

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 March 2025

Attendance of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Adam Price, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
(Lead Member)

Summary

This annual report provides an account of the role of the Lead Member for Children's Services as identified in the Department for Education statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS) (DfE 2012). This report details their ambitions for their areas of responsibility, how they have and will undertake political challenge and leadership and what their priorities and ambitions are for the year ahead. It covers the period from April 2024 until February 2025.

1. Recommendation

- 1.1. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the report.

2. Budget and policy framework

- 2.1 The areas within the terms of reference of this Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Lead Member for Children's Services according to the Council's constitution are:

- Children's Partnership Commissioning (0-25)
- Children's Provider Services (including Adoption, Fostering, Supported Accommodation and Residential Care)
- Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services including Safeguarding Board
- Early Help (including Youth Justice Service (YJS) and Youth Services)
- External Inspections
- Inclusion

- 2.2 This report sets out how as portfolio holder for Children's Services I have supported Cabinet and the service in trying to ensure income and expenditure remain within the budget approved by the Council. However, given specific demand led pressures on placement costs and legal costs along with a

reduced level of savings delivered from the opening of Eden house due to a delayed opening of the service, we are currently reporting an overspend in the region of £1million for the areas within the Lead Member for Children's Services

- 2.3 I work with other members and officers to scrutinise the effectiveness, value for money of resources and check that expenditure remains within budget. This is challenging within resource availability, pressures on Council budgets and demands on the service, but I am confident that the service has rigorous oversight and is taking all necessary steps to ensure spending is proportionate and appropriate. I have worked with the service and Council colleagues to ensure that whilst efficiency savings are identified and delivered, the service for our children and families continues to meet our statutory responsibilities.

3. Background

- 3.1 I am proud to be the Lead Member for Children's Services, and I have held this position since the Labour party took over the administration of the Council in May 2023. I work closely with Children's Services who have continued to work with Medway's children and families providing support and assistance. The Council also works closely with statutory and voluntary partners, to ensure that together we do everything we can to keep children and young people safe and free from risk of harm. I would like to thank all our staff and partners for their hard work and commitment.
- 3.2 In July 2023, Children's Service gained the ILAC judgement of Good and since that time the service is continuing to drive improvement. Local Authorities judged to be good at their most recent inspection will usually receive a short inspection that would usually take place about 3 years after the previous inspection, in between inspections, the local authority will usually receive one focused visit or a JTAI (joint targeted area inspection). Focused visits evaluate an aspect of service, a theme or the experiences of a cohort of children. Therefore, we are awaiting either focussed visit or JTAI. I would like to thank Children's Services staff and leaders in Medway for their continued commitment to improvement, and I am pleased and very proud of the progress that has been made.

4. Providing political leadership and challenge

- 4.1 In December 2023, Donna Marriott, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care successfully gained a secondment to the Government of Jersey which started in April 2024. The AD position was initially covered by Interim AD Raj Bharkhada and then following a competitive interview process for an internal Act up AD position Kelly Cogger, successfully gained this position. Kelly has been in post since 1st July 2024, initially working alongside Raj however since 1st October, she has led the service alone. Full Council has agreed to recruit to the post of Assistant Director to commence from Spring 2025.

- 4.2 Following the ILACs inspection, the Improvement Board was re-launched as a Continuous Improvement Board to ensure oversight of the updated improvement plan. Colleagues from partner agencies, including education, health and police, are central to the effectiveness of the Board and this will help to ensure continued improvements in the support that children receive.
- 4.3 The Continuous Improvement Board, of which I am a member is held quarterly, and ensures I maintain an overview of progress. The Board includes statutory partners, with voluntary attendance from the LGA and our DFE adviser. As a member I can review progress on the plan and contribute to Board discussions about how to support ongoing improvements to the service.
- 4.4 As Chairperson of Corporate Parenting Board and Lead Member for Medway Children and Young People's Council, I engage with our young people and support them to actively participate in Board meetings, ensuring that their voice is heard.
- 4.5 I am fully briefed on the current recruitment challenges in the social care workforce, which are faced by all local authorities nationally, and have supported actions taken to address this on a local level to minimise the impact on practice.
- 4.6 In addition to regular meetings with the Director of People and Children's Services leadership team, along with the Leader, I meet three times a year with the Children's Social Care Assistant Director (AD), and Head of Improvement to review progress against the Continuous Improvement Plan. This provides the opportunity to scrutinise quality of practice and identify challenges and ways to overcome these. Within these meetings I can review effectiveness, understand the impact of our interventions and support plans for improvement.
- 4.7 As Chairperson of the monthly Children's Services (Children and Education) Oversight Board I ensure oversight of the effectiveness of Children's social care and education. The Board is attended by the Director of People, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Schools, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Assistant Director of Education and SEND, and all Heads of Service, and reviews performance data. This provides an opportunity for me to challenge and where there are identified shortfalls, I can question this with the operational managers and ensure they have plans in place to address this.
5. **Championing the Interests of Children and Young People**
- 5.1 I actively support the work of Child Friendly Medway which sets out a vision for making Medway a better place for children to live, learn, and contribute to our community. Child Friendly Medway works together with teams in children's social care and Education, and with partners across Medway to ensure that the voice of the child is heard in all that we do. I have attended

many of the free events that have been offered to all of Medway's children, young people and their families.

- 5.2 I regularly visit our services to gain a better understanding of roles and responsibilities of practitioners from across the service. I recently visited our Single Point of Access and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, this is the team who receive contacts from members of the Public, Practitioners and Professionals requesting a service for a child or family. I have also visited all four of our Children and Family Hubs and supported the 'Welcome to Medway' events led by Family Solutions. At these events I have met children, young people and parents and carers and engaged with practitioners and multi-agency partners learning about their role and hearing their voices and what could improve their services.
- 5.3 I meet with our workforce regularly, either through attending offices and events as shared above, or when I take part in training or attend staff conferences and celebration events such as Time to Shine and our Fostering Celebration. I was delighted to be part of both events and celebrate the achievements of our children in care and care leavers, and our carers.
- 5.4 I continue to take part in safeguarding visits to children and families alongside Children's Services practitioners. This is a planned programme whereby together with the Director of people, Assistant Director Children's Social Care (and occasionally the Leader and CEO) we meet front line practitioners and then accompany them on visits to a child or family. This provides a direct line of sight into practice and opportunity to speak to children and families to hear their experiences. My last visit in January 2025, was undertaken alongside a social worker from the Assessment Service.
- 5.5 As Lead Member I continue to mobilise Council resources, engaging the support of other elected members, to support the events that are run for children in care and care experienced young people, including events such as Care Leavers Week and the care leavers Christmas dinner.

6 Support for key social care service areas

6.1 Commissioning

- 6.1.1 Medway have continued to see increasing challenges in meeting the placement needs of Medway's Children. I have worked closely with the Leader to oversee the work of the Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Head of Commissioning who work together to address the challenges posed by a shortage of available placements for children in our care.
- 6.1.2 In July 2024, Medway joined the Regional Care Cooperative (RCC) Pathfinder. This is a Department for Education (DfE) funded project to encourage local authorities (LAs) to work together more closely on the commissioning and procurement of placements for looked after children. The RCC's three-year business plan outlines 5 strategic priorities and initiatives designed to improve regional data integration, enhance resource allocation,

and support evidence-based decision-making. This is a three-year initiative, and the Council will receive the £1.030m capital grant funding in April 2025 for redevelopment of Aut Even and the Eden House Cabin.

6.1.3 Children's Services has now commissioned two emergency placement beds, and upon gaining Ofsted Registration, have opened Eden House Residential Home in October 2024, supporting our vision to keep children close to their families within Medway boundaries.

6.1.4 I have been actively engaged in discussion about the Children's Services budget holding monthly meetings with the AD, at the Oversight Board and in wider Cabinet discussions with officers regarding the Financial Improvement for Transformation (FIT) plan. I am aware that effective 'access to resource' panels remain in place, ensuring robust oversight and monitoring of spend on placements and transport.

6.2 Children's Provider Services (including Adoption, Fostering, Supported Accommodation and Residential Care)

6.2.1 The Head of Provider Services has now been in post for one year. This post holder is responsible for our in-house fostering service, adoption, Parklands, our residential short breaks home for children with disabilities, the Youth Service and the multi-disciplinary service which provides our workforce with seamless access to timely and effective wrap around support for families, particularly for those on the edge of care. Provider Services also includes the Family Partnership, Adolescent support, Family Group Conferencing, and a Specialist Assessment Team which is delivering high quality work that is acknowledge by the judiciary and avoids the use of Independent Social Workers.

6.2.2 To support the recruitment and retention of foster carers our in-house fostering service has recently reviewed its fees and allowances made to foster carers which will be launched from April 2025. They are also providing additional support and training for our carers, to help them care for our more vulnerable children. Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a priority, national challenges mirror Medway's picture. Medway is part of the Local Authority Fostering Southeast (LAFSE) which aims to help with the recruitment of foster carers in a planned way by utilising a local recruitment hub. This year Medway has recruited 7 new foster carers, compared to 5 at the same time last year. I have heard firsthand about the commitment and dedication of our foster carers and actively accept opportunities to meet with them and hear what could be done differently to encourage them to continue fostering for Medway.

6.2.3 As part of the LAFSE, Medway fostering service launched its first Mockingbird constellation in October 2024 and plans to launch it's second by 31 March 2025. The Mockingbird is an extended family model which consists of a hub home and several satellite homes nearby. These offer regular respite care and peer to peer support as well as regular social activities. The service are currently working through the registration process for supported homes

(previously Medway's supported lodgings) which is a provision for young people aged 16+ who require support with developing independent living skills. We currently have 12 supported homes hosts.

6.2.4 I am pleased to provide an overview of the progress of Medway's regional adoption agency (RAA), the Adoption Partnership, Southeast, which is a collaboration comprising Medway, the London Borough of Bexley and Kent County Council. The RAA launched on 1 November 2020 and delivers adoption services on behalf of the three local authorities. The RAA is now well embedded. In 2024, Medway had 6 children who were adopted. Timeliness in Medway, as well as National, mirrors the picture where adoption figures are not yet back to pre-pandemic levels due to delays in court proceedings and the complexities in the needs of children.

6.3. Children's Social Work and CYPD

6.3.1 The current Head of Service for Children's Social Work Teams and Children and Young People Disability Service has been in an Act up position since the permanent Head of Service left in July 2024. This post will be recruited to permanently following successful recruitment to the AD. The Children's Social Work service focuses on support and intervention for children in need, child protection and the initiating of Court proceedings and has 8 Children's Social Work teams and 3 Children and Young People with a Disability Social Work teams (CYPD).

6.3.2 Since 2024, Assistant Team Managers (ATMs) were built into the establishment for Children Social work teams, and it is planned that this will be replicated once budgets are agreed for 2025-26. The addition of ATMs has supported an increased level of management oversight for practitioners, supporting robust throughput of work. 2 additional project teams were in place 2023-24, however left the service in a planned way in October 2024.

6.3.3 The Children and Young People with Disability teams are now embedded within the Social Work teams. They work with children and young people 0-17 and the 18-25 team now sits within Adult Services supporting those young people to prepare for adulthood. The Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) introduced in 2023 remains in the service and is currently on transitions and preparing young people for adulthood. The DSCO will be focussing on Medway's preparation for adulthood (PFA) strategy collaborating with colleagues in Education, Adults, Children's commissioning, parents and carers.

6.3.4 The volume of work into the service remains high and complex, with a significant peak in referrals in November 2024. Therefore, average caseloads are higher than I would want them to be. At the end of January 2025, the number of children subject to child protection plans was 304 and those children subject to Child in Need plans was 552, both are higher than at this point last year (CP – 268 and CIN – 501), evidencing the current high volume of children within the service. I have ensured oversight of the data and the numbers of children in need and subject to a plan on a regular basis, which

assures I am in touch with the pressures on the service and staffing to enable action to be taken when necessary.

6.3.5 Whilst staffing within the 5 assessment teams has remained stable, the majority of the Social Work service has continued to experience significant staff turnover and unfilled vacancies over the last year. This is as a consequence of a national shortfall of qualified social workers to take up posts. New rules are in place for locum staff and when leave a post, a 3 to 4 week notice period is expected, this has slowed down the recruitment process. This remains a significant risk in terms of improved quality of practice. I have supported a request to Council to agree additional funding for 8 senior practitioners to provide essential capacity to ensure all our children have an allocated social worker.

6.3.6 The service continues to focus on 'growing our own'. The service is currently piloting 2 newly qualified social work teams, one in our children's social work teams and one in our children in care teams. This will ensure all NQSW have consistent caseloads that develop in complexity and numbers over the year. By May 2025, the service will have 14 NQSW across the service, 4 step up to social work and 4 apprentices.

6.4 Medway Safeguarding Children's Partnership

6.4.1 Medway Council, Kent Police and NHS Kent and Medway are the three safeguarding partners that make up the Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP). The purpose of the MSCP is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together.

6.4.2 Safeguarding cannot be undertaken in isolation, and it is essential that all parties are working together with the Council children's services. During the year, the MSCP holds an Accountable Officers Meeting to ensure the statutory partners remain well informed on the issues facing the partnership and can address strategic issues in relation to staffing resources and overall direction. This is a positive development and is evidence of a strong commitment to safeguarding children at the highest levels across the partnership.

6.4.3 During the year, I am aware that the MSCP published one Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSRP) in December 2024 in relation to Julia and has also completed 2 Rapid Reviews. There were multi agency learning points from both reviews. Through the MSCP Executive I am assured that the notification process to trigger LCSRP and Rapid Reviews is effective and that the numbers are in line with expected trends.

6.5 Early Help

6.5.1. I continue to support the delivery of the Early Help across Medway, our Early Help Strategy is currently being reviewed and is due to be relaunched by April 2025. The Early Help Partnership Board are promoting a shared vision, joint priorities, and services, ensuring the best possible outcomes for children. Partners continue to be involved in the delivery of early help services and

ensure that our in-house service, Family Solutions, can target its intervention on supporting children and families who have more complex needs.

- 6.5.2. Family Solutions' relationship with children's statutory services continues to strengthen, with the embedding of Early Help Co-ordinators and the Child in Need Reviewing Officer (CINRO) working closely with teams to ensure families are receiving the right level of intervention at the right time. I remain confident that Family Solutions are developing relationships with partners in Education, Health and across Medway.

6.6 Youth Services

- 6.6.1 In Medway, youth work is delivered as a preventative and early intervention service for young people. As such, it plays an integral part in delivering improved outcomes for children and young people. To reduce the demand for statutory interventions in their families' lives, Youth Services has close working relationships with colleagues in a range of other services including Social Care, Youth Justice, Family Solutions and with partners like schools, the hospital and police.
- 6.6.2 The Youth Service has been successful at receiving external grant funding and income. The service continues to pursue external funding to work towards minimising the financial cost of the service to the Council. Several special projects within the service have been externally funded to deliver innovative targeted programmes, including the continuation of the project based at the hospital to respond to young people presenting at A & E to support young people who are missing or at risk of exploitation. The external funding provides additional capacity for specific purposes rather than reducing the cost of the youth service.
- 6.6.3 Since January, the Youth Service have been piloting a new team to support our young people who are on the edge of care, at risk of exploitation and potential exclusion for their educational setting. The wraparound adolescent support programme aims to offer mentoring and support to young people when they need it; either during the day, in the evenings or at weekends. The impact of this programme will be continually reviewed, and resource will be adjusted depending on the demand.

6.7 Youth Justice Service

- 6.7.1 Medway's Youth Justice Service was last inspected in June 2020 and received a rating of 'Requires Improvement'. The new inspection framework was launched by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) on 4 November 2024 and will go live with inspections from Spring 2025. Medway's Youth Justice Service could receive an announcement of an inspection anytime from 19 February 2025. The framework has undergone significant changes and has been designed to ensure that the work delivered to children and victims is at the forefront of inspections, and that inspections drive effective practice and improvement. I am a member of the Youth Justice Partnership Board and therefore have an oversight of practice and

performance data and the board is chaired by the Assistant Director Education and SEND.

6.7.2. In July 2024, the Youth Justice Service had a two-week mock inspection, offering insight into current practices and highlighting opportunities for further development. Since the mock inspection, a Youth Justice Improvement Lead has been appointed to support the service in driving the new inspection framework forward. The Youth Justice Service staffing establishment has been increased since 2024, with the recent appointments of a Service Manager and an additional Practice Manager who both start at the end of March. In January, the Youth Justice Improvement lead led a workshop for Youth Justice Board Members ensuring Members were aware of their responsibilities and had a clear understanding of the new inspection framework.

6.8 Support to children in our care and care leavers

6.8.1 In December 2024, the new Head of Corporate Parenting and Youth Justice started in Medway. At Full Council on 18 July 2024, Medway adopted Care Experienced as a protected characteristic. I am proud that Medway Council is aspirational for children in care and care leavers and as such want to go beyond our statutory requirements and ensure that the needs of care experienced people are at the heart of all decision-making. Medway Council will join the national campaign like other councils, to agree to make being care experienced a protected characteristic in law.

6.8.2 As Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, I work closely with our children in care and care leavers service. Our children in care cohort has decreased by 13 since Jan 2024 (from 495 to 482) and this includes 41 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged between 9 and 17 years in our care, compared with 23 at the end of January 2024. The monthly dashboard enables me to see that our children and young people have regular contact with their social workers, and that 99% of them participate in their reviews and meet their Independent Reviewing Officers between reviews.

6.8.3 I have continued to champion stability and permanent homes for our children. There has been an increase in the percentage of children in matched long-term fostering compared with a year ago – now 52%. This is positive given the context of wider market challenges regarding a shortfall in sufficient homes for children in care. I am kept regularly updated about placement challenges, including the need to place some of our children in unregulated or unregistered provision when no other suitable placement is available. Currently we have 7 children placed in unregulated provision, compared to 15 in January 2024. I am confident that there is a robust process in place for overseeing these children and mitigating the additional risks caused by the need to make these placements.

6.8.4 I am aware that the service continues to engage with children and young people to hear their views. The Mind of My Own App is well used, and

Medway Children and Young People Council (MCYPC) is engaging with and capturing the voices of our children and young people.

6.8.5 The service has seen an increase in the number of young people in our leaving care service, with currently 202 young people receiving support, this includes 12 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The addition of the aspirations officer in the leaving care service has resulted in continued improvement in the percentage of our young people who are in Education, Training and Employment, now 60% which is an increase of 15% since January 2024. I visited the Elaine Centre which is a wonderful resource offering a range of regular of events and activities and am pleased to report that we facilitate regular parenting groups, independent living skills training, and housing advice and support, alongside drop in facilities.

6.9 Corporate Parenting

6.9.1 Corporate parenting is the collective responsibility of the council to prioritise the needs of children in our care and seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children. I am proud to chair our Corporate Parenting Board, and I work closely with other councillors and officers to deliver against our strategy and improve outcomes for our children in care and care leavers, ensuring the Board maintains its agreed priorities.

6.9.2 The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) meets bi-monthly with sub-groups reporting into the Board. Membership crosses all key areas, including representation from the Council's children in care council (Medway Children and Young People's Council (MCYPC)), Council officers, elected members, strategic leads for key partner agencies, as well as representative foster carers and adopters. Corporate Parenting Board provides the necessary leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to achieving its objectives. The Board ensures there is feedback to our children and young people after each Board meeting.

6.9.3 There is a structured approach to the CPB function, and the Board works to a thematic work plan. CPB sessions now focus on key practice areas which are important to children and young people, and which help members to scrutinise delivery against plans. As part of the Board, we have had active participation from children in care/care leavers representatives through MCYPC.

6.9.4 The interface between the CPB and the Medway Children and Young People's Council (MCYPC) continues to be strong. A representative of MCYPC attends CPB meetings and acts as a conduit for sharing the views of children and young people, supported to participate by a member of the Young Lives Foundation (YLF). Young people delivered 'Voice of the child' training to the board in December and in January led the 'reverse buddying scheme training' which buddies members and officer with young people to hear the voices of care experienced young people.

6.9.5 The CPB receives a performance 'scorecard' at each meeting in addition to the performance reports of each sub-group. A programme of performance

workshops delivered by the AD, Children's Social Care, has continued to support newly elected members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, many of whom sit on the CPB, in how to interpret and understand the data and what to consider when seeking to provide scrutiny and challenge.

- 6.9.6 The Corporate Parenting Board will be reviewing and refreshing the Corporate Parenting Strategy this year, which was developed in consultation with young people; this will be monitored and reported on throughout the coming year.

7. Medway Virtual School

- 7.1. I have spent time with team members across the Virtual School to further understand their roles and how they work with all teams across children's social care and Education and SEND to promote the educational outcomes for our care experienced children and young people.
- 7.2 As lead member, I have delegated membership of the Corporate Parenting Board subgroup: Early Years, school, college and training, to Cllr Coombs and Cllr Howcroft – Scott. The group meets regularly and has a work plan that examines in detail the educational outcomes for our care experienced. Challenge is provided on the actions taken by the virtual school to improve outcomes and the impact this has through my monthly oversight boards.
- 7.3 Medway Virtual school has been moved to sit under Education and SEND, to give a focus on access to education, whilst ensuring that the strong working between Medway Virtual School and Children's Social Care have remained effective. I know, through discussions with the team and, as Chairperson of the Corporate Parenting Board, that communication between and across the services is good.
- 7.4 The implementation of the use of Mosaic for all Personal Education Plans (PEPs) has resulted in a higher completion rate of these statutory documents (Autumn term 24/25 is at 80%) and I have challenged the services to improve on this and to move rapidly to a 100% return.
- 7.5 The review of in year data for this academic year has shown a reduction in suspensions for children in care and I continue to challenge all those working with our children and young people to ensure that their policies and practices reflect a trauma informed approach.
- 7.6 I am very aware of the number of young people that are not engaging in education employment or training and the limited availability of an appropriate local offer for some young people. I welcome the initiative, working with the Virtual School Kent, that provides an opportunity to deliver accredited employability skill training, alongside functional skills Mathematics and English, for our care experienced young people living in Kent.
- 7.7 Last summer's results showed some improvements in education outcomes for our care experienced children and young people; however, they continue to

be below their peers nationally. I continue to challenge, with my colleague Cllr Coombs, our education partners to continue improving educational outcomes for those for whom we are a Corporate Parent.

8. Inclusion

- 8.1 There is a strong partnership across partners and agencies in Medway and we are ambitious for our children and young people. We are committed to providing the best quality of education and support for children and families, and to securing good outcomes and effective transition to adulthood.
- 8.2 The Education and SEND team continue to champion the individual rights of our children, and their families, in relation to access to education. We have seen an increase in the number of children and young people missing education or being removed from school. Cllr Coombs and I continuously challenge education providers to develop further inclusive practice through regular network meetings, such as the Medway Education Partnership group and the SEND Partnership Board. I have also attended the headteacher network meetings, Medway Education Leaders Association and Medway Secondary Headteachers Association and Specialist SEND and AP Leaders of Education, and have visited 10 schools throughout this year.
- 8.3 We held the second Inclusion conference in September 24, where schools had the opportunity to discuss the issues and share good practice.
- 8.4 We have seen an increase in the number of our children and young people being permanently excluded. There were 24 Permanent Exclusions between Sept and Dec 2024, compared to 6 and 19, for the same period in 2023 and 2022 respectively.
- 8.5 We also continue to see Medway schools suspend too many of our children and young people. Suspensions caused by persistent disruptive behaviour were the most frequent. Unlike permanent exclusions, the rate of suspensions is in excess of the national rate, for our non-selective secondary schools and our special schools. Of those who are suspended a high proportion have SEND, and a high proportion are in receipt of Free School Meals.
- 8.6 High quality inclusive education is at the heart of improving long term sustainable outcomes. Children and young people thrive when they are included in their local communities and mainstream schools. We have been explicit in our intention to maintain this priority.
- 8.7 We set clear goals and actions to support the inclusion agenda in Medway, including:
 - Providing a core offer of training and support to embed whole school approaches to support inclusion, building upon skills and expertise within individual schools.
 - Funding training to embed trauma informed practice across Medway's schools and the education and children's services partnership.

- Providing additional funding to schools to, not only support individuals, but to develop whole school approaches to improving inclusion.
- We have increased the capacity of AP to support pre-emptive and reintegration support back into school and increased additional assessment placements and outreach.
- We continue to work with schools and wider partners to develop this offer.

9. Closing comments

- 9.1 I continue to be fully supportive of the service and the work which is being undertaken in challenging circumstances for all of our children and young people in Medway and am committed to supporting continued progress across all service areas for which I am responsible.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None