

From: **Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education**

Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

To: **Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 7 September 2017**

Subject: **Annual Equality and Diversity Report for Children, Young People and Education 2016-17**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **None**

Future Pathway of Paper: **Informs KCC Annual Equality and Diversity Report 2016-17. To be considered by the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – Autumn 2017**

Electoral Division: **All Divisions**

Summary: This report provides a position statement for services within the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate regarding equality and diversity work and provides an update on progress in delivering Kent County Council's (KCC's) Equality Objectives for 2016-17. The Council is required to publish this information on an annual basis in order to comply with its statutory Equality Act duties.

Recommendations:

The **Children's, Young People and Education** Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i) note the current performance of the CYPE directorate in relation to education equality priorities as well as the performance of Specialist Children's Services (SCS) within the body of this report;
- ii) note the progress CYPE has made in reducing inequalities in 2016-17 and the future key actions by education proposed in Appendix 1 and consider SCS's key priorities for future development within this cover report; and
- iii) agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

1. Introduction

1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides the framework for public bodies in England to promote equality and eliminate discrimination. KCC must also adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as detailed in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the Council to promote equality, undertake equality analysis to inform all policy decisions and to publish equality information. The three aims of the equality duty are:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

1.2 As part of its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, KCC must publish an Equality Annual Report to demonstrate compliance with the general PSED. Proactive publication of equality information ensures compliance with the legal requirements.

1.3 Compliance with the Council's equality duties should also result in:

- Better informed decision-making and policy development;
- A clearer understanding of the needs of service users, resulting in better quality services;
- More effective targeting of resources to address greatest need;
- Greater confidence in, and satisfaction with, the Council;
- A more effective workforce and a reduction in instances of discrimination.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the Annual Equality and Diversity Report. However, gathering equality information and using it to inform decision-making enables KCC to achieve greater value for money in services delivered, through more effective targeting of resources to address need.

3. KCC's Strategic Statement and Policy Framework

3.1 Advancing equality and reducing socio-economic inequalities in Kent contributes towards the achievement of 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' – KCC's Strategic Statement 2015-2020, the Medium Term Financial Plan 2017-20 and CYPE's Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20. KCC's Equality Objectives were developed from the Council's three key strategic outcomes. The objectives correspond with existing Council priority outcomes to ensure: children and young people in Kent get the best start in life; Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life; and older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.

3.2 The Children, Young People and Education Services' 'Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-20' document is the key strategic plan for these services in Kent. The development of this plan and its priorities follow annual discussions with Headteachers, governors and other public sector partners to determine where Kent learning institutions need to be in relation to improving education and learning outcomes. The Plan sets out shared ambitions and includes a range of ambitious priority improvements up to 2020. These ambitions and strategic priorities for CYPE's Services are based on a rigorous analysis of current performance and challenging expectations for future improvements. The Plan provides all concerned with education and early help and preventative services in Kent, a clear sense of what services are for, the challenges faced and the priorities and targets for transformation and improvement both within the Council and amongst our schools, and other settings, as well as KCC services.

3.3 KCC published its equality objectives for 2016-2020 in December 2016. Each Directorate

was asked to provide equality information and to demonstrate how they complied with equality legislation between 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, and what performance measures they have in place to achieve the KCC Equality Objectives. Appendix 1 to this report details the actions in the last year that the CYPE Directorate has undertaken and actions that will be taken in the future, in order to narrow the inequality gaps and promote equality of opportunity to address the diverse needs of all Kent's children and young people.

4. Education Equalities Priorities for 2016-17

4.1 CYPE's Directorate Management Team considered the Council's overarching equalities objectives in May 2016 and agreed the following key Directorate equalities objectives and progress made against each Equalities Priority:

4.1.1 Narrow the achievement gaps for all groups, including FSM pupils, learners with SEND, and Children in Care:

While there is very positive year on year improvement in pupil outcomes in Kent, so that for example in 2016 standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and all Key Stages were above the national averages, our biggest challenge is to achieve more progress in narrowing achievement gaps, especially for those supported by the Pupil Premium.

Many aspects of education in Kent continue to improve, including more good and outstanding schools and better standards of achievement at the end of Primary education and at GCSE. The system as a whole has moved on significantly but some groups of children and young people are still being left behind, and these are our biggest challenges. Our achievement gaps for Pupil Premium pupils, Children in Care and learners with Special Educational Needs are still too wide and their outcomes are not good enough. Going forward it is a key priority for us to raise attainment at all key stages and narrow achievement gaps, particularly for vulnerable learners.

These gaps are proving hard to close. Gaps in Kent are wider than the national gaps at every stage of education and, following the national trend, they become greater as children get older. This means that too few pupils are helped successfully to catch up, and even where Free School Meals (FSM) pupils achieve the expected standard at an early Key Stage too many fall behind and do not achieve the expected standard at the next Key Stage.

The Government's new term for narrowing the achievement gap is Diminishing the Difference. We have produced two toolkits, for Primary and Secondary Schools, that bring together some of the most effective approaches to Diminishing the Difference. These were shared at a Pupil Premium conference held by the Authority and attended by 200 schools at the beginning of February 2017. In addition, a summary of good practice was shared with all schools.

In order to make more progress we aim to support more schools to undertake Pupil Premium Reviews, recommended by the DFE for schools that need to make more effective use of the funding.

4.1.2 Increase post 16 – 25 participation and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable groups:

In the last year we reduced the number of NEETs in Kent to under 5% for the second year running (rolling three month average for November, December and January) January 2016 – 5.0%, January 2015 - 4.7% and January 2014 - 5.8%. The Target was 3.5% NEETs for January 2016. In January 2017 the NEET percentage was 3.0%. Our NEET figures are still too high and too many 16-18 years are either not participating in education or training or they do not have the right options, support and provision to ensure they achieve success. Too many 16-18 year olds and some older students with learning difficulties and disabilities do not have the right

educational provision available for them in their locality, including the support they need to access training and employment.

By 2017, we aim to ensure there will be no more than 2.5% of young people aged 16-17 (years 12 and 13 age group) who are NEET and there will be full participation in education and work based training for this age group with year on year reductions in the NEET figures to no more than 1% by 2020.

The employability skills of 19 year olds will also have improved, especially in English and Mathematics, so that Level 2 attainment at age 19 is well above the national average. By 2017 we expect this to be 90% and 95% of the cohort will achieve a Level 2 qualification by 2020.

We aim to improve the outcomes at Level 3 for 19 year olds to 65% by 2017 and to at least 75% by 2020. The Level 3 achievement gap for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is a priority for improvement. We aim to ensure this will be better than the national average and the gap between this group and other students will have reduced to 18% by 2017 and to 14% by 2020.

4.1.3 Ensure more vulnerable young people are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship.

In the last year we improved employment or progression for vulnerable learners, through a range of projects managed by the Skills and Employability Service. Professional sponsored support for 32 young people to undertake Assisted Apprenticeships, in preparation for full Apprenticeships; and 28 SEND young people placed onto the pilot Supported Internship Programme. 40 places are available for vulnerable learners looking at moving into Assisted Apprenticeships, with a greater onus on the employer financially supporting the learner with professional support from the Skills and Employability Service.

Going forward it is a priority to reduce the number of NEETs by ensuring increased provision for all vulnerable young people so that they have progression pathways and are engaged in learning or training until aged 18, with a good outcome that leads to employment, including apprenticeships and technical options to age 24. We intend to increase the number of young people on employability and pre-apprenticeship pathways; promote improving standards in sixth forms through the development and extension of successful KS4 strategies and improved GCSE results in English and mathematics; and significantly increase the number of young people gaining level 2 English and mathematics qualifications by age 19.

4.1.4 Increase access to early years for the most vulnerable including the two-year old offer of free provision for the most disadvantaged.

In the last year we delivered the 'Free for Two' scheme in Kent with take up having increased to a maximum 70% in December 2016, as part of the Government's policy for Free Early Education places for disadvantaged two year olds. Work will continue to promote and support take up by eligible children and families. We established a project to ensure the delivery of the Government's policy of 30 Hours of Free Childcare for the three and four year old children of eligible parents, with effect from September 2017. Going forward we will ensure all children get the best start in the early years by ensuring improved Ofsted and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outcomes, increasing the take-up of free early education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and ensuring there are sufficient high quality early education and childcare places.

4.1.5 Drive down exclusions from schools to zero.

In the last year we developed support to manage challenging behaviour in Primary schools and reduce rates of exclusion. We have put in place better quality assurance and monitoring systems to ensure that the eight Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) Primary school hubs deliver the support that meets local needs and results in a reduction in permanent exclusions. In February 2016, we piloted a single digital point of access for inclusion and attendance providing information about prevention and statutory support. We have had particular success in reducing permanent Primary school exclusions by 38% (47 in 2014-15 to 16 in 2015-16).

The latest exclusion data for Kent indicates that the number of exclusions reduced significantly in the 2015-16 academic year. Countywide, the number of permanent exclusions has been significantly reduced from 105 to 66 compared to the same period in 2015, with 727 fewer fixed-term exclusions, reducing from 10,723 to 9,996. This reflects good practice in many schools, supported by LA services, in identifying and providing appropriate help for vulnerable pupils with challenging behaviour and other learning needs.

In order to disseminate the good practice and effective processes that have been adopted by many schools in Kent, we have produced the first Kent Exclusion Guidance for Schools and Governors. The document summarises the statutory requirements while promoting effective and preventative approaches that Kent schools and LA services have developed in the past year. The procedural sections reflect many good practices and new ways of working, which the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) has worked with schools to develop.

The work of the Pupil Referral Units and other Alternative Provision has also played a key role in working with schools to identify alternatives to exclusions, providing appropriate support for children with challenging behaviours.

4.1.6 Increase the proportion of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium attending selective education:

In the last year KCC undertook a Select Committee Inquiry into Grammar Schools and Social Mobility (report published in June 2016) in order to improve the representation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds in grammar schools, if suitable for their abilities. The report made a number of recommendations which were agreed by County Council and progress in implementing these recommendations is being monitored. Many of the recommendations were cited by the Government in bringing forward their selective schools' proposals contained within the DFE consultation document 'Schools that Work for Everyone', that have now been withdrawn. All Grammar and Primary schools received a copy of the Select Committee report and were encouraged to implement the recommendations. Sound progress in the nine months since the publication of the report has been made and more will be made in the forthcoming year.

In terms of increasing fair access to Grammar schools, a significant proportion (more than 50%) of Grammars in the County have now introduced some form of prioritisation within their admission arrangements for disadvantaged pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium. The Local Authority has drafted a letter which will be sent to the remaining Grammars early in the autumn term, encouraging the remaining schools to follow suit.

4.1.7 Where appropriate, fewer young people become young offenders.

Youth Justice is now embedded across the work of the Early Help and Preventative Services. The central Youth Justice service focuses on court disposals, and the Early Help Units focus on out of court disposals. The annual statutory Youth Justice Plan for the county outlines the key

priorities and performance targets for the year. Three national indicators are included, focusing on reducing first time entrants to the Criminal Justice system, reducing custodial sentences and reducing re-offending, particularly the disproportionate number of Children in Care, by increased co-ordination of decision making between multi-agency services.

In the last year, there has been more effective working of the Youth Justice Board, to ensure all agencies contribute to the reduction in youth offending, and re-offending, and young people are helped towards positive destinations through education and training.

In 2015-16 the number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice system fell to 426, which meant that the target of 615 was exceeded. This compares with 614 in 2014-15 and 709 in 2013-14. By 2020, we aim to reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system from no more than 350 young people in 2017 to 290, and the rate of re-offending will be no more than 25%.

4.1.8 Ensure more Children in Care are able to access progression pathways post 16, including the offer of an apprenticeship where appropriate, and fewer CiC become young offenders.

Early Help and Preventative Services are committed to keeping Children in Care out of the Criminal Justice system wherever this is possible. From April 2016 a new process has been implemented between Early Help and Kent Police, which means that any complex cases are discussed at a multi-agency panel. These cases include all Children in Care as well as cases where there is gang involvement or other issues of concern. The aim is to ensure a well informed decision is made which delivers the most appropriate outcome and support to both the victim and the offender.

In delivering the NEETs Strategy we expect to see a significant reduction in NEET numbers for Children in Care, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, young offenders, pupils attending PRUs and alternative provision and other vulnerable groups such as young carers and those who are home educated.

Progress has been made in expanding local learning and skills opportunities in all districts available on the Ready to Work website for young people looking to re-engage in learning, who are NEET, and looking for apprenticeships or employment with training. These programmes offer alternative pathways and have facilitated young people's access to over 63 training providers and colleges.

A priority for the year ahead is to target support for vulnerable young people, including Children in Care to achieve and gain employment by following either an academic or technical pathway post 16.

4.1.9 Safeguard all children and young people from harm.

The Education Safeguarding Team (EST) provides support, guidance and challenge to schools and early years settings and services within the Directorate to ensure that children are kept safe and their welfare is promoted, as required by Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Education Safeguarding Team provides a consultation service to schools and settings, with over 4000 enquiries during the 2015-16 school year. These have been on a variety of subjects, including online safety, policy and procedure alongside welfare concerns about specific children. A training programme for Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and settings is rolled out centrally each year which meets both DfE and Ofsted requirements and exceeds what Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) or Working Together to Safeguard Children 2016

advocates. Training days and twilight sessions are also delivered in schools and settings and there is a programme of training delivered to school governors. In the 2015-16 school year, over 7000 individuals were trained according to their roles and responsibilities.

Commissioned work has been steadily increasing over the past year with reviews of safeguarding arrangements in schools, based on Ofsted's 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings' (updated August 2016). This is proving to be particularly popular with both the maintained and independent sectors.

4.2 Specialist Children's Services Equalities Priorities

4.2.1 The core function of Specialist Children's Services (SCS) is to ensure children and young people living in Kent are safeguarded, regardless of their protected characteristics. These include ensuring that they grow in a healthy environment, where their health, growth and welfare are enhanced.

4.2.2 This aim is achieved by working with other directorates and agencies, including Education, Health, Adult Social Care and other protective services.

4.2.3 SCS work with children and families from all backgrounds, providing assessment to identify children's needs, providing appropriate and culturally sensitive support where those needs are identified and protection of those children who are at risk of significant harm as stipulated by the Children Act (1989).

4.2.4 Equality and Diversity work in SCS is facilitated within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit. The focus is to support and enhance the knowledge and skills of social workers around equality and discrimination issues that may arise in their practice within SCS.

4.2.5 The Directorate Business Plan for SCS for 2017-18 provides an overview of the four equalities priorities for Social Care:

- Priority 1 – Safeguarding children and young people and vulnerable adults from harm
- Priority 2 – Improved life chances and outcomes of children and young people and vulnerable adults through service developments and transformation
- Priority 3 – The quality and range of services are improved through increasing engagement with service users and carers
- Priority 4 – The number of BME children and young people and their families in the mental health system is reduced.

4.3 Management Information Unit – SCS Data

4.3.1 SCS continually works to improve the quality, collection and monitoring and use of equality data as part of the evidence base to inform service design delivery and policy decisions.

4.3.2 As at 31 March 2017 the total number of children and young people accessing SCS is 9740. The figures are broken down by various categories, namely Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC), Looked After Children (LAC), Child Protection/Child in Need (CP/CiN) and Care Leavers.

4.3.3 Children and young people supported categorised by gender as at 31 March 2017

Gender as at 31.03.2017	UASC*	CIC (exc UASC)	CP/CIN (exc UASC and Care Leavers)**	Care Leavers (exc UASC)
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Male	1141	787	3443	332
Female	81	625	2966	296
Indeterminate	-	-	3	-
Total	1222	1412	6412	628

4.3.4 Children and young people supported categorised by sexuality or gender orientation as of 31 of March 2017

Sexual Orientation as at 31.03.2017	UASC*	CIC (exc UASC)	CP/CIN (exc UASC and Care Leavers)**	Care Leavers (exc UASC)
Bisexual	1	-	-	3
Gay/Lesbian	3	-	-	4
Heterosexual	180	7	3	252
Not Recorded	876	1390	6397	325
Rather Not Say	1	-	1	5
Transexual	-	-	-	1
Unknown	161	15	11	38
Total	1222	1412	6412	628

4.3.5 Children and young people supported categorised by Ethnicity as of 31 March 2017

Ethnicity as at 31.03.2017	UASC*	CIC (exc UASC)	CP/CIN (exc UASC and Care Leavers)**	Care Leavers (exc UASC)
White British	-	1225	5248	549
White Other	29	72	371	28
Mixed	7	85	320	31
Asian	74	10	122	3
BCiCk and Minority Ethnic Group	519	15	165	14
Any other ethnic group	593	5	58	3
Refused	-	-	2	-
Information not yet obtained	-	-	95	-
Not Recorded	-	-	31	-
Total	1222	1412	6412	628

*UASC figures taken from caseload report and will therefore include CIC and Care Leavers

**This includes all cases from caseload report excluding those CIC and Care Leavers. This means if they were both CP and CIC they have not been included

5. Key Education Achievements 2016-17

5.1 A full report of what has been achieved in terms of reducing inequalities within Children,

Young People and Education Services over 2016-17 can be seen in Appendix 1 to this report. Detailed below are some highlights:

5.2 The Quality of Education in Kent Schools

5.2.1 We continue to make progress in increasing the number of good and outstanding schools in Kent, following inspection by Ofsted. As at the end of 2016, 90% of schools were good and outstanding compared to 82% at the end 2015 and 75% in the previous year. In 2011-2012 only 60% of schools were judged good or better; the national average was then 70%. The national average for good and outstanding schools is now 88%.

5.2.2 In Kent this overall figure of 90% includes 85.4% of Secondary schools, 91% of Primary schools, 100% of Special schools and 86% of PRUs in Kent, judged to be good or outstanding. Also, 97% of Early Years settings are good or outstanding.

5.2.3 Currently, 88% of pupils attend a good or outstanding school. This includes 88.5% of Primary pupils, 86.5% of Secondary pupils, 100% of pupils attending Special schools and 98.2% of pupils attending a PRU. This equates to 10,300 more children and young people receiving a better education compared with last year. In 2015, 83% of pupils in Kent attended a good or outstanding school.

5.3 Apprenticeships

5.3.1 Kent continues to perform well in increasing apprenticeships; in 2015-16 numbers were significantly higher for 16 to 18 year olds at 3020. Performance is better than our statistical neighbours. There has been a significant campaign by all Kent apprenticeship providers to increase the number of 16 to 18 year old apprentices and the latest trend in the data suggests that the final out turn will be well above last year's figures.

5.3.2 In 2015-16, the new Kent Employment Programme exceeded the target of 100 by placing 129 young people aged 16-24 who were unemployed for more than three months into apprenticeships. The final outturn for the Kent Employment programme for the last four years now stands at 1031 young people taking up apprenticeships.

5.3.3 In the past year the percentage of schools offering apprenticeships was 51%, which exceeded the target of 50%. Currently, 306 schools are employing apprentices with 453 starts to date. This work continues to engage more schools with a target to increase the number of higher and advanced apprenticeships.

5.3.4 The NEET figure for 2016 was 5.0% which was a slight increase on the January 2015 figure (4.7%) and above our target for 2016 of 3.5%. A new NEET Strategy is now in place which will help bring the NEET figure down. The target we are working towards in 2017 is 2.5%. In January 2017 the NEET figure was 3%.

5.3.5 Since last year youth unemployment for 18 to 24 year olds has risen to 2.7%, which is slightly below the national average of 2.8% and accounting for 22.4% of all unemployed people in the area and above the national average of 21.6%. In August 2015 unemployment for this age group was 2.3%, compared to 3.35% in 2014. The five youth unemployment zones are registering the following percentages of young people unemployed in 2016, with data for August 2015 in brackets: Dover 3.4% (3.7%), Gravesham 3.4% (3.7%), Shepway 3.4% (3.4%), Swale 4.5% (3.8%) and Thanet 5.2% (5.6%). Thanet has the highest unemployment rate in the South East. The comparable figures for 2014 were Dover (4.8%), Gravesham (4.3%), Shepway (5.1%), Swale (5.2%) and Thanet at (7.8%).

5.3.6 The number of assisted employment opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities fell short of its target of 125 at 94.

5.4 Exclusions

5.4.1 The latest exclusion data for Kent indicates that the number of exclusions reduced significantly in the 2015/16 academic year. Countywide, the number of permanent exclusions has been significantly reduced from 105 to 66 compared to the same period last year, with 727 fewer fixed-term exclusions, reducing from 10,723 to 9,996. This reflects good practice in many schools, supported by LA services, in identifying and providing appropriate help for vulnerable pupils with challenging behaviour and other learning needs.

5.4.2 In 2015-16, 96% of pupils left Pupil Referral Units with at least 1 A*-G GCSE pass or equivalent. 65% achieved at least 1 or more A*-C GCSE passes or equivalent. 10% of the students achieved 5 or more A*-G GCSE qualifications or equivalent and 8% achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSE qualifications or equivalent, including A*-C in GCSE English and Maths.

5.5 School Attendance

5.5.1 School absence rates overall are now just in line with the national averages.. Overall the percentage of total absences in Kent was 4.6% compared to 4.6% nationally. For Secondary schools the figures were 5.5% compared to 5.3% nationally, and for Primary the percentage was 4.0% compared to 4.0% nationally.

5.5.2 However persistent absence rates in Kent are higher than the national average. The percentage of pupils who have missed 38 or more sessions (15% persistent absence) was 4.4% in Kent compared to 3.7% nationally. For Secondary schools this figure is 6.5% compared to 5.4% nationally and for Primary schools it is 2.5% compared to 2.1% nationally. The previous persistent absence figure for 2013-14 for Secondary schools was 6.2%, and for Primary schools it was 2.3%. The latest data shows an increase in persistent absence for Secondary schools up to 6.5%, and an increase to 2.5% for Primary schools. These figures continue to be worse than the national figures, which mean they are an even greater priority for improvement. For the new threshold of 10% for persistent absence from school, the figures for Kent are 9.3%, compared to 8.8 nationally for Primary pupils, and 13.2% compared to 12.3% nationally for Secondary pupils.

5.6 Education Health and Care Plans

5.6.1 DfE published data showed that Kent is performing well compared to other LAs nationally, issuing 86.2% of new EHCPs issued within 20 weeks, compared to 59.2% nationally and transferring 30.3% of all existing statements to EHCPs, compared to 18.2% nationally. The volume of transfers and maintaining this pace is an issue for all local authorities.

5.6.2 The volume of psychological statutory advice completed in 2015-2016 increased by 16% (an increase from 904 in 2014-2015 to 1046 pieces of statutory work), with completion within required timeframes reducing from 98% in 2014-2015 to 91% in the past year. This rising demand for statutory assessment is a concern at a time when we have invested in significant additional high needs funding which delivers resources to schools without the need for a statutory assessment. As a result the number of pupils supported by high needs funding has increased substantially.

5.7 Early Help

5.7.1 In Early Help and Preventative Services support is being provided in a more timely way to 6,300 children and young people, and their families, who have an Early Help Plan. 83.4% of cases are now closed with a positive outcome for children and the family, compared to 69% last

year. 22.7% of the cases closed by Specialist Children's Services were stepped down to Early Help for on-going support, which is a marginal improvement on last year. Around 6% of cases closed to Early Help are stepped up to Social Care because children's needs and the risks to them have increased.

6. Specialist Children's Services Achievements and Activities 2016-17

This section sets out the key achievements in relation to equality and diversity and demonstrates how the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is being implemented.

6.1 Young People

6.1.1 Age is one of the protected characteristics. Evidence suggests that most vulnerable children, particularly those in care including UASC are not often involved or consulted in how they are supported or cared for by adults or professionals in their lives. SCS employs and embeds a child centred approach which ensures that children and young people are at the core of the services that we offer. Children from minority communities, including disabled children have been consulted and included in most of our activities.

6.1.2 Young people have been recruited and trained through the Recruit Crew programme to work alongside HR and managers as active members of recruitment panels. The Recruit Crew programme provides accredited training where young people are trained in recruitment and selection procedures as potential interview panel members. 15 young people have been trained to date including six UASC. They have been involved in 50 recruitment selection processes so far.

6.1.3 The 'Take Over Challenge Day' organised by the Young Adult Council (YAC) members and Apprentices witnessed young people who took over the Lead Member's role. As part of feedback the former Lead Member for Specialist Children's Services, Peter Oakford said that it was very refreshing to sit in a group of young people asking questions about his job. Young people also felt a sense of reassurance that Kent as a county cares about their lives and their future as active citizens of their communities.

6.1.4 The Mind of My own (MOMO) app which enables young people to give effective feedback on the services provided to them and which was piloted last year, has been recommissioned for two years by the Directorate. The MOMO Express App specifically designed for our children and young people with learning disabilities will also be rolled out in 2017. The early review on its use by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service on its suitability has been very positive and has highlighted that the apps captured all relevant areas of the children and young people's review forms.

6.2 Fostering and Adoption Services, Child in Care, Disabled Children Services and Leaving Care

6.2.1 Kent corporate parenting service recently launched the 'Open Your Heart' Campaign with the aim of recruiting 200 foster carers for Kent's children. This is open to all members of the Kent community who are ready to provide a safe and loving home for our looked after children. Fostering information events are organised throughout Kent which prospective carers can attend. In recent events, prospective applicants have been provided with information on how to become a foster carer in Kent, they had opportunities of meeting with current foster carers and professionals who shared their experiences of working with or being a foster carer. These events have so far attracted a good number of potential applicants from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) and other protected groups.

6.2.2 The new Lifespan Pathway within the Disabled Children, Adult Learning Disability and Mental Health (DCALDMH) Division went live from 1 April 2017, this will ensure children, young people and adults with a disability have better transition at all stages, help young people achieve their ambitions and improve their outcomes.

6.2.3 The new Pathway Plans - Assessment and Plan - have been made into Easy Read versions by the Young People's Team to help communicate effectively with young people / young adults with additional and complex needs. There was extensive consultation with young people in the development of the Pathway Plans, and some staff from the Disabled Children's Service tested them out for disabled young people, leading to modifications to the final versions.

6.2.4 With regard to involving service users, there was consultation carried out in 2015 with families of young people to gauge their views on the creation of transition teams, and more recently four events were held in February 2017 for young people and their families/carers that would be in the Young People's Team (YPT). Kent Pathways, Kent Supported Employment, The Independent Living Service and Adult Short Breaks as well as social workers, occupational therapists and health staff from the teams were available at the events to provide information and deal with any queries. Over 350 people attended the events over the three day period and gave very positive feedback about the changes which are planned.

6.2.5 The Short Break Service continues to support children and young people who access their services in a person centred way, ensuring those with specific physical and learning needs are appropriately supported.

6.2.6 An Equality and Disability workshop with staff at Windchimes Short Break Centre was held in March 2017, this was facilitated by the Practice Development Team in corporation with the Corporate Equality Lead. Twenty five support workers attended the workshop and were trained around the equality legislations as it relates to children with disabilities, safeguarding and unconscious bias which may often occur while planning and delivering support services for people with disabilities.

6.2.7 Children in Care (CiC) and the Virtual School Kent (VSK) continue to provide support to LAC. During this reporting period, (2016-2017) a large number of our 16+ cohort remained in education, training or employment, compared to the 2015/16 reporting period. The UASC population also registered improved outcomes in their educational achievements. The factors responsible for these positive outcomes include the robust scrutiny of their personal educational plans (PEP), focused support from skilled personal advisors and VSK tutors as well as the significant input of the IRO service.

6.2.8 The introduction of the National Transfer Scheme has seen a decrease in our UASC population in Kent. The UASC Service has also been restructured in order that more time and resources are targeted at those who remain living in Kent. The service reported good improvements in the outcomes of the UASC cohort, providing quality care and meeting their identified needs. Where language needs were identified, easy access and quality support were provided by the commissioned interpreting services which continue to improve.

6.3 Independent Review Officers (IRO) and Child Protection Conference (CPC) services

6.3.1 The IRO service continues to make progress in ensuring consultative processes are fully accessible to disabled children and those children in care who are non-English speakers, including UASC. Young people continue to be provided with IRO contact cards, which remain a useful resource. The Young Adult Council (YAC) and the IRO services have produced a short film where young people are sharing their experiences of being in care (*It About You – You're*

(re)View Matters). The aim is to encourage other young people particularly those from minority backgrounds to become more involved in their individual care.

6.3.2 The Child Protection (CP) Service has continuously engaged young people to ensure that they become involved in CP conferences and core group meetings. The service recently introduced a young people only conference. This is a unique and innovative way of running CP conferences where young people lead on the preparation and convening of the conference. They are given the autonomy by CP chairs to select or advise on professionals and family members they want to attend. They can also chair with support of the allocated CP chair and guide the agenda according to the wishes of the young person. The feedback from young people has been reassuring as those being involved in the pilot phase shared that their voices were heard and their views were included as part of their care plans.

6.4 Training and Development

6.4.1 With the growing migrant population in Kent, particularly due to the movement of Immigrant families from the London Boroughs and other European families from mainland Europe, social workers are now dealing with more complex child protection issues than ever before. Some of these include issues around Families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), (UASC), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child care related matters involving families and their authorities living abroad.

6.4.2 As a result social workers have been provided with specific guidance and procedures to fully equip them with the required information to enable them to exercise their duties effectively when dealing with children and their families under these circumstances.

6.4.3 The Practice Development Officers (PDO) have additionally carried out a series of training events over the past year in which social workers have been trained and supported at district and service levels. Specific policy and guidance briefings were organised with CP Chairs, IROs front line social workers on working with Foreign Authorities, UASC, NRPF, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Private Fostering and section 20 of the Children Act (1989).

6.4.4 In November, 2016, the Safeguarding Unit in collaboration with the Training and Development Team organised an Equality and Diversity development day. This programme attracted over 90 Social Workers and allied professionals working with children and their families. The aim of the day was to raise awareness on Human Rights and Equality issues that might arise in their daily work as social workers across Kent. The featured workshops deliberated and made recommendations on how to safeguard and improve outcomes for children, in the following areas: Asylum and Immigration, Male victims of Domestic Abuse, Modern Day Slavery, PREVENT and Radicalisation, Race and Ethnicity, Religion, Sexuality and Mental Health.

6.4.5 A similar activity is planned for this year, with series of workshops organised prior to the main event as recommended by participants of the last event.

6.5 Policy and Practice development

6.5.1 Where gaps were identified, key policies were developed during the reviewing period to ensure that our practices and procedures are in line with the Equality Act 2010.

6.5.2 The UASC policy was updated to include recent Home Office guidance on UASC dispersal and the National Transfer Mechanism scheme rolled out in July 2016. This has helped to decrease the UASC population as well as ensuring the needs of those who are currently in our care are being met.

6.5.3 The No Recourse to Public Funds Policy has been reviewed and updated. Links with the NPRF network, the Home Office and the counter fraud department have been strengthened. This has given social workers good knowledge and confidence in carrying out their duties in a fair and judicious manner. The procedures also developed and agreed by the Directorate continue to ensure social workers are appropriately assessing families and providing services where required and at the same time saving much needed resources by identifying areas of fraud and potential misuse of services.

6.5.4 A new transgender policy and guidance has been developed to comply with the PSED while also providing much clarity for social workers when dealing with and supporting children, young and their families who may be going through a gender transition. SCS is part of the KCC transgender working group and have recently been involved in the rollout of the new web-based transgender training module.

6.5.5 A new pathway plan has now been rolled out and current training on how to engage young people in developing their individual plans are being organised by the safeguarding Practice Development Team and the Corporate Parenting Service. An easy read version has also been created in collaboration with the Young People's team (Children and Young People Disability team) to ensure young people with learning disabilities can fully understand and are able to contribute to their plans.

6.5.6 Young people's feedback so far has been positive as they found the document more friendly and easy to navigate.

7. Specialist Children's Services' Key Priorities for Future Development

7.1 The priorities set out below are based on the challenges being identified as we move forward with this work in Specialist Children's Services. These are also underpinned by the need to ensure that best practice is achieved while working with children and families, particularly those with protected characteristics.

- Continue to build the knowledge base of staff by ensuring that all staff undertake equality and diversity awareness training. This should be promoted to new staff as part of the induction process, while also raising awareness to existing staff, encouraging use of the appropriate resources through the e-learning portal, including specific workshops on Prevent, Transgender, Intercultural Competence and Gang culture.
- Continue to ensure the voice of children from minority communities is captured, particularly taking into account their identity and cultural needs to inform, care planning and provision.
- Continue to ensure that data relating to all protected characteristics is collected and fully analysed. Customer feedback and complaints system is focused on not only capturing the data, but to work with information intelligence and the individual services areas to carry out an annual review categorised by the equality strands, and develop actions for improvement.
- Collect evidence on the profile of Kent's emerging migrant communities, the extent of inequality and disadvantage within their communities and to identify priorities across the county.

8. Governance

8.1 As part of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a statutory duty to show due regard to equality issues arising from any important decisions it makes relating to its policies, procedures and budget. The Council discharges this duty through a process of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). These assessments capture evidence about the impact of LA decisions and policies on

the people of Kent.

8.2 To ensure that managers discharge their equalities obligations, KCC has ensured a system of internal controls, based around EqIAs. Accordingly, in 2012 governance arrangements were agreed by the Council to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) following an internal audit. Governance is now based on decisions having an EqIA at both Directorate Management Team and Member levels. If decisions about service changes and provision are taken without full equality analysis, the local authority is open to potential Judicial Review.

9. Future reporting

9.1 KCC has revised and consulted upon its Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives for 2016-2020. The new equality objectives, were agreed in December 2016, and are embedded in the achievement of the key strategic outcomes of the Council and their achievement monitored through the Council's performance framework.

9.2 Outcomes will be monitored through core performance management frameworks which will result in greater efficiency and accountability in relation to the delivery and achievement of outcomes by services for customers. Performance monitoring is to be reported to the relevant Committees and this will meet the statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 There is no requirement to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment because this paper reports performance monitoring on the previous year's work and internal governance arrangements.

11. Conclusion

11.1 This CYPE Annual Equalities Report 2016-17 sets out progress on the relevant equality objectives. The Directorate can demonstrate that it provides accessible and usable services but it needs to continue to improve outcomes and narrow achievement gaps, as well as ensure the children, young people and families with multiple disadvantages receive the services and support they need to learn, develop and thrive.

Recommendations:

The **Children's, Young People and Education** Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i) note the current performance of the CYPE directorate in relation to education equality priorities as well as the performance of Specialist Children's Services (SCS) within the body of this report;
- ii) note the progress CYPE has made in reducing inequalities in 2016-17 and the future key actions by education proposed in Appendix 1 and consider SCS's key priorities for future development within this cover report; and
- iii) agree to receive this report annually in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

12. Background Documents

12.1 Kent County Council Equality Objectives 2016-2020:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-objectives>

13. Contact details

Report Authors:

Akua Agyepong - Corporate Lead, Equality & Diversity

03000 415762

akua.agyepong@kent.gov.uk

John Reilly – CYPE Strategic Business Adviser

03000 416949

john.reilly@kent.gov.uk

Mohamed Haji-Kella - SCS Practice Development Officer

03000 412748

Mohamed.Haji-Kella@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Corporate Directors:

Patrick Leeson

03000 416384

patrick.leeson@kent.gov.uk

Andrew Ireland

03000 416297

Andrew.ireland@kent.gov.uk