

PEOPLE: A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN CARE & CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INFORMATION

Our Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) continues to offer a consistent service to our partners and communities. We have just completed the CADS six month review and the impact of this change continues to be felt in a positive way by the service, and by partners who have an opportunity of speaking with a qualified social worker who determines what the required response should be. The total number of cases open to Children's Social Care is 1,475, this is a reduction from last year and puts our service more in line with our statistical neighbours. The number of children subject to child protection plans is 222 and the number of Children in our Care is 409, with numbers of children in our care having been relatively stable over the last 12 months. In addition, 860 children are being supported by Early Help Services and our partners. 26 children have been adopted since April 2019 and 24 children are currently placed in adoptive placements.

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

Over the Covid 19 period Adolescent Services have continued to deliver face to face work to the YP identified as most vulnerable during this period. The team have developed a number of innovative ways of delivering services whilst maintaining social distancing (1-1 cycling, nature walks, bush craft skills, outdoor fitness challenges etc.)

Other YP have been contacted weekly (minimum) via skype/tel and in some cases this has proved a very successful alternative, with some YP preferring this communication method when discussing their issues and behaviours and working through challenges..

Earlier this year the Youth Justice Service and the Engage Team co-ordinated and participated in a number of multi-agency meetings to develop a response to a group of young people in and around the Darwen town centre who had repeatedly come to the negative attention of the Police. Following involvement and intervention with some of the individuals involved, it became apparent that there were significant concerns around the welfare of some of these young people in the context of them being exploited, or there being significant potential for this given their vulnerabilities. Following a 'peer mapping' exercise completed by the Engage Team and the sharing of information with Police colleagues, this contributed to a large-scale Police operation. Through this, a number of adults, regarded as being key operators in the supply of drugs in the area, were arrested. The role of the services has been acknowledged by Police colleagues as being extremely significant in the success of this operation, highlighting extremely effective multi-agency working to provide better outcomes for the young people of Darwen and undoubtedly for the local community as a whole.

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/18543412.18-blackburn-darwen-charged-major-drug-operation/>

The SEND Inclusion team has continued to deliver term time and holiday offers. The team devised a programme of simultaneous 1-1 sessions that has enabled the service to offer half and full day provision throughout Easter and May holidays, which has received lots of very positive feedback from parents during this period.

YPS has secured HAF (Holiday Activity Fund) funding to enable the service to expand its offer to this cohort and will offer an all-day 1-1 offer for the 5-19 years cohort for the full 6 weeks holiday term. All YP will receive the offer of a meal too.

If guidance allows YPS will look to offer as many places as is possible whilst remaining within guidance.

YPS have also secured HAF funding to allow it to deliver a TYS specific summer offer. The Targeted Youth Support team will offer 30 places per day for 4 hours a day for 4 weeks, increasing it's targeted offer significantly. Young people will be taken on a range of activities and will all receive a meal each.

YPS has continued to deliver vehicle only detached youth work throughout the Covid period and now that government guidance allows for more interaction outside has launched a 7-day detached youth work offer commencing on June 15th 2020. Offering 3 hours per session, the detached team will pass on key public health messages as well as signposting YP to help and support, challenging them around behaviour and informing them of new opportunities as the service awaits opening of Youth Centres to begin to offer group work and activities again.

PERMANENCE SERVICES

Looked after children, care leavers and children with disabilities were all RAG rated at the start of Covid to ensure that the most vulnerable were identified and provided with the highest levels of support. The most vulnerable have continued to receive direct visits and all children have enjoyed enhanced virtual and telephone contact by social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and the Virtual School. The additional support has helped to sustain placements that might otherwise have disrupted and feedback from children and carers is that they have felt well supported. Some children who struggled to manage virtual contact at the beginning have become much more confident with it and some have indicated that they prefer it to direct contact. Overall, children in care and care leavers have coped much better with lockdown than anticipated and placement stability has been good.

Foster carers have been provided with some additional financial support and with Pupil Premium money to help them to purchase appropriate resources to help with home schooling and again feedback is that the extra help has been appreciated and they feel that the additional pressure of home schooling and managing children at home 24/7 has been acknowledged. Most children are once again having appropriate direct contact with their birth families which they missed during lockdown. The Revive Service continued to offer virtual support around emotional health and well being and although some children have really struggled with this during lockdown, with support they have got through it and more of them are now attending school and getting back to some sense of normality.

Children with disabilities have been particularly vulnerable during lockdown, particularly those with significant health needs. Children were RAG rated and the CwD team worked with the CCG to ensure that packages of care and support remained in place wherever possible. Some care providers offered practical support such as shopping, fetching medication etc where families have been shielding or self isolating. Appletrees have

focussed the short breaks offer for children with autism without additional health needs to ensure that those vulnerable to entering care were helped to maintain their place in the family. This support has been successful and no new children with disabilities have come into care.