary information forms are received directly by schools the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a Common Application Form has been received from the parent and, if not, the LA will contact the parent and ask them to complete a Common Application Form. Under the requirements of the scheme parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary information form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.
9. Any school which operates criteria for selection by ability or aptitude must ensure that its arrangements for assessing ability or aptitude, to enable decisions to be made on nominations, conform to the timing requirements of the scheme as set out in Schedule 2. (N.B. no Community, Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided School in North Tyneside operates criteria for selection based on ability or aptitude)

Processing of Common Application Forms

10. It will be the responsibility of parents to ensure that Common Application Forms are received directly to the LA by the closing date of **14 January 2022**. Common Application Forms may also be completed on-line by the closing date.

Determining offers in response to the Common Application Form

11. The LA will act as a clearinghouse for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the Common Application Forms. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the Common Application Form where-
- (a) It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
 - (b) An applicant is eligible for more than one place and is allocated a place at the highest ranked school, or
 - (c) An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 18 of this Schedule.

12. Completed application forms must be received by the closing date of **14 January 2022**.
13. Completed application forms, which are received after the closing date will be marked '**LATE**' and considered on an individual basis except that the procedure must not prevent the proper processing under the Scheme of application forms received on time.
14. The LA will process all application forms; any completed application forms must be treated as a confidential communication between the parent and the LA. All ranked applications received by the closing date will be considered before any ranked applications received after this closing date unless exceptional circumstances apply.
15. **By 3 February 2022** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details and any supplementary information received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria. Where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will also similarly notify the relevant authority/authorities by this date.
16. **By 25 February 2022** the admission authority for each Trust, VA and Academy school will provide the LA with a list in rank order, in accordance with their admission criteria of all pupils who applied for a place at the school.
17. **By 7 March 2022** the LA will exchange responses to preferences with other LAs.
18. **By 11 March 2022** the LA will match the provisional offers of places against each parent's ranking and proceed as follows:
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at that school will be offered to the child.
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools they will be offered a place at whichever school is the highest ranked and any lower offers will be disregarded.
 - Where none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority
 - The LA will allocate a school place to those pupils who have not submitted a Common Application Form after all other pupils who submitted a Common Application Form have been considered. The LA will allocate a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority
19. **25 March 2022** -The LA informs its First and Primary Schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools, and informs other LAs of places in North Tyneside schools to be offered to their residents.

- 20. On 16 April 2022** parents will be notified by email of the outcome of their application if they applied online and requested an email notification. If the parent completed a paper application form a letter will be posted 2nd class informing them of the school place allocated. This letter will give the following information
- The name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other higher ranked schools nominated on the Common Application Form;
 - Information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
 - Allow parents to request that their child's name is placed on a waiting list for any schools that they were refused that were ranked higher on the application form than the place that was offered.
 - Contact details for the schools (in the case of nominated VA schools where they were not offered a place) so that they can lodge an appeal, with the governing body, and the relevant LAs.

The letter will not inform parents of places still available at other schools.

- 21. 2 May 2022: (1)** the deadline for parents to accept the place offered. If they do not respond by this date the LA will assume that the offer of the school place is accepted and will notify the school accordingly where possible the LA will also continue to pursue parents for written confirmation of acceptance for oversubscribed schools. **(2)** the deadline for parents to request to place their child's name on a waiting list for any school they ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered.

WAITING LISTS

Parents may ask for their children to be kept on a waiting list of children to be re-allocated places if they become available **after 16 April 2022** at any school they have ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their Common Application Form they may be placed on the list of all the schools they did nominate and can then be considered for places at those schools. If pupil numbers fall below the published admission number then children will be admitted from the waiting list according to the admission criteria regardless of when their application form was received. The LA will hold all waiting lists where requested. Waiting lists for schools will be kept for **one term** in the academic year i.e. **31 December 2022**. No list will be kept for any school thereafter either by the Local Authority or by any individual school.

- 22. 6 May 2022:** The LA re-allocates any places that may have become vacant since 16 April, in accordance with the school admission criteria, which will include the following:
- Those who have not yet been offered any school place, for example, late applications from parents who have just moved into the area and have not been offered a school place.
 - Those who have not been offered a school place at any of the schools they nominated on the Common Application Form and the place that has become available is at a school originally nominated on the Common Application Form.

- Those who have been offered a school place but who ranked the school at which a place has now become available higher on the Common Application Form.

Where there are more applicants than places available then the priorities used within the schools admission criteria will also be applied to all applicants on the waiting list to determine the allocation of places.

23. Where a parent has been allocated a place at their second ranked school, they may be placed on a waiting list of their first ranked school but not their third and so on. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their Common Application Form, they may be placed on the list of all the schools they did nominate, and can then be considered for places at those schools.
24. Waiting lists for schools will be kept by the Local Authority for **one term** in the academic year i.e. **31 December 2022**. No lists will be kept for any school thereafter, either by the LA or by individual schools.
25. Where parents have not returned their acceptance slip for oversubscribed schools or responded to the offer the LA will assume that the place has been accepted and the school will be notified accordingly.

PART 2 – LATE APPLICATIONS

26. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **14 January 2022**. As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a good reason or in exceptional circumstances may be considered provided they are received before **31 January 2022**, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of what may be considered as good reason and exceptional circumstances include: when a lone parent has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a North Tyneside property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances may be considered and each case will be decided on its own merits by each individual admission authority.

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 14 JANUARY 2022:

27. Once parents have submitted their Common Application Form they cannot change their preferences without a genuine reason, for example if the family has recently moved address, proof of ownership or tenancy of a North Tyneside property will be required.

LATE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 31 January 2022

28. Late applications received after 31 January 2022, which, are not deemed to be exceptional by the Authority, will not be processed until after 16 April.

NO COMMON APPLICATION FORM RECEIVED BY 16 APRIL 2022

29. Where no Common Application Form is submitted the child will **not** be offered a school place on 16 April 2021. The Local Authority will not offer a place until a form has been completed and after **6 May 2022**. The parent will then be offered a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 16 APRIL 2022

- 30.** Applications received after 16 April at any school must be forwarded to the LA immediately. Where only the supplementary information form is received the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a Common Application Form has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a Common Application Form. The LA will enter the details onto its Education Management System (EMS) and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place as soon as possible at the school highest in the parent's order of preference that has a vacancy or if this is not possible, at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy (as defined in paragraph 18).

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 16 APRIL 2022

- 31.** Parents cannot change their original school preference(s) without a genuine reason, for example if the family has recently moved address. Where the LA agrees to accept a change of preference application the original school preference will be cancelled and a new application must be submitted which will be considered as 'Late'. Any place previously offered at a school in North Tyneside on 16 April 2022 will be withdrawn and the parent will be notified in writing of the outcome.

YEAR OF ENTRY APPEALS

- 32.** All Admission Authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by **28 February each year.**
- 33.** Where schools are their own admission authority i.e. Academies, VA and Trust the school will be responsible for presenting the schools case for any appeals lodged. However, for Academies and Trust Schools the LA can be present for stage 1 of the appeal to answer any questions on the admission process.

PART 3 - 'IN YEAR' ADMISSIONS

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 16 APRIL 2022

- 34.** Applications received after 16 April 2022, and for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry to First and Primary schools, will be treated as 'In Year' admissions.

APPLYING FOR A SCHOOL PLACE OUTSIDE THE NORMAL YEAR OF ENTRY

- 35.** Parents must apply to their 'home' local authority regardless of the school they are applying for.
- 36.** The 'home' local authority will process all Common Application Forms and inform parents of the outcome of their application even if the school is an Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided.
- 37.** The local authority is unable to process applications for schools where the date that the place is required from, is more than 2 months from the date of the application (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
- 38.** Children must be resident in the country before a Common Application Form can be considered (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
- 39.** School places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless a house move has been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or a rental

agreement. The admission authority reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support the claim to residence.

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

A Local Authority has the power to direct an admission authority (including Academies, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools) to admit a child who is Looked After by the Local Authority, even when the school is full. The Local Authority must not choose a school from which the child is permanently excluded but may choose a school whose infant classes are already at the maximum size. In respect of admissions for key stage 1 a Looked After Child would be admitted as an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

RESPONDING TO COMMON APPLICATION FORMS

40. If the application is for an Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided school, the local authority will refer the application to the Governing Body of the school. In the case of applications for schools outside North Tyneside, the LA will contact the relevant authority.
41. All admission authorities must respond to the local authority within 5 working days of receiving the Common Application Form informing them of the decision. If there is a place available pupils **must** be admitted within 20 school days of the application being received by the local authority or at the beginning of a half term if appropriate.
42. Where a place is not available at the highest ranked school the local authority will co ordinate with the second and third preference schools until a place can be offered at one of the preferences.
43. If the pupil is not on the roll of a North Tyneside school and a place cannot be offered at any of the nominated schools, the parent will be informed of places available at other schools in the area.
44. If there are more applications than places available the published admission criteria must be applied.
45. Pupils can only be refused a place at a school if one of the statutory reasons in the School Admissions Code applies.
46. Pupils should not be placed outside the normal age group without written recommendation from an Educational Psychologist.
47. The LA will keep a track of any pupils who apply for 'In Year' admissions, and intervene as appropriate to ensure that they are placed in a school without undue delay particularly in respect of Looked After Children and disadvantaged children moving into the area i.e. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.
48. Where schools are their own admission authority i.e. Academy, Trust or VA, the school will be responsible for presenting the schools case for any in-year appeals lodged. The school should liaise directly with the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel, Legal, Governance and Commercial Services, North Tyneside Council, NE27 0BY. Tel: (0191) 643 5316.

DETERMINING OFFERS IN RESPONSE TO THE COMMON APPLICATION FORM

Pupils living in North Tyneside and applying for a school in the area (including Academies, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools) The LA will notify the parent of the outcome of the place for all schools including Academies, Trust and VA schools.

Pupils living in North Tyneside applying for a school out of the area

The 'Home' authority (NorthTyneside) must contact the maintaining authority to confirm the availability of a place. The 'Home' authority (NorthTyneside) would then confirm the offer of the place in writing to the parent, with a copy to the maintaining authority.

Pupils living out of the area applying for a North Tyneside school

The 'Home' authority must contact North Tyneside LA to confirm the availability of a place. The 'Home' authority would then confirm the offer of a place to the parent, with a copy of the offer to North Tyneside LA.

Acceptance of the school place

Parents will be expected to respond to accept or decline the offer within 10 working days, failure to do so will result in the school place being assumed as accepted and the school notified accordingly.

WAITING LISTS

The LA will hold the waiting list where requested. The waiting list will be held for the year of entry only i.e. reception class for oversubscribed schools. The list will be held for **one term** in the academic year. No list will be held by the Local Authority for any school after **31 December 2022**.

SCHEDULE 2

TIMETABLE OF CO-ORDINATED SCHEME
FIRST AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

DATE	EVENT
9 September 2021	Application Process begins for 2022/23
14 January 2022	Closing date for all applications to be received by the Local Authority
3 February 2022	Details of preferences to be sent to Trust, VA, Academies and other Local Authorities where preferences stated are for schools other than the home LA.
25 February 2022	The admission authority for each Trust, VA and Academy School will provide the LA with a list in rank order in accordance with their admission criteria of all pupils who applied for a place at the school.
7 March 2022	The LA will exchange responses to preferences with other LAs.
25 March 2022	The LA will inform all North Tyneside schools of children to offered places at their schools.
16 April 2022	National Offer Day for places
2 May 2022	Last date for parents to accept or refuse the offer that has been made.
2 May 2022	Last date for parents to request in writing that they want to place their child's name on the waiting list for any schools which they have applied for and been refused.
6 May 2022	The LA reallocates any places that have become available since offer day.
June/July 2022	Appeals to be heard

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME – FIRST AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Admission Authorities in the Area of North Tyneside to which the scheme applies

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Voluntary Aided Schools:

Christ Church C of E Primary School	Keilder Terrace North Shields NE30 2AD
St Bartholomew's C of E Primary	Goathland Avenue Longbenton NE12 8FA
Wallsend St Peter's C of E Primary School	North Terrace Wallsend NE28 6PY
St Aidan's RC Primary School	Coniston Road Wallsend NE28 0EP
St Bernadette's RC Primary School	Rising Sun Cottages Wallsend NE28 9JW
St Columba's RC Primary School	Station Road Wallsend NE28 8EN
St Cuthbert's RC Primary School	Lovaine Place North Shields NE29 0BU
St Joseph's RC Primary School	Wallsend Road North Shields NE29 7BT
St Mary's RC Primary School	Farringdon Road North Shields NE30 3EY
St Mary's RC Primary School	Great Lime Road Forest Hall NE12 7AB
St Stephens' RC Primary School	Goathland Avenue Longbenton NE12 8FA
Star of the Sea RC Primary School	Seatonville Road Whitley Bay NE25 9EG

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Learning Trust Schools:

Amberley Primary School	East Bailey Killingworth NE12 6SQ
Appletree Gardens First School	Appletree Gardens Whitley Bay NE25 8XS
Balliol Primary	Chesters Avenue Longbenton NE12 8QP
Battle Hill Primary School	Berwick Drive, Battle Hill Wallsend NE28 9DH
Benton Dene Primary School	Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton NE12 8FD
Burradon Primary School	Burradon Road Cramlington NE23 7NG
Carville Primary School	The Avenue Wallsend NE28 6AX
Denbigh Primary	Denbigh Avenue Wallsend NE28 0DS
Fordley Primary	Dudley Drive, Fordley Cramlington NE23 7AL
Forest Hall Primary School	Delaval Road Forest Hall NE12 9BA
Greenfields Primary School	Taylor Avenue Wideopen NE13 6NB
Hadrian Park Primary School	Addington Drive Wallsend NE28 9RT
Hazlewood Primary School	Canterbury Way, Woodlands Park Wideopen NE13 6JJ
Ivy Road Primary	Forest Hall Newcastle NE12 9AP
King Edward Primary	Preston Avenue North Shields NE30 2BD
Monkhouse Primary School	Wallington Avenue North Shields NE30 3SH

Preston Grange Primary	Chiltern Road North Shields NE29 9QL
Redesdale Primary School	Wiltshire Drive Wallsend NE28 8TS
Richardson Dees Primary	High Street East Wallsend NE28 7RT
Rockcliffe First School	Grafton Road Whitley Bay NE26 2NR
Stephenson Memorial Primary	Martin Road Wallsend NE28 0AG
Wallsend Jubilee Primary School	Mullen Road Wallsend NE28 9HA
Western Primary School	Rutland Road Wallsend NE28 8QL
Westmoor Primary School	Southgate Killingworth, NE12 6SA
Whitehouse Primary School	Whitehouse Lane North Shields NE29 7PE

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Academies:

Grasmere Academy	Grasmere Court Killingworth NE12 6TS
Kings Priory School	Huntington Place North shields NE30 4RF

Community Schools where the Local Authority is the Admission Authority

Coquet Park First	The Links Whitley Bay NE26 1TQ
Langley First	Drumoyne Gardens West Monkseaton NE25 9DL
Marine Park First	Park Road Whitley Bay NE26 1LT
Southridge First	Cranleigh Place Whitley Bay NE25 9UD

South Wellfield First	Otterburn Avenue Whitley Bay NE25 9QL
Whitley Lodge First	Woodburn Drive Whitley Bay NE26 3HW
Backworth Park Primary	Hotspur North Backworth NE27 0FZ
Bailey Green Primary	West Bailey Killingworth NE12 6QL
Collingwood Primary	Oswin Terrace North Shields NE29 7JQ
Cullercoats Primary	Marden Avenue, Cullercoats North Shields NE30 4PB
Holystone Primary	Whitley Road, Holystone Newcastle NE27 0DA
New York Primary	Lanark Close, New York North Shields NE29 8DP
Percy Main Primary	Nelson Terrace North Shields NE29 6JA
Preston Grange Primary	Chiltern Road, Preston Grange North Shields NE29 9QL
Riverside Primary	Minton Lane North Shields NE29 6DQ
Shiremoor Primary	Stanton Road, Park Estate Shiremoor NE27 0PW
Spring Gardens Primary	Brightman Road North Shields NE29 0HP
Waterville Primary	Waterville Road North Shields NE29 6SL

Proposed

Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Middle and High Schools in the area of North Tyneside Local Authority 2022

Introduction

1. This Scheme is made by North Tyneside Council under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (Primary) (England) Regulations 2008 and applies to all Middle and High Schools in North Tyneside.

Interpretation

2. In this Scheme -

"The LA" means North Tyneside Council acting in their capacity as Local Authority;

"The LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA is the Local Authority;

"Primary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996;

"Primary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996;

"Secondary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996;

"School" means a community, foundation or voluntary school (but not a special school), which is maintained by the LA;

"VA schools" means such of the schools as are voluntary aided schools;

"Trust schools" means such of the schools have a trust status;

"Academy" means such of the schools have academy status;

"Admission Authority" in relation to a community school means the LA and, in relation to Trust and VA schools means the governing body of that school and in relation to an Academy means the Academy Trust of that school.

"The equal preference system" the scheme operated by North Tyneside Council whereby all preferences listed by parents/carers on the common application form are considered under the over-subscription criteria for each school without reference to parental rankings. Where a pupil may be offered a place at more than one school, the rankings are used to determine the single offer by selecting the one ranked highest on the common application form;

"The specified year" means the school year beginning at or about the beginning of September 2022;

"Academic year" means a period commencing with 1st August and ending with the next 31st July.

“The determination year” in relation to the proposed admission arrangements for a school, means the academic year beginning two years before the academic year to which the arrangements relate.

"Admission arrangements" means the overall procedure, practices, criteria and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places and refers to any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered;

“Parent/Carer” means any person who holds parental responsibility, as defined under the 1989 Children Act, and with whom the child normally resides;

“Direct distance” means the distance measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council’s Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority;

“Appropriate school” means the nearest school identified by the authority in accordance with the home to school transport policy;

“Home” local authority means the local authority in whose area the parents live;

The Secondary “National Offer Day” is 1 March or the next working day;

“In year “admission means any application for a place other than the normal year of entry;

School Admissions Code refers to the code published on 19 December 2014;

“Eligible for a place” means that a child has been placed on a school’s ranked list at such a point, which falls within the school’s published admission number.

Commencement and extent

This scheme applies in relation to the admission arrangements for the schools for admission year 2022-2023 (the specified year).

The LA will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in Schedule 1 to this scheme, or provisions having the same effect.

The governing body of each of the Academies, VA and Trust schools will include in its admission arrangements for the specified year the provisions set out in the Schedule, so far as relevant to that school, or provisions having the same effect.

The Scheme

1. The Scheme shall be determined in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1 and processed in accordance with the timetable set out in Schedule 2.
2. The scheme shall apply to every school in the LA area as identified in Appendix 1 (except special schools).
3. The Scheme will also include applications from parents seeking admission to North Tyneside schools who live within the following neighbouring LA’s:

- Newcastle Local Authority
- Northumberland Local Authority

We will also co-ordinate our admission process with any other Admission Authorities where relevant.

SCHEDULE 1

PART I -THE SCHEME

1. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form.
2. The Common Application Form will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the first year of Middle and High School education in the specified year, and for applications made outside the normal year of entry i.e. 'In year' admissions leading up to, and during, the academic year 2022/2023.
3. The Common Application Form must be used as a means of expressing up to 3 preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents resident in the LA area wishing to express a preference for their child-
 - a to be admitted to a school within the LA area (including Academies, VA and Trust schools);
 - b to be admitted to a school located in another LA's area (including Academies, VA, and Trust schools)
4. **The Common Application Form will -**
 - a Allow parents to express up to 3 preferences, including, where relevant, any schools outside the LA's area, in the rank order in which they wish their child to receive an offer of a place at the respective schools,
 - b Specify the closing date and where the application form must be returned in accordance with paragraph 10.
5. **The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:**
 - a That the Common Application Form is available on request from the LA and on-line at www.northtyneside.gov.uk/schooladmission until the closing date and
 - b. That the Common Application Form is accompanied by a written explanation of the key features of the co-ordinated admissions scheme.
6. **The LA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:**
 - a Every parent resident in the LA area who has a child attending year 4 of a First School year 6 of a Primary and year 8 of a Middle School and is eligible to commence secondary education receives a written explanation of how to apply either online or paper copy (on request only); and
 - b Every parent whose application falls within the category of an 'In Year' transfer receives a copy of the Common Application Form (and written explanation), on request, and understands the process.

Parents will be advised that they will receive no more than one offer of a school place and that:

- (i) If more than one school is nominated and two or more preferences can be offered the parent will be regarded as having ranked the schools in the order appearing on the form (the first-mentioned being ranked the highest); and
 - (ii) Places at any oversubscribed school will be offered on the basis of equal preference rank order and that where an offer is made it would be for the highest ranked school.
 - (iii) If a place cannot be offered at a nominated school, a place will be offered at an alternative school.
7. The Common Application Form will include an extra section to be completed by parents who express a preference for a Voluntary Aided School to enable them to provide additional relevant information.
8. Where a school receives a supplementary information form from a North Tyneside resident it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed a Common Application Form and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary information forms are received directly by schools the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a Common Application Form has been received from the parent and, if not, the LA will contact the parent and ask them to complete a Common Application Form. Under the requirements of the scheme parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary information form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.
9. Any school which operates criteria for selection by ability or aptitude must ensure that its arrangements for assessing ability or aptitude, to enable decisions to be made on nominations, conform to the timing requirements of the scheme as set out in Schedule 2. (N.B. no Community, Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided School in North Tyneside operates criteria for selection based on ability or aptitude)

Processing of Common Application Forms

10. It will be the responsibility of parents to ensure that Common Application Forms are received directly to the LA by the closing date of **31 October 2020**. Common Application Forms may also be completed on-line by the closing date.

Determining offers in response to the Common Application Form

11. The LA will act as a clearinghouse for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the Common Application Forms. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the Common Application Form where-
- (a) It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or
 - (b) An applicant is eligible for more than one place and is allocated a place at the highest ranked school, or
 - (c) An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

The LA will allocate places in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 18 of this Schedule.

12. Completed application forms must be received by the closing date of **31 October 2021**.
13. Completed application forms, which are received after the closing date will be marked '**LATE**' and considered on an individual basis except that the procedure must not prevent the proper processing under the Scheme of application forms received on time.
14. The LA will process all application forms; any completed application forms must be treated as a confidential communication between the parent and the LA. All ranked applications received by the closing date will be considered before any ranked applications received after this closing date unless exceptional circumstances apply.
15. **23 November 2021** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every nomination that has been made for that school, including all relevant details and any supplementary information received by this date, which schools require in order to apply their oversubscription criteria. Where parents have nominated a school outside the LA area, the LA will also similarly notify the relevant authority/authorities by this date.
16. **10 January 2022** the admission authority for each Trust, VA and Academy school will provide the LA with a list in rank order, in accordance with their admission criteria of all pupils who applied for a place at the school. The LA will then match this ranked list against the ranked lists of the other schools nominated.
17. **24 January 2022** the LA will exchange responses to preferences with other LAs.
18. **24 January 2022** the LA will match the provisional offers of places against each parent's ranking and proceed as follows:
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the preferred schools, a place at that school will be offered to the child.
 - Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the preferred schools, they will be offered a place at whichever school is the highest ranked and any lower offers will be disregarded.
 - Where none of the preferences can be met, the child will be offered a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority
 - The LA will allocate a school place to those pupils who have not submitted a Common Application Form after all other pupils who submitted a Common Application Form have been considered. The LA will allocate a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy, as measured in a straight-line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS/ONE) those living closer to the school will receive higher priority
19. **14 February 2022** -The LA informs its Middle and High Schools of the pupils to be offered places at their schools and informs other LAs of places in North Tyneside schools to be offered to their residents.

- 20. 1 March 2022** parents will be notified by email if the parent applied online and if the parent completed a paper application a letter will be posted 2nd class informing them of the school place allocated. This letter will give the following information
- The name of the school at which a place is offered;
 - The reasons why the child is not being offered a place at any of the other higher ranked schools nominated on the Common Application Form;
 - Information about their statutory right of appeal against the decisions to refuse places at the other nominated schools;
 - Invite parents to contact the LA if they want to be considered for any places that might become available in schools, they ranked higher than the school they are offered, in the re- allocation process on 20 March 2019;
 - Contact details for the schools (in the case of nominated VA schools where they were not offered a place) so that they can lodge an appeal, with the governing body, and the relevant LAs.

The letter will not inform parents of places still available at other schools.

- 21. 14 March 2022: (1)** the deadline for parents to accept the place offered. If they do not respond by this date the LA will continue to pursue parents for written confirmation of acceptance for oversubscribed schools. **(2)** the deadline for parents to request to place their child's name on a waiting list for any school they ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered.

WAITING LISTS

Parents may ask for their children to be kept on a waiting list of children to be re-allocated places if they become available after 1 March 2022 at any school, they have ranked higher on their Common Application Form than the school they were offered. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their Common Application Form they may be placed on the list of all the schools they did nominate and can then be considered for places at those schools. If pupil numbers fall below the published admission number, then children will be admitted from the waiting list according to the admission criteria regardless of when their application form was received. The LA will hold all waiting lists where requested. Waiting lists for schools will be kept for **one term** in the academic year i.e. **31 December 2022**. No list will be kept for any school thereafter either by the Local Authority or by any individual school.

- 22. 21 March 2022:** The LA re-allocates any places that may have become vacant since 1 March, in accordance with the school admission criteria, which will include the following:
- Those who have not yet been offered any school place, for example, late applications from parents who have just moved into the area and have not been offered a school place.
 - Those who have not been offered a school place at any of the schools they nominated on the Common Application Form and the place that has become available is at a school originally nominated on the Common Application Form.
 - Those who have been offered a school place but who ranked the school at which a place has now become available higher on the Common Application Form.

Where there are more applicants than places available then the priorities used within the school's admission criteria will also be applied to all applicants on the waiting list to determine the allocation of places.

23. Where a parent has been allocated a place at their second ranked school, they may be placed on a waiting list of their first ranked school but not their third and so on. Where a parent has been offered a place at a school, which they did not nominate on their Common Application Form, they may be placed on the list of all the schools they did nominate and can then be considered for places at those schools.
24. Waiting lists for schools will be kept by the Local Authority for **one term** in the academic year i.e. **31 December 2022**. No lists will be kept for any school thereafter, either by the LA or by individual schools.
25. Where parents have not returned their acceptance slip for oversubscribed schools the LA will give the parent a further opportunity to respond however, the LA will explain that the offer may be withdrawn if they do not accept.

PART 2 – LATE APPLICATIONS

26. The closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is . As far as is reasonably practicable applications for places in the normal admissions round that are received late for a good reason or in exceptional circumstances may be considered provided they are received before **22 November 2021**, the date the allocation procedures begin. Examples of what may be considered as good reason and exceptional circumstances include: when a lone parent has been ill for some time, or has been dealing with the death of a close relative; a family has just moved into the area or is returning from abroad (proof of ownership or tenancy of a North Tyneside property will be required in these cases). Other circumstances may be considered, and each case will be decided on its own merits by each individual admission authority.

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 31 OCTOBER 2021:

27. Once parents have submitted their Common Application Form, they cannot change their preferences without a genuine reason, for example if the family has recently moved address, proof of ownership or tenancy of a North Tyneside property will be required.

LATE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 22 November 2021

28. Late applications received after 22 November 2021, which, are not deemed to be exceptional by the Authority, will not be processed until after 1 March. Parents will, nevertheless receive an offer of a school place on 1 March 2022 in accordance with the terms of the scheme.

NO COMMON APPLICATION FORM RECEIVED BY 1 March 2022

29. Where no Common Application Form is submitted the child will, on 1 March 2022 be offered a place at the catchment area school if a vacancy exists, or at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 1 March 2022

30. Applications received after 1 March at any school must be forwarded to the LA immediately. Where only the supplementary information form is received the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a Common Application Form has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete a

Common Application Form. The LA will enter the details onto its Education Management System (EMS) and, after consultation with the relevant admission authority, offer a place as soon as possible at the school highest in the parent's order of preference that has a vacancy or if this is not possible, at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy (as defined in paragraph 18).

CHANGE OF SCHOOL PREFERENCE AFTER 1 March 2022

31. Parents cannot change their original school preference(s) without a genuine reason, for example if the family has recently moved address. Where the LA agrees to accept a change of preference application the original school preference will be cancelled, and a new application must be submitted which will be considered as 'Late'. Any place previously offered at a school in North Tyneside on 1 March 2022 will be withdrawn and the parent will be notified in writing of the outcome.

YEAR OF ENTRY APPEALS

32. All Admission Authorities must publish their appeals timetable on their website by **28 February each year**.
33. Where schools are their own admission authority i.e. Academies, VA and Trust the school will be responsible for presenting the schools case for any appeals lodged. However, for Academies and Trust Schools the LA can be present for stage 1 of the appeal to answer any questions on the admission process.

PART 3 - 'IN YEAR' ADMISSIONS

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 1 March 2022

34. Applications received after 1 March 2022, and for places in year groups other than the normal year of entry to Middle and High schools, will be treated as 'In Year' admissions.

APPLYING FOR A SCHOOL PLACE OUTSIDE THE NORMAL YEAR OF ENTRY

35. Parents must apply to their 'home' local authority regardless of the school they are applying for.
36. The 'home' local authority will process all Common Application Forms and inform parents of the outcome of their application even if the school is an Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided.
37. The local authority is unable to process applications for schools where the date that the place is required from, is more than 2 months from the date of the application (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
38. Children must be resident in the country before a Common Application Form can be considered (Service and Crown Personnel are exempt).
39. School places cannot be allocated on the basis of intended future changes of address unless a house move has been confirmed through the exchange of contracts or a rental agreement. The admission authority reserves the right to seek further documentary evidence to support the claim to residence.

Looked After Children

A Local Authority has the power to direct an admission authority (including Academies, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools) to admit a child who is Looked After by the Local

Authority, even when the school is full. The Local Authority must not choose a school from which the child is permanently excluded but may choose a school whose infant classes are already at the maximum size. In respect of admissions for key stage 1 a Looked After Child would be admitted as an 'excepted pupil' for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

RESPONDING TO COMMON APPLICATION FORMS

40. If the application is for an Academy, Trust or Voluntary Aided school, the local authority will refer the application to the Governing Body of the school. In the case of applications for schools outside North Tyneside, the LA will contact the relevant authority.
41. All admission authorities must respond to the local authority within 5 school days of receiving the Common Application Form informing them of the decision. If there is a place available pupil **must** be admitted within 20 school days of the application being received by the local authority or at the beginning of a half term if appropriate.
42. Where a place is not available at the highest ranked school the local authority will coordinate with the second and third preference schools until a place can be offered at one of the preferences.
43. If the pupil is not on the roll of a North Tyneside school and a place cannot be offered at any of the nominated schools, the parent will be informed of places available at other schools in the area.
44. If there are more applications than places available the published admission criteria must be applied.
45. Pupils can only be refused a place at a school if one of the statutory reasons in the School Admissions Code applies.
46. Pupils should not be placed outside the normal age group without written recommendation from an Educational Psychologist.
47. The LA will keep a track of any pupils who apply for 'In Year' admissions and intervene as appropriate to ensure that they are placed in a school without undue delay particularly in respect of Looked After Children and disadvantaged children moving into the area i.e. Gypsy, Roma and Traveler children.
48. Where schools are their own admission authority i.e. Academy, Trust or VA, the school will be responsible for presenting the schools case for any in-year appeals lodged. The school should liaise directly with the Clerk to the Independent Appeal Panel, Legal, Governance and Commercial Services, North Tyneside Council, NE27 0BY. Tel: (0191) 643 5316.

DETERMINING OFFERS IN RESPONSE TO THE COMMON APPLICATION FORM

Pupils living in North Tyneside and applying for a school in the area (including Academies, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools) The LA will notify the parent of the outcome of the place for all schools including Academies, Trust and VA schools.

Pupils living in North Tyneside applying for a school out of the area

The 'Home' authority (NorthTyneside) must contact the maintaining authority to confirm the availability of a place. The 'Home' authority (NorthTyneside) would then confirm the offer of the place in writing to the parent, with a copy to the maintaining authority.

Pupils living out of the area applying for a North Tyneside school

The 'Home' authority must contact North Tyneside LA to confirm the availability of a place. The 'Home' authority would then confirm the offer of a place to the parent, with a copy of the offer to North Tyneside LA.

Acceptance of the school place

Parents will be expected to respond to accept or decline the offer within 10 working days, failure to do so will result in the school place being assumed as accepted and the school notified accordingly.

WAITING LISTS

The LA will hold the waiting list where requested. The waiting list will be held for the year of entry only i.e. reception class for oversubscribed schools. The list will be held for **one term** in the academic year. No list will be held by the Local Authority for any school after **31 December 2022**.

SCHEDULE 2
TIMETABLE OF CO-ORDINATED SCHEME
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

DATE	EVENT
9 September 2021	Application Process begins for 2022/23
31 October 2021	Closing date for all applications to be received by the Local Authority
22 November 2021	Details of preferences to be sent to Trust, VA, Academies and other Local Authorities where preferences stated are for schools other than the home LA.
10 January 2022	The admission authority for each Trust, VA and Academy School will provide the LA with a list in rank order in accordance with their admission criteria of all pupils who applied for a place at the school.
24 January 2022	The LA will exchange responses to preferences with other LAs.
14 February 2022	The LA will inform all North Tyneside schools of children to offered places at their schools.
1 March 2022	National Offer Day for places
14 March 2022	Last date for parents to accept or refuse the offer that has been made.
14 March 2022	Last date for parents to request in writing that they want to place their child's name on the waiting list for any schools which they have applied for and been refused.
21 March 2022	The LA reallocates any places that have become available since offer day.
June/July 2022	Appeals to be heard

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSIONS SCHEME – MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Admission Authorities in the Area of North Tyneside to which the scheme applies

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Roman Catholic High School:

St Thomas More Catholic High School	Lynn Road North Shields NE29 8LF
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The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Learning Trust Schools:

Marden Bridge Middle School	Lovaine Avenue Whitley Bay NE25 8RW
Monkseaton Middle School	Vernon Drive, Monkseaton Whitley Bay NE25 8JN
Valley Gardens Middle School	Valley Gardens Whitley Bay NE25 9AQ
Wellfield Middle School	Kielder Road, South Wellfield Whitley Bay NE25 9WQ
Burnside Business Enterprise College	St Peter's Road Wallsend NE28 7LQ
Churchill Community College	Churchill Street Wallsend NE28 7TN
George Stephenson High School	Southgate Killingworth NE12 6SA
John Spence Community High School	Preston North Road North Shields NE29 9PU
Longbenton High School	Hailsham Avenue Longbenton NE12 8ER
Marden High School	Hartington Road North Shields NE30 3RZ
Monkseaton High	Seatonville Road Whitley Bay NE25 9EQ

Norham High School

Alnwick Avenue
North Shields NE29 7BU

Whitley Bay High School

Deneholm
Whitley Bay NE25 9AS

The Scheme applies to the Governing Body as the Admission Authority for the following Academies:

Kings Priory School

Huntington Place
Tynemouth, North Shields, NE30 4RF

North Gosforth Academy

Dudley Lane
Seaton Burn NE13 6EJ

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Proposed**NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL****Admission Numbers September 2022****North Tyneside Community First and Primary Schools**

School No.	School Name	Published Admission Number 2018	Indicated Admission Number	Admission Number 2020	Comments
392/2032	Backworth Park Primary School	30	45	45 (Reception only)	
392/2054	Bailey Green Primary School	60	60	60	
392/2076	Collingwood Primary School	60	58	60	
392/2059	Coquet Park First School	30	30	30	
392/2000	Cullercoats Primary School	60	58	60	
392/2036	Holystone Primary School	60	60	60	
392/2060	Langley First School	60	60	60	
392/2058	Marine Park First School	75	75	75	
392/2081	New York Primary School	44	45	45	
392/2008	Percy Main Primary School	30	34	30	
392/2021	Riverside Primary School	30	30	30	
392/2031	Shiremoor Primary School	60	60	60	
392/2055	South Wellfield First School	60	58	60	
392/2046	Southridge First School	60	60	60	
392/2016	Spring Gardens Primary School	60	57	60	
392/2004	Waterville Primary School	30	30	30	
392/2074	Whitley Lodge First School	45	45	45	

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**PROPOSED ADMISSION POLICY- SEPTEMBER 2022 for
Sir James Knott Nursery School and
Community and Trust Schools which have
a Nursery Class attached
(Including Grasmere Academy)**

Applications for nursery places should be made directly to the school before the end of January preceding admission in September. Offers of place will be made as soon as possible after this date.

The LA provides nursery education to three year olds and four year olds leading up to their statutory school starting age.

Oversubscription Criteria

1. Looked after children in the care of a local authority or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements (formerly residence) or special guardianship order. **See Note 1 below.**
2. Pupils who live within the catchment area of the nursery school/class (pupils in this category with a sibling link (an older brother or sister) who will be attending the school in September 2022 will be given priority.
3. Sibling link (an older brother or sister) to include adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings and long term fostered children residing at the same address and who will be attending the nursery school/class in September 2022.
4. Shortest distance measured as a straight line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the nursery school/class using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) system.

N.B The above distance measurement will also be used as a 'tiebreaker' within each criterion, if necessary. In the case of flats if there is more than one home address with the same measurement the flat with the lowest number will be offered the place. In all other cases of the same measurement, random allocation will be used.

NOTE 1

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time the application for admission to school is made and whom the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the date of admission. This also includes children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

An **adoption order** is an order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002

A **child arrangements order** (formerly residence order) is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989

It should be noted that places in a nursery school or nursery class should be on a part- time basis (5 mornings or 5 afternoon sessions per week) and this will be the maximum amount of funding allocated. One nursery session is based on three hours in length.

Full time places can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the Head of Commissioning and Asset Management.

Waiting Lists

Where parents are refused a place schools will keep a waiting list of the names of applicants up to the start of the Autumn Term or ongoing. Children are placed on the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when their application was received. Within each criterion their place is ordered by shortest distance to the school measured in a straight line, from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.

If a place becomes available it will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. This means a child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another late application is received that falls within a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria.

There is no appeal procedure for parents refused a place in a nursery school/class but if parents feel that they have been unfairly treated then they can go through the Schools Complaints procedure through the Governing Body.

PROPOSED ADMISSION POLICY FOR COMMUNITY FIRST AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2022-23

Where the Local Authority receives more applications than places available the following admission criteria are used to decide on admission to Community First and Primary Schools.

All Community First and Primary Schools operate an equal preference system for processing parental preferences.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are required to be admitted to the school named in the statement and with effect from September 2014 those children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Thereafter the following oversubscription criteria will apply.

Oversubscription Criteria

1. Looked after children in the care of a local authority or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption, child arrangements (formerly residence) or special guardianship order. **See Note 1 below.**
2. Pupils who live within the catchment area of the school (pupils in this category with a sibling link (an older brother or sister) who will be attending the school in September 2022 will be given priority).
3. Sibling link (an older brother or sister) to include adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings and long term fostered children residing at the same address and who will be attending the school in September 2022.
4. Shortest distance measured as a straight line from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) system.

N.B The above distance measurement will also be used as a 'tiebreaker' within each criterion, if necessary. In the case of flats if there is more than one home address with the same measurement the flat with the lowest number will be offered the place. In all other cases of the same measurement, random allocation will be used.

NOTE 1

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of a local authority in accordance with section 22 of the Children Act 1989 at the time the application for admission to school is made and whom the local authority has confirmed will still be looked after at the date of admission. This also includes children who appear to the admission authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

An **adoption order** is an order made under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002

A **child arrangements order** (formerly residence order) is an order outlining the arrangements as to the person with whom the child will live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989

A **special guardianship order** is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian or guardians.

Closing Date

In determining admissions, priority will be given to those applications where the parental application is received by the published deadline date **14 January 2022**.

Late Applications

If you return your application after the closing date your application will be classed as Late unless exceptional circumstances exist. The Governing Body will consider your reasons, provided they are received before 31 January 2021 and if they are exceptional, consider your application along with those received on time. Examples of what may be considered as exceptional circumstances are a family who have just moved into the area (proof of ownership or tenancy agreement will be required). If your reasons are not exceptional then your application will not be processed until after **16 April 2022**. You should be aware that this will reduce your chance at gaining a place at the school you want.

Offer Date

16 April 2022 parents will be notified of the outcome to their application. If you applied online and requested an email response, then you will be sent an email on this day. If you completed a paper application a letter will be sent out by 2nd class post on this day.

Equal Preference System

The Governing Body of each school operates an equal preference system for processing applications. This means at the first stage there will be no distinction between first, second or third preference applications. Therefore, all applications will be considered equally against the admission criteria. If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference will be offered and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded.

Parental Responsibility

When considering your application, the Local Authority will use the parental home residence of the Parent/Carer who receives or would have received the child benefit for the child/ren.

Waiting lists

If you have been refused your preferred school(s), you will have the opportunity to place your child's name on a waiting list(s) for those schools. You may wish to place your child's name on a waiting list for more than one school. Children are placed on

the waiting list according to the oversubscription criteria regardless of when their application was received. Within each criterion their place is ordered by shortest distance to the school measured in a straight line, from a single fixed central point of the home address (including flats) to the central point of the school using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and the Council's Geographical Information System (GIS), with those living closer to the school receiving higher priority.

If pupil numbers fall below the published admission number, the place will be offered to the child at the top of the waiting list. This means a child who is on the waiting list will move down the list if another late application is received that falls within a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria.

Waiting lists for schools will be held for one term in the academic year i.e. 31 December 2022; no list will be held by any individual school or the Local Authority after this date.

Catchment Areas

All Learning Trust Schools have a defined geographic area called a catchment area. To find out which catchment area you live in log onto www.northtyneside.gov.uk or contact the Access Team on telephone number 0191 643 8724

Sibling Link

If your child has an older brother or sister residing at the same address (including adoptive siblings, half siblings, step siblings, long term fostered children) attending your preferred school in September 2022, the governing body will consider this as a sibling link. However, no guarantee is given that siblings can transfer to the same school where the school is oversubscribed.

Admission of children below compulsory school age and deferred entry to school

The School Admissions Code requires school admission authorities to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday. However, a child is not required to start school until they have reached compulsory school age following their fifth birthday. For summer born children this is almost a full school year after the point at which they could first be admitted.

Some parents may feel that their child is not ready to start school in the September following their fourth birthday. Parents can request that their child attends part-time until he/she reaches compulsory school age, or that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the same academic year. The child must, however, start school full time in the term after its fifth birthday.

Parents can request that the date their child is admitted to school is deferred until later in the academic year or until the term in which the child reaches compulsory school age

Further information/advice on the admission of summer born children is available on the school's website and North Tyneside Council's website at www.northtyneside.gov.uk

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Equality and Diversity

Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor		Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Bruce Pickard
Report from Service Area:	Corporate Strategy	
Responsible Officer:	Jacqueline Laughton Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service	(Tel: (0191) 643 5724
Wards affected:	All wards	

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

North Tyneside Council's Equality and Diversity Policy ("the Policy") sets out its commitment to achieving the aims of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") and how it will seek to demonstrate due regard to these aims in the way the Authority exercises its functions.

In accordance with good practice, the Policy is reviewed every two years. On this occasion the opportunity was also taken to review the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives – these highlight the priority issues the Authority needs to address to better achieve the aims of the Act. Consultation on the Policy and the review of the Corporate Equality Objectives was undertaken between November 2020 and January 2021.

This report updates Cabinet on the findings of the consultation exercise and the review of the Corporate Equality Objectives and proposed actions.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) agree the Equality and Diversity Policy for the Authority; and
- (2) agree the Corporate Equality Objectives for the Authority for the period April 2021 to March 2022.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 18 December 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

North Tyneside Council's commitment to equality and diversity, as outlined in the updated Equality and Diversity Policy, underpins all of the priorities contained in the Our North Tyneside Plan 2020-24.

The commitments made in the Policy are also reflected in the Authority's customer promise (Appendix 2) and values (Appendix 3).

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Context

The Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy sets out its commitment to achieving the main aim of the Equality Act 2010 which is to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct and to demonstrate how the Authority, when carrying out its functions, will have due regard to the public sector equality duty and the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristic under the Act and those who do not have such a characteristic; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

A protected characteristic under the Act is any of the following: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy was originally agreed in 2017 and in line with good practice is reviewed every two years in consultation with internal and external groups and individuals. As a review of the Policy was due, the opportunity was also taken to review the Corporate Equality Objectives. These objectives enable the Authority to identify and publish the priority issues (in terms of policy making, service delivery and employment) it needs to address in order to better achieve the aims of the Act.

This report sets out the findings from the equality policy consultation and the review of the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

1.5.2 Equality and Diversity Policy consultation findings

Consultation on the Policy ran from 25 November 2020 until 17 January 2021.

The following external groups were asked to participate: AgeUK, Youth Council, Church of England, Catholic Church, North East Sikh Service, Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force (which includes Black, Muslim and Jewish community representatives, Show Racism the Red Card, Tyne Coast College, North Tyneside Business Forum, Department for Work and Pensions, North Tyneside Voluntary Organisations Development Agency (VODA) and Nexus), North Tyneside Disability Forum, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People, Learning Disability North East, North Tyneside Women's Voices, Barnardos, Peary House, Action on Hearing Loss, North Tyneside Carers Centre, Northern Pride, North Tyneside Residents Panel and local people.

Internally views were sought from: Deputy Mayor, Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Equality Group, Trades Unions and employees.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted internally through the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork; and externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media.

124 responses were received. These came from members of the Corporate Equality Group, Senior Leadership Team, Youth Council, the Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force, Age UK, North Shields and Whitley Bay Methodist Circuit, North Tyneside Residents Panel, and employees and residents.

The feedback received was positive and informed the proposed amendments made to the Policy (highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1) or to the new actions underpinning the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives. Many respondents stated their approval of the Policy and the importance of ensuring it is put into practice. The respondents recognised the need to demonstrate due regard to all protected characteristics and a desire to continuing developing a better community for all.

1.5.3 Corporate Equality Objectives

In accordance with the requirements of the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, the Authority must:

‘prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty.... at least every four years’.

The Authority's current Corporate Equality Objectives were agreed by Cabinet in January 2019, implemented from April 2019 and published in the 2019 Annual Equality and Diversity Review. As the Equality Objectives are reviewed every two years, it was timely to undertake that review alongside the review of the Policy.

The Authority's current Equality Objectives and underpinning actions are outlined below. In light of the progress achieved, a refreshed set of actions for 2021/22 are proposed alongside one new additional Equality Objective.

Objective 1: Improve North Tyneside Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Review, update and promote EIA guidance and documentation.
- b. Appoint new EIA 'champions' who will be trained and supported to help team members complete EIAs.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for the re-introduction of a fit for purpose electronic system for EIAs.

Progress to date:

- a. A new EIA form and guidance were developed, published on the intranet and are in use.
- b. It was agreed that Corporate Equality Group members should act as EIA Champions, however the development and roll out of this training has been delayed until Spring 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- c. Options for development and introduction of a new electronic system for the storage and monitoring of EIAs is progressing.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Deliver EIA training for trainers to Corporate Equality Group Members for roll out within all service areas.
- b. Create and share single list of live EIAs.
- c. Complete an audit of EIA and equality data collection processes across all service areas.
- d. Re-introduce a fit for purpose electronic system for EIAs.

Objective 2: Be a good employer and promote an inclusive workforce that feels valued

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Undertake and implement findings from the Staff and Employee Health and Wellbeing surveys.
- b. Understand the specific equality and diversity issues arising from both surveys and make recommendations for action.
- c. Develop and promote an annual equalities events calendar, encouraging employees to contribute to the development of the activities it delivers.
- d. Ensuring that the Authority's mental health first aid approach provides increased awareness of the issues associated with specific protected characteristics.

Progress to date:

- a. The findings from both surveys have been shared and action taken. This has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic through the Employee Pulse Surveys of July and November 2020.
- b. Analysis of the Staff and Employee Health and Wellbeing surveys was completed. This led to further engagement with employees with disabilities led by the Chief Executive, which informed the Authority's Employee Covid Risk Assessment process and work to develop a Workplace Support Profile and Disability Policy.

During 2020 focused engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) employees began and will continue in the early part of 2021.

- c. Equality and diversity calendars were agreed for 2019 and 2020 and awareness raising activities promoted and delivered across both years. The 2021 Equality and Diversity calendar has been developed.
- d. Awareness raising about the impact of mental health conditions on people with protected characteristics was undertaken with the Authority's Mental Health First Aiders.
- e. The Authority has been awarded Disability Confident status from 2021-2024 – this reflects the actions taken by the Authority to recruit, retain and develop employees with disabilities.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Continue to analyse the findings from the Employee Pulse Surveys by equality characteristic and act on the findings.
- b. Implement the Workplace Support Profile and introduce a Disability Policy to sit alongside the Authority's Attendance/Wellbeing Policy.
- c. Review the Authority's Attendance Management Procedure to ensure a wider focus on health and wellbeing.
- d. Deliver the Authority's commitment to make its workforce more representative of the borough's population through its Workforce Development Plan.
- e. Implement an embedding equality programme to make equality and diversity "everyone's business", this will include work to establish staff networks.
- f. Develop and implement an action plan based on findings from engagement with BAME employees.
- g. Promote and deliver the 2021 Equality and Diversity Calendar events and activities.

Objective 3: Ensure staff and elected members are kept informed about the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Key actions from 2019/20:

- a. Continue to develop and deliver a programme of equality training.
- b. Develop a handbook to help staff consider and respond to the needs of customers and colleagues with specific protected characteristics.
- c. Ensure that our equality duties are considered as part of the review of the North Tyneside Council Constitution.

Progress to date:

- a. Participation in the Authority's equality training programme is growing with 79% of managers being up to date with their equality training. The provision of on-line training for managers, the roll out of devices to enable more staff to participate in on-line training and the on-going development of new learning methods have all contributed.
- b. The staff equality handbook has been published.
- c. The review of the Authority's Constitution is paused due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Add further courses and learning options to the existing equality training programme for both staff and elected members to provide information and guidance on specific equality groups and issues.

Objective 4: Improve the collection and use of both internal and external equality data**Key actions from 2019/20:**

- a. Provide guidance on the appropriate and consistent collection of equality data.
- b. Improve collection of staff equality data on our Business Management System (BMS) to increase by 50% the number of staff who complete BMS data by March 2020.
- c. Use staff equality data to inform the development of initiatives to support our commitment to make our workforce more representative of the borough's population.
- d. Use equality data to ensure service delivery and community engagement is balanced and proportionate.

Progress to date:

- a. Standard equality/demographic questions and guidance were developed and published.
- b. The number of employees providing equality data has increased but the data provided varies by characteristic. All employees with access to BMS are now asked on an annual basis to update their personal details. Managers of those employees without access are also asked to undertake the check with their employees. Further progress will be possible following installation of a new business management system.
- c. Human Resources routinely use equality data to inform its service priorities and duties, including those outlined under Objective 2.
- d. Equality monitoring data is used for these purposes, but further improvement is needed to the access and use of equality data.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Deliver the data workstream of the embedding equality programme to ensure a corporate approach to the collection, publication and use of employee, customer and resident equality data.
- b. Develop, monitor and report equality and diversity performance measures.

Objective 5: Ensure our buildings, services and communications are accessible**Key actions from 2019/20:**

- a. Review and publish accessibility statements for all our public buildings.
- b. Review and act on the findings of our EIA on council communications.

- c. Deliver additional equality actions identified within our Customer Service Programme.

Progress to date:

- a. 34 building audits were completed by AccessAble in late 2020 and building guides will be published in February 2021. A working group will develop an action plan to address recommendations by AccessAble.
- b. A contract was agreed with SignVideo to pilot provision of a free British Sign Language (BSL) video interpretation service enabling BSL speakers to contact the Authority's Contact Centre independently.
- c. Covid-19 guidance was published on the Authority's website in different languages and formats.
- d. Following the review of the Customer Service Programme, these actions will be progressed under the accessibility workstream of the embedding equality programme.

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Implement the action plan based on AccessAble's findings.
- b. Complete roll out of SignVideo services to reception desks and evaluate the pilot.
- c. Agree and promote new translation and interpretation services.
- d. Implement the equality actions from the Customer Service Programme Review.

Objective 6 (new): Improve engagement with North Tyneside's diverse communities

Proposed actions for 2021/22:

- a. Support the Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force to develop and deliver its action plan.
- b. Appoint a new Engagement Officer with focus on engagement with diverse communities in the borough on the basis of their protected characteristics.
- c. Develop and implement a plan for on-going community engagement with these communities.
- d. Review and publicise local hate crime reporting procedures, linking with safeguarding processes where appropriate.

1.5.4 Implementation of the policy and objectives

Delivery of the objectives will enable implementation of the Policy. Performance measures and action plans will be developed for each of the Equality Objectives. These will be delivered through the embedding equality programme and be reflected in service plans.

The Equality Objectives will be reviewed every year and performance reported on an annual basis to Cabinet in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review.

Both the Policy and the Annual Equality and Diversity Review will be published on the Authority's website, and promoted widely.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

To approve the proposed amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy, and to the Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 2

To approve the proposed amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy, but not to the Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 3

To approve the amendments to Corporate Equality Objectives and actions, but not to the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Option 4

Not to approve the amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives and actions.

Option 5

To request changes to the Equality and Diversity Policy or Corporate Equality Objectives and actions, prior to further consideration by Cabinet.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The Authority's approach to equality and diversity underpins all of its decision-making including key plans and policies. Approval of the recommended option will ensure that the Authority has a current Equality and Diversity Policy that reflects both current legislation and the context within which the Authority is operating.

The proposed Corporate Equality Objectives and actions will enable implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy and ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Equality and Diversity Policy 2021 – proposed amendments

Appendix 2: North Tyneside Council's Customer Promise

Appendix 3: North Tyneside Council's Values

1.9 Contact officers:

Jacqueline Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy, tel. (0191) 6435724

Anne Foreman, Policy and Performance Manager, Corporate Strategy, tel. (0191) 643 2225

Jessica Madden, National Graduate Development Programme Management Trainee, Corporate Strategy, tel. (0191) 643 2225

David G Dunford, Acting Senior Business Partner, Strategic Finance, tel. (0191) 6437027

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) [Cabinet Report Equality and Diversity Policy – 21 January 2019](#)
- (2) [Cabinet Report Corporate Equality Objectives Progress Report - 20 January 2020](#)
- (3) [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- (4) [Equality Act 2010: Guidance](#) Government Equalities Office and Equality and Human Rights Commission – updated 16 June 2015

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The costs of delivery are included in existing service budgets and no additional costs are anticipated.

2.2 Legal

Publication of the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives demonstrates the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity and to compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty provided by section 149 of that Act.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation on the Equality and Diversity Policy ran from 25 November 2020 until 26 January 2021.

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Views were sought from: Deputy Mayor, Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Equality Group, Trades Unions and employees. The consultation was promoted via the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted internally through the intranet, Facebook and Teamwork; and externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Participation was sought from AgeUK, Youth Council, Church of England, Catholic Church, North East Sikh Service, Elected Mayor's BAME Task Force (which includes Black, Muslim and Jewish community representatives, Show Racism the Red Card, Tyne Coast College, North Tyneside Business Forum, Department for Work and Pensions, North Tyneside VODA and Nexus), North Tyneside Disability Forum, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People, Learning Disability North East, North Tyneside Women's Voices, Barnardos, Peary House, Action on Hearing Loss, North Tyneside Carers Centre, Northern Pride, North Tyneside Residents Panel and local people.

In addition to direct e-mails, the consultation was promoted externally via the Residents Panel, the engagement hub and social media

124 responses were received. The feedback received was positive and informed the amendments made to the policy or to the new actions underpinning the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives.

2.4 Human rights

The 2010 Equality Act created a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The human characteristics protected by the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act is therefore of particular pertinence to the Human Rights of freedom of thought, belief and religion; freedom of expression; the right to marry; and protection from discrimination.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The policy provides the framework for work undertaken by the Authority to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty, and to fulfil its commitment that North Tyneside becomes a place where people feel safe and no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of their characteristics, background or personal circumstances.

The policy and corporate objectives demonstrate the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity as a leading local employer, service provider and commissioner. It also makes clear the responsibility that everyone who represents North Tyneside Council or who delivers services on the Authority's behalf has for its implementation.

2.6 Risk management

The effectiveness of the Authority's equality and diversity processes are monitored every quarter as part of North Tyneside Council's risk management processes and are reported via the Corporate Strategic Risk Register.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. However, the policy does affirm the Authority's commitment to equality and diversity and highlights

that the Authority will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation on any grounds and will take action against it.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☒
- Head(s) of Service ☒
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☒

Equality and Diversity Policy

Date: January 2021 **Version:** 1 **Author:** Policy,
Performance and Research



Document Number	E&DPOL 3	Document Revision Number	2
Date last Reviewed	<i>January 2021</i>	Planned Review Date	<i>December 2022</i>
Document Owner	Senior Leadership Team		
Reviewed By	Corporate Equality Group		
Document status	This document does not form part of an employee's terms and conditions of employment and can therefore be reviewed, amended and withdrawn at the discretion of the Council.		

This Equality and Diversity Policy evidences due regard to the aims and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty referred to in that Act. The policy consists of ten sections:

1. Purpose
2. Accountability
3. Legal and policy framework
4. Our Commitments
5. Equality and diversity in employment
6. Equality and Diversity in service provision
7. Equality and Diversity in procurement and commissioning
8. Our responsibilities
9. Governance, implementation and monitoring
10. Review

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how North Tyneside Council seeks to:

- ensure compliance with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty, and thereby
- achieve its aim that North Tyneside is **becomes** a place where people feel safe and no one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of their [characteristics](#), background or personal circumstances¹.

2. Accountability

The policy is the responsibility of Cabinet and sits within the Human Resources portfolio held by the Deputy Mayor, and with the Chief Executive.

Oversight of the policy, its implementation and monitoring rests with Senior Leadership Team, supported by the [Corporate Equality Group](#) (whose members include representatives from service areas, trades unions and our Strategic Partners). **and which** It is chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

However, equality affects and involves everyone and as individuals we are all responsible for own actions and efforts.

3. Legal and policy framework

The content of the policy is determined by the following:

- The [2010 Equality Act](#)
- The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- Codes of practice published by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

As one of the borough's leading service providers and employers, **and in accordance with our corporate values**, North Tyneside Council is committed to developing the borough to be an inclusive place in which to live, work, visit and invest to achieve the ambitions of **set out in** the [Our North Tyneside Plan](#).

4. Our commitments

To achieve our purpose set out in section 1 above North Tyneside Council will:

- a) proactively embed equality and diversity considerations in everything we do and challenge others to do the same
- b) meet all our legal equality duties under the [2010 Equality Act](#), the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) and follow codes of practice published by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

¹ Protected characteristics cover everyone – we are all a mix of multiple visible and invisible protected characteristics.

- c) not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation or any other prohibited conduct on any grounds, **and will take action against it.** This includes all forms of hatred including those **targeting protected characteristics such as** anti-Semitism as defined by the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\) definition and supporting guidance](#), racism, sexism, ageism, **disablism, religion, Islamophobia**, homophobia and transphobia (this is not an exhaustive list)
- d) **raise awareness of how to report discrimination, harassment and victimisation and the support that is available**
- e) publish our equality objectives, equality data² and report progress in [our Annual Equality and Diversity Review](#)
- f) undertake and implement the actions from [Equality Impact Assessments](#) on significant decisions, policies, plans, practices and procedures
- g) ensure people with protected characteristics feel listened to, and have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions about our services
- h) build understanding amongst residents, employees, partners and elected members of the needs **and values** of different protected groups across North Tyneside
- i) take account of, and respond to, the needs of residents and customers, **ensuring with protected characteristics are given due consideration** when delivering our services
- j) create an environment where elected members, employees, residents and visitors are confident to be themselves **and meet the aims of the Act**
- k) strive to make our workforce more representative of the borough's population and the residents it serves, by ensuring equal access to jobs, training and career progression
- l) require others providing services on our behalf **to** follow its approach to equality.

² [Equality data](#)

Where we ask employees and service users to provide us with personal information, this will only be used to improve access to and the quality of the services we provide.

Collecting equality information helps us to:

- understand the needs of our residents
- design policies and services which are effective and meet those needs
- demonstrate compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and its other statutory duties
- measure more effectively how we are improving as an employer and a service provider.

We will only collect information when it is relevant and will be used by managers to develop an understanding of take up and need. While employees and service users are encouraged to provide equality information, it is their choice whether or not to answer all the questions. Confidential information will be handled in accordance with the strict controls of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the information gathered will be used to inform the Authority's policy and planning, and to report on performance.

5. Equality and Diversity in Employment

This section applies to all employees and people seeking work with us. As outlined in our Human Resources and Organisational Development and Employment and Skills strategies as a local employer we have a key role to play in tackling inequality and discrimination. We aim to positively promote equality of opportunity through all of our employment policies and practices: including recruitment, terms and conditions, learning and development, promotion and when ending employment.

We will:

- a) provide equality of opportunity to all applicants and prospective applicants through fair recruitment and selection procedures
- b) recognise that people with particular protected characteristics, including people with disabilities or from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, may experience discrimination in employment, and we will adopt selection and retention practices designed to eliminate any such discrimination ~~therefore seek to take positive and proportionate action to recruit and retain employees from such groups, while~~ always taking into consideration the duty to appoint on merit
- c) make reasonable adjustments to enable the employment and redeployment of employees with disabilities
- d) annually publish gender pay gap data and any other pay gap data required by law
- e) use the information and feedback we collect to understand more about, and respond to, employee's experience of working for the Authority
- f) ensure that all employees are considered for promotion on the basis of their merits, abilities and skills, and are given equal opportunities to progress within the Authority
- g) create an appropriate balance between work and home commitments to maximise equal opportunities for all, including promoting flexible working where possible
- h) ~~wherever possible, aim to~~ give employees the training and development opportunities needed to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Authority and themselves
- i) ensure that all employees undertake equality training so that they understand its importance in the workplace and in service delivery and know how to challenge any inappropriate behaviour
- j) develop an anti-discriminatory and supportive culture where employees are aware of their rights and enjoy working for the Authority
- k) respond to any allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment through appropriate internal processes, including our disciplinary and whistleblowing procedures.

6. Equality and Diversity in Service Provision

We and our strategic partners will seek to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all current and potential service users in accordance with our customer promise and corporate values.

We will:

- a) use our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process to help us challenge, review, monitor and improve our services, working practices and resource allocation
- b) ensure all of our customers receive services in accordance with our customer promise and that reasonable adjustments are made
- c) use a range of channels to enable service users to access our services independently and appropriately
- d) ensure that the information we provide can be read or received and understood by the people for whom it is intended
- e) ensure that all buildings, facilities and services used by our customers are welcoming and accessible
- f) work with our partners to tackle any discrimination affecting groups within our communities, ensuring that clear procedures are in place for reporting any such discrimination
- g) use the equality data we collect to identify and take action to address the needs of under represented groups, those who are disadvantaged or have particular needs due to their characteristics
- h) involve residents in shaping our services through inclusive engagement and consultation.

7. Equality and Diversity in Procurement and Commissioning

We will ensure that our procurement and commissioning practices (as set out in our [Procurement Strategy and Social Value Priorities](#)) fulfil our equality duties by endeavouring to ensure ensuring that:

- a) contractors, suppliers, and strategic and commissioned partners:
 - i. are aware of the authority's position on equality, we will include a commitment to equality in tender specifications
 - ii. where appropriate and necessary, evidence the integration of the relevant equality principles into their policies and procedures. have an equality policy that is compliant with national and European public procurement legislation and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- b) our selection and tendering processes address and include equality considerations
- c) our contract monitoring processes are inclusive of equalities considerations
- d) relevant employees receive guidance on equality issues for procurement.

8. Our responsibilities

Equality, and the implementation of this policy, is the responsibility of all elected members, employees and everyone who represents the Authority or delivers services on its behalf (including our Strategic Partners – Engie and Capita and Keir). More specifically:

8.1 Everyone who works with or for North Tyneside Council

We all have a personal responsibility to:

- ensure our equality training and awareness is up to date
- treat our colleagues and customers with dignity and respect
- promote and deliver equality in the workplace and in serving local communities
- behave in a way that supports this policy and is compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice
- report, and if you consider it safe to do so, challenge any discriminatory behaviour or practices you encounter in the course of your work.

8.2 As Elected Members

Elected members have a responsibility to:

- lead the equality and diversity agenda of the Authority
- represent and provide leadership for all groups and communities across North Tyneside
- provide a scrutiny role
- have 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make.

8.3 As Leaders and Managers

Leaders and managers are also responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy in their service areas via their service planning process, this includes ensuring:

- the identification and elimination of discriminatory practices
- equality objectives and improvement actions identified in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review are included in service plans and progress is monitored to achieve timely delivery
- processes are in place to systematically collect and report equality performance management data
- an effective EIA of decisions, policies, plans, practices and procedures is undertaken
- service delivery demonstrates due regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics
- employees are fully aware of their individual equality responsibilities, and those of the organisation, under the Equality Act 2010.

8.4 As Trades Unions

Unions have a responsibility to:

- represent the views and concerns of their members on equality and diversity issues
- challenge and address any incidents of discrimination within workforce membership
- support the continuous improvement of equality policy and practice.

8.5 Strategic Partners

Our Strategic Partners have a responsibility to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty
- demonstrate 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make
- support the Authority to achieve the purpose of this policy – including active participation in the work of the Corporate Equality Group.

8.6 Partnership Boards

The Partnership Boards at which North Tyneside Council is represented are expected to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- demonstrate 'due regard' to the equality implications of the decisions they make
- support the Authority to achieve the purpose of this policy.

8.7 Volunteers and other partners

Volunteers and other partners (defined as those who work alongside the Authority but are not commissioned) are expected to:

- ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- support North Tyneside Council to achieve the purpose of this policy.

9. Governance, implementation and monitoring

As set out in Sections 2 and 3 above, this policy is the responsibility of Cabinet, and sits within the Human Resources portfolio held by the Deputy Mayor.

Oversight of the policy, its implementation and monitoring rests with the Senior Leadership Team, supported by Corporate Equality Group which is chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

We assess and monitor our progress against the purpose of this policy by:

- regular reports to the Cabinet Champion for Equality and Diversity and the Senior Leadership Team
- the activity of Corporate Equality Group, which leads the equality work of the organisation and co-ordinates a range of activities to help the Authority fulfil its equality duties in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty
- the inclusion and delivery of actions within our service plans that contribute to the achievement of the commitments made in this policy and the corporate equality objectives and service actions identified in the Annual Equality and Diversity Review
- our EIA process to ensure **elected members and officers** properly consider the potential impact of **operational, and** Cabinet and Full Council decisions on protected groups
- the identification of the equality and engagement implications of the decisions recommended in our Cabinet and Full Council reports
- managing any potential equality risks through our Risk Management Process
- publication of equality data as required by government, including Gender Pay Gap reporting

- dealing with any complaints³ of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, or any other prohibited conduct seriously, promptly and confidentially and ensuring that any person who feels they have suffered any form of discrimination by the Authority is given guidance in making a [complaint](#)
- publication on our website of our Annual Equality and Diversity Review, which reports progress reports against our Corporate Equality Objectives and service equality actions and is evaluated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to check accessibility and compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and the outcome of the review will be reported to Cabinet. However, we will be guided by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission if any new guidance or legislation is produced before the next review date.

The next review will be undertaken by December **2022**.

³ In relation to specific types of complaints:

- employee complaints - should an employee have any complaint in respect of their treatment in relation to this policy, this should be taken up through internal processes, such as our disciplinary processes
- public complaints - information on how to make a complaint can be found in our libraries, leisure centres, customer first buildings and Quadrant headquarters or [here](#)
- complaints about the behaviour of an Elected Member - information on how to make a complaint about an Elected Member who has not acted in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

Appendix 2: North Tyneside Council's Customer Promise

We listen, we care: our customer promise to you

We are here to serve you, our residents, businesses and visitors. We provide you with a wide range of vital services, from bin collections to social care, often in complicated and difficult circumstances. We strive to deliver excellent customer service to keep North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit.

Through listening, we have learned what matters to you, and we have developed this promise.

We listen

- We take time to fully understand and meet your individual needs.
- We are open, honest and use clear language in all our communication.
- Where appropriate, we prefer to serve you via our website, but if this is not right for you, there are different ways to contact us and use our services.
- We use your experiences to design our services and help communities to get involved.

We care

- We put you in contact with the right person and, when possible, tell you how long it will take to solve your query.
- We keep you informed with up to date information and explain what we have done.
- We treat you with courtesy, politeness and understanding.
- We keep your personal data secure and respect your privacy.
- We admit when we are wrong, we say sorry, and make every effort to put it right.
- We give you straightforward and clear advice about the services that are available to you.
- We work together as a team who support and respect each other.

You can help us to keep our promise by:

- Letting us know if you have any specific needs.
- Giving us the information we need to deal with your enquiry.
- Telling us when we have done a good job.
- Treating us politely and with respect.
- Telling us how you feel about our service by giving us feedback so we can learn and improve.

Please tell us how we are doing by:

- Leaving comments at one of our Community Conversation Corners in our Customer First Centres.
- E-mailing your comments to: engagement@northynteside.gov.uk

Appendix 3: North Tyneside Council Values

Our values:

We listen.

We listen to our customers and colleagues and understand their needs. We pay attention to messages and respond. We express information clearly, are open, honest and encourage people to have their say.

We care

We care for our customers by understanding their needs, we treat them with respect and safeguard those who are most vulnerable. We care for each other by being a positive role model. We respect each other and work well with colleagues. We care for ourselves by looking after our physical and mental health and asking for help when we need it.

We are ambitious

We are ambitious by always looking for ways to do things better. We are positive and learn from our mistakes and successes. We can be ambitious by reflecting on our performance and acting on feedback to improve. We strive to reduce the carbon footprint in our services by using less energy in our buildings, travelling less in our vehicles and recycling as much as possible.

We can be good value for money

We can be good value for money by delivering services in line with our customer promise and service standards. We use resources carefully, avoid unnecessary cost, try to get things right first time and share resources with colleagues.

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North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Procurement of Care Home Provision

Portfolio(s): Adult Social Care Finance and Resources	Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Gary Bell Councillor Ray Glendon
Report from Service Area: Responsible Officer:	Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding (Tel: (0191) 643 7317)
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The Authority has a duty to ensure that it has a sustainable Adult Social Care Market, this is provided by third party providers within the borough. This report sets out the Authority's requirements in relation to adult residential care placements and seeks authority to put in place contractual arrangements for a residential and nursing home care services. This report follows on from a Cabinet decision on 29 June 2020 with regard to the Adult Social Care Action Plan and sets out details of the commercial arrangements required to support this and ensure that services are in place to secure longer term adult social care market sustainability and offer an appropriate social care offer to meet the needs of residents.

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to undertake procurement exercises for the award of contracts for care homes provision for all client groups (older people, learning disability, mental health and physical disability).

These are all services that are currently in place and the current contracting arrangements have come to an end. New contracts and arrangements are to be put in place to secure provision across the borough and to ensure there is continuity of supply and placements.

In accordance with Contract Standing Orders 8(4), this report requests approval to proceed with the procurement exercises as the aggregated value of the contracts to be procured will exceed £500,000.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding in consultation with the Head of Commissioning and Asset Management,

the Head of Law and Governance and the Head of Resources, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to:

- 1.2.1 Finalise the commercial arrangements to secure the delivery of residential and nursing care home services from providers operating across North Tyneside. This includes the procurement of nursing and continuing health care services on behalf of North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group;
- 1.2.2 Undertake a procurement exercise to procure a range of providers to deliver the identified services, as outlined in section 1.5.2 of this report;
- 1.2.3 Following the procurement exercise carried out in accordance with 1.2.2 above, to proceed with the award of contracts to the preferred bidders.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 22 January 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities contained within the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan.

Our People will:

- Be listened to so that their experience helps the Council work better
- Be healthy and well – with the information, skills and opportunities to maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and independence, especially if they are carers
- Be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable including if they become homeless
- Be encouraged and enable to, wherever possible, to be more independent.

Our Places will:

- Offer a good choice of quality housing appropriate to need, including affordable homes that will be available to buy or rent

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

The Care Act 2014 gave local authorities, the NHS and the CQC (Care Quality Commission) clear legal responsibilities for managing different elements of the adult social care market. These include:

- Developing the quality and range of services that local people want and need
- Integrating commissioning of services from the care market with key partners, including the NHS and housing, and ensuring a diverse range of services, so people have choice.

The Authority currently commissions a range of adult social care services from the independent sector to meet the needs of individuals deemed to be eligible in accordance with the Care Act 2014 following a Care Act assessment.

The Authority does not deliver these services internally and needs to have robust and proper arrangements in place for services to be procured and available. There are arrangements in place at present for these services and these have come to an end. There is, therefore, a need to put new arrangements in place and this report sets out proposals and recommendations for new contracts to be put in place. This is to ensure there is sufficiency and continuity of supply to ensure the needs of eligible individuals and the wider population can be met.

New contracts will put in place a range of services and providers to support individuals and ensure there is sustainability of supply and provision over the period the contracts are in place. The contracts will also need to ensure value for money is achieved and also that client outcomes are deliverable and that this is a key focus of the service to be commissioned.

All contracts will be in line with the strategic objectives and the commercial context in which the services operate, these were set out in the Cabinet report on 29 June 2020. For Adult Social Care, these stem from the Our North Tyneside Plan which sets our priorities for supporting vulnerable people to be healthy and well and also that they are cared for, protected and supported.

Strategic Objectives

Need – meeting our assessment of need in line with our statutory duty and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Sustainability – support a sustainable care market which can treat its staff and customers well, and

Value for money – ensure there is transparent value for money for the local tax payer and can be accommodated within the Medium Term Financial Plan

Commercial Context

Required outcomes – identifies needs to be met, outcomes required and services to meet those needs and outcomes

Current market assessment – the range of providers currently engaged and their characteristics

Current commercial assessment – how many providers the Authority contracts with, what is paid and how that compares nationally and locally

Social value – the Authority's current social value policy and how that applies to the care market

Our strategic plans and values – how providers and the market will contribute to the strategic goals

1.5.2 Care homes (older people, learning disability, mental health and physical disability)

There are currently 31 homes in the borough for older people, with 1482 beds.

There are currently 14 homes in the borough for those with a learning disability, working age mental health and physical disability, with 182 beds.

The Authority does not fund all of the beds in these care homes; placements in these homes include private funded placements, placements funded by other Local Authority areas and placements funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The proposed procurement process will allow the Authority to contract with any care home provider in the borough that accepts the fee structure proposed by the Authority and which meets the standards set out in the contract and service specification for personal care, funded nursing care and NHS continuing healthcare.

All care homes are required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and will be subject to the CQC regulatory process and this includes undertaking inspection visits and publishing inspection reports. The Authority will work closely with the CQC on all matters relating to service quality and delivery.

The overall estimated cost of this service over the contract period will be in excess of £500,000 and requires Cabinet approval. Gross spend for all care homes in 2019/20 was over £32 million.

Whilst Adult Social Care must seek to ensure Best Value in terms of the procurement of residential and nursing care, the structure of the existing market in the Borough, the use of a pre-agreed pricing mechanism and the choice of placements afforded by the Choice of Accommodation Direction mean that it has not been previously possible to competitively procure this service. The current contract ended in 2015 and has been extended as a waiver since then due to ongoing fee negotiations. In accordance with the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 a procurement exercise must be undertaken. Extensive engagement is currently being undertaken to ensure providers are ready to contract with the Authority. Engagement is being undertaken in relation to pricing, placement strategy and contract duration. Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the Authority complies with its duties contained within the Care Act and provides a commercially robust approach for the Authority. If approved the final terms of the contract and offer to the market will be determined in accordance with the recommendations as set out at paragraph 1.2 of this report.

The Authority is seeking to procure and operate a new contract and framework agreement for care homes provision in the borough from 2021, for a term of four years to 2025. The procurement arrangements will allow for new providers to the market to be added during the contract's lifetime. All individual services will be commissioned on a spot purchase basis.

This report seeks authority to procure a care home service and to award contracts to providers that meet the required criteria.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet

Option 1

Agree the recommendations set out at section 1.2.

Option 2

Not agree the recommendations set out at section 1.2 and propose that officers consider other options for delivering this provision.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

- (a) Current contracts and contracting arrangements have expired and are subject to annual carry forward and could be leaving the Authority subject to financial risk, new arrangements will need to be in place to ensure continuity of service for individuals accessing those services;
- (b) Ensure compliance with procurement regulations, undertake competitive procurement exercises;
- (c) To ensure commissioning arrangements are current, effective and ensure value for money is in place with those contracts and framework agreements;

1.8 Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

1.9 Contact officers:

Scott Woodhouse, Strategic Commissioning Manager Adults, Tel. (0191) 643 7082
David Dunford, Acting Senior Business Partner, Tel. (0191) 643 7027

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Report to Cabinet dated 29 June 2020 – Adult Social Care Action Plan

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The commissioning and procurement of Adult Social Care services will need to take full account of the resources and funding available to meet the needs of the target population. The contracts / framework agreements that will be put in place will then have a number of clients linked to them and the cost associated with the contract will be linked to the assessed and eligible needs of the individual and the agreed support plan that is put in place.

Spend for each client group and for each service type will be linked to specific budget lines within the overall Adult Social Care budget. There is provision within the overall Adult Social Care budget and contingencies for these.

Spend against these budgets will be managed through the normal budget monitoring process and reported to Cabinet bi-monthly as part of the financial management reporting of the Authority.

Any financial support in relation to the coronavirus pandemic will be subject to separate regime.

Where appropriate, the Provider will be required to work with the Authority to manage the overall demand and service levels that are in place.

The Care Act 2014 provides that when commissioning services, the Authority should be assured and have evidence that contract terms, conditions and fee levels for care and support services are appropriate to provide the delivery of the agreed care packages with agreed quality of care. This should support and promote the well-being of people who receive care and support and allow for the service provider to meet their statutory obligations to pay at least the national minimum wage or the national living wage and provide effective training and development of staff. The Authority should have regard to guidance on the minimum fee levels that are necessary to provide this assurance, taking account of the local economic environment.

2.2 Legal

The contracts and contracting arrangements that will be in place for each of the services included in this report will ensure Authority will comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Authority's Contract Standing Orders when procuring each of these services and will seek to achieve value for money in the procurement process.

The Authority also has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to ensure the assessed and eligible needs of individuals are met and this will include meeting those needs via services being commissioned or put in place as set out in this report. The Care Act also places a general duty to promote diversity and quality in the care and support provider market with a view to ensuring that any person in its area wishing to access services in the area has:

- (a) Variety of providers to choose from who (taken together) provide a variety of services;
- (b) Variety of high-quality services to choose from;
- (c) Sufficient information to make an informed decision about how to meet the needs in question.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The process of establishing a detailed specification for each of the services / service areas included in this report will be undertaken in close conjunction with key colleagues across the Authority.

The process of tender evaluation for the award of contracts / framework agreements will be completed alongside colleagues with specialist knowledge, experience and expertise across the Authority.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

There is continuous engagement with care and support providers, service users and family carers of those who access the services and the NHS to ensure the delivery of high quality services.

Comments and feedback from individuals with specialist knowledge, experience and expertise will be fed into the procurement process.

The current engagement on the new contract and procurement arrangements is on-going with a range of stakeholders to ensure the requirement delivers high quality service

provision alongside value for money and fully meets the Authority's needs and at the same time ensures there is sufficiency of sustainable provision.

2.4 Human rights

The proposals contained in this report relate to the following human rights:

- Right to liberty and security;
- Right to respect for private and family life;
- Freedom of thought, belief and religion;
- Freedom of expression;
- Protection from discrimination.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The Adult Social Care contracts stipulate that the Provider(s) will ensure compliance with the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore will not unlawfully discriminate against employees or service users with protected characteristics.

The contract also stipulates that the Provider(s) must ensure that its workforce receives appropriate training in order to understand their roles and responsibilities under the Equality Act e.g. implementing Equal Opportunity requirements, and to promote equality and prevent discrimination.

This will be monitored through the quality monitoring arrangements for each of the services.

2.6 Risk management

Risks have been considered and evaluated. Actions that could be taken to mitigate identified risks have been identified. During the process of contracting, risks will be discussed, evaluated and actioned as appropriate.

Risks that are specific to service delivery will be identified and included in the service specification.

Any risks associated with the process of putting new contracts in place have been mitigated through the use of the NEPO portal as the mechanism to ensure that an open and transparent procurement process is in place.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐
- Head(s) of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Children and Young People's Plan 2021 – 2025

Portfolio:	Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member:	Councillor Peter Earley
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Report from: Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding

Responsible Officer: Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding **Tel:** (0191) 643 7317

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2025.
- 1.1.2 Cabinet approved the initial proposals for the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-25 on 30th November 2020, and subsequent consultation and engagement has been undertaken with key stakeholders, as well as with the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, whose comments have been incorporated into the final plan presented to Cabinet.
- 1.1.3 The Children and Young People's Plan is a key strategy for the North Tyneside partnership to deliver the priorities set out within the Our North Tyneside Plan, particularly in relation to Our People. It sets out the strategic framework and partnership priorities to ensure that all children in North Tyneside are able to achieve their full potential.
- 1.1.4 The plan sets out how the Authority and its partners will work together to achieve its vision for children and young people in North Tyneside, which is:
- “Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled, are ready for school, ready for work and life, cared for and supported.”**
- 1.1.5 The plan then sets out the Authority's and partners' priorities to achieve this vision, which are:
1. Ensuring children and young people are living safely
 2. Supporting children to have a healthy early childhood
 3. Narrowing the gap in educational outcomes
 4. Ensuring the right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

5. Supporting children to be active citizens
6. Developing resilience, confidence and independence in children and young people

1.1.6 The priorities within the Plan build on the positive work delivered across the partnership in recent years and are based on a detailed understanding of need across the borough, as well as recognising and responding to the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, and the services that work with them.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (1) Agree that the Children and Young People's Plan 2021–2025 be submitted to Full Council for approval, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Authority's Constitution.

1.3 Forward Plan:

- 1.3.1 Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 30 October 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

- 1.4.1 The Children and Young People's Plan is one of the Authority's key plans that forms part of the Authority's Policy Framework. Accordingly, this initial report is submitted to Cabinet pursuant to the rules under Part 4.7 of the Constitution for formulation and approval of plans and strategies within the Policy Framework.
- 1.4.2 The Children and Young People's Plan is a key mechanism by which the Authority delivers the objectives linked to Our People, set out within the Our North Tyneside Plan. It focuses on delivering improved outcomes for all children and young people up to the age of 19 years, and those young people aged up to 25 years who are care leavers, have special educational needs or a disability and live in the borough.
- 1.4.3 This report relates to the following priorities in the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:
 - Be listened to so that their experience helps the council work better for residents.
 - Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life.
 - Be ready for work and life – with the right skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet business needs.
 - Be healthy and well – with the information, skills and opportunities to maintain and improve their health, well-being and independence, especially if they are carers.
 - Be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable including if they become homeless.
 - Be encouraged and enabled to, whenever possible, be more independent, to volunteer and to do more for themselves and their local communities.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 The North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2025 is developed and owned by the Children and Young People's Partnership. The partnership brings together public, voluntary and community sector organisations to improve the lives of the borough's children and young people.

1.5.2 The 2021-2025 plan is the third Children and Young People's Plan that the partnership has produced. The previous Children and Young People's Plan 2014-2018 has underpinned the delivery of key success and significant service developments and improvements, which include:

- Children's services were judged Outstanding by Ofsted in March 2020, noting that "strategic partnerships are mature, well-developed and highly effective"
- Continuing to successfully deliver the Troubled Families programme in North Tyneside, successfully 'turning around' 1,500 families, demonstrating improved outcomes across a range of indicators
- Entering into a long-term, strategic partnership with Barnardos to develop new and innovative solutions supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Establishment of schools-led, peer-to-peer, exclusion panels, as part of a borough-wide Keeping Children in School programme, which have contributed to improved exclusion and attendance rates
- Multi-agency Keeping Families Connected service, funded by the Department for Education innovation funding, has effectively supported a reduction in entries to care, stabilisation of existing placements, and reunification where possible.

1.5.3 Despite the many significant achievements that the Authority has delivered in recent years, there remain many challenges that the Authority continues to be focused on. Alongside the changing need and demand that the partnership expects as a result of the impact of Covid-19, the Authority's understanding of its challenges and what is important to children and young people have informed the priorities and actions set out in the Plan.

1.5.4 The priorities and deliverables set out in the Plan are aligned to the strategic outcomes the Authority and partners wants to see for children and young people, which are:

Outcome 1: I am Safe

Priority 1.1: Ensure children and young people are living safely

Outcome 2: I am Healthy

Priority 2.1: Supporting children to have a healthy early childhood

Outcome 3: I have Opportunities

Priority 3.1: Narrow the gap in educational outcomes

Priority 3.2: Ensure the right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

Outcome 4: I have a Voice

Priority 4.1: Support children to be active citizens

Outcome 5: I am Happy

Priority 5.1: Develop resilience, confidence and independence in children and young people

1.5.5 These priorities and the related actions have been developed through engagement with a range of stakeholders across the Children and Young People's Partnership, as well as

drawing upon ongoing engagement with children and young people which is a central component of the Authority's approach. This includes recommendations from the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee to strengthen the Plan in relation to services to support young people who may be, or at risk of, being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

1.6 Decision options:

Option 1

Agree that the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-25 be submitted to Full Council for approval.

Option 2

Cabinet does not agree to the submission of the Children and Young People's Plan to Full Council and requests officers to consider relevant issue(s) identified by Cabinet.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

1.7.1 Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

- The Children and Young People's Plan is a key plan to deliver the priorities linked to Our People, as set out within the Our North Tyneside Plan.

1.8 Appendices:

Children and Young People's Plan 2021 – 2025

1.9 Contact officers:

Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding, tel. (0191) 643 7317

Mark Jupp, Senior Manager, Transformation, tel. (0191) 643 5332

David Dunford, Senior Finance Business Partner, tel. (0191) 643 7207

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report:

- (1) [2014-18 Children and Young People's Plan](#)
- (2) [2020-24 Our North Tyneside Plan](#)
- (3) [North Tyneside Council Constitution: Part 4.7 Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules](#)
- (4) [The Children and Young People's Plan \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)
- (5) [Cabinet 30 November 2020](#)
- (6) [Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting 18 January 2021](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

- 2.1.1 The Children and Young People's plan priorities are aligned with the Our North Tyneside Plan and are consistent with the Authority's existing financial and resource planning priorities.

2.2 Legal

- 2.2.1 Under the Children and Young People's Plan (England) Regulations 2005 the Authority is required to prepare, consult upon and publish a Children and Young People's Plan and to review the Plan. The Regulations specify amongst other things what should be included in the Plan, how consultation on the Plan should take place as well as the timing and manner of publication of the Plan and how a review of the Plan should be undertaken each year in which the Authority is not required to publish a plan.

The Children and Young People's Plan is the shared responsibility of Cabinet and Council. As such it is included in Schedule 3 of The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a function that is not to be the sole responsibility of Cabinet. Therefore, the Plan forms part of the Authority's Budget and Policy Framework.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning and colleagues at all levels across Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding.

The initial and final proposals for the Plan have been considered by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in the Authority's Constitution. Views expressed by the Committee in relation to strengthening the focus on supporting young people who are, or at risk of becoming, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) have contributed to the shaping of the final Plan presented to Cabinet.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Plan and its priorities have been developed through engagement with partners represented across the Children and Young People's Partnership.

The Authority and partners regularly engage with children and young people through a variety of mechanisms and methods, and their views have shaped the strategic outcomes and priorities contained within the Plan. Engagement has specifically been undertaken with the Youth Council regarding the proposed priorities, and with its constituent committees in order to understand the views of young people in relation to the priorities focused on education and mental health support.

The "I have a Voice" strategic outcome is entirely focused on ensuring the Authority and partners continue to engage with children, young people and families and act upon their views and wishes. Children, young people and families will be consulted on, and engaged

with, in relation to the development of the various strategies, plans and activities set out within the Plan.

2.4 Human rights

2.4.1 There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

2.5.1 The plan will contribute to the Authority's statutory equalities duties. It will advance the equality of opportunity for children and young people, with a focus upon those who are experiencing or at increased risk of experiencing vulnerability and / or deprivation. It will also contribute to the achievement of the two other key aims of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty contained in the Act; to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share those characteristics.

2.6 Risk management

2.6.1 Failure to deliver significant priorities, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, could limit the Authority and partnership's ability to improve outcomes for children and young people. Therefore, the Plan proposes a focus on a smaller number of priorities to ensure the Authority's efforts are focused on the key issues facing children, young people and their families.

2.7 Crime and disorder

2.7.1 The partnership's work to reduce risk taking behaviour will incorporate young people engaged in or at risk of becoming involved in offending behaviour.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

2.8.1 There are no direct environmental and sustainability issues arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☒
- Head(s) of Service ☒
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☒

North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan

2021 – 2025



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Foreword



Welcome to the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2025, which sets out the strategic framework and partnership priorities to ensure that all children in North Tyneside are able to achieve their full potential.



Our collective vision for children and young people in North Tyneside is:

“Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled, are ready for school, ready for work and life, cared for and supported.”



This is a key strategy for the North Tyneside partnership to deliver the priorities set out within the Our North Tyneside Plan. It is based upon a detailed understanding of our successes, the challenges that we continue to face, and the clear feedback from children and young people about what is important to them.

This is the third Children and Young People's Plan that the partnership has produced. Through the lifetime of the previous strategies, we have worked together as a partnership to support children and young people to be ready for school, work and life, as well as being safeguarded and supported if required.

The strategy will cover a period of change and opportunity in the way that the partnership works. This includes the formation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority, which has set out ambitious plans to develop an inclusive economy and an Education Challenge, and the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements that we have established in line with our duties under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

Inevitably, the context within which we all work will be impacted by the ongoing presence of Covid-19, meaning we need to understand how need has changed as a result and how we need alter and adapt our approach to working with children and young people.

Regardless, our vision and focus remain the same – ensuring children are safe, happy, healthy, with opportunities and a voice.

1. Introduction, Strategic Vision and Context

The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out the strategic objectives for North Tyneside. It has been developed with the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP) and is the key driver for the work of the partnership.

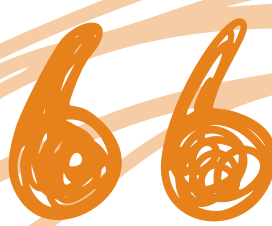
The Our North Tyneside Plan focuses on three areas:

- Our People
- Our Places
- Our Economy

The Children and Young People's Plan is a key mechanism by which we deliver the objectives linked to 'Our People'. It focuses on delivering improved outcomes for all children and young people up to the age of 19 years, and those young people aged up to 25 years who are care leavers, have special educational needs or a disability and live in the borough.

Our vision for children and young in North Tyneside is:

"Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled, are ready for school, ready for work and life, cared for and supported."



1. Introduction, Strategic Vision and Context

To achieve our vision, we will focus on the 5 outcomes that children, young people and their families tell us matter most to them:



**I AM
SAFE**

**I AM
HEALTHY**



**I HAVE
OPPORTUNITIES**

**I HAVE
A VOICE**



**I AM
HAPPY**

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all of our communities, and its ongoing presence will continue to do so. In North Tyneside, we have continued to provide services across the partnership, with multi-agency arrangements continuing and work with children and families being delivered using virtual methods where face-to-face contact has not been possible. Schools have worked incredibly hard, in collaboration with key partners, to ensure they were able to provide places for vulnerable children and those of key workers. This work continued to ensure that schools were able to fully open safely from September 2020. However, the national lockdown announced in January 2021 required schools again to alter the way in which they operated and continued to educate children in the borough.

The impact of the pandemic has increased rates of poverty across families in North Tyneside and, whilst some measures such as the Poverty Intervention Fund will help us support those families, we know this is likely to have a long-term impact on children and families. Similarly, mental health issues for our children and young people are likely to increase and require us to harness the work already underway in North Tyneside to an even greater extent.

Alongside this, financial constraints and funding reductions across agencies continue to challenge the way we work. This provides a continued impetus to find new ways of working within each partner agency, and across the partnership, to ensure we continue to deliver high-quality services and improve outcomes for our children and young people.

2. Demographics and Demand



North Tyneside has a current population of 205,985, which is expected to increase by 2% by 2030, with much of this increase in the over-65 population. Our 0-18 population is 43,415 (around 21% of the borough's total population).

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 8.7% of all children living in the area, which is lower than the national average.

North Tyneside is the least deprived of the five Tyne and Wear municipal areas. However, whilst there are some areas in the 10% least deprived nationally, there are other areas of significant deprivation. This is illustrated by the fact that a child born in one part of the borough can expect to live 10 years less than a child born in another part of the borough. The 'disadvantage gap' can be seen from a very young age across a range of issues, including in the rate of childhood obesity which doubles from Reception (1 in 10) to Year 6 (1 in 5). The increase is even more significant for boys living in more deprived communities.

Just under 5,000 children and young people in North Tyneside schools have identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) – 3,542 (11% of the school-age population) children in our schools have a SEN Support Plan and 1,265 (4.1%) have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The total number of North Tyneside children, including those educated out of borough, having an EHCP stands at 1,827. For our cohort of children and young people with SEND, we have seen a sustained increase in those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) identified as their primary need.

Approximately 900 families in North Tyneside receive early help support at any time, either through a plan led by local authority Family Partners or by other partner agencies, usually schools.

Contacts to our multi-agency front door service average around 12,000 per annum, with an increasing proportion having needs met through a multi-agency early help response. During the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst most authorities have seen a sharp reduction in the number of referrals made to social care, demand levels in North Tyneside have remained stable. Around 500-600 children in North Tyneside have a Child in Need Plan at any time, and around 150-175 children have a Child Protection Plan, although the number of CP Plans were at their highest during the height of the pandemic in 2020.

Numbers of children in care in North Tyneside have remained relatively stable for a number of years, between 290-310. At the end of 2019/20, North Tyneside's rate of children in care was the lowest in the north east. The majority of children in our care live with North Tyneside foster carers.

3. Recent Achievements



The Children and Young People's Partnership is comprehensive, robust and mature, which has enabled us to deliver a range of significant service developments and improvements in recent years.

These include:

- Children's services were **judged Outstanding by Ofsted** in March 2020, noting that "strategic partnerships are mature, well-developed and highly effective"
- We have continued to successfully deliver the **Troubled Families programme** in North Tyneside, which is fully embedded into our multi-agency early help offer in the borough. We have successfully 'turned around' 1,500 families, demonstrating improved outcomes across a range of indicators
- Through our continued focus on promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention issues, we have entered into a long-term, **strategic partnership with Barnardos** to develop new and innovative solutions supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Establishment of schools-led, peer-to-peer, exclusion panels, as part of a borough-wide **Keeping Children in School** programme, which have contributed to improved exclusion and attendance rates
- Strong partnership working is also visible in the broader approach to **tackling deprivation** in North Tyneside, which started in Chirton and Riverside Wards and has now been extended to Howdon and Wallsend

- Our multi-agency **Keeping Families Connected** service, funded by DfE innovation funding, has effectively supported a reduction in entries to care, stabilisation of existing placements, and reunification where possible.

The impact of the range of work we have delivered across the partnership over recent years is evident in a number of strong indicators:

- **72% of children reached a Good Level of Development** at the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2019, improved by 24% since 2013
- 8 in 10 young people attending a **school that is judged as Good or Outstanding** by Ofsted
- **School attendance and exclusion rates** have reduced and are lower than national averages
- 2.8% of 16 and 17 year olds are **Not in Education, Employment or Training** (NEET) at June 2020, which is an improvement from 4.1% in 2013/14
- **Referral and re-referral rates** to children's social care have been lower than national, regional and statistical neighbour averages for many years
- **The rate of children in care in North Tyneside** was the lowest in the north east region at the end of 2019/20

4. Strategic Outcomes and Priorities



In 2019, the 5 Is Outcomes Framework was adopted to ensure a child-centred focus for all the work we do across the partnership, based on feedback from children and young people about what is important to them.

THE FIVE IS



Despite the many significant achievements that the partnership has delivered in recent years, there remain many challenges that we continue to be focused on. Alongside the changing need and demand that we expect as a result of the impact of Covid-19, our understanding of our challenges and what is important to children and young people have informed the priorities and actions set out in this strategy.

The priorities and deliverables set out in this strategy are aligned to the strategic outcomes we want to see for children and young people.

I am safe	I am healthy	I have opportunities	I have a voice	I am happy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the reach and impact of early help • Respond to contextual safeguarding concerns • Tackle neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce smoking in pregnancy • Narrow the gap • Childhood obesity • Alcohol misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow the gap in attainment • Ensure the right support for children with SEND 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase active participation • Ensure children and young people's input to learning reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen resilience and emotional wellbeing

I am Safe: safe and free from harm and neglect



Priority 1.1: Ensure children and young people are living safely

Why is it important?

We want to ensure that children and young people are living safely and, where they do need to be in the local authority's care, we want to ensure they are close to home and we are actively supporting them to improve their outcomes. Whilst we have worked successfully together to provide an effective early help and multi-agency response where concerns are raised, we know that new challenges are presenting that require a partnership response.

Contextual safeguarding, where factors outside of the traditional family home can cause young people to participate in a range of risky behaviours, is an increasing concern. We know from our analysis that neglect remains the biggest factor in referrals to social care, and this has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.

And, whilst North Tyneside has a well-established and effective multi-agency early help model, we want to expand and develop this model even further, as we know prevention is the best solution to the challenges faced.



I am Safe: safe and free from harm and neglect



What will we do as a partnership?

Our new statutory Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, via our Safeguarding Executive, will lead the development of safeguarding approaches and practice in the three key areas of: Early Help; Neglect; and Contextual Safeguarding.

We will:

- Develop and implement a new Prevention and Early Help Strategy and associated delivery plan
- Review and re-launch new strategic and operational Missing, Slavery, Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) partnership arrangements
- Launch a new multi-agency Adolescent Service
- Develop new partnership tools to identify and respond to risks around exploitation and contextual safeguarding
- Review and refresh the North Tyneside Neglect Strategy
- Launch a borough-wide communications campaign regarding neglect
- Review and develop new practice guidance regarding working with children, young people and their families where there is neglect

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Reduction in repeat referrals to early help
- Reduction in early help cases that step up to social care
- Reduction in those supported through early help, child protection or in care due to neglect
- Reduction in the number of missing episodes and children and young people that go missing



I am Healthy:

choosing healthier lifestyles



Priority 2.1: Supporting children to have a healthy early childhood

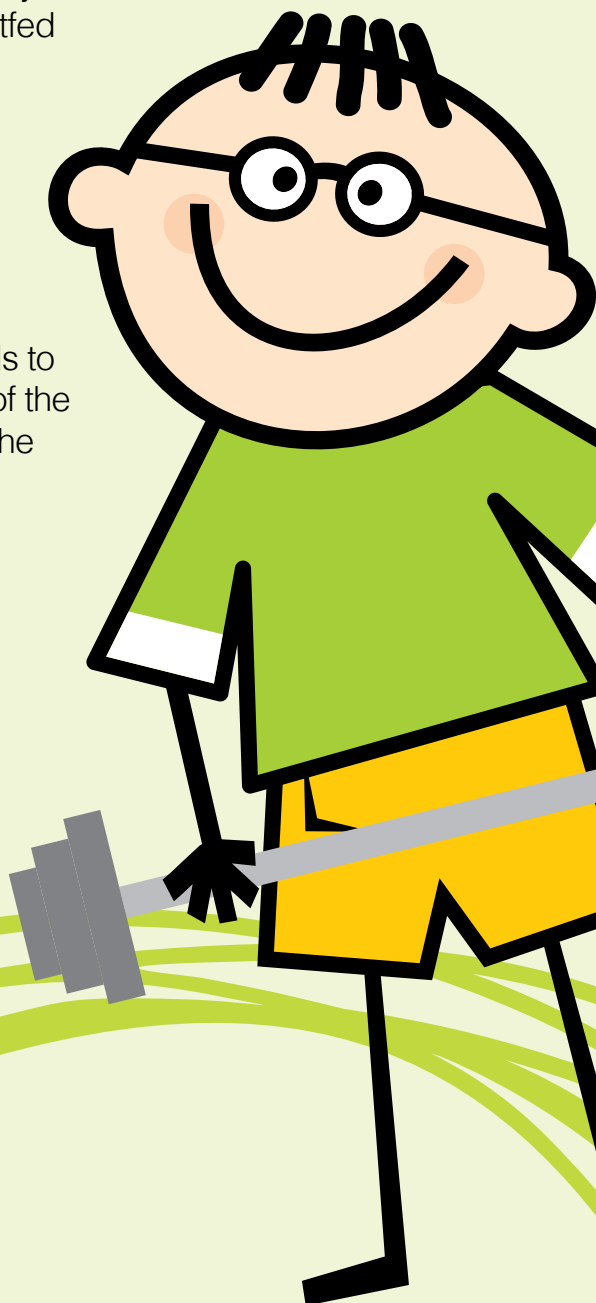
Why is it important?

The majority of children in North Tyneside enjoy a healthy early childhood. However, issues such as smoking during pregnancy, babies born with low birth weight, and babies not being breastfed can have a negative impact on a child's healthy life chances. Progress has been made in these areas in recent years - for example, rates of smoking amongst pregnant women have improved but remain too high; while breastfeeding rates have also improved but remain below the national average.

The evidence regarding the importance of early years is clear. When someone doesn't have a healthy early childhood, it leads to gaps which widen throughout a child's life; for instance, 40% of the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others at the age of 16 is present even before children start school.

There are four main areas of focus within this priority:

- Narrowing the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes
- Reducing smoking in pregnancy
- Tackling childhood obesity
- Tackling the impact of alcohol in childhood



I am Healthy:

choosing healthier lifestyles



What will we do as a partnership?

We will:

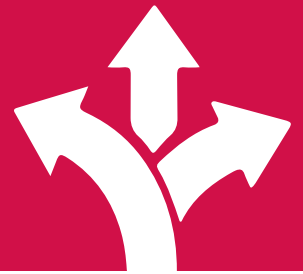
- Provide universal health visiting to all families, promote uptake of 2- and 3-year offer, and provide targeted parenting support programmes in areas of greatest need
- Implement a plan and pathways which includes antenatal interventions, access to good quality stop smoking services and promotes smoke-free homes
- Develop and implement a healthy weight action plan that:
 - Promotes healthy weight through pregnancy
 - Promotes breastfeeding and improve rates of initiation and at 6-8 weeks
 - Focuses on healthy weaning and reducing sugar consumption in early years
 - Delivers the National Child Measurement Programme
 - Promotes physical activity, use of parks, wagon ways and outdoor space
- Develop a plan to promote an alcohol-free childhood, which incorporates alcohol free pregnancy, supports children of alcohol-dependent parents, and supports young people who misuse alcohol

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Reduce prevalence of smoking in pregnancy to 6% by 2025
- Prevention of any further rise in childhood obesity by 2025.
- Increased initiation of breastfeeding and continuation at 6-8 weeks
- Increased access of adults to treatment who are dependent on alcohol and living with children



I have Opportunities: learning and developing skills for life and work



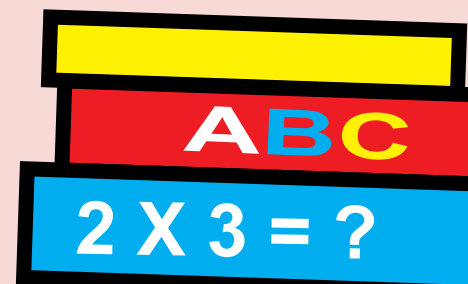
Priority 3.1: Narrow the gap in educational and employment outcomes

Why is it important?

North Tyneside has a very good education offer for most pupils; 8 in 10 pupils in the borough attend a Good or Outstanding school, and the majority of attainment measures compare well with national comparators.

However, there continues to be a gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the borough. This gap gets wider as pupils get older. The overall average for pupils in North Tyneside achieving grade 4 or higher in English and maths GCSEs was 65%. For the non-disadvantaged cohort, it was 72%, which was 1% higher than their national peers, but it was 44% for North Tyneside's disadvantaged pupils. The impact of Covid-19 is likely to have, and will continue to, exacerbate this gap further.

Whilst we know that the proportion of young people in North Tyneside who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) compares favourably with other areas, it is clear that the impact of Covid-19 on education and the economy will reduce opportunities for our young people at a crucial point in their life.



I have Opportunities: learning and developing skills for life and work



What will we do as a partnership?

A new Education Strategy, developed through engagement and consultation with schools and a range of other partners, will take forward this priority. As part of this strategy and associated implementation plan, we will work in partnership to implement specific strategies to support the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, including:

- A focus on early reading, with every nursery being supported to focus on phase 1 phonics
- Increased focus on Pupil Premium strategies and the identification of barriers to learning
- Improved literacy delivery across the curriculum alongside a strengthening of reading cultures in schools
- The development of education-to-employment pathways that maximise participation in learning and support progression to vocational training and employment:

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Reduced gaps in speech, language and communication attainment at the end of EYFS
- Reduced gaps in reading achievement and greater consistency in our results at all stages
- Increased proportion of young people in Education, Employment or Training (EET)



I have Opportunities: learning and developing skills for life and work



Priority 3.2: Ensure the right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

Why is it important?

North Tyneside, like many areas nationally and regionally, has seen a significant increase in the numbers of children with an identified Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Children and young people with SEND in North Tyneside achieve good outcomes compared to national averages. This can be seen in educational attainment across the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, as well as the rate of young people with SEND who are in Education, Employment or Training (EET).

Despite this, we know we need to do more as a partnership to provide the right level of support at the right time, through an inclusive approach across education, health and care to respond to increased demand, pressures on school places, and – most importantly – our desire to support every child and young person to fulfil their potential.

What will we do as a partnership?

Through the SEND Strategic Board and supporting governance, we will:

- Embed the graduated approach to supporting children and young people with SEND in school
- Launch and embed a new SEND Inclusion Strategy, with a clear understanding of local need, priorities, and how these will be met
- Develop a new multi-agency early help model for SEND, to strengthen the early identification of need and deliver the right support at the right time
- Launch and embed a new Autism Strategy and develop an effective multi-agency response for children and young people with autism

How will we know we've made a difference?

- An increasing proportion of children and young people with SEND supported through early help and SEN Support Plans
- An increasing proportion of children and young people with SEND in mainstream education
- Continued strong educational attainment and education, employment and training outcomes for children and young people with SEND

I have a voice: an active citizen with a voice and influence



Priority 4.1: Support children to be active citizens

Why is it important?

North Tyneside wants to be a place that listens, cares and is ambitious for our residents. This starts with our children and young people. Our strategy, outcomes framework, and priorities are all informed by what children and young people have told us are important to them.

This priority is aimed at ensuring the delivery of our strategy, priorities and ongoing service developments across the partnership are all based on feedback from children and young people.

We have many very positive examples of listening to children and young people and ensuring our services are shaped by their aspirations – including a Children in Care Council described as “exceptional” by Ofsted and the recent development of a SEND Youth Forum. We want to embed this through everything we do, ensuring that children and young people are able to tell their stories, help us to test services, and provide us with ongoing challenge.



What will we do as a partnership?

We will:

- Commission an annual borough wide survey of children and young people in order to better understand their needs, experiences, vulnerabilities and any threats they face
- Embed our SEND Engagement and Co-production Strategy, ensuring the voice of the child is evident throughout everything we do
- Deliver a project to engage every child in our schools to understand the impact of poverty on children and young people
- Via our Quality of Practice Group in our multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, consult and develop a proposed strategy and plan for delivering a shift in practice
- Continue to work with our Children in Care Council to have a conversation with every child in care to understand their experience
- Deliver the national New Belongings project to understand, and act upon, the views of care leavers about support they receive in North Tyneside

How will we know we've made a difference?

- We will make progress and deliver improved outcomes in the areas that children and young people tell us are important to them
- All service developments will be able to clearly set out how they have been informed by the views of children and young people

I am happy: resilient, enjoying life and having fun



Priority 5.1: Develop resilience, confidence and independence in children and young people

Why is it important?

All children and young people in North Tyneside should enjoy happy, confident childhoods. We want them to grow into resilient adolescents and adults, be able to cope with the demands of daily life, and be equipped to contribute to life in the borough.

Positive early experience is vital to ensure children have good life chances and are resilient. Mental health conditions affect about 1 in 10 children and young people and it is estimated that 75% of mental health problems in adult life, excluding dementia, start before the age of eighteen.

Locally young people, through the “Make Your Mark” campaign, voted for young people’s mental health to be their top priority which aligns with the findings from the recent MH2K youth-led project which explored mental health.

This objective will be delivered through the North Tyneside Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing partnership, which is working toward the vision of all children, young people and their families achieving their optimum mental health and emotional wellbeing.

What will we do as a partnership?

- Review the current strategy and action plan and develop a clear vision to promote mental and health and wellbeing in children and young people in North Tyneside which focuses on:
 - promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention
 - improving access to support
 - services for high risk and vulnerable groups
- Promote a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing across all education settings
- Develop a model of peer support across North Tyneside

How will we know we’ve made a difference?

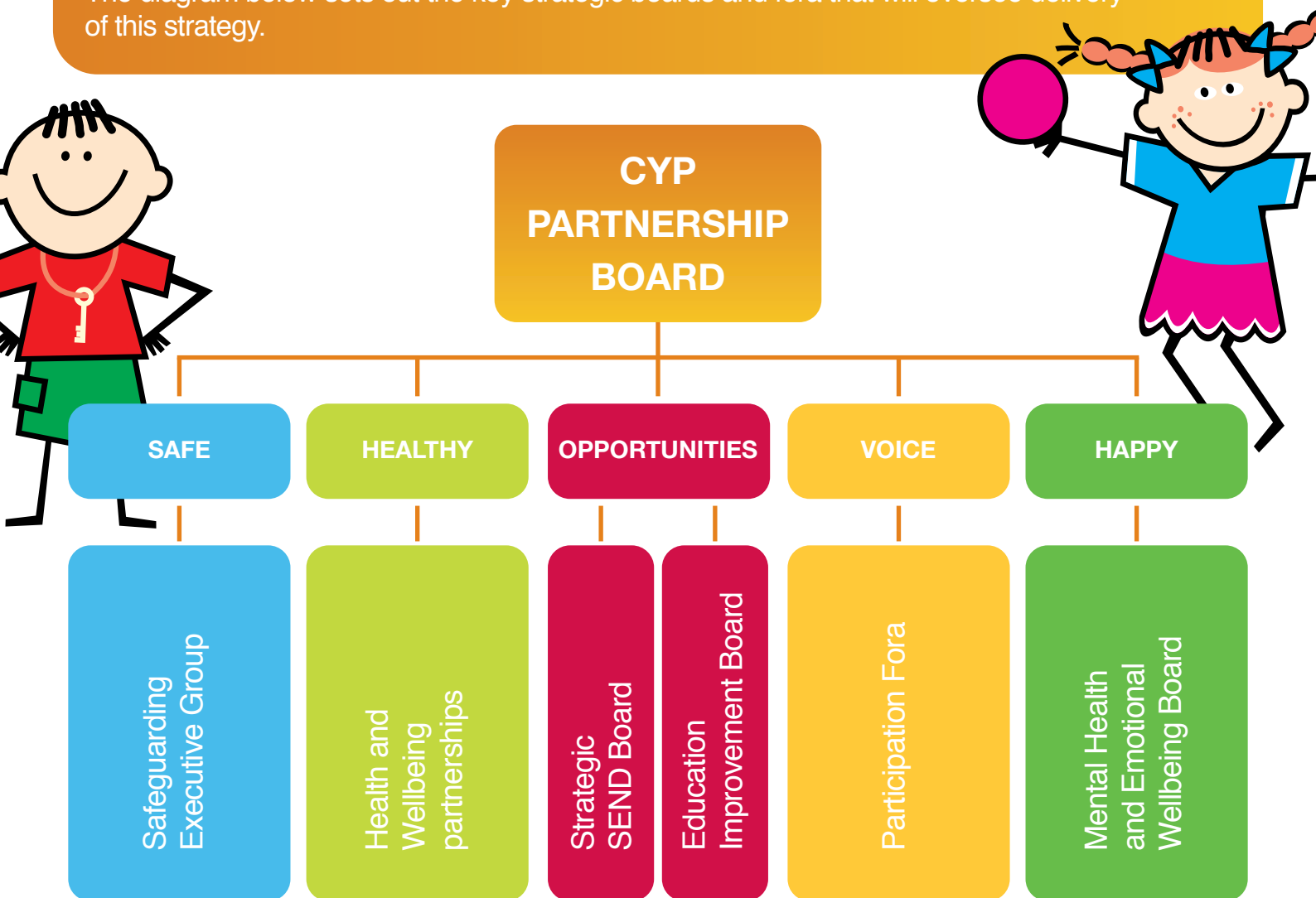
- Continued improvement in self-reported wellbeing in the biannual local mental health and wellbeing survey
- Fewer referrals into specialist mental health services
- Fewer children and young people with emotional and mental health issues being as their primary special educational need



5. Governance and Delivery

The Children and Young People's Partnership is the strategic mechanism by which partners come together to address the biggest challenges facing the borough's children, young people and their families.

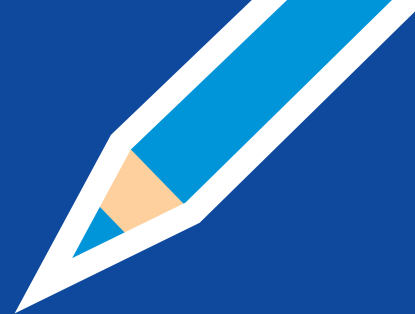
The diagram below sets out the key strategic boards and fora that will oversee delivery of this strategy.



Underpinning this strategy will be an implementation plan to take forward delivery of the key priorities and actions. Respective priorities will be overseen by the boards shown above, linked to the partnership's outcomes framework.

Quarterly reports will be presented to the CYP Partnership Board to update on progress, with particular focus on a certain priority at each meeting.

6. Outcomes Framework



Our outcomes framework is based on five key statements that children and young people have told us are important to them. At a strategic level, we have a small number of indicators that will tell us whether we are meeting these outcomes for children and young people in North Tyneside.

Individual priorities and projects will have a range of other indicators that will demonstrate success; however, below are the indicators across the strategic partnership that we are most focused on.

SAFE

Safe and free from harm and abuse

HEALTHY

Choosing healthier lifestyles

OPPORTUNITIES

Learning and developing skills for life

VOICE

An active citizen with a voice & influence

HAPPY

Resilient, enjoying life and having fun

Key Indicators

- Effectiveness of early help (repeat referrals, step-up to social care)
- Stability of children in care placements
- Child Protection Plans with neglect as primary factor

- Childhood obesity
- Smoking in pregnancy
- Access to treatment for alcohol-dependent parents

- 5 GCSEs grade 9-4, incl. maths and English
- 16-18 year olds in education, employment or training
- Attainment measures across EYFS, KS2 and KS4 for children and young people with SEND

- Participation in EHC assessments and reviews
- Participation in social care assessments and reviews

- Self-reported mental health
- Rate/number of SEN Support Plans and EHCPs with SEMH as primary need
- Referrals to mental health services



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February 2021



North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Peter Earley
Report from Service Area:	Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding
Responsible Officer:	Jacqui Old (Tel: (0191) 6437317)
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

- 1.1.1 This report introduces the strategy for children in our care and care leavers, which sets out the Authority's responsibilities to children in the Authority's care and those cared for in their childhoods. It makes clear the Authority's ambitions for them and the things the Authority will do to provide them with support to thrive into adulthood.

The strategy

- 1.1.2 The role that the Authority plays in caring for children is one of the most important things it does. In this context, the Authority is referred to as being the 'corporate parent' of these children and young people, and the critical question that should be asked in adopting the presented strategy is: 'would this be good enough for my child?'.
- 1.1.3 The ethos of corporate parenting is that everyone in the Authority and partner services take responsibility for promoting and delivering the vision for the children in our care and care leavers. It is recognised that the children in the Authority's care have the same needs as every child – to be loved, cared for and to feel safe. It is also acknowledged that children may have unique challenges due to the abuse or neglect they have suffered.
- 1.1.4 The ambition of the strategy is to promote a strong corporate parenting ethos recognising that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being. This strong corporate parenting vision means that everyone is concerned about children and care leavers as if they were their own. This is evidenced by a culture where officers do all that is reasonably possible to ensure the Authority is the best 'parent' it can be to the child or young person. In order to evidence the strongest corporate parenting practice, it is vital that all parts of the Authority, beyond those directly responsible for care and pathway planning, recognise they also have a key role.
- 1.1.5 Statutorily the corporate parenting principles apply only to local authorities. The statutory Director of Children's Services and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning in North Tyneside, work to ensure that relevant partners understand how they

can assist the Authority in applying the principles of good corporate parenting, in relation to the services those partners provide. 'Relevant partners' include local policing bodies and Chief Officers of Police, local probation boards and probation services, youth offending teams, clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, schools and educational institutions.

- 1.1.6 There have been no objections to the strategy which will, if agreed, be in place across all wards in North Tyneside and will remain in place until review in 2023.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy for the period 2021 – 2023 at Appendix 1 of this report.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 20th January 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

- 1.4.1 This report relates to the following priorities in the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People will:

- Be listened to so that their experience helps the Council work better for residents.
- Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life.
- Be ready for work and life – with the right skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet business needs.
- Be healthy and well – with the information, skills and opportunities to maintain and improve their health, well-being and independence, especially if they are carers.
- Be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable including if they become homeless.
- Be encouraged and enabled to, whenever possible, be more independent, to volunteer and to do more for themselves and their local communities.

Our Places will:

- Be great places to live by focusing on what is important to local people, such as by tackling the derelict properties that are blighting some of our neighbourhoods.
- Offer a good choice of quality housing appropriate to need, including affordable homes that will be available to buy or rent.
- Benefit from the completion of the North Tyneside Living project and by North Tyneside Council's housing stock being decent, well managed and its potential use maximised.
- Provide a clean, green, healthy, attractive, safe and sustainable environment. This will involve creating a cycle friendly borough, investing in energy efficiency schemes and by encouraging more recycling.
- Have an effective transport and physical infrastructure - including our roads, pavements, street lighting, drainage and public transport.
- Be a thriving place of choice for visitors through the promotion of our award-winning parks, beaches, festivals, and seasonal activities.

Our Economy will:

- Grow by supporting new businesses and building on our strengths, including our existing world class companies, and small and growing enterprises.
- Be business friendly, ensuring the right skills and conditions are in place to support investment, and create and sustain new high-quality jobs and apprenticeships for working age people.
- Continue to support investment in our business parks, units and Town Centres.

1.4.2 The priorities listed below within the Children & Young People's Plan 2021 – 2025 are also key for improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers and align to this strategy.

Outcome 1: I am Safe

Priority 1.1: Ensure children and young people are living safely

Outcome 2: I am Healthy

Priority 2.1: Support children to have a healthy early childhood

Outcome 3: I have Opportunities

Priority 3.1: Narrow the gap in educational outcomes

Priority 3.2: Ensure the right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs

Outcome 4: I have a Voice

Priority 4.1: Support children to be active citizens

Outcome 5: I am Happy

Priority 5.1: Develop resilience, confidence and independence in children and young people

1.4.3 The children and young people who are cared for by the Authority are some of the most vulnerable residents in North Tyneside and the areas of North Tyneside Plan listed above and the Children and Young People's Plan, have a direct impact on their current and future wellbeing. As with all parents, the Authority wishes to see children cared for, follow their dreams and ambitions into adulthood, becoming productive and responsible citizens with solid support networks and the ability to contribute to the future of North Tyneside.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 North Tyneside Council has not experienced the increase in Children in Care that regional partners and statistical neighbours have during the Covid 19 pandemic. There are 285 children in care and 157 young people supported by care leaving services on the date of writing this report.

1.5.2 These children and young people are cared for in a variety of settings including wherever safe to do so, within their own families or networks, supported by our specialist fostering team. The Authority has responsibility for children who live in foster care with mainstream foster carers and others who live in children's homes. As the young people mature, the Authority as corporate parent encourages them to remain living in their stable foster homes as long as each young person wants under the 'staying put' scheme. When young

people are ready to move on, the Authority has a dedicated accommodation service which offers an excellent range of options to young people.

- 1.5.3 Children and young people in the Authority's care receive health assessments and support and advice from dedicated staff. This helps young people to be as healthy as possible and to develop the skills and confidence to manage their own health needs as they mature.
- 1.5.4 Children in the Authority's care are supported to maintain stable education and are assisted by dedicated staff who work alongside schools and colleges to promote the best outcomes for the children. Despite this young people who have experienced care often struggle to gain and sustain employment and the global pandemic has further impacted negatively on this outcome. The Authority recognises that significantly more focus is required to aid them with this.
- 1.5.5 The strategy seeks to provide the culture and circumstances in which each child and young person can be supported with a stable home, a family and professional network that is mutually supportive of the child, the best health and educational opportunities and high expectations of their ability to follow their dreams. The Authority wants children in its care to experience genuine affection, acceptance of who they are and belief in them.
- 1.5.6 The strategy has identified a range of key priorities. The overarching priorities are: -
- The Authority will only bring children into care when it cannot be made safe for them to stay at home.
 - The Authority will work with each child's network to try and keep every child within their network.
 - The Authority will support all adults who care for children to do so safely.
 - The Authority wants all children to live in safe homely and comfortable homes.
 - The Authority wants all children to be able to build enduring relationships with consistent adults.
 - The Authority will work with children in care to stop them having to tell their story over and over.
 - The Authority wants all children to achieve their best in education, and will work with them and their school, college or workplace to support this.
 - The Authority wants all children in its care, and those who have left its care help the Authority to get better at caring for children.
- 1.5.7 There are then a range of further actions under the following themes: -
- Our Children and Young People
 - Relationships
 - Virtual School and Health (Health, Information & Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing)
 - Learning from Care Experienced Young People
 - Model of Practice
 - Care Leavers
 - Children in Care Council
- 1.5.8 The implementation of the plan will be overseen by the Children in Care Council and the Corporate Parenting Forum. The Multi-Agency Looked After Panel (MALAP) is the key delivery mechanism. On an annual basis, progress against the strategic priorities will be reported to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

1.6 Decision options:

1.6.1 The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet

Option 1

Cabinet agree and adopt the Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy 2021-2023 as the document to set out the strategic ambition for children in care and care leavers in North Tyneside.

Option 2

Cabinet does not agree to adopt the Children in Care and Care Leaver Strategy 2021-2023 and requests officers to consider any issue(s) raised by Cabinet.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

Option 1 demonstrates the Authority's commitment to its corporate parenting responsibilities and best aids the continued development of service improvements for children in its care and those who have experienced care.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix: Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021-2023

1.9 Contact officers:

Jodie Henderson Senior Manager Children in care (Resources) 0191 6437388
Julie Firth Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Services 0191 6438910
David Dunford, (Acting) Senior Business Partner, Strategic Finance 0191 6437027

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The strategy does not include any additional financial or human resources pressures within the Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding (HECS) service area.

2.2 Legal

2.2.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to provide corporate parenting to children and young people in its care or who have been in the care of the Authority in accordance with: -.

- Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Part 3 of the Children Act 1989
- The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 (the Care Leavers Regulations)
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010

2.2.2 The way in which each local authority does this is not defined in law, but it is considered best practice to adhere to seven basic principles. These are: -

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The production of the strategy has included the consultation with groups representing children in care. These have included the Children in Care Council and the care leavers consultation 'New Belongings' which was specifically designed to improve the voice of care leavers in strategic planning.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

As above, the production of the strategy has included consultation with internal groups of children in care and care leavers and includes within the body the expressed views of children who have experienced care. It has also drawn upon national, published consultation with children in care and care experienced young people. It has also been produced in consultation with the multi-agency looked after children partnership (MALAP) in North Tyneside.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

It is acknowledged that some children and young people in our care or previously cared for, do have some additional protected characteristics and some by virtue of their experiences are likely to be disadvantaged. Given this, due regard has been and will continue to be, given to their protected characteristics during the ongoing development and delivery of this strategy.

There is a commitment to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), on specific projects or initiatives delivered as part of strategy implementation.

2.6 Risk management

While no additional risk has been identified directly arising from this strategy, the strategy will, through delivery of the priorities, reduce risks to children in care and care leavers and improve life chances.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐
- Head(s) of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐

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Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021-2023





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Foreword

We are passionate about supporting children in North Tyneside to grow up in communities that support them to thrive and achieve their full potential. We want them to have happy and safe childhoods that support them to be successful and contented adults.

Sometimes children and young people, are not able to live with their parents, in these circumstances we will always work hard to support the child to live within their family network if this is possible and safe to do so. There are times when children need to be cared for outside of their families, and when this needs to happen we want to make sure that children are offered the best care. We know that when children feel safe, secure, cared for, understood and happy, children can thrive and succeed. This is shown when they leave our care, and they can go on to lead, fulfilled lives supported by lifelong relationships of trust and respect.

We believe that relationships are key to supporting children to thrive and to make sense of the reasons they may be in our care. We try to work openly with children in our care and their families to improve the child's circumstances with our efforts. Being in care should improve a child's circumstances and we need to remain focused that our actions do this for each child. No child should feel disadvantaged by being in care.

We want to make sure, that where possible and when in their best interests, they can safely and happily return to their families. If this is not possible and children remain in our care, we want to make sure that we as corporate parents are providing the care and support, we would want for our own children.

When they become young adults, we want to be sure that they feel able to achieve their best at work or in education, have positive relationships and stable lives in warm and comfortable housing. We need to be ambitious with them and work to make a real and lasting difference to their lives, with enduring positive relationships.

This strategy has relationships at its heart. When children in our care talk about what makes a difference for them it is the people and relationships, they have been able to make, and sustain, that make the difference.

Our children and young people have told us that the relationships they have made with the people who have cared for them have supported them to gain employment, they have shared with us their first car, and their achievements when graduating, and when becoming successful and loving parents. As corporate parents these achievements and the young people choosing to share them with us, as they mature into their potential, demonstrates the impact of positive relationships and excellent care.

Our challenge is to provide this experience to every child who comes into our care. This strategy is a statement of our intention to continue to work with families, carers, schools, and all professionals, to create the culture in our communities to help children in our care and care leavers get the help and support they need.



Peter Earley
Lead Member for
Children's Services



Paul Hanson
Chief Executive



Jacqui Old
Director of Adult
and Children Services



Julie Firth
Assistant Director
Children's Services

Our Pledges



1 We will intervene early with evidence based, family focussed services

2 We will work in partnership to keep children in school

3 We will keep children and young safe at home, healthy and connected to their local communities

Our Vision

In North Tyneside we want to make sure that children only come into our care when they must do so. When they cannot remain with their families, because they are being harmed or the risk of their being harmed becomes too great. We will work relentlessly to support children to remain living with their families, and if a child needs to leave their parents care we will work with the child and their network to support the child to remain living with safe familiar adults.

When children are cared for within their networks, we will support the adults who care for them. We will work with the child and their family to gain a shared understanding of what has happened in their family and why the child has been cared for away from their parents.

We want any child who is unable to live at home to live in a homely and comfortable environment. With care provided by foster carers, or staff teams who are committed to helping them enjoy their childhoods and grow with positive experiences of loving care by trusted and dependable adults.

We want children in our care to have consistent adult support with stable and positive social work relationships so that they don't feel the need to repeat their story. We want them to thrive with adults who have walked beside them during their care journey.

Children in our care and care leavers will be supported to achieve their potential in education with dedicated support and detailed personal education plans. This support will continue into adulthood with specialised support from connexions workers and targeted work across the borough to increase employment and educational opportunities for care leavers.

We want children in our care and care leavers be sure that their voices will be heard on an individual and collective basis. We want all children who need support to be heard and to have access to advocacy. We want to make sure that regardless of communication challenges, language barriers, every child is supported to share their views.

We want to provide the children in our care and care leavers with safe boundaries and loving care provided by all corporate parents to make sure that the care we offer improves their circumstances now and in the future.

We want to make sure that the communities in North Tyneside work with us to help children who have needed to be in care to continue to feel they are valued as they grow.

Key points for action

- We will only bring children into care when it cannot be made safe for them to stay at home.
- We will work with each child's network to try and keep every child within their network.
- We will support all adults who care for children to do so safely.
- We want all children to live in safe homely and comfortable homes.
- We want all children to be able to build enduring relationships with consistent adults.
- We want to walk alongside children who are unable to stay living at home to stop them having to tell their story over and over.
- We want all children to achieve their best in education, and will work with them and their school, college or workplace to support this.
- We want all children in our care, and those who have left our care help us to get better at caring for children.



North Tyneside Context

In North Tyneside we have maintained relative stability in the numbers of children in care but as with all North East Local Authorities, we have a higher proportion of children in care than the national average. This means we have around 300 children in our care at any one time.

This is a lower rate than our statistical neighbours and reflects our strategic intention to make sure that we have robust mechanisms to challenge thinking and seek ways of maintaining children within their families if it is safe, or can be made safe, to do so.

This is supported by our strengths-based model of social work practice, Signs of Safety which has been implemented across children's services. This supports consistency in approach and aids creative and child focused practice.

The development of the 'Keeping Families Connected' service with innovation funding from the DfE provides intensive intervention with families to maintain children in their families.

We have a corporate parenting forum which holds to account the services delivered to children on the edge of care, in care and care leavers. This forum has highlighted priorities for the coming 12 months. These are:

- stability of social worker for children and care leavers.
- Reduction in numbers of children who are missing from care.
- Improving life story work for children in care and care leavers.

Within North Tyneside children's statutory social work services have been structured to provide small teams with increased management oversight to better support social work practice. This model was selected in support of the model of social work practice, to reduce the case transfers for children between teams and promote managers capacity to know children's circumstances better.

It is acknowledged that we have been told by our Children in Care Council that further work is required to progress the transition from children's social work teams to leaving care services. It is accepted while a leaving care member of staff sits alongside the child's social worker from 17 that a transfer at 18 is not appropriate as this does not support the development of relationships with leaving care staff. We have accepted this challenge from our children in care council and will make this a priority development for the next 12 months.

Our Children and Young People

The children who come into our care do so because they have suffered loss and/or harm. They need to be supported by all the adults in their lives to understand what has happened in a way that makes sure they do not assume blame or shame for what has happened. As a result of the challenges the children in our care have faced, we need to be assured that being in our care makes things better for them.

Our children have amazing talents and skills and it is our role to help them to explore these. We will provide the environment that supports each child to feel loved and confident to learn and to make mistakes. The children in our care will feel able to have all the opportunities their friends have, without being concerned that they are in our care.

In doing this we work with all of the services that are in contact with the children in our care and care leavers to seek to remove any barriers or prejudices them. The children in our care and care leavers will be aware that we are proud of their achievements and that we celebrate these with them.

Children are supported in having their achievements acknowledged in all manner of ways, linked to their choices. Children are supported to participate in all celebration events in their school and colleges. Individual talents in arts and sports are supported along side support for children and care leavers who choose an academic pathway into adulthood via university.

Key points for action

- **We will hold annual celebration events for children in care and care leavers.**
- **We will always try to provide warm and loving care to children and young people.**
- **We will challenge discrimination towards any child in care or a care leaver.**



Relationships

In North Tyneside we believe that every child needs to be supported to develop relationships with people that sustain them through challenges in life and to share happy times.

We know, because they have told us, that the children we care for value the relationships they have with the people who care for them. Foster carers, social workers, residential staff teams, teachers and, nurses can all have a huge impact on a child's life. It is our responsibility to make the impact positive. The children we have cared for have told us that this makes the difference to them as they have grown up.

These relationships need to be nurtured and acknowledged as special in supporting each child to understand their place in the world and to feel confident to learn and to grow.

The children in our care have families and histories that we must respect. We must work cooperatively with each child's family as co-parents in the best interests of each child. We must allow the possibility for change and growth in families and with enduring supportive relationships help each child to maintain all positive relationships in their lives.

In North Tyneside we do not believe that any person progresses to independence, As social beings' humans require loving supportive relationships throughout their lives to thrive. We want to support children who are, or have been, in our care to develop and sustain these relationships.

Key points for action

- We will always try to support children and young people to keep the relationships that matter to them.
- We will continue to improve the way we work with birth families.
- We will stick with children and young people through good and challenging times.

Health, Information and Advice, Virtual School and Emotional Wellbeing (HIVE)

We want our children to succeed at school, have the support they need to keep healthy and be helped to recover from what has happened to them in the past. Our multi-agency HIVE Team is a one stop shop for children, young people and their network to get the advice and support they need.

We know that some of our children have gaps in their learning and so our teachers will take the time to fill those knowledge gaps and support them to not only catch up with their peers but believe they can achieve their dreams, whatever they might be. Many of our children have special educational needs and we work to understand ways to enable them to have those needs met effectively.

We believe every child should have access to books and develop a love of reading, so we are part of The Letterbox Club and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. We have a Reading Recovery teacher who provides intensive support to any child in Yr 2 who has not yet grasped reading. We know reading is the gateway to learning but also a way to share special time with carers and family members and later, discover new worlds.

We want our children to be healthy and active, so we provide all children in our care with an Ease card so they can access our sports facilities free of charge. As we want them to be supported in their friendships their Ease card allows them to take another person with them. We also want our children to enjoy arts and culture and some were recently involved in a dance project. We regularly take children to the theatre to develop their interests and passion.

We have developed our mental health support beyond CAMHS to include counsellors, an occupational therapist and educational psychologists. We offer a range of trauma-informed interventions aimed at helping the children in our care manage their sensory needs and regulation, have positive relationships at home and school and have people to talk to when the time is right. Whilst we are unable to take away the harm or loss, we are able to provide a safe space to talk to trauma-trained counsellors who are able to offer support to the child and their network.



Learning from Care Experienced Young People

The care experienced young people conference in 2019, developed 10 principles to underpin the way in which services to children in care and care leavers should be delivered. We are committed to these and will endeavour to deliver on these in the following ways:

1 Promote more love in the care system including displays of positive physical affection;

We have a clear expectation that the adults providing care to children and young people will do so with genuine affection. Our policies regarding physical contact and displays of affection include the need for this to build safe and sustaining relationships. We are working with Barnardo's to consider the ways in which our organisation responds to trauma, Not only across the staff team but with all our service users. This is acknowledged as hugely significant to the development of relationships of trust that support adults to be emotionally responsive to children's needs.

2 Ensure care experience people are regarded and treated as individuals worthy of respect and to promote that respect wherever we can;

Every person who comes into contact with services provided by North Tyneside Council deserves respect. The demonstration of this respect is in the interactions between individuals. It is in the thought and consideration of each other's needs and is underpinned by the quality of relationships we can build with each other.

Key points for action

- We will show respect to children in our care and care experienced people by including them in all decisions about care planning as soon as they are old enough to understand.
- We will make sure that we explain decisions to them and that we challenge any preconceived views about children in care.
- We will listen to each child's views and avoid a one size fits all service that doesn't allow space for individual choices and experiences.
- We will work with each child in care and care leaver to explore their potential and support them to continue to develop skills.

3 Ensure that relationships are central to all our policies and procedures to support children in care and care experienced people;

Without relationships human beings are unable to function. We are social beings who require the interaction with others to thrive. We believe that the consistency of relationships is central to our ability to build trust and confidence in each other. We seek to provide this stability in carer and social worker, but acknowledge we have work to progress to recruit and retain foster carers, residential staff and social workers in order to provide the stability of relationship the children and young people we care for require.

Key points for action

- We will make sure that all policies, and processes will consider the need to support enduring positive relationships with children in care and care leavers.
- This will include the policies for foster carers and children's home staff as well as for children's social workers.
- We will support our staff to understand the impact of relationship-based working with dedicated training, and reflective supervision to support their capacity to build and sustain meaningful relationships with children in our care and care leavers.

4 Take clear steps to improve stability and continuity in the lived experiences of people in care;

We have a large proportion of children in care who live in stable foster care homes. For most children and young people these homes sustain throughout the children and young people's lives with relationships that endure.

There are some children and young people who do not have this stability and we are working to increase our foster care offer so that we can provide a greater matching choice at the outset of coming into care. We acknowledge that we have too many children and young people who have moved in our care too many times. This prevents them from building the relationships that they need. We are seeking to establish smaller residential homes for children who may need care to be provided in this way. It is hoped that in doing this we will be better able to build relationships that can endure.

- 5** Work with our partners and young people to raise awareness of need and improve support for the mental health and well-being of children in care and care experienced people in our local area;

We have an established mental health and wellbeing board that works to promote the positive mental health of young people in North Tyneside.

We have worked with young people to develop Kooth as an online resource for children to support emotional wellbeing.

We have a virtual mental health lead for children in care this dedicated post is in place to remove barriers for children in care in accessing support and working to raise mental well being amongst children in care and care leavers.



- 6** Recognise in our daily work that the impact of care experience does not end at 18 or 21 or even 25, and review our practice to remove age restrictions on support wherever we can;

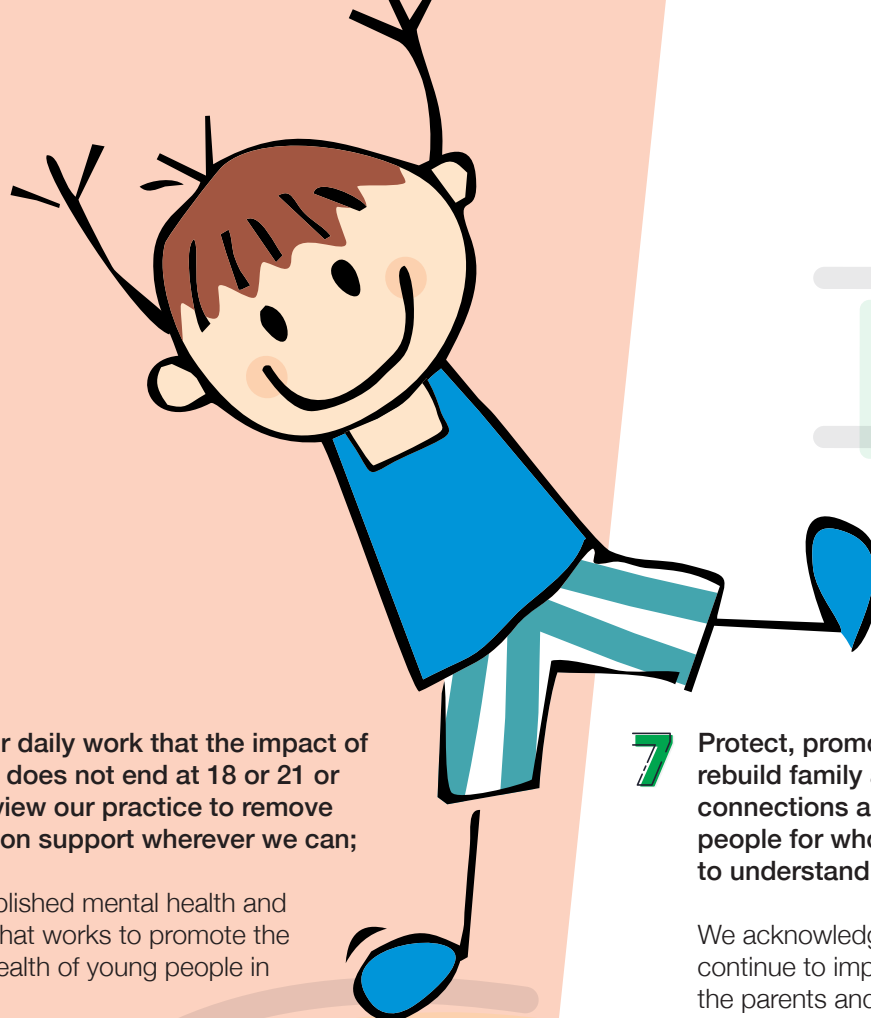
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We have a virtual mental health lead for children in care this dedicated post is in place to remove barriers for children in care in accessing support and working to raise mental well being amongst children in care and care leavers.

Key points for action

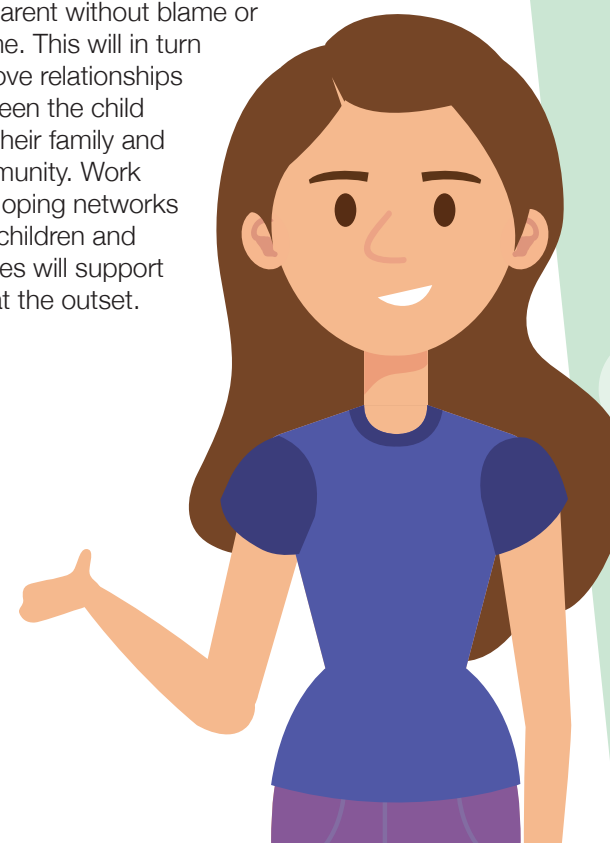
- **We retain relationships with children and young people for as long as the young person wants to. While the Local Authority is not resourced to provide financial support to care leavers over 25 we always provide emotional support and sign posting to services regardless of age.**
- **We respect the right of all care experienced people to retain the positive relationships they have established throughout their lives and accept that there may be periods of time when care leavers choose to have no communication with us, and times in their lives when they wish to do so.**
- **We encourage all care leavers to share their experiences, achievements and challenges with the people they have the most positive relationships with regardless of work role.**



- 7** Protect, promote and where necessary rebuild family and community connections and help those young people for whom we are responsible to understand their personal history;

We acknowledge that we need to continue to improve our relationships with the parents and families of some of the children and young people we care for.

We need to co-parent in a more productive manner to support parents and families where children cannot safely live with them to provide their children with as much positive support as they can. Always demonstrating respect for the sharing of parental responsibility with birth parents. This will aid the ability to develop a shared understanding of why a child or young person is not living with the parent without blame or shame. This will in turn improve relationships between the child and their family and community. Work developing networks with children and families will support this at the outset.



- 8** Make sure that young people in our care are routinely engaged, consulted and have a real say in their own lives;

We commit to listening to children and young people's views and responding to these or explaining why we are not able to and seeking shared ways forward. This will be supported by each child's IRO who will monitor the plan for each child and their involvement with this.

The impact of really listening and considering the views of each child will need to be monitored on an individual basis. We have small social work teams to support increased oversight and support to social work. This will enable managers to monitor this in supervision with social workers and support genuine reflection on the extent to which the child's wishes are included in the plan and the difference they make.

There will be times when we are not able to do what a child wants us to do, either because it is not safe, or we cannot support the risk involved. In these circumstances the child's allocated social worker will explain this to the child. If we can, we will find a negotiated way forward, often with the support of an independent advocate.

Key points for action

- **We will support children to explore how they make choices and express their views.**
- **We accept that this involves a degree of risk-taking behaviour and will work with children and young people to support this within age appropriate limits.**



- 9** Ensure that young people in our care are properly and fully informed of their rights and offer advocacy to ensure they receive them; and

Every child in the care of North Tyneside Council has the right to access advocacy support and we commit to promoting this right to all children who come into our care.

We have a dedicated participation team who work with children and young people to explore their rights. We will provide every child who comes into our care aged 8 and over with information about their rights as a child in care and entitlements that may remain with them even if they return to their parents' care.

We commit to informing all young people aged 16 and above who contact the Local Authority and declare themselves as homeless of their right to be a child in care, and the implications of doing this or choosing not to do so.

- 10** Listen to the voice of children in care and care experience people of all ages and always consult them about changes to services and support.

We continue to work with the Children in Care Council (CiCC) to understand the care experience of children in North Tyneside. We are committed to the views of the CiCC being presented regularly to the Corporate Parenting Forum to direct the work of the service. Senior Leaders will meet with the CiCC no less than quarterly and information from the CiCC will be circulated to all staff as required.

The active role of the CiCC in the region and nationally is acknowledged as a significant strength and we are keen to continue to work together to improve services.

Key points for action

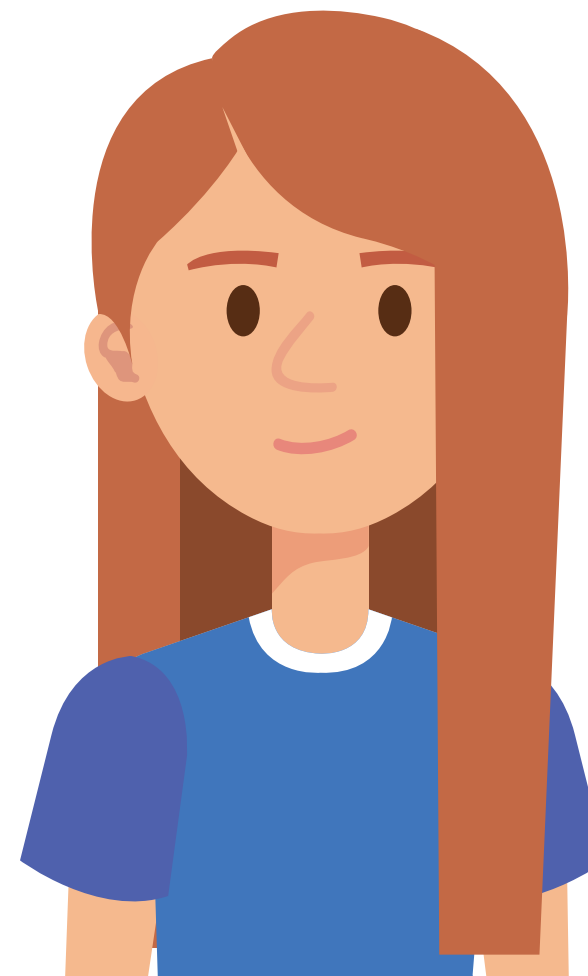
- We will consult with children in care and care leavers about any change in policy or practice that has a direct impact on them and;
- We will listen to their views when determining what to do next and how to improve the services we provide for them.

Model of Practice

Within North Tyneside children's services, a strengths-based model of social work practice has been agreed as the chosen model across all service areas. All front line staff have been trained in Signs of Safety and partners are supported with introductory training. This is an innovative strength based, safety organised approach to social work.

The approach focuses on "How can workers build relationships with children and their networks in situations where children may have been harmed and continue to safeguard children and work in partnership to meet the child's needs overall". This strengths-based and safety-focused approach to child protection work is grounded in partnership and collaboration.

We will work with children and young people to develop ways of expressing themselves within supportive and consistent relationships. Working through with their social worker what they think is going well in their life, what are the worries what needs to happen as a result.



Key points for action

- We will continue to work to establish stability in workers for children in care and care leavers. We know that this best aids children and young people to feel that they are valued and reduce the need to repeat their stories.
- We will help children in care and care leavers to understand why they have been cared for outside of their parents' care. This will be done using 'words and pictures' with the parents to establish a shared understanding that the whole family can accept that explains in simple terms what happened. This is then shared with the child. This is further supported with a record of the child's experiences in care which together form the child's life story record.
- For children and young people in our care, or care leavers we work using this model to identify signs of stability and wellbeing. Focusing upon the achievements and strengths in each child's situation to grow positives and reduce the challenges. There are a number of tools within signs of safety which support this.

Care Leavers

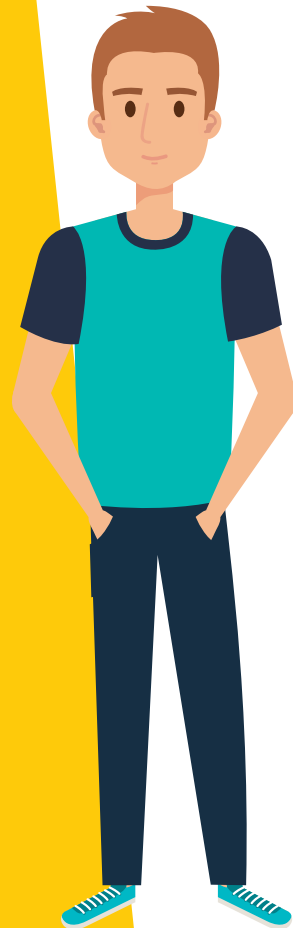
Young People who have remained in our care into adult life continue to require the nurture and support of consistent relationships. We want the children and young people who have experienced our care to have been cared for in stable and supportive homes. Where possible we want these to be foster homes that have been able to work alongside the child's family and network to support the child to believe in themselves and their abilities.

We are proud of the accommodation offer we have for care leavers with a commitment to 'Staying Put' in foster carer, through our dedicated Staying Close provision for young people leaving children's homes into our 'Starting Point' supported accommodation offer.

We believe that the ambitions and aspirations of the young people we care for or have cared for need to be supported and nourished to help each young person fulfill their potential. This includes support with education and employment but also support to become happy and contented members of our communities as they mature.

Key points for action

- **We will provide a dedicated personal assistant to all young people who are eligible for leaving care services.**
- **We will have clear mechanisms for determining leaving care status and will explain this to care leavers and their families.**
- **We are committed to supporting care leavers to engage in education and employment.**
- **We work within the Local Authority and with business partners to support.**



Children in Care Council

The Participation, Advocacy and Engagement team work to support children and young people living and attending schools in North Tyneside have their voices heard and their views taken into account and taken seriously.

The team supports a number of children and young people's forums such as the Elected Young Mayor, Elected Member of UK Youth Parliament, Young Cabinet, Youth Council, Children in Care Councils, Children's Council and a variety of themed working groups, including Young People's Health & Wellbeing, Anti Bullying, Ready for Life, Young People's Activities and Environment.

The Children in Care Council is a group of care experienced children and young people who have the aim of ensuring that all children who are in the care of North Tyneside and our care leavers are able to give their views on the services they receive. In North Tyneside we have one main group that meets on a weekly basis, with some specific working groups working on leaving care and small events held as part of the Junior Children in Care Council project.

The Children in Care Council are involved in planning and delivering conferences for professionals led by young people. These are promoted to Directors of Children's Services, Senior Leaders and across social media with changes being reported on an annual basis.

North Tyneside Children in Care Council works on monthly themes which link to the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The young people were supported to give their views on these themes and ensure senior managers are listening to these on a strategic level and including them in service changes where possible.

North Tyneside Children in Care Council works with the Regional Children in Care Council and over the last years have used this as a positive way to find out the views of the wider population of children in care and care leavers.

The service supports children in care to be introduced to an independent visitor to support them building positive and enduring relationships.

Key points for action

- **Support Regional Children in Care Council campaigns.**
- **Support North Tyneside Children in Care Council to achieve change on their monthly themes**
- **Support the Children in Care Council to find out the views of more children in care and care leavers.**
- **Hold two Children in Care and Corporate Parent events each year? .**
- **Increase the number of children and young people who have an Independent Visitor.**



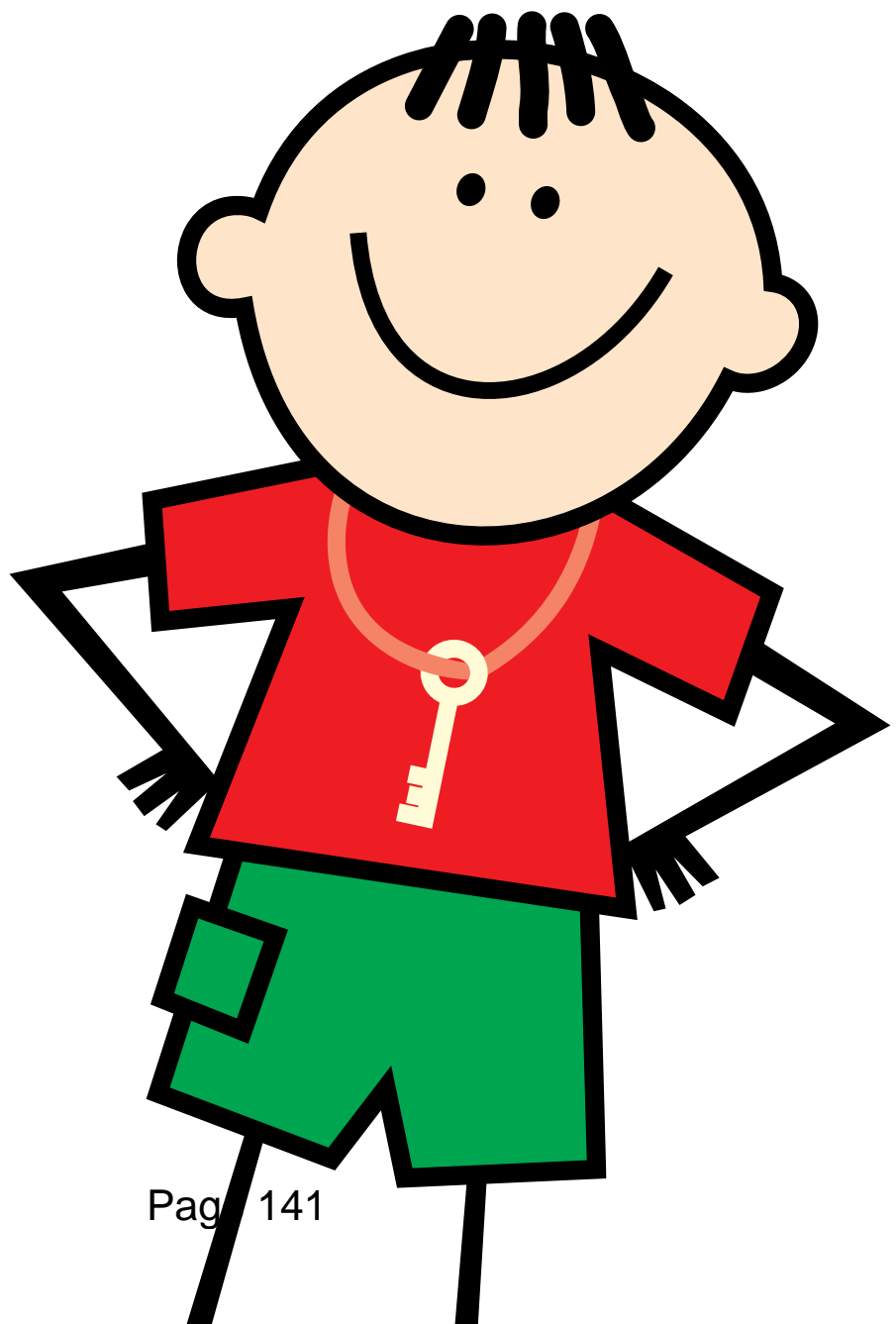


North Tyneside Council

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North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Unified ICT System for Housing, and interim system

Portfolio(s): Housing Strategy Housing Management	Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Steve Cox
Report from Service Area: Environment, Housing and Leisure	
Responsible Officer: Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure	(Tel: (0191) 643 7295)
Wards affected: All	

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Cabinet of the strategic review of the Housing, Asset and Repairs ICT systems with a view to developing a joint business requirement as a first stage towards procuring a unified system solution. The review stage will be completed in Spring 2021, and a further report will then be brought to Cabinet outlining next steps and any procurement proposals. It is anticipated that the procurement and implementation of a unified system would take place by March 2023.
- Seek Cabinet approval for the modification of the current contract for the Northgate Housing system to March 2023. This will ensure the system is supported until the completion of the above process, and provides the opportunity to make changes to the contract to reduce the cost of the system and introduce some improvements.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (1) Note the content of the report with regard to the system review;
- (2) Approve the terms of the modification of the current contract for the Housing system.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 22nd January 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2020-24 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our Places will:

Offer a good choice of quality housing appropriate to need, including affordable homes that will be available to buy or rent.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 In September 2020, ICT Board gave approval for a review of the Housing, Asset and Repairs ICT systems with a view to developing a joint business requirement and procuring a single system solution. The Authority currently operates several ICT systems to deliver its Housing, Housing Property and Construction, Asset, and Strategic Investment and Property services. These systems include, Northgate, AccuServ, SHINE and Keystone. These services have limited interfaces to ensure the transfer of important information and data between them.

1.5.2 A move to a unified solution could improve service delivery through more 'joined up' systems, processes and data, and has the potential to provide cost efficiencies. Potential benefits include:

- Improved data quality
- Streamlined services
- Reduced interfaces between systems
- Improved customer and user experience

These benefits and others will need to be explored in more detail, agreed, documented and monitored through the proposed project. This is a significant project which will take 2-3 years from the initial system review through to full implementation.

1.5.3 The proposal is for a 3-stage process: Review, Procurement and Implementation, to be completed by 2023. It is anticipated that the Review stage will be completed by Spring 2021. A further report will be brought to Cabinet after this stage is complete, and when there are clear proposals for next steps.

1.5.4 In the interim, there is an opportunity to reduce the cost of the current Northgate Housing system through a modification of the current contract. This would allow the service to cease maintaining elements of the software that are no longer used and, introduce some improvements to functionality, at a lower overall cost than maintaining the status quo.

1.5.5 The proposed modified contract will run to March 2023. This will ensure the system can be maintained with some improvements to functionality, while the longer-term unified system project is delivered.

1.5.6 The key factors affecting a decision on the modified contract are as follows:

- **Fragmentation:** Current systems are very fragmented: there are separate solutions in place for online access to rent balances, and for predictive analytics. These do not integrate with the main Housing database, resulting in duplication of work and the risk of inconsistent information between systems. The unified system project will address

this at a strategic level, but there is an opportunity to resolve some key issues in the short term through the modified contract.

- **Online:** The Service has an ambition to deliver better online services to tenants and customers, but progress has been limited due to the technology available. For instance, the in-house solution that allowed tenants to access their rent accounts online was built on old technology and failed, and whilst a limited workaround solution is in place, this does not allow tenants to interact with their accounts in any meaningful way, so the service continues to invest significant resource in handling calls and queries. In the light of the Covid situation, it is becoming increasingly important to support customers to interact with the Authority online. The proposed modified contract will add some portal functionality integrated with the core system.
- **Analytics:** Currently the service buys into a separate analytics package, RentSense, which uses a weekly upload of payments data from the Northgate system. The Policy, Performance and Research team is developing a replacement for RentSense using the Alteryx analytics solution that is already used in other areas of the Authority. This will be more flexible to meet the changing needs of the Service, and can be tailored to meet the Authority's local requirements. The modified Northgate contract includes new APIs (connections between systems) that would allow Alteryx to draw live data directly from the Northgate system, removing the dependence on data uploads, and allowing more timely information to be provided to the Service
- **Cost:** In recent years the contract has been renewed on an annual basis. The proposed modified contract is an opportunity to reduce costs and obtain a system configuration that is a better match for service needs.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet. These options are based on the contract options available from the supplier.

NB: there is no option to cease support and maintenance for the system. The Northgate system supports approx. £65m in rent payments per year, and no alternative system will be available until the strategic procurement for the unified system is complete.

Option 1: Maintain the status quo :

This assumes the current configuration of the software is retained, with no additional functionality, and the contract continues to be renewed on an annual basis.

Benefits

- No change in process, so no additional effort and no governance requirements
- System continues to be supported by the supplier
- Core system functionality (e.g. rents) continues to be available.

Disadvantages / risks

- Fails to take advantage of discount – cost is at least £11k more than the modified contract .
- Maintains modules we no longer use
- Missed opportunity to obtain functionality that will improve customer service
- Missed opportunity to 'do more for less'

Option 2: Approve the modification of the contract. (recommended) :

Cabinet could authorise the modification of the contract to include improved functionality at a lower cost than maintaining the status quo. This will provide ongoing system support & improve value for money in the interim, while a longer term solution is procured

This option involves cancellation of unused elements of the software and introduces the improvements described at 1.5.6 above. The maintenance cost over 3 years is lower than maintaining the status quo.

Benefits

- Cost saving compared to maintaining the status quo.
- Opportunity to include functionality that better meets the needs of the business, at lower cost than the current contract.
- Opportunity to improve the service to customers
- Matches long term strategic aims and aligns well to a future move to a unified system
- Includes the new APIs for connection to Alteryx
- System continues to be supported by the supplier
- Core system functionality (e.g. rents) continues to be available.

Disadvantages / risks

- Possible internal resource costs relating to implementation of new functionality and business process change.

Option 2 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 2 is recommended for the following reasons:

This option allows the functionality of the current system to be improved to better meet service objectives, at a lower cost than the current annual maintenance.

This option also aligns well with the strategic project to move to a unified system:

- It allows the system to be maintained and supported by the supplier until the unified system project concludes in 2023.
- It reduces some of the existing fragmentation of systems, which will reduce the complexity of the unified system project.
- It supports the customer-focused business process change that will be more fully delivered through the unified project.

1.8 Contact officers:

Paul Worth, Senior Manager Housing Operations, (0191) 643 7554

Jan Hawley, Information Systems Manager (0191) 643 8130

Adam Hagg, Customer Interface and Service Improvement Manager, (0191) 643 6684

1.9 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

(1) Gateway 0 document to ICT Board, Sept 2020

(2) Contract options paper to Environment Housing and Leisure SMT, Oct 2020

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The modified contract is within the current budget allocation and provides a saving to the authority.

2.2 Legal

The proposed variation applies to a contract valued at over £500,000. Therefore in accordance with the Authority's Contract Standing Orders, the variation must be reported to Cabinet. Regulation 72 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 allows contracts to be modified without a new procurement procedure in certain circumstances. As the modification does not alter the overall nature of the current contract and represents a saving to the Authority, the variation complies with these legislative provisions

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

A report was taken to Environment Housing and Leisure SMT in October 2020

A Gateway 0 for the Unified System Project was approved by ICT Board in Sept 2020, and a report on the proposed interim contract was taken to ICT Board in January 2021

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

External consultation arrangements will be part of the strategic Unified System project. As advised in section 1.1 of this report, a further report on the project will be brought to Cabinet when the review stage is complete.

2.4 Human rights

No implications.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There is no change to the demographic data being collected. Northgate have recently undertaken a review of their portal product and have carried out development to ensure the most recent release of the software complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) and Government Digital Service guidance.

2.6 Risk management

Risks will be managed through the ICT Governance process.

2.7 Crime and disorder

No implications.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

No implications.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐ x
- Head(s) of Service ☐ x
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐ x
- Chief Finance Officer ☐ x
- Monitoring Officer ☐ x
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐ x

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 22 February 2021

Title: North Tyneside Council Customer Service Programme

Portfolio(s): Deputy Mayor and Community Safety and Engagement	Cabinet Member(s): Deputy Mayor Councillor Bruce Pickard and Councillor Carole Burdis
Report from Service Area: Responsible Officer: and engagement	Corporate Strategy and Customer Service Jacqueline Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service (Tel: (0191) 6435724)
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

A key theme running through the Our North Tyneside Plan is to listen to residents and to focus on ensuring that the Authority works better for them. The North Tyneside Council Customer Service Programme, agreed by Cabinet on 28 May 2019, is the operational delivery of this ambition.

Based on resident, partner, and team feedback, on what constituted good and poor customer service, the Programme has the Authority's crest motto "we serve" at its core.

The Programme established a plan of work in four parts, demonstrating the Authority's ambition to improve customer service; fulfil key commitments made in the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy and to demonstrate that "we listen and we care".

This report sets out the work to date and progress made by the Programme. This includes the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which in many instances, has accelerated both the ambition and delivery of the Programme.

The next stage of priorities for the Programme are also detailed in this report. They continue to be a direct articulation of the ambition to deliver customer centric services, that demonstrate how the Authority listens to and cares for, its residents.

Feedback from the Authority's Covid-19 Recovery Programme is directly informing the Customer Service Programme priorities and approach. Both of these programmes are in turn, driving the prioritisation of digital services for the Authority's customers, first set out in the Digital Strategy for North Tyneside, agreed by Cabinet in January 2020. The interdependency of these three programmes, for the Authority's customers, has been

carefully assessed and the next stage of priorities set out in this report, reflects this approach.

The pandemic has changed how many of the Authority's services are delivered and in turn, customer expectation has also shifted. An assessment of these shifts, understanding how services have changed; the impact of change on the Authority's customers and which, if any, should continue beyond the restrictions of the pandemic, will be made. This will continue to direct the priorities of the Customer Service Programme.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) notes the progress and deliverables of the Customer Service Programme to date;
- (2) agrees to the list of second phase priorities for the Programme; and
- (3) notes that a further progress report will be presented to Cabinet in 2022.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 22 January 2021.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority(ies) in the 2020/24 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People will

- Be listened to so that their experience helps the Authority work better
- Be healthy and well – with the information, skills, and opportunities to maintain and
- improve their health, wellbeing, and independence, especially if they are carers
- Be ready for work and life – with the right skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet business needs.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

a. Customer Service Programme

The organisation is guided by the Our North Tyneside (ONT) Plan. This is the top-level articulation of the Mayor and Cabinet's policy priorities for the Borough. In developing and delivering the customer service programme, the priorities were linked to the direct delivery of that plan.

Based on resident, partner and team feedback on what constituted good and poor customer service, the Programme has the Authority's crest motto "we serve" at its core.

The Programme established a plan of work with four themes, demonstrating the Authority's ambition to improve customer service and to demonstrate that "we listen and we care":

- Customer promise
- Brilliant basics
- Customer first, and
- Better never stops.

Working groups, with actions plans were established for each of the four programme parts and were led by Elected Members and members of the Authority's Senior Leadership Team.

b. A Digital Strategy for North Tyneside

A Digital Strategy was agreed by the Authority's ICT Board and then by Cabinet at its meeting on 20 January 2020. The Strategy has 4 overarching priorities for data, customers, team and the Borough.

All four overarching priorities ultimately aim to improve the customer experience and are a critical lever to improving customer service .

- Data; delivery on the policy priorities from the Our North Tyneside Plan for People, Place and Economy have been shaped by consideration of the evidence. Recent examples include, work on Poverty Intervention, development of the North Shields Masterplan, delivery of the right services to support vulnerable people – all of which have been evidence-based to support policy development.
- Customers; successful delivery of the Customer Service Programme requires appropriate technology to support the Authority's work with the full range of our customers.
- Team; the Elected Mayor and Cabinet have been clear they want North Tyneside Council to be a good employer and the team to have the tools to deliver policy priorities and serve the Borough effectively. The Authority is clear that great customer service starts with great employees and the Authority's commitment to teams who feel safe, are appropriately paid, are happy and healthy and capable of delivering great customer service.
- Borough; working with partners and with the North of Tyne Combined Authority, the Elected Mayor and Cabinet want to ensure that North Tyneside is appropriately connected as part of making sure it is a great place to live, work and visit and to ensure their Ambition for North Tyneside is inclusive – connecting physical regeneration work with people, communities, business and visitors.

c. North Tyneside Council's Covid-19 Recovery Programme

The Authority's Covid-19 recovery programme was agreed by Cabinet on 29 June 2020 and set out an 18-month plan of work to move the Authority and Borough, through three phases of recovery from June 2020 to July 2021.

A review of the first phase of the recovery programme was completed in November 2020 and demonstrated a range of ways in which service delivery has changed or new things have had to be developed; these changes bring corresponding improvements in customer service in line with the four themes of the Customer Service Programme.

1.5.2 Achievements and Progress Made

At the outset of the pandemic, Customer Service Programme workstream meetings had to be paused as the business of Authority services focused on the response to national lockdown measures and the Authority's own recovery programme. However, some of the planned work from the Customer Service Programme and a significant proportion of new work, was expedited and initiated.

a. Customer Promise

A new customer promise was been developed based on feedback from residents, partners and teams. The Promise was launched initially internally and the externally in early 2020. However, further work is now planned to publicise the Promise more widely and to also embed its delivery across the whole of the organisation.

During the pandemic the delivery of our Customer Promise was evident in the following key examples.

- All social care customers continued to receive a tailored response to their care needs in a way that prioritised their health and safety.
- Cabinet, Council and other Committee meetings were held virtually and livestreamed, so that the decision making of the Authority continued to be transparent to residents and others.
- Local care homes were given intensive and individualised support to ensure consistent standards of safety for their residents and staff, including the provision and use of personal protective equipment.
- A Local Support System was developed which redeployed 81 employees and made over 12,000 welfare calls to our vulnerable residents who had to shield. The service not only assisted with signposting residents to other support services but helped reduce their anxiety and combatted loneliness.
- Hundreds of residents were supported to claim financial support from the Government's various Covid-19 support schemes.
- The Authority's tenants, who were financially impacted by Covid-19, were supported by placing tenancy enforcement action on hold.
- A strong focus was placed on key suppliers at risk of closure. This allowed taxi firms to continue to transport children of key workers to school.
- Residents who were rough sleeping were provided with emergency bed and breakfast accommodation which was vital to ensure their safety during the pandemic.
- All essential services continue to be delivered including: refuse collection, highways, housing repairs and street cleansing.
- Connexions advisers facilitated interactions with over 2,000 students leaving year 11 and year 13, to confirm their destinations in September 2020 and minimise levels of young people not in education, employment or training.

- The Authority's back to work service, supported customers through over 3,000 information, advice and guidance sessions, CV writing and interview skills training and referrals to distance learning courses. This service also provided essential support to businesses to safeguard jobs and provided early intervention between the team and those made unemployed.
- Over 2,500 new applications for free school meals have been processed as a result of an increase in people in receipt of Universal Credit claims and all families whose children were in receipt of free school meals, continued to receive these when the schools were only open to key worker or vulnerable children.
- Match funding was secured through the North of Tyne Capacity Fund, which enabled the voluntary and community sector to continue to deliver their employability project through Covid-19.
- Over £40m has been paid to over 3,000 busines in North Tyneside, providing vital support for those forced to close due to national lockdown restrictions.
- Bereavement services have continued to support grieving families and friends, with covid-19 secure funeral services.
- Free advertising was offered in the Our North Tyneside magazine to support local businesses.

b. Brilliant Basics

- Over 130 new silver vehicles and a new protocol have been developed, to ensure consistent branding on all Authority vehicles.
- Street name and roundabout signage protocols were developed, again to promote consistent branding and look and feel of the Borough.
- Organisation wide new office templates for presentations, meetings and emails etc have been produced and rolled out to the organisation for use.
- An audit of town signs was completed, to inform future replacement, consistent branding and approach.
- A new uniform protocol was agreed and new lanyards procured.

During the pandemic –

- New guidance was produced for teaching staff - 'Teaching Safely in Employment and Skills'.
- All of the Authority's buildings have a consistent approach to Covid-secure standards and have consistent corporate workplace signage in place.
- The IT helpdesk supported colleagues to continue providing services to customers from home, by answering over 400 calls a day and resolving queries with a quick turnaround.

- Consistent signage has been put in place in the Authority's public spaces, such as play parks and beaches, to ensure adherence to their use in a Covid-secure way.
- Covid-19 guidance was produced in different languages and formats on the council's website.
- A new British Sign Language video interpretation link has been added to the Authority's website.

c. Customer First

Many teams across the organisation had to fundamentally change their methods of service delivery during the pandemic. Many of these changes are in line with the Programme's customer first peer review methodology which focusses on the customer promise, good value for money, environmental sustainability, digital strategy, accessible services, safe, paid, healthy happy and capable teams.

- The refuse collection centre now has an online appointment booking system. This has reduced queueing times, resulting in a better customer experience and fewer emissions.
- A methodology and process for internal peer reviews was developed.
- Six team members received Local Government Association peer review training to enhance their skills and understanding of carrying out service reviews.
- A school meal's peer review was completed and improvement actions underway, including introduction of a new cashless payment system. Learning from this first review is also shaping all subsequent reviews as part of the customer service programme.

During the pandemic –

- All face to face customer services were switched to telephone or web based. Overall, customer services dealt with 336,000 transactions via telephone or web in 2020, a slight overall decrease from the previous year, due to national lockdown restrictions. In the second half of the year, when national lockdown restrictions were eased, the teams, dealt with a year on year increase, from 2019, of 20,000 calls and 5,000 emails.
- Virtual family time sessions were established so families could still spend quality time together during lockdown.
- The school improvement team provided extensive home learning resources and locally deployed the Department for Education 'laptops for schools' project, so children could continue their education from home.
- A dynamic purchasing system was also established so service areas, care providers and schools, could order specialist personal protective equipment.
- A digital outreach project was launched to coordinate a community approach to providing basic digital skills for residents.

- Online courses were established to enable adult learning and apprenticeship courses to be delivered virtually.

d. Better Never Stops

- National customer service week was celebrated out in 2019, with events over 5 days and a customer service award's event, for the Authority employees.
- Focus groups and staff surveys have been carried out to understand how Authority teams feel about making suggestions, reporting issues and recognising moments of great customer service. A staff suggestion scheme has also been developed, ready for future roll out.

During the pandemic –

- Two staff pulse surveys have been carried out, to understand the impact of the pandemic and new methods of working. Results have directly shaped the Authority's recovery programme and approach to supporting the wellbeing of the workforce during the pandemic.
- A survey of Elected Members, as part of the first end of stage review for the Authority's recovery programme, was carried out in October 2020. This ensured that Member's views informed the review process and second phase recovery plan. A further survey with Members is planned, as part of the next end of stage review, in March 2021.
- The Elected Mayor's Spirit of North Tyneside Borough saw a Borough wide celebration in 2020, for exceptional customer and community service; over 150 nominations were received.
- North Tyneside's Voluntary Organisation Development Agency's good neighbour project, supported by the council, was refocused to collect and deliver prescriptions and distribute 150 food boxes a week to residents that were vulnerable and shielding.
- An enforcement hub was immediately set up at the start of the pandemic and has dealt with hundreds of customer complaints and supported local businesses to comply with Covid-secure measures.
- A correspondence unit has been established, to provide up to date and consistent responses, to the increasing numbers of pandemic related enquiries from the public, business and partners, received by the Authority.
- Temporary traffic management schemes were introduced in three town centres, one district centre and the coastal strip, to maintain social distancing measures in line with Government guidance.
- A town centre recovery plan for the reopening of the four town centres was developed to safely reopen and support our high streets.
- New pavement license applications were considered and licenses issued, to temporarily provide outside seating for businesses.

- A skills exchange was created, to ensure any staff member, unable to carry out their substantive role, could be redeployed into areas with high or new demand. To date over 1,000 staff completed a skills survey and over 300 staff have been redeployed into different roles, since the start of the pandemic.
- Over 100 conversations took place with residents as part of the Big Community Conversation in summer 2020, to help to shape the priorities for North Tyneside in response to the pandemic. This has been fed into the budget setting process.

1.5.3 Next Stage Customer Programme Priorities

Having reviewed the progress made since the start of the Customer Service Programme as set out above, the priorities for the next phase of the Programme's delivery have been refreshed and are set out below against each of the four Programme's themes.

a. Customer Promise

- **Embedding the promise;** the customer promise is the Programme's commitment of what every customer of the Authority can expect. From April onwards, the Promise will be more widely publicised internally and externally. It will also be included into every team member's individual performance review from 2021 / 2022.
- **The Elected Mayor's Spirit of North Tyneside initiative ;** will be used to highlight and celebrate exceptional customer and community service all year round and will be the focus of the Authority's celebration of national customer service week, in October 2021.

b. Brilliant Basics

- **Corporate branding;** remains a priority and all previous workstream activity will continue in line with any relevant Covid-19 guidance or restrictions.
- **Correspondence, complaints, and customer feedback;** the recently established correspondence unit, will be used to assess different approaches to dealing with all of the Authority's correspondence, complaints and customer feedback, including those from Elected Members.
- **Team communication;** the Authority's staff pulse surveys highlighted how social distancing measures have increased the gap between those who are office based and those working remotely. Digital and personal skill solutions for addressing this gap will be progressed, ensuring all staff are connected and have the information they need to do deliver the Promise, to every customer, every time.

c. Customer First

- **Customer focused web services;** throughout the pandemic, the ability and demands of the Authority's customers to access online information and carry out digital transactions with the council has grown significantly. The second phase of the Programme has a number of web based projects which will see notable improvements in the offer of the Authority website, including the look and feel of the site, as well as access to improved information services for children and families and vulnerable groups receiving social care support.

- **Community hubs;** the Authority has been growing community hubs for over 10 years, with investment in local health and wellbeing services, focused community and voluntary sector investment and customer first centres. A new community hub strategy will be developed, determining how best to further make use of these resources and to enhance the customer experience through COVID-19 recovery and beyond.
- **Digital inclusion;** Throughout the pandemic, the use of technology with the Authority's customers has grown exponentially. Nationally and locally this has further highlighted the digital skills and resource gap. Working with the community and voluntary sector and local NHS, a number of digital inclusion projects will be undertaken, as part of a digital inclusion strategy for the Borough.

d. Better Never Stops

- **Staff as the Authority's eyes and ears;** a new tool for staff living and working in the Borough will be developed, enabling them to report, in real time, issues that require action by Authority's services. Additionally, a new staff suggestion scheme, highlighting ways to improve the customer experience, will be established.
- **Workforce;** further workforce development will be undertaken to embed and evaluate the implementation of the organisation's values, most importantly, ensuring people understand and can live the customer promise. Work will begin to look at how trauma informed practice ¹can be applied beyond social care, to other areas across the organisation.
- **Service reviews;** the methodology of internal service reviews will be refreshed, with a greater focus on technology and of course, Covid-19 Recovery plans.
- **Best in class work systems;** a number of IT systems that support the delivery of Authority services will be refreshed and replaced. This will improve the efficiency of how these services are delivered, as well as improving customer experience.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

(i) Cabinet to agree the proposed priorities for the Customer Service Programme in North Tyneside as set out in section 1.5.3.

Option 2

(i) Cabinet does not agree to the proposed priorities and request officers to consider other options for Cabinet's consideration.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

¹

Much like individuals, organisations experience trauma and can embed it within their culture. Trauma-informed organisations incorporate knowledge about trauma in all aspects of the organisation – in practice and, if pertinent, service delivery.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The priorities outlined have been developed following a formal review of the work of the Customer Service Programme to date. The priorities continue to present the ambition set out in the Programme and have taken careful consideration of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and work of the Authority's Covid-19 Recovery Programme.

1.8 Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

1.9 Contact officers:

'Jacqueline Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy, tel. (0191) 6435724'
'Haley Hudson, Manager Customer Service and Digital, tel. (0191) 6437008'
'David Dunford, Acting Senior Business Partner, tel. (0191) 643 7027'

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- (1) Report to Cabinet – Equality and Diversity 22 February 2021
North Tyneside Council's Equality and Diversity Policy as published in the Equality and Diversity Report presented to Cabinet on 22 February 2021
- (2) Report to Cabinet – Covid-19 A Framework for Recovery in North Tyneside 29 June 2020 <https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s4039/Covid-19%20-%20A%20Framework%20for%20Recovery%20in%20North%20Tyneside.pdf>
- (3) Report to Cabinet – A Digital Strategy for North Tyneside 20 January 2020
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s2638/A%20Digital%20Strategy%20for%20North%20Tyneside.pdf>
- (4) Report to Cabinet - We Listen and We Care NTC Customer Service Programme 28 May 2019
<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s798/We%20Listen%20and%20We%20Care%20North%20Tyneside%20Council.pdf>

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

Any financial implications arising from the activities in the customer service programme will be met from existing service budgets.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

A formal review of the first stage of the Customer Programme has been undertaken with each of the workstream leads; this has shaped the proposed priorities outlined in this report.

The end of phase review for the Authority's Covid Recovery Programme, captured feedback from Elected members, staff, partners and residents; this has informed the proposed priorities set out in this report.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Customer Service Programme is based on extensive Borough-wide consultation; the Annual Big Community Conversation; Budget Engagement, State of the Area and Youth Council consultation.

Over 100 conversations took place in summer 2020 with residents as part of the Big Community Conversation.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The Customer Service Programme supports delivery of the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy, in particular, key elements of section 6 equality and diversity in service provision and corporate equality objectives for staff training, use of equality data, accessible buildings and services and communication.

Equality impact assessments will continue to be undertaken to inform the development of projects under the Customer Service Programme, to ensure that equality considerations are embedded into the programme and due regard shown to customers and employees with protected characteristics.

Equality impact assessments have been built into the Authority's COVID-19 recovery framework, overseen by the Recovery Co-ordinating Group.

2.6 Risk management

Specific projects will have their own risk management arrangements in line with the agreed corporate approach

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The contents of the second stage of the Customer Service Programme, aim to support sustainable development.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐ X
- Head(s) of Service ☐ X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐ X
- Chief Finance Officer ☐ X
- Monitoring Officer ☐ X
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐ X