

CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN

The Resilient Communities area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Kathryn Benson (Schools and Learning)
- Councillor Amy Cross (Adult Services and Health), and
- Councillor Maria Kirkland (Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services).

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Corporate Issues

The Health of the People of Blackpool 2017

As Members are aware, our Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to write an annual report on the health of the local population. The report presents the Director of Public Health's independent assessment of local health needs, determinants and concerns. This latest report is Dr Rajpura's tenth report and presents a review and commentary around health taking in the previous decade. Three key components of the report concern:

1. A summary of health trends over the past decade

Overall, the health of our resident population has improved over the past decade. Of particular note are the improvements in early deaths from major killers such as heart disease, stroke and cancer. There is good progress too in reducing rates of smoking, one of the major lifestyle factors influencing health. New arrangements for stop smoking support are being developed to ensure that this progress continues. Early signs of progress in reducing rates of overweight and obesity amongst children are emerging also. There have also been significant reductions too in teenage pregnancy. However, increases in self-harm and drug and alcohol-misuse, especially amongst young people highlight the importance of the forthcoming Drug Prevention Strategy and of the HeadStart programme. We recognise issues around mental health and substance misuse, which is why Blackpool Fulfilling Lives exists in Blackpool to help us develop services. We must continue to focus on improving the lives of people with these challenges and we are committed to doing so.

2. A discussion on the topic of housing and health

This year's theme focuses on the impact of migration on population health, which concludes that Blackpool has a net outflow of working people in managerial and intermediate occupations, while central areas of the town see high levels of inward migration of people of less means and poorer health, which appears to be driven by an abundance of low-cost accommodation.

Members will know that the Council has long recognised the key role that poor quality housing, especially in inner Blackpool, plays in driving health and social outcomes. This is why housing intervention is so high on our agenda and why we continue to put so much emphasis into lobbying the Government to raise statutory minimum housing standards and to change the way housing benefit operates so that it actually incentivises investment in housing.

3. Child Oral Health

Oral health is a key marker of the general health of a community and contributes to general well-being. Tooth decay is still the most common dental disease that affects children. In the Public Health Outcomes Framework, one of the indicators is the proportion of five-year-old children free from dental decay. As I reported last time, oral health survey figures published in May 2018 showed an increase in the proportion of five-year-old children free from dental decay in Blackpool, up from 57.5% (2014/15) to 75.1%. This is now similar to the national average of 76.7%. Whilst this improvement is pleasing, we are not complacent and already have programmes in place to take things further.

Improvements in Educational Attainment

I am pleased to report that our young adults across Blackpool who have taken 'A' levels this year have exceeded expectations with a 99% pass rate across all courses and results have been excellent. There has been considerable success at A* and A grades and distinctions at BTEC. I am absolutely delighted to inform Members that this year double the numbers of our children in care have also achieved outstanding results.

It is pleasing that Key Stage 4 results have shown promising increases in some parts of the town, particularly at Highfield Leadership Academy, St Mary's Catholic Academy, St George's School and Blackpool Aspire Academy. At South Shore and Unity Academy, results were disappointing. However, overall results mean that there is a very reasonable chance that the number of schools in Blackpool rated as Good by Ofsted at Secondary level will increase over the next twelve months. Whilst there is clear evidence of improvement, Blackpool results are still below national average in terms of attainment and the numbers of pupils achieving a pass at grade 4 and 5. This is despite a narrowing of the gap in many areas between Blackpool's level of attainment and pass rates in relation to North West England figures and National figures. Due to the small number of Secondary schools in Blackpool, the performance of the weakest schools reduces the cumulative level of the gains that have been made by Blackpool schools overall, with the picture being one of further increases across the majority of the town, showing a three year increase in performance since 2015.

Strategic Issues

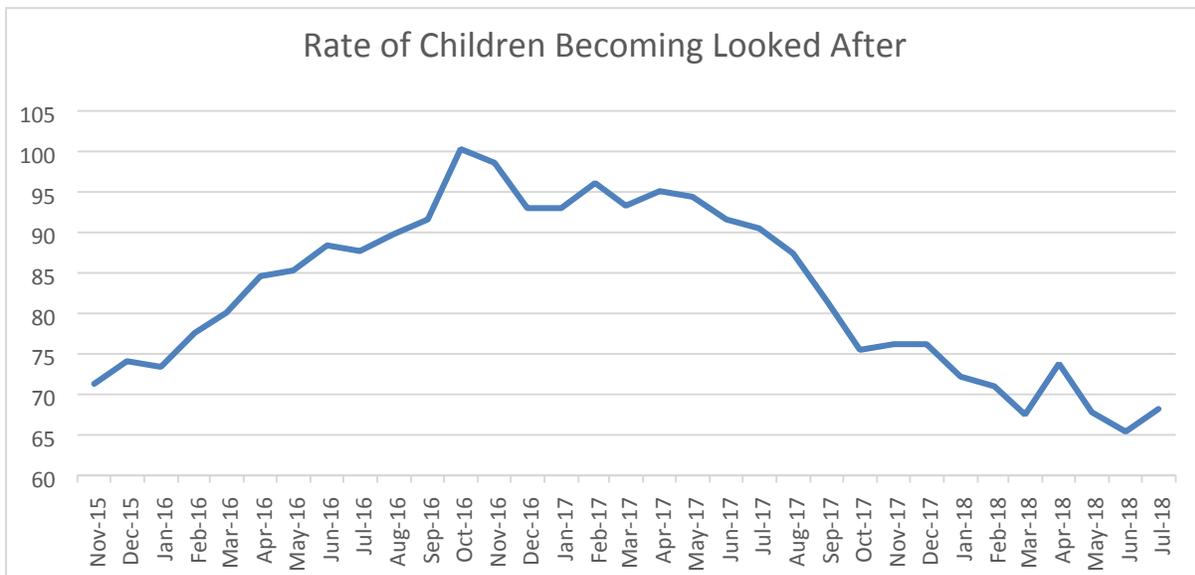
Demand management

I am pleased to report that we continue to see a decrease in the number of referrals being made to Children's Social Care (CSC) in comparison to the same quarter last year. The first quarter in 2018/ 2019 saw a total of 694 referrals compared to 717 in 2017/ 2018. However, this is higher than the last quarter. The percentage of these referrals that are repeat referrals

was also lower at 18% compared to 24% in 2017/ 2018. It is pleasing that we are seeing the conversion of referrals to assessment increase, with this quarter seeing 83% of referrals progressing to a Children’s Social Care assessment. This indicates that we can see increasing evidence of the right work being referred for statutory assessment. The number of children and young people subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced to 267 in June 2018. This is 118 children less subject to a Plan from the highest number in August 2017.

Despite real evidence of progress it is undoubtedly the case that the numbers of looked after children continues to be high in Blackpool. At the same time, I wish to emphasis to Members that numbers were significantly lower than that forecast when our journey of service change began. Indeed, based on the data from November 2015 to June 2017, the expected forecast number for August 2018 is 620. The actual figure in August was 560. Therefore, our programme of change is having a clear, positive impact.

The most significant change is in the rate of children becoming looked after in a rolling 12-month period. The rate has reduced from a peak of 100.3 in November 2016 (per 10,000 populations) to the level we previously achieved in 2015, and is now 68.5.



Our longer-term ambition is to increase the rate at which children are supported safely out of the care system, through a robust care leaver offer for those reaching independence or, for younger children either returning home or settling in to a new family support network. We have recently secured additional funding to deliver safely this ambition. As this work takes shape and care orders are discharged at court, we expect to begin to see not just a decline in the rate that looked after children numbers rise, but a slow and steady reduction in the overall cohort count overall.

I am confident we have the right approach to safely managing demand in Children’s Services. However, I fully recognise the financial strain that existing demand has on the Council’s overall

budget. As the Leader has made clear in his report, demand pressures in social care are causing havoc to local authority budgets up and down the country, sending a brace of largely Conservative upper tier authorities close to the financial cliff edge. We are not in this position. Our situation, whilst of concern, is understood and under control. The only long-term solution to social care is for the Government to stop savaging local authority budgets and commit to the proper funding of local services.

Transforming Services

Apprentice Social Worker Scheme

I am delighted to inform Members that we have successfully developed and commenced our first apprentice social worker scheme. Employers with the aim of developing standards and increasing higher-level technical and professional skilled workers have driven the scheme. Our recruitment process included interviews with the University of Central Lancashire, a service user representative and two senior staff members from Blackpool Council. Four applicants were eventually chosen and will now commence social work degree training in September 2018. The course will run for three years and involve one full day at the University of Central Lancashire during term time and the rest of the week is on the job learning. All candidates chosen come from an Adult Social care background undertaking roles such as case assessor or support worker.

This is a first for Blackpool Council and represents a life-changing event for the successful candidates. It is a fantastic chance to reward unqualified staff for their hard work for the Council by investing in their professional development.

Accreditation of the Advocacy Service

I am pleased to report the Blackpool Advocacy Hub service delivered by Empowerment have been awarded the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM) from the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). The QPM is the UK's only independent quality performance mark for organisations offering independent advocacy, an essential service for people who need support to express their needs and have increased choice and control in their lives.

To gain the QPM, independent advocacy providers have to undergo a rigorous self-assessment process and policy review. This is followed by a structured site visit for NDTi assessors to meet advocates and the people they support. The Advocacy QPM provides us with a robust benchmark to measure independent advocacy services, ensuring they select the very best providers. Gail Petty, QPM Manager and Lead for Advocacy and Rights at NDTi said, "The Advocacy Quality Performance Mark is only awarded to advocacy organisations who can demonstrate that they are providing excellent services to people often experiencing challenging situations in their lives. It indicates that they have the training and policies in place to ensure people's rights are upheld and their preferences are heard and responded to."

We are very pleased that the service commissioned 12 months ago is making good progress and able to provide a high quality service provision to the residents of Blackpool.

The New Langdale and Nibbles Café

In late summer of 2016, the New Langdale Service (which provides Nibbles and The Green Team) became aware of the development opportunity for a café within the grounds of Carleton Cemetery. There had previously been a tearoom on site, but it had been empty for some time and was very much missed by members of the public, bereaved people and funeral directors. Team members from Nibbles were included in all preliminary meetings to gather their ideas, queries and iron out any possible problems. Parent/ carers were asked for their thoughts and comments during parent/ carer forums and these were all taken into consideration in plans and designs. As the building work got underway, there were many positive comments from members of the public and funeral directors eager to see the café open and enquires regarding the possibility of holding wakes following services.

I am pleased to confirm that Nibbles @ Carleton opened for business on Monday 6 August 2018.

Coopers Way Respite Service: Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection

On 4 June 2018, Coopers Way had an announced CQC Inspection. I am pleased to inform Members that the outcome from this inspection is that the Service has been rated as Good in all Key Lines of Enquiry areas: caring, responsive, safe, well led and effective.

The inspector spoke with family members of 12 people who used the service that have difficulty in communication and received very positive feedback on the service. The inspector observed the care and support provided for two people staying at Coopers Way. He also observed staff communicating with people by their preferred method and commented that they displayed a warm and caring attitude. The inspector felt the people appeared comfortable in their surroundings and enjoyed interacting with our staff members.

The inspector saw for himself the emphasis we place on promoting dignity, respect and independence for people supported by the service and that the staffing team understood the importance of high standards of care to give people meaningful lives. The people accessing the service told the inspector that we treated them as individuals and received person centred care and also told him that they enjoyed a variety of activities, which were organised for their entertainment.

The inspector made it clear that in his view the service had robust systems in place to record safeguarding concerns, accidents and incidents and that appropriate risk assessments were in place. The inspector saw that Coopers Way use a variety of methods to assess and monitor the quality of the service and to ensure that the many systems of work in place are effective in maintaining health, safety and wellbeing of all persons accessing the service. These included regular audits and satisfaction surveys to seek the views of people who use and have stayed at Cooper's way and their relatives about the service provided.

Working with Partners

Health and Social Care Education to Commence in the Town Centre at Bickerstaffe House

It is my great pleasure to inform Members that the first students are scheduled to attend teaching sessions on the ground floor of Bickerstaffe House in early September. I reported last time that the Council, Blackpool and the Fylde College and Lancaster University has signed an agreement to form an Alliance that would include basing a new Health and Social Care Academy in the town centre. Conversion work took place over the summer and parts of the ground floor at Bickerstaffe House have been fitted out to the College's requirements. It looks fantastic and will make for an excellent teaching space.

I am sure all Members will join me in welcoming a Further and Higher education presence right in the centre of town. I certainly hope this is the beginning of bigger things to come.