

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### 1. Cabinet decisions since the last Executive Report to the County Council

- 1.1 There will have been 2 Cabinet meetings (19 September and 9 November) since the last Executive Report to County Council. The items of business specifically attributed to this portfolio were:-

#### Cabinet - 9 November 2016

A joint report between the Director of Resources and the Director of Children's Services on the Invest to Save bid for Families First Triage will go to Cabinet on 9 November 2016 [Cabinet - 9 November 2016](#)

### 2. Consequences of Cabinet decisions before the last meeting of the County Council on 19 July 2016

- 2.1 Nothing to report.

### 3. Anticipated/ future decisions to be made by Cabinet

- 3.1 There are currently no anticipated Cabinet decisions required in the near future.

### 4. Key Partnerships

- 4.1 I sit on the Health and Wellbeing Board; Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning Executive (CYPICE) and Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB).

### 5. Other comments

#### 5.1 Hertfordshire – The best place in UK to raise a family.

The uSwitch Better Family Life Index which ranks 138 local authorities on 33 factors important to family life has ranked Hertfordshire as the best place to raise a family in the United Kingdom citing top GCSE grades, good pay, high employment and access to fast broadband. The full report can be viewed here; <https://www.uswitch.com/media-centre/2016/08/new-index-reveals-best-place-to-live-for-families-in-uk/>

#### 5.2 Family Safeguarding

To date Family Safeguarding has contributed towards a 47% reduction in the number of children subject to a child protection plan and a 10% reduction in the number of children looked after compared with 2014 as well as a reduction in the percentage of agency staff in qualified social worker posts. Positive feedback continues to be received by staff, courts, families and schools. The service has attracted positive interest from the media as well as local authorities who have come to visit and learn from Hertfordshire's experience. An independent evaluation of the outcomes from Family Safeguarding has been undertaken by

the University of Bedfordshire. The report is in the process of being finalised and will be presented to Children's Services Panel in January 2017.

The Department for Education invited bids for Wave 2 innovation funding in June 2016. A bid for funding to increase the range of professionals in family safeguarding to extend 'Virtual School' and CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health service) therapeutic support to children in need of protection totalling £1m has been made. In addition, 4 other local authorities have applied for funding and Hertfordshire's support in implementing Family Safeguarding in their areas.

### **5.3 Family First Hubs/Triage**

An Invest to Save bid to support the implementation of locally based Families First Hubs and Triage Panels will be presented to Resources and Performance Cabinet Panel on the 31 October and to Cabinet on the 9 November.

### **5.4 National Citizenship Service**

Almost 800 young people took part in the Youth Connexions National Citizen Service (NCS) programme this summer, raising an amazing £12,500 for local charities and undertaking over 47,400 hours of volunteering in their communities. Youth Connexions held four graduation ceremonies at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield on 11 and 18 September. The events were opportunities for the NCS graduates to showcase their successful social action projects to their parents, reunite with their team mates and youth workers, and receive their NCS certificates of achievement. National Citizen Service gives all 16 and 17 year olds the chance to take part in activities that build skills for work and life and culminates in a team project to help the community. The estimated economic value of the hours volunteered in Hertfordshire in the summer 2016 is £179,646. The estimate is based on the average number of volunteering hours completed by each NCS participant during the course (60 hours) multiplied by the figure of £3.79 as the minimum hourly wage for workers above school leaving age but under 18 for the 800 participants that completed the programme.

### **5.5 SEND Inspection**

The letter from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission concerning Hertfordshire's SEND inspection during July 2016 has now been published. The report highlights some of the good work we are doing to support families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and praised teams in Hertfordshire for starting to make a difference to the outcomes for children and young people some of which included:

- Parents of very young children, who are experiencing local area support for the first time, often have high levels of confidence in how these arrangements are decided.
- The needs of most young children are picked up through a range of early years services, particularly at children's centres and child development centres.
- Schools, academies and colleges focus well on helping young people reach meaningful and aspirational destinations for further education or employment.

The inspection also raised a number of areas for improvement that we need to address including the way we communicate with young people and their families and our responsiveness to their feedback and concerns. The report also picked up on inconsistencies in areas of activity across the County. A post inspection action plan is being developed in partnership with parents and key partners. The full letter is available here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-outcome-letters>

## **5.6 Key Performance – September 2016**

- The number of children subject to a child protection plan has reduced to 655 a rate of 25 per 10,000 0-18 population, one of the lowest in the Country.
- The number of children looked after in Hertfordshire has reduced to 907 plus 67 unaccompanied asylum seeking children (the lowest overall number since 2009) a rate of 37.2 per 10,000 0-18 population.
- The fostering service is currently projecting a net gain of 20 new foster carers by the end of March 2017. The service has recently launched a number of innovative recruitment initiatives, aimed at recruiting carers to meet priority service needs, such as bus advertising, petrol ad nozzles, social media promotion and continue to hold regular open evenings in venues across the County.

## **6. Cabinet Panels**

- 6.1 Since the last Executive Report to Council, the Children's Services Cabinet Panel has met on 15 September 2016. The matters discussed can be found at the following location:

[Children's Services Cabinet Panel - 15 September 2016](#)

**Richard Roberts**  
**Executive Member for Children's Services**  
**November 2016**