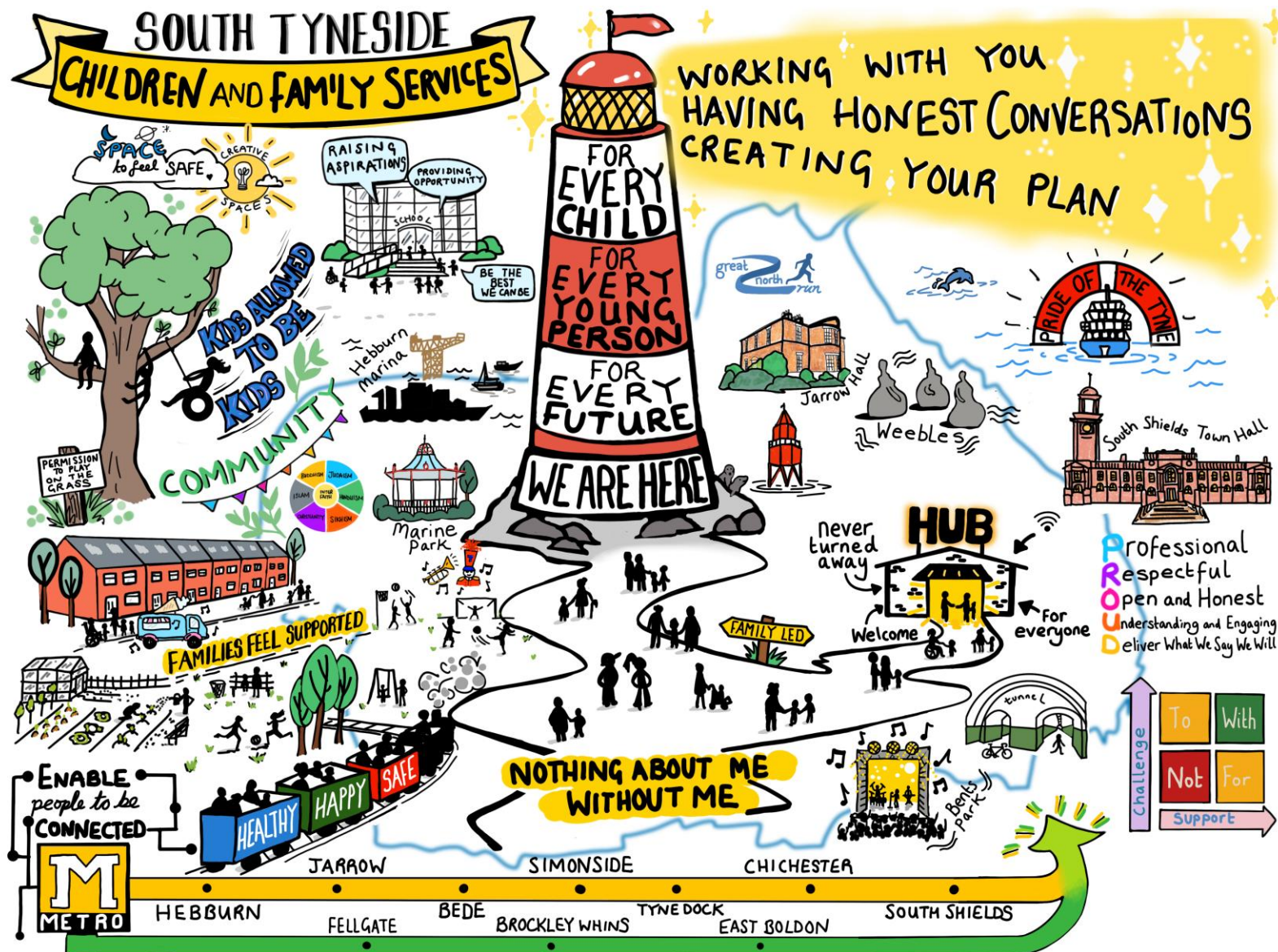




Stuart Easingwood
Director Children Services

Chris Ring
Assistant Director – Children
and Family Services





SERVICE STRUCTURE

Family Help Services

Our community based Early Help family support service operates within and out of our Family Hubs, alongside multi-agency partners. We provide a targeted family support offer via our **12 Family Hubs**.

Homepage - For Every Family
(southtynesidefamilyhubs.co.uk)

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Our MASH is our **single point of contact** to access services, supported by our EH MASH Coordination Team. This includes key partner agencies such as: Police, Health, Education, housing, probation, and Restart (Domestic Abuse Service & IDVA).

Assessment Service

When children require social care involvement this begins with an assessment undertaken by one of our **three Social Work Assessment Teams** which are part of the Front Door service.

Strengthening and Safeguarding Families Service (SSF)

When statutory involvement is needed to safeguard a child, longer term work including Child in Need Planning, Child Protection Planning and Court work is held by our **six SSF teams**. Our **2 Edge of Care Workers** are also based in SSF.

The Children's Disability Team (CWD)

CWD is a small **specialist team of Social Workers** who provide support to children and young people whose ability to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve is significantly impacted upon by their disability. They also undertake statutory safeguarding duties, holding responsibility for children with a child protection plan and children in care.

Cared For & 0-25 Children

Our **two Cared for teams** support children in our care who are subject to full Care Orders, progressing plans for permanence. Our **Leaving Care Team** support our young people into adulthood in relation to their health, housing, education, employment and training needs.

Effective Practice Team

Our **Effective Practice team** are responsible for the Practice Model, Quality Assurance Framework, Learning, Development, culture and staff wellbeing.

Fostering Team

Our Fostering Team recruit, assess, review, and offer support to our foster carers. Our Liaison Worker supports our **4 Mockingbird constellations**.

Kinship Team

Our Connected Carers team complete assessments of friends or family members, including viability assessments, Regulation 24 assessments and full assessments.

Residential Service

We currently have **six in-house children's homes** with two new homes progressing to registration.

Virtual School

Our Virtual School provides monitoring and direct support for children in our care and provides advice and information to schools on the education of children in our care. The virtual school also provides a strategic role in education for all children with a social worker.

The Children's Standards Unit (CSU)

Our **Independent Reviewing Officers** oversee care plans for children subject to a child protection plan, and children in our care. They chair multi-agency conferences and reviews and provide oversight and challenge ensuring that the voice of the child informs our practice. Our **LADO** is also based within CSU.





Youth Justice Service

The YJS is a partnership between the Local Authority, Northumbria Police, Probation and Health services, each of which holds a statutory responsibility for resourcing and supporting the partnership.

The service works in partnership coordinating the provision and delivery of interventions of a youth justice system to prevent offending and re offending by children and young people.

Outdoor Education & Youth Services

South Tyneside Youth Service gives young people the chance to get involved in exciting youth projects across the Borough. Our projects are based around young people's own interests, experiences and are youth-led.

The Holiday Activity Food (**HAF**) programme aims to provide healthy food and enriching activities to children and young people aged 5 to 16 up to 18 years with SEND, who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

Connexions

Connexions South Tyneside provide careers information, advice and guidance to young people aged between 16 and 18, and up to 25 if they have a special educational need or disability.

Asylum, Migrant & Refugee Community Integration

Our Asylum, Refugee and Migrant Community Integration Team offer information and support, for people who are new to the area.





South Tyneside Council

CHILDREN' SERVICES (2026)

Number of
children or
young people in
South Tyneside

30,513



Families
supported
by early
help plan

528



Rate of children
on CP Plan per
10,000

54.8



Number of
young people
engaging in
Youth Services

23,000



Number
of children
in need

593

Number
of children
looked after

301



CHILDREN' SERVICES (2026)



South Tyneside Council

Number of
Foster Carers
50



Number of In House
childrens
home beds
12



% of under 16s living
in relative low income
households after
housing costs;

29.6%



Number
of Kinship
Carers
37

Children cared
for living outside
South Tyneside;
47.1%



Of those,
71.1%
live within 20 miles
of South Tyneside

MAGIC (Making a Great Important Change)

MAGIC is how we describe our participation and engagement work with children who are cared for and care experienced. MAGIC captures the voice and influence of children and young people through project work, consultation, engagement groups and events, and regular meetings with senior staff and decision makers.

Mini MAGIC (5-11yrs)

Weekly project-based group & 4x year engagement events

MAGIC (12-16yrs)

Weekly project-based group/ summer consultation/ annual residential

Care Leaver Engagement (17-25yrs)

Monthly engagement programme (incl: Wellbeing Walks, Sunday Lunch, Job Club)

Care Leavers Council (fortnightly focal point of voice and influence)

Regional Children in Care Council representation

Care Leaver Ambassador role within the Participation & Engagement Team



Let's Talk – parent/carers engagement

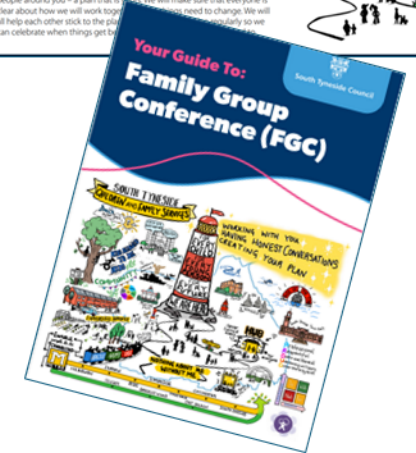
Let's Talk is one of the ways we hear directly from parents and carers about their experience of Children and Family Services

Let's talk engagement activity:

- 2x Let's Talk big engagement events each year – parents/carers with senior staff
- Monthly Let's Talk parent/carers forum – with Participation Lead and Assistant Director Children's Services

What's changed as a result of Let's talk?

- Parents/carers helped create the '3 Most Important Things' now used by all staff
- Parents/carers trained to interview (Family Group Conference Coordinators and Participation & Engagement Officer recruitment)
- Parents/carers now co-produce all 'Your guide to...' leaflets
To date, these include Family Assessments/ Child Protection Enquiry/ Section 20/ Safety Plans/ Family Group Conferencing
- Let's Talk parent/carers engagement has been essential to the creation of a suite of animated films capturing the voice and lived experience of parents/carers



ACHIEVEMENTS AND STRENGTHS



South Tyneside Council

- Coherent vision and culture
- Engagement of Parents Carers / Children and Young People
- Stability across staff teams and leadership team
- Strong audit outcomes demonstrating improving practice
- Registered and opened 2 children's homes (3 x beds – both rated Good)
- Procurement / recommissioning exercise for Supported Accommodation (8 beds) and extension of Staying Close offer (5 properties)
- Strong Kinship offer – c 15% cared for children in kinship arrangements
- Quality of relationships within our leaving care team leading to high keeping in touch rates





CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

- Need to continue to embed practice improvements
- Maintaining stability of sufficient workforce
- Continued need to ensure services are meeting needs of children and families at earliest possibly opportunity
- Continued need to ensure we have sufficient homes for children and young people
- Opening of 2 x 4-bed children's homes
- Implementation and pace of social care reforms
- Imminent Ofsted and Youth Justice inspections

