



Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Wednesday 9 November 2016**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Wellfield School, North Road East, Wingate, TS28 5AX**
TO MEET AT RECEPTION at 9.20 a.m.

- * **For those who require transport, it will leave County Hall at 9.00 a.m.**
- * **Following the meeting Members will be invited to take a short tour of Wellfield School before departing at approximately 11.45 a.m.**

Business

Part A

Items during which the Press and Public are welcome to attend. Members of the Public can ask questions with the Chairman's agreement.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Meeting held 29 September 2016 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Media Relations - Update on Press Coverage
7. Young Carers Update (Pages 9 - 12)
 - a) Report of Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service
 - b) Presentation by Strategic Manager, Children's Services Reform
8. Educational Attainment of Looked After Children (Pages 13 - 16)
 - a) Report of the Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services
 - b) Presentation by Strategic Lead Special Educational Needs and Disabilities & Virtual Head

9. Education Services Update - Report of Interim Corporate Director Children and Young People's Services (Pages 17 - 24)
10. Annual Report of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panel Report - Report of Interim Corporate Director Children's Services (Pages 25 - 54)
11. Annual Report of the Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service - Report of the Interim Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services (Pages 55 - 92)
12. Durham Local Safeguarding Annual Report - Report of the Independent Chair of Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (Pages 93 - 146)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Colette Longbottom
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
1 November 2016

To: **The Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)
Councillor M Nicholls (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, K Corrigan, K Dearden, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, J Hart, D Hicks, K Hopper, P Lawton, J Measor, S Morrison, L Pounder, M Simmons, H Smith, M Stanton, P Stradling and W Stelling

Faith Communities Representatives:

Mrs A Swift

Parent Governor Representatives:

Mr R Patel

Co-opted Members:

Miss K Ashcroft and Mr D Kinch

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 29 September 2016 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, K Corrigan, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, J Hart, S Morrison and H Smith

Faith Community Representative:

Mrs A Swift

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, D Hicks, K Hopper, M Nicholls, M Simmons, P Stradling and Mr D Kinch.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 1 July, 25 July and 5 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

6 Media Relations - Update on Press Coverage

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to recent press articles relating to the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The articles were:

- County Durham Students – Durham County Council had issued a press release congratulating students with regards to their A Level results
- Durham County Council was presented with the Young Carers Charter, developed by Family Action – The Bridge Young Carers Service, for its commitment to supporting young carers across the county
- Sugar intake in children double recommended level – a national survey had found that four to ten year olds were consuming twice as much sugar as the recommended intake and teenagers were consuming three times as much
- The Youth Offending Service had received three nationally recognised accolades

The Chairman requested that a letter be sent to the Youth Offending Service, recognising the achievement and congratulating them on behalf of the Committee.

7 County Durham Teenage Pregnancy

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adult Services which provided an update on local plans and progress to reduce under 18 conceptions and unplanned teenage pregnancies (for copy see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from Portfolio Lead for Public Health, (for copy see file of minutes) which gave an overview on the need to reduce teenage conceptions, an update on the current U16 and U18 conception rate, a summary of the findings from the teenage pregnancy HNA 2015 and six key actions to reduce teenage conceptions in County Durham.

Members were advised that the information regarding the reduction of both under 18 and under 16 conceptions in County Durham related to 2014 and this was due to a data time lag.

Councillor Hart referred to a time when there was significantly high rate of teenage pregnancy in Newcastle which had required government intervention and following the setup of a Teenage Pregnancy Unit, the figures had reduced by 51%. The reduction had been in conjunction with a rise in sex education and there was always a worry that there would be another influx of unplanned teenage pregnancy if the measures in place were relaxed. The Portfolio Lead in Public Health confirmed that even when considering reductions in budgets, teenage pregnancy was a priority and would continue to be monitored. It was important that Schools and School Nurses continued to identify and support young people who may need it. There was also a lot of support for teenage parents who were being encouraged to pursue aspirations. There was funding available for 16-19 year olds and she referred to the Care to Learn scheme and the Teen Parents Support Programme which was a 20 week course to develop skills and knowledge such as self-esteem and confidence, sexual health awareness and money management. The programme had been successful enough to be nominated for a national award, however funding was non-recurrent which was a continued concern.

Councillor Gunn referred to the importance of childcare for young people and referred to the recently appointed shadow education secretary who, having been pregnant at 16 years old with no qualifications was an inspiration to young teenagers in the same situation. The shadow secretary had publically credited Sure Start for helping her to overcome the difficulties she had faced being a teenage parent. The Portfolio Lead for Public Health

confirmed that many of the parents on the Teen Parents Support Programme were anxious at being separated from their children and therefore it had been delivered within Children's Centres in order to ensure that babies were cared for on the premises. As a result of the programme some parents had gone on to higher education, employment, or had returned as a mentor.

The Head of Children's Services confirmed that since the review in 2014, Sure Start had improved and there was now consistent engagement with all young mothers.

In response to a question from Councillor Hart, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that the possibility of registering births at Children's Centres had been considered, however it was acknowledged that contact levels with new teenage mothers was 100% and therefore no improvement was required.

Resolved

That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Update on School Funding Reforms

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, Interim Corporate Director Resources and Interim Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services which provided information on School Funding Reforms (for copy see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from Finance Manager, Education Services (for copy see file of minutes), which provided Members with information on the ongoing Government consultation with regards to Authority proposals affecting 2017/18 school funding and changes to the National Funding Formulas (NFF) for;

- Mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools
- Early Years (nursery schools)
- Special Educational Needs

Early Years Funding was based on historical spend and proposals were for a national formula to allocate funding to local authorities from 2017/18. Indicative allocations provided as part of the consultation indicated that Durham would receive a 3% increase in funding. The early years funding formula would require greater equality in distributing funding to providers. However the specific impact for County Durham, for Early Years providers and SEN Funding would not be known until the outcome of the consultation.

Councillor Gunn referred to the information which had been presented to Members and the significant impact it would have on young people in County Durham for years to come. It was not a case of a few changes or minor changes, but a significant amount of huge changes which would affect schools drastically. A reduction of £7.5k was the difference in having a teacher or not having a teacher and although she had many unanswered questions, she acknowledged that they could not be answered until the consultation had ended.

Councillor J Armstrong acknowledged that the presentation had raised more questions than answers, however the changes which the Government were making were essentially leading up to remove the responsibility of education services from Councils and pushing schools to becoming Academies. There was no clarity to the plans other than there would be a reduction to the budget and the Finance Manager, Education Services agreed that when more information was available, he would present it to the Committee.

Councillor Hart referred to the potential impact the new formulas could have on small rural primary schools and the Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed that a potential reduction in budget of £30k would have a huge impact on any school, however until the outcome of the consultation, no modelling work could be undertaken as there was too much uncertainty.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, the Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed that sparsity funding may be applicable to small schools which were located in areas where pupils would have to travel long distances to the nearest alternative school.

Mrs Swift commented that Governing Bodies were anxiously waiting for the consultation to end and queried what would happen to those schools who were sitting on large surplus budget balances which they had carried forward. The Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed the capping mechanism had been removed a few years ago and however some schools were carrying money forward because of required capital works or to assist contingency plans following the Reform.

Councillor Gunn suggested getting the information that this was a Government reform, into the public domain should to be a priority. Councillor Armstrong agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young Peoples Services would be consulted in circulating information to all Members, Schools and how to address and keep the public informed. It was agreed that a letter should be sent from the Children and Young People's Services which advised the Portfolio Holder of the Committees concerns and requested a communication plan be put in place following the outcome of the consultation to ensure that the relevant information was disseminated and all concerned be informed that any future funding reductions as a result of the reforms were not within the Council's control.

Resolved

That the report be noted and a letter be sent to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, as requested.

9 Children and Young People's Services Ofsted Single Inspection Framework

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services which presented Members with the final improvement plan for submission to Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) following the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in February 2016 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Children's Services presented Members with an overview of the report and confirmed that the Service response was not entirely with regards to the outcome of the

Ofsted Inspection, as they had already been working towards making improvements before receiving the judgement. She reassured the Committee that the whole workforce was committed to responding to the outcome of the Inspection.

The Chairman confirmed that the work plan included a presentation to the Committee on the role of Social Workers and would give Members an idea of the problems that were faced within the Service.

Councillor Hall queried the response of Local Authorities to make improvements on the outcome Ofsted Inspections and suggested that occasionally the response was to throw money at the Service. The Head of Children's Services agreed that was sometimes the case and referred to Stockton Borough Council who had been offering new employees up to £10000 for signing up with them. She was pleased to report that Durham had only lost a couple of employees because of this, however there was a worry that the Social Work Programmes which were being offered by Durham, would be used to gain excellent skills through training would then be recruited by other Councils. There was also an issue in recruiting Managers as people didn't seem to want the responsibility. A Management Development Programme had been started alongside South Tyneside Council, and now Durham was continuing to offer the programme in the hope that it would give people the confidence to put in for those roles that were proving difficult to fill.

In response to a query from Councillor Hart, the Head of Children's Service confirmed that cases were open longer, but the new model of work did take longer to complete. In addition the Court process was taking a lot longer, which had in turn impacted on the time it took to go through the adoption process. There had been a 20% increase in the number of care orders and interim care orders which required Court involvement and therefore impacting on cases. Considering the problems in recruiting Social Workers, there had also been an increase in LAC's - there were 120 more than there had been in 2014.

Councillor Hart then queried why £360k was being spent on agency staff and the Head of Children's Services confirmed that it was simply because agency staff were paid more. People were signing up to agencies as they were paid twice as much for carrying out the same work and were not tied into the Councils terms and conditions.

Councillor Hart referred to the extensive amount of work the Portfolio Holder had to do and suggested that like Newcastle City Council, it could be beneficial to have a Junior Cabinet Member to share the responsibilities. The Head of Children's Services confirmed that the Service was well supported by the current Portfolio Holder and Councillor Armstrong confirmed that should Councillor Hart wish to make suggestions about the structure of Cabinet, that he should put them in writing to the Group Secretary.

With regards to the relationship with Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that there had always been good engagement with Members, however it was acknowledged that there had been oversights with regards to the reports presented to the Committee. For example, Members were regularly updated on performance but there were never any performance issues and this may have led to false assurances. One of the themes covering the 14 recommendations identified by Ofsted was to strengthen political and management oversight and Members could be assured that there would be more transparency in future.

Councillor Armstrong confirmed that all Members of the Council were Corporate Parents and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny had a strategic role, therefore the Committee would receive an overview on the Role of the Social Worker to a future meeting of the committee.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

10 Draft Oral Health Strategy For County Durham

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Public Health which presented Members with the Draft Oral Health Strategy for County Durham for consultation (for copy see file of minutes).

The Portfolio Lead, Public Health presented Members with an Overview of the report.

Councillor Armstrong confirmed that there was evidence in North West Durham that fluoridation worked and recommended that the information be presented to Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Gunn welcomed the report and commented on how far schools had come with regards to restricting the amount of refined sugar in schools and encouraging fruit as an alternative. The problems with regards to adult oral hygiene, were compounded by a phobia that many people had of dentists was and also poor oral health in residential homes. The Portfolio Lead, Public Health also drew members' attention to the link between areas of deprivation and poor oral health.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

11 CAS - Revenue and Capital Outturn 2015/16 and CAS - Quarter 1: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2016/17

The Committee considered reports of the Head of Finance which provided them with details of the actual outturn budget position for the CAS service grouping based on the final position at the year end, and details of the forecast outturn budget position based on the position to the end of June 2016 (for copies see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the reports be noted.

12 Quarter One 2016/17 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators, Council Plan, and service plan actions and other performance issues for the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year, covering the period April to June 2016 (for copies see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management presented Members with an overview of the report.

Councillor Hart queried whether there had been a response a question he had raised at the meeting in July with regards to CASCYP 30 and the waiting times for CAMHS referrals. The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management confirmed that a response had been received from the CCG and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust. Both had ~~had~~ acknowledged that the 22% increase in referrals needed addressing, possibly by re-evaluating the service in order for patients who require lower level services to be referred quickly and also free up clinical staff to treat patients requiring more complex treatment. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the written response would be forwarded to Councillor Hart following the meeting.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

13 Summary of Minutes from Children and Families Partnership

Members received a copy of the Summary of Minutes from the Children and Family Partnership (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the minutes be noted.

14 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Councillor Gunn confirmed that at the meeting on 1 April 2016, she had raised the issue with regards to the management of school exclusions and asked that it was included as part of the Work Programme. The Chairman confirmed that this issue would be covered at the meeting in February 2017.

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**Children & Young People's
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

9 November 2016

**Update - Young Carers in County
Durham**



**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director Transformation and
Partnerships and Margaret Whellans, Interim Corporate Director
Children & Young People's Services**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to introduce a presentation to members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee which gives an update on Young Carers in County Durham. The Presentation will be given by Julie Scurfield, Strategic Manager Children's Services Reform.

Background

2. The number of children and young people with caring responsibilities for grandparents, parents, siblings or other adults within the family is unknown to a great extent. In some cases a child or young person may be supporting a parent with caring responsibilities and therefore the young person is overlooked.
3. The Children's Society report Hidden From View indicates that according to census data released in May 2013 there are 166,363 young carers in England and as many young carers remain hidden from official sight making the figure above the 'tip of the iceberg.'
4. The Department for Education commissioned Loughborough University to investigate the lives of young carers aged 5–17 years in England and in February 2016 they published their report. The report highlights the importance of early intervention and the critical role all statutory services have in assessing and supporting families. The report goes on that social care, health and educational professionals have a crucial role in identifying and assessing the needs of young carers.
5. The key findings from the report highlight concerns which both parents and young carers have about the consequences of disclosing young caring responsibilities; they worry about involving statutory agencies and the possibility of their children being taken into care. This can lead to children and young people with caring responsibilities and their wider needs going unrecognised and unsupported. This adds to the ongoing challenge in identifying and engaging with 'hidden' young carers so that appropriate support can be provided to help young carers and their families moderate the impact of their caring responsibilities and to prepare for adulthood.

Background to Young Carers in County Durham:

6. In County Durham the number of known young carers is 4201 according to 2011 census information. Most young carers, (3029) commit 0-19 hours of unpaid care per week; 655 young carers provide 20-49 hours of unpaid care per week; 517 young carers provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week.
7. The Children and Families Act 2014 gives young carers rights to ask for help and requires local authorities to carry out a Young Carers Needs Assessment as soon as they are aware of the young carer. With agreement of both the young carer and the person being cared for the local authority can combine the assessment with that of the adult being cared for.
8. In carrying out the assessment the local authority must consider and decide if the young carer has support needs in delivering care and to identify how those needs can most effectively be met to ensure the child achieves good outcomes.

Update on Challenges and Priorities:

9. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee received and initial overview on Young Carers in County Durham at its meeting on 2 December 2015 and members requested a further update.
10. At this meeting Children's Services reported on the key challenges and priorities as follows:-
 - The identification of young carers and the need to work more closely with Adults Services
 - Supporting young carers as they make the transition to adulthood and continuing to work closely with the Horizon Programme – a voluntary sector service delivered by DISC
 - Awareness raising of the needs of Young Carers through the promotion and implementation of the Young Carer's Charter
11. The presentation will provide an update on the actions and progress made to tackle the priorities and provide an outline of the work programme for the forthcoming year.

Recommendations

12. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the information contained in the presentation and comment accordingly.

Background Papers

- None

Contact: Julie Scurfield, Strategic Manager Children's Services Reform Tel: 03000 261630

Ann Whitton, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Tel: 03000 268143

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The Equality Act 2010 prohibits less favourable treatment of individuals based on nine protected characteristics. Young carers are protected by this legislation, both by virtue of their age and their association with people with a disability.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None

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**Children & Young People's
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

9 November 2016



**Educational Attainment of Looked
After Children**

Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation & Partnerships and Margaret Whellans, Interim Corporate Director of Children & Young People's Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to introduce a presentation to members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Young Carers in County Durham. The Presentation will be given by Strategic Lead Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Standards and Improvement, Virtual School Head.

Background

2. The concept of the 'Virtual School Head' for Children Looked After was first outlined in the White Paper 'Care Matters: Time for Change' (DCSF, June 2007 and placed the statutory responsibility on Directors of Children's Services to make sure that their local authority promotes the educational achievement of the children they look after, regardless of where they are placed.
3. The Children and Families Act 2014 amended section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and placed a statutory duty on all local authorities to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH) to promote the educational achievement of its Children Looked After. It is the responsibility of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services to ensure that these duties are met.
4. In the DfE document 'Promoting the education of Children Looked After, statutory guidance for local authorities' July 2014, it prescribes that: Virtual School Heads (VSHs) are in place and that they have the resources, time, training and support they need to discharge the duty effectively.
5. The Durham Virtual School, under the current Head was established in 2015 and encompasses the previous LACES team (Looked after children education support.) In September 2016 the team was restructured to include: a Deputy Head of the Virtual School, two Casework Managers, nine Caseworkers and two Education Inclusion Support Workers. The team is part of Durham Education and works closely with other teams within the Local Authority to ensure the best possible support and outcomes for Looked after Children in Durham.

6. The number of Children Looked after by Durham is increasing and at the time of writing stands at 656, an increase from 2015. 468 are of school age, 26 of reception age and an additional 74 are post 16. The virtual school has a duty to promote the education of and support all Durham Looked after Children from Reception to year 13.
7. In Durham, 78 of our Looked after Children are educated in out of county schools and there are 115 children who are looked after by other local authorities, placed in Durham schools. The Durham Virtual School also supports our schools with the education of none Durham Looked after Children.
8. 73 of our school aged children are educated in special schools, 99 have either a Statement of special educational need or Education Health Care Plan. A further 188 have an identified special educational need.

National Context

9. Nationally, children who are looked after achieve better educational outcomes than children in need, but perform less well than non- looked after children. In addition, there is evidence to suggest, the earlier children enter the care system, the greater chance they have of reaching their educational potential.
10. Statistics also show that a greater proportion of looked after Children, have an identified special educational need, with the greatest need being Social, Emotional and Mental health (SEMH). When outcomes for non-looked after children with similar needs are compared to the outcomes for Looked after Children, the achievement gap is much narrower and closes completely for younger (primary aged) children.
11. Regular attendance at school is a major factor in improving outcomes for all children and national statistics show Looked after Children attend less regularly and are twice as likely to be permanently excluded as their peers. For Fixed term exclusions, this figure rises to five times as likely.
12. In 2015 53% of our care leavers (aged 19 to 21) were in education, employment or training compared to a national figure of 48% and 5% compared to a national figure of 6% were in higher education.
13. The presentation will focus on end of key stage **Outcomes of Durham's Looked after Children and will include attendance, exclusion and SEND data.**

Recommendations

14. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the information contained in the presentation and provide comment accordingly.

Background Papers

- None

Contact: Irene Lavelle Strategic Lead Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Virtual Head [Tel:03000 265801](tel:03000265801)

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None

CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9th November 2016



Education Services Update

Report of Phil Hodgson, Strategic manager Education Development Services

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide updated information to the CYP Overview and Scrutiny Committee on educational outcomes in County Durham, and related updates on the focus and provision of education services.

Background

2. Durham County Council's education department continues to provide support and intervention, including intensive support for schools in most need, to ensure the best educational outcomes for children and young people in Durham.
3. The results from tests and examinations at the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4/5 for 2016 which, when compared with national averages, provide the key outcome measures for early years, primary and secondary education respectively, indicate that schools and settings continue to perform very well. The support they receive from the County's education service contributes to these positive outcomes.

Early Years outcomes

4. Early years outcomes are measured by the percentage of children reaching a good level of development (GLD) according to national Early Years Profile criteria. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are assessed by the percentage reaching a good level of development in relation to the Early Learning Goals. Assessments are made against pre-set levels, with internal and external moderations.
5. Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes are as follows:

Early Years % GLD	2014		2015		2016	
	Durham LA	National	Durham LA	National	Durham LA	National
	All	57	60	64	66	69	69
Boys	48	52	56	59	62.3	62.1
Girls	66	69	72	74	76.2	76.8

6. As the table above indicates, Durham’s outcomes are in line with national outcomes, and this has been achieved in 2016 for the first time. This is a very significant achievement considering levels of deprivation in parts of the County which always put pressure on our Early Years outcomes when set against a national benchmark. It also marks an exceptional trajectory of improvement as Early Years outcomes were significantly below national outcomes until the gap began to close in 2014.
7. The gender gap has been closed by 2 percentage points, as boys have made particular improvement in 2016. There has also been a marginal improvement in EYFS outcomes in terms of the gap between children receiving free school meals and all children (20 percentage points in 2015 closing to 19 percentage points in 2016), although there is still work to be done in this area.
8. There are three main areas of activity on which the Early Years team is focused currently, namely:
 - early identification and intervention in schools and settings requiring support
 - the establishment of a new early years panel of professionals to target support more effectively
 - developing new models of support for early years children with particular educational needs, including reviewing the current outreach provision
9. The table below shows the highly effective work done by the Early Years team to secure free early education places in line with national targets:

	2015	2016
National	63%	70%
Regional	35%	81%
Durham	73%	87%

These figures place Durham 24th out of 152 local authorities nationally; 2,025 2-year olds have been placed in Durham during the current term.

10. In terms of Ofsted outcomes, Durham is also a highly effective local authority:

% of good or better PVI settings			
	2014	2015	2016
National	78%	85%	85%
Durham	77%	85%	90%
% of good or better primary schools			
National	82%	85%	86%
Durham	89%	91%	93%

Key Stage 1 outcomes

11. In all key measures at Key Stage 1, Durham’s outcomes are ahead of national, as the table below indicates:

	National	Durham
Phonics – Year 1	80.5%	82.1%
Phonics – Year 2	66.7%	67.8%
KS1 Expected standards +		
Reading	74.0%	75.3%
Writing	65.5%	69.9%
Maths	72.6%	75.0%
RWM	60.3%	64.6%

12. For Key Stage 1, the benchmark for expected attainment in 2015 was level 2B+. In 2015 81% of KS1 children in County Durham reached this level, with Durham lagging slightly behind the national average (82%). This benchmark has now been altered to the percentage of children reaching expected standards or better (EXS+). In fact, in 2016, on both the previous and the new measure Durham's outcomes exceeded national.

13. This was a particular achievement as Key Stage 1 outcomes had been a priority for improvement for the local authority in recent years, and while the gap between local authority outcomes and national had consistently narrowed, this is the first year where national figures were exceeded.

Key Stage 2:

14. At the end of the primary stage of education there are still formal, national assessments of pupils' attainment in mathematics and English, through externally set and marked tests for all 11 year-olds. Writing is judged by teacher assessments, moderated by the local authority. Assessments are made against "age related expectations" (AS) for this age group.

15. The table below sets out the percentage of pupils in Durham and nationally that achieved KS2 AS in English (reading), English (writing), mathematics, grammar/punctuation/spelling (GPS) and RWM combined.

KS2 (AS)	National	Durham
Reading (test)	65.7%	69.3%
Writing (teacher assessment)	74.1%	78.3%
Mathematics (test)	69.8%	74.7%
G/P/S	72.4%	75.4%
RWM combined	53.3%	58.9%

16. Attainment levels across the local authority continue to be very strong against national levels and the significant trend of improvement in Durham continues year on year.

17. The same outcomes for Free School Meals pupils (FSM) indicate that Durham's schools perform exceptionally well in supporting the education of

our most vulnerable children. The table below shows data for pupils who have been in receipt of FSM at any point in the previous 6 years (known as 'FSM ever-6' or 'FSM E6')

KS2 (FSM E6)	National	Durham
Reading (test)	52.6%	57.5%
Writing (teacher assessment)	63.5%	68.3%
Mathematics (test)	56.9%	63.5%
G/P/S	60.3%	65.1%
RWM combined	38.5%	44.6%

Key Stage 4:

18. Assessment at Key Stage 4, which represents the end of compulsory schooling, continues to be through externally set and marked GCSE and GCSE equivalent examinations across a wide range of subjects and courses. These are graded from A*-G with national benchmarks of achievement. Annual results from examinations at each of Key Stages 4 and 5 (sixth form) are analysed in order to identify trends across the local authority and to inform discussions with specific schools regarding challenge and support.
19. Key Stage 4 outcomes in 2016 are reported in a different way from previous years, with a focus now on 'Basics' (% of pupils achieving A* - C English and Maths), 'Attainment 8' (pupils' performance across their best 8 qualifications measured on a points award basis, with each grade worth points on an ascending scale), and 'Progress 8' (pupils' progress across their best 8 qualifications expressed as a decimal where +0.01 and above indicates a measure of progress from a predetermined start point and -0.01 and below indicates insufficient progress against expectations).
20. The table below shows 2016 Key Stage 4 outcomes for the local authority against national, although these remain unvalidated until later in the school year.

Provisional Key Stage 4 - 2016		
	National	Durham
% Basics (A*-C Eng & Maths)	62.6%	62.1%
Attainment 8	49.8	49.0
Progress 8	-0.03	-0.12

21. Although as yet unvalidated, these results show that the progress of pupils within English has significantly improved this year at both expected and more than expected rates of progress. Moderate improvements in maths progress

are evident with this still being a future focus for improvement. There have been subject attainment and progress improvements within Durham schools outside of the core which should be reflected in the final progress 8 figures from the DFE releases.

22. In spite of the changes in reporting outcomes that are described above, analysis by officers in the Education Development Service indicates that Durham's KS4 results in 2016 have more than recovered after the small and unprecedented dip in 2015.

Sixth form results

23. AS levels, A levels and vocational qualifications have gone through major reforms in the last few years so, as anticipated, there was more variability in results this year than in the past. The content of new A level and AS level courses have been changed, and courses are no longer divided into modules or contain coursework except where it is required to assess specific skills.
24. Additionally new accountability measures for 2016 mean yearly performance comparisons are more difficult to make with previous cohorts than has been the case in the past. Nationally the proportion of A* and A grades has continued to fall for the fifth successive year as part of the Department for Education's standards agenda.
25. Despite this, the results for County Durham students have remained broadly consistent with the successes of previous years. Our academic and vocational outcomes continue to be above national figures with an increased number of students achieving the higher grades. Although the full national attainment and progress statistics are not yet validated, the overall picture remains positive.

National update

26. It was announced at the end of October that the government has dropped its plan for a bill that would have forced some schools to become academies and removed the role of councils in driving up standards in education. The Education Secretary, Justine Greening, said the government had "reflected on its strategic priorities" and will now not attempt to implement measures announced in the Queen's Speech and outlined in the 'Education for All' white paper.
27. Consultation will continue on the 'Schools that Work for Everyone' green paper, which includes lifting the ban on new grammar schools and allowing faith schools to select 100% of pupils based on their faith.
28. It is a generally held view amongst County Councils that the forced academisation of schools and the removal of the council role in school improvement goes against evidence that council-maintained schools perform

more highly than academies and free schools in Ofsted inspections, and that conversion to academies does not in itself lead to better results. In Durham in 2016, maintained schools performed better than academies in terms of KS4 outcomes for the first time.

Recommendations

29. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the information contained in the report.

Contact: Phil Hodgson, Strategic Manager, Education Development Service.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – none

Staffing - none

Risk - none

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – n/a

Accommodation – n/a

Crime and Disorder – n/a

Human Rights – n/a

Consultation – n/a

Procurement – n/a

Disability Issues – n/a

Legal Implications – n/a

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**Children and Young People's
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



9 November 2016

**Annual Report of the Adoption Service
and Adoption Panel Report - April 2015 -
March 2016**

**Report of Margaret Whellans, Interim Corporate Director Children
Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Annual Report of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panel Report April 2015 – March 2016 which is attached at appendix 2.
- 2 To highlight:
 - Key activities and achievements of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panels from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
 - Significant changes in Adoption practice in England and Wales
 - Priorities for the next period.

Background

- 3 Significant focus has been on adoption and permanence over recent years as part of the DfE Adoption Reform Programme. Key legislative drivers for Children's Services are:
 - The Children and Families Act 2014
 - The Adoptions Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013
- 4 The Local Authority provides the Annual Report to Cabinet and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Conclusion

- 5 The Adoption Services continues to focus on achieving the best outcomes for children and to prevent delay in achieving permanence for the child with a plan for adoption.

- 6 There will be more challenges in the forthcoming year for the Adoption Service and the Adoption Panel. These have been highlighted in the attached report.

Recommendation

- 7 Children and Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- Note the attached Annual Report of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panel Report at appendix 2.

Contact: Carole Payne, Head of Children's Services Tel: 03000 268657

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – One adopted, children are no longer looked after and therefore incur fewer costs, post adoption support is provided. Currently this is paid for from a national government grant but this is likely to end in 2020.

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – Adoption supports children’s right to a family life.

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues – Specific adoptive placements are recruited for disabled children.

Legal Implications – None

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Durham County Council

Adoption Service

Annual Report of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panel Report

1ST April 2015 - 31ST March 2016



INTRODUCTION

2015-16 has been another busy and successful year for the DCC Adoption Service. Durham is outperforming the North East and England to ensure that children with a plan of Adoption are linked, matched and placed with suitable adopters at the earliest possible opportunity.

The purpose of this report is to highlight:

- Key activities and achievements of the Adoption Service and Adoption Panels from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
- Significant changes in Adoption practice in England and Wales

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ADOPTION: EXTERNAL DRIVERS

This past year has been marked by the following significant changes:

May 2015 – the Adoption Support Fund was implemented. This provides additional therapeutic support for adopted children and their families initially post order although in February 2016 this was extended to include children placed for adoption who had not yet been granted an Adoption Order. Initially Durham were not able to make significant use of this fund due to the extensive support offered by the Full Circle Service, so we were unable to claim for anything in house that was available on 1st March 2015. However in November 2015 we were notified that the referral criteria had changed and since then have made full use of the fund. To date Durham has claimed £145,122.27 from the fund. The majority of this has been for service delivery to adopted children and their families by Full Circle.

June 2015 - ‘Regionalising Adoption’. The government published a paper highlighting the intention to radically reform Adoption services within the timescale of this parliament (i.e. by 2020) by moving towards Regional Adoption Agencies. Collaborative work is underway in order to determine the way forward for Durham Adoption Service

27 March 2016 - ‘Adoption – a vision for change’. This published document confirmed the government’s determination to radically reform Adoption Services by the end of this parliament. The included further changes to the Adoption Support Fund to allow children and Families placed under Special Guardianship Orders to access funding for therapeutic support from the fund.

The above report also clarified that **COURT OF APPEAL JUDGEMENTS Re B-S AND Re B** had not brought about any change in the law, rather there was a greater responsibility on the local authority to ensure that the evidence presented to the court was robust enough to assist the court in decision making but that the government remains committed to adoption as the most positive solution for children who can no longer be brought up within their birth families. The government expressed concern in the reduction in the number of children receiving Agency Decision Maker approval across the country since those judgements and promised judicial reform to ensure that Adoption is considered as a positive outcome for children.

OFSTED SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

Durham County Council Children's Services Single Inspection began on 22nd February 2016 and lasted for 4 weeks. The Adoption Service was closely scrutinised during this inspection.

The informal feedback received during the inspection was positive in regard to the Adoption Service although concerns were raised regarding the lack of Fostering for Adoption Placements and the lack of clarity in matching recruitment to the needs of Durham children.

The OFSTED report published in May 2016 found that adoption performance was assessed to be 'Good' whilst overall Durham 'Required Improvement to be Good'.

A number of outcomes have improved, for example for children whose plan is adoption. The adoption service is a strength within the authority. Work is child focused to ensure that a lifelong placement for children and young people is at the heart of all practice. The adoption service is stable, experienced and well led. A dedicated senior practitioner effectively monitors and tracks the individual progress of children. Plans for children are discussed at weekly team meetings and at fortnightly link meetings. This ensures that children awaiting placement are known to the managers and the team, keeping them at the forefront of the process

Children's progress through care proceedings and planning is effectively tracked to avoid unnecessary delay. However further work is needed to ensure that there is targeted recruitment of adopters which is informed by clear analysis of need, the area of focus identified by Ofsted.

British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)

On 31st July 2015 it was announced that BAAF was to close as it was no longer possible to sustain the organisation in the face of "significant changes and prevailing economic conditions".

BAAF, who had been supporting, advising and campaigning for children in care for three decades, transferred some of its functions to children's charity Coram to be housed in a newly created entity, CoramBAAF Adoption and Fostering Academy. Like BAAF they will operate as an independent membership organisation and take on BAAF's research, policy, professional advice and development work and administer the National Adoption Register for England, the Independent Review Mechanism and will run National Adoption Week. The Independent Review Mechanism evaluates adoption agencies' decisions not to approve an individual as an adopter on behalf of the Department for Education.

DCC ADOPTION SERVICE AND ADOPTION PANELS' ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Head of Children's Services is Carole Payne.
- Karen Robb, Strategic Manager, for Looked After Children and Permanence Services, continued to serve as the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).
- Mark Gurney, Strategic Manager for Child Protection and Disability, became temporary ADM.
- Bronwen Keegan, Operations Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Full Circle was appointed as temporary ADM in February 2016 to cover the sickness absence of the Strategic Manager.
- There continues to be a core group of experienced and highly skilled social workers in the team.
- In September 2015 Wendy Ellis was appointed as Permanent Team Manager.
- Lindsey Gray remains as Senior Practitioner with responsibility for Post Adoption and is the Adoption Support Senior Practitioner (Decision maker) for the Adoption Support Fund.
- Clare Bewley remains as Senior Practitioner with responsibility for Recruitment.
- In November 2015 Sarah Fitzpatrick was appointed as Senior Practitioner for Family Finding. This was following a successful 'Invest to Save' application.
- In January 2016 Sarah Riches joined the team as an Adoption Social Worker again following a successful 'Invest to Save' application. Sarah has a temporary contract until June 2017.
- There were 25 Adoption Panel meetings during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
- Stella Chambers has continued to serve as Adoption Panel Administrator, supported by Catherine Dawson.
- Wendy Ellis remained Agency Advisor, together with senior practitioners Clare Bewley, Lindsey Gray and Sarah Fitzpatrick.
- The Adoption Panels continue to work in close partnership with the Adoption Service.

- The Adoption Panel Independent Chair, Agency Medical Agency/Vice-Chairman and Independent Panel Members continue to contribute to the training and preparation courses for prospective adopters.
- Appraisals for Adoption Panels members continue to be conducted annually and are all complete.
- Adoption Panel training took place in 2015 in respect of recent changes in practice with regard to legal issues, and Learning from Disruptions. This was joint training with Panel Members and the Adoption Service/LAC Permanence Team in attendance. Further relevant joint training is planned for the next financial year to include siblings together or apart, contact and the matching and selection processes.
- Most members of Adoption Service have individual laptops and the majority of the team members are enabled to access DCC IT systems and services remotely via the Juniper programme. This enables team members to work in a more efficient and effective manner, in planning their work and reducing travelling time.
- The Adoption Service reviewed its Recruitment and Marketing Strategy for 2015-2018. Regular monthly information drop in sessions were held and the number of training and preparation and counselling courses continued at 6 per year
- Members of the service continued to develop guidance and forms to meet the changes in regulation, including Prospective Adopters Report which marks the key stages of the prospective adopters' journey into adoption.
- DCC continues to provide excellent adoption support services with therapeutic input from Dr Joyce Powell, consultant Clinical Psychologist, and other members of the Full Circle Therapeutic Team.
- The number of children receiving adoption financial support and allowance remains high. On 27th March 2016 111 children's families were in receipt of an adoption allowance at a weekly cost £13,569.50. Over the period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 the number of children in receipt of an adoption allowances was 159 and the total expenditure for adoption allowances was £815,505.
- The majority of the children placed with prospective adopters enjoyed stability and security in their new permanent families. Unfortunately, in spite of intensive social work and multi-agency support, one child's adoptive placement disrupted on 21.4.15 (a child who had been in placement with his sister, whose placement disrupted in November the previous year). A Disruption Meeting was convened on 26.6.15 and the report of this meeting was never received due the demise of BAAF who had provided the independent chair.

- The Annual Family Summer Fun Day took place in July 2015, and the popular Christmas Party was held in December 2015. Both events were well received and attended.
- Although there were a number of Regional Activity Days held across the South of the country we did not feel it was appropriate to feature any of our children due to the distances involved. However Senior Practitioner for Family Finding arranged our own Future Families event on 18th March 2016 with support from other members of the team where 10 of our harder to place children (children in sibling groups or children with complex needs) were featured via DVD and information stalls.
- The featured children's social workers, fostering social workers and foster carers attended the event and waiting adopters were given the opportunity to find out extensive information about the children. The event was very well attended and the feedback from attenders was excellent. At the time of writing this report the outcome is still being evaluated.
- Fostering For Adoption: This is an aspect of adoption practice advocated by government where the risks are taken by the Adopters rather than the child. Children are placed prior to the granting of a Placement Order with families who are resilient enough to manage the complex task of fostering the child throughout Care Proceedings, with the child being 'placed for adoption' only following the granting of the Placement Order. This enables the child to build attachments with their permanent carers from an early age and reduces the need for broken attachments when children move on to an adoptive placement. This places the risk firmly on the adopters and their family, as a court may not agree to the plan of adoption for the child and may decide to return the child to the care of birth family.

Fostering for Adoption continues to be discussed with all prospective adopters during training and assessment. However, until recently there has been little interest in this form of adoption as enquirers feel they are unable to take the risk of a court deciding to return the child to their birth family. Also the demography of people wishing to adopt in this area tend to be people who work outside the home and are unable to make the financial commitment that this form of adoption requires.

However, this area continues to be pursued by the Adoption Service in line with government focus. In September 2015 an advertising campaign focussed particularly on Fostering to Adopt but met with little response.

The Adoption Service have developed printed information and the referral form to the team has been revised to ensure that Fostering for Adoption is considered by the child's social worker at the earliest opportunity and plans are already in place to access Approved Fostering for Adoption carers from Voluntary Agencies if this need cannot be met through DCC adopters.

VISION, VALUES AND AIMS OF DURHAM ADOPTION TEAM

The Adoption Service's vision, values and aims are:

- Our values will always be: "Children Come First", and will be at the centre of all our work.

We seek to:

- Be the best, approachable, professional and supportive Adoption Service.
- Be an Adoption Service that people choose.
- Value and celebrate the diversity, differences and background of our potential adopters.
- Be respectful, flexible, honest and transparent in the manner we work with prospective adopters, children and young people, and professionals from multi-agencies.
- Be a highly skilled and experienced team, with excellent mix of skills and abilities, seeking continual improvement in our work.
- Promote and provide a robust post adoption support service for all affected by adoption.
- Maximise use of technology and social media to enable us to be competitive in the changing face of adoption work.

RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS:

April 2015 - March 2016

1 Initial Enquiry

Table 1:

	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Initial Contact	24	11	21	15	14	21	10	19	19	22	17	10	203
Number of Enquiry Forms	19	9	19	10	11	14	7	15	13	9	11	7	144
Initial Visits	2	3	4	7	3	3	7	3	3	1	6	3	45
Registration of Interest (ROI) Accepted	3	3	6	2	7	2	1	4	2	2	2	3	37
Training	-	4	-	9	-	3	-	5	-	4	-	6	31

Previous year figures in brackets. This table demonstrates the reduction in Initial contacts that have been received over the period when compared with the previous 12 months (252), this has led to a reduced number of Enquiry forms (207), Initial visits (52), ROI's accepted (44) and people attending training (31). We continue to ensure that enquiries are screened and evaluated so that only people with the necessary skills to meet the needs of Durham Children are invited to progress to complete the Registration of Interest (ROI) and training

The Recruitment and Marketing Strategy has continued to generate interest from prospective adopters to apply to adopt with Durham County Council throughout the year although the interest in Adoption has not been high on the media profile which has a big impact on recruitment. We continue to advertise continually on Durham's website and Facebook page as well as more broadly in the community.

There is currently a mismatch between adopters waiting and children with a plan of adoption who are waiting to be matched which is common across the northern consortium and the whole country. We have a number of Adopters approved at panel and awaiting a link (currently 16 although 4 are currently being considered for tentative links to children). The majority of those waiting wish to adopt a female child, or a child without complexity, or both. We currently have 10 children who have complex needs that we are actively family finding for.

There were limited opportunities for collaborative work amongst the twelve Local Authorities in the North East Region. The reason for this was that there continues to

be a reduction in the numbers of children with a plan of adoption across the region and our partner agencies largely decided to reduce their advertising accordingly, because they were only accepting enquiries from people wishing to adopt older children, sibling groups or children with more complex needs. In Durham we have continued to recruit any suitable adopters who express an interest although this situation may be reviewed in the near future if the pool of adopters we have waiting continues to increase.

There were a total of 203 initial contacts with 45 progressing to Initial Visits. There were a high number of enquiries where it was not appropriate to progress to initial visit. The following are some of the reasons for not progressing:

- Ongoing fertility treatment
- Ongoing serious mental health issues
- Poor home conditions
- Could not be contacted
- Withdrew prior to the initial visit
- Had no spare bedroom
- Had not been as a couple for three years
- Smoking, or recent cessation of smoking

The assessment process remains robust to ensure that only carers who can meet the needs of children throughout their childhood and into adulthood are progressed. Of the initial visits 31 prospective adoptive families have currently undergone training. This is due to the high level of screening and preparation work that is carried out with prospective applicants during and following the initial home visit to ensure that only enquirers with the necessary skills to adopt are progressed to Stage 1 of the adoption process.

2 Prospective Adopter Assessment

2.1 Recruitment Target

DCC Adoption Service aimed to recruit and approve enough families of prospective adopters during 2014/15 to meet the needs of Durham children with a plan of adoption and 35 adoptive families were actually approved. The reasons for this reduction in performance compared to the previous year are outlined below.

- There has been a reduction in the numbers of enquiries from prospective adopters and the majority wished to adopt a child without complex needs in order to meet their own needs to become parents often following issues with their own fertility.
- There continues to be a reduction in the numbers of children requiring a plan of adoption, along with an increase in the number of children with complex needs who require permanence through adoption.

The Adoption Service is robust during assessment processes and were successful in ensuring people without the necessary skills to adopt withdrew or were counselled out during the process.

The adoption process states that enquirers cannot move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the process until references, medicals and DBS's have been received and the Adoption Service is constantly seeking to address delay caused particularly by medicals and DBS disclosures (currently up to 18 week timescale) not being processed by outside agencies in a timely manner. Many of these processes are beyond our control but impact on our performance.

2.2 Number of Prospective Adopters Approved 1st April 2015 – end March 2016

(Timescale Prospective Adopters Application Form received to Agency Decision Maker approval)

Table 2:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Number of approvals	0	4	2	4	5	1	4	4	3	3	4	1	35
0-1 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-3 months	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
3-6 months	0	4	1	2	2	1	0	2	1	0	3	1	17
6-12 months	0	0	1	2	1	0	4	2	1	3	1	0	15
12 months +	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

This table shows the length of time between the ROI being received and the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) approval of prospective adopters as suitable to adopt. This demonstrates that although the majority of adopters are approved within 6 months in accordance with Government requirements, where timescales are exceeded this was due to medical concerns (4), Applicants delay in providing information (1), Applicants took a break within the process for medical or personal reasons (7) applicants choosing to take a 6 month break between Stage 1 and Stage 2, Applicants not making themselves available for assessment (3), DBS issues (1) and availability of panel (1).

The Adoption Service continues to have a clear focus on recruitment with a robust Recruitment Strategy to enable the recruitment of sufficient adopters to meet the needs of children who have a plan of adoption. All team members continue to be actively involved in recruitment and training activities.

2.3 Inter-Agency Placements of children with DCC adopters

DCC approved adopters have been matched with children from other Local Authorities in 2015/16 due to the high level of waiting adopters in our own and all other local authorities:

3 Children Approved for Adoption

3.1 Number of Children Approved for Adoption by Agency Decision Maker-

Table 3:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2015/16	10	1	10	6	3	5	3	0	5	2	6	2	53
2014/15	6	0	9	2	2	1	2	5	1	6	7	5	46
2013/14	11	6	14	4	7	5	7	4	4	2	3	0	67
2012/13	8	7	12	2	7	1	9	4	0	6	9	2	67

There has been an increase in the number of looked after children in DCC approved for permanence through adoption compared to 2014/15.

3.2 Children with a plan of adoption whose plans have changed.

Table 4:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2015	0	0	1	0	1	4	6	2	1	1	0	3	19

The majority of the children were given ADM approval but the courts did not approve a plan of adoption.

Children with an Adoption Plan Waiting for Placement

As at 31 March 2016 there were 33 children with a plan of adoption awaiting placement

Number of children with Placement Order at 31 March 2016

There were 25 children who were the subject of a Placement Order

Number of children with ADM but awaiting a Placement Order 31 March 2016

There were 8 children whereby adoption was the agreed plan and for whom a Placement Order was not yet in place.

DCC has an overall strategic aim to secure permanence at the earliest opportunity and reduce delay for children moving onto their 'Forever Family'. There has been an increase in the numbers of children placed with family and friends with a view to securing permanence through a Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order, although this could change following the recent publication of the Government paper: 'Adoption- a vision for change' where it is clarified about the expectations that local authorities will consider adoption plans for children over family placements wherever this is in the best interests of the child and the government has stated there will be legal changes to ensure that this happens where necessary

4 Matching

4.1 Number of DCC Adopters Matched to a Child 1.4.15 – 31.3.16

(Date of Agency Decision Maker approval of prospective applicants to date of the Agency Decision Maker approval of the Match)

A total of 37 matches were made (an increase on the previous year related to the increase in children with a plan of adoption)

Table 5:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2015/16	1	3	1	2	7	5	7	2	4	1	3	1	37
2014/15	8	3	4	2	2	0	6	2	3	1	1	0	32
2013/14	4	7	3	2	3	4	0	5	6	1	5	6	46
2012/13	3	2	6	6	3	2	9	10	1	5	4	4	55

Projected Matches planned at panel April/May 2016

Table 6:

Apr	May	Total
5	1	6

4.2 Inter-Agency Placements of Children with DCC Adopters

As all local authorities across the country have a surplus of adopters for children without complex needs there have been no children from elsewhere placed with Durham approved adopters

5 Children Placed for Adoption

5.1 Number of Children Placed for Adoption April 2015 – March 2016

Table 7:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
DCC	1	3	1	5	6	3	11	2	4	2	3	0	41
DCC- FC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VAA	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
OLA	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	10
Total	1	3	5	6	6	6	11	2	4	2	6	1	53
2014/15	10	3	5	2	2	0	4	6	4	0	1	0	37
2013/14	12	6	3	6	3	4	0	3	6	5	3	1	52

Key: DCC – Durham County Council, VAA – Voluntary Adoption Agency, OLA – other Local Authority, FC – Foster Carer

5.2 Number of Children Placed for Adoption Awaiting Adoption Order as at 31.3.16

There were 42 children placed for adoption and awaiting an adoption order as at 31.3.16

The majority of prospective adopters continue to make their application to adopt following the 10 week review in order to progress their adoption at the earliest opportunity. It is expected that a significant proportion of these children will have their Adoption Orders granted by 31st March 2017

6. Adoption Orders

6.1 Number of Children Adopted

Table 8: No. of Adoption Orders granted 1.4.15-31.3.16

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
DCC	2	4	4	4	0	0	2	0	2	3	3	1	25
VAA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OLA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
DCC-FC	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	4	4	4	0	0	4	0	2	3	3	1	28
2014/15	3	2	7	2	3	6	4	6	2	2	3	3	43
2013/14	3	4	5	5	5	11	8	10	7	4	8 (9)	1	73

- 28 adoption orders were granted between 1.4.15 – 31.3.16
- There has been significant delay in the granting of Adoption Orders in the past 12 months as a number of birth parents have contested the Placement Order at the Initial Birth Parent Hearing to consider the application for the Adoption Order has increased and is now the norm. In the majority of cases their appeal has not been granted but this has caused the Hearings to be adjourned until a later date causing delay in the granting of the Adoption Order. This creates anxiety for adopters which require and receive extensive support from their adoption worker at this time.

6.2 Pre-Adoption Order Disruption

1 child who had been placed for adoption by DCC was returned to the care of the Local Authority following an Adoption Disruption despite receiving comprehensive adoption support. This child was the full sibling of the child whose placement disrupted the previous year.

7 Non-Agency Adoption Orders

Table 9:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
0	0	3	0	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	9

The majority of non-agency adoptions are processed and assessed by Adoption Social worker who has extensive experience in this area of work.

9 non-agency adoption orders were granted in 2015/16

8 Adoption Support

It is acknowledged that children placed for adoption and their families often require additional support over the period of their childhood. Durham has been a forerunner in the provision of support due to The Full Circle Therapeutic Service which provides bespoke therapeutic interventions in a timely manner.

This sets us apart from our regional neighbours and is often the reason why prospective adopters choose to come to Durham Adoption Agency

Adoption support systems and processes have been reviewed and re-designed to provide a more effective, efficient and responsive service for all affected by adoption which underpins the implementation of **Durham Adoption Support Passport**. Adopters and their families are informed that they have a right to request an assessment of their adoption support needs throughout the life time journey of their adoption experiences until the child reaches the age of majority at 18.

Adoption support needs are evaluated during assessment, match and placement in order to achieve positive outcomes and where required additional support from a wide range of services is available:

- Dedicated Looked After Nurses, life story co-ordinator, Full Circle Therapeutic Service, Clinical Consultant Child Psychologist and Medical Adviser all contribute to provide excellent support to adopters and professionals in addressing any health issues.
- Informal “buddy” support from approved adopters for newly approved adopters and those who need “friendly” support and advice.
- The LACES Service offers a wide range of support, advice and guidance to adopters and professionals with regard to educational issues. Use of Pupil Premium Plus continues to be promoted
- Out of Hours support is available for adopters through the Durham County Council Emergency Duty Team (EDT).
- The dedicated Consultant Clinical Child Psychologist provided 74 consultations to adopters during the period April 15 to end March 16. This consultation and support to adopters helped them to understand the impact of trauma and neglect upon children’s behaviour and relationships as well as thinking about the children and young people’s developmental, emotional and mental health issues and concerns and promoted placement stability. This is especially important during matching.

- The adoption support Fund has been available to access funds for therapeutic support for adopted children and their families. To date a total of £145,122.27 has been claimed from the fund to fund the support of children placed by and within County Durham
- Attachment Training is delivered by The Full Circle Team and receives excellent feedback from adopters and is invaluable to assist them in their understanding of the needs of children and some of the challenges their behaviour may bring ensuring that adopters offer suitable therapeutic parenting to children from the outset..

Additional Adoption Support Events:

- Two family fun day events are organised each year by the Adoption Service in July and December. These are well attended and received and give adopted children the opportunity to meet with other children and families
- The Service level agreement for providing post adoption support to birth parents, adoptive families, their children and young people continues to be held by PAC UK. This service has been extended for a further year in line with the original agreement
- Family and Friends of Adoption Events take place 6 times a year. These events are well received by the friends and families of prospective adopters and the feedback received is excellent.

A wide range of adoption support services with multi team/agency input is provided and these include regular training events, seminars, social events, drop in sessions, and individual casework

8.1 Birth Records Counselling

Table 10:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
1	2	3	3	2	0	4	3	1	3	1	3	26

When a child reaches the age of 18 they can apply to view their birth records and make an application to DCC and are supported to do so. Records are sought and they're supported to view them.

8.2 Enquiries to Access to Adoption Information Adopted Adults

Table 11:

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
1	1	3	1	1	2	6	3	4	2	4	0	28

8.3 Referrals to Parents & Children (PAC) UK

Table 12:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Family support	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Adopters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adopted Adults	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	5
Contemporary Birth Parents	3	7	3	0	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	28
Birth Relatives (Post AO)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Total	3	7	3	0	5	2	6	2	3	5	1	2	38

8.4 Number of Indirect Contact Arrangements In Place

We have 1,213 post adoption events from 31.3.15- 1.4.16 which include adoption allowance reviews, indirect contact with adopters and birth families (292 birth others, 210 birth fathers, 103 maternal grandparents, 47 paternal grandparents and 39 significant others) and 23 new Adoption Allowances

8.5 Request for an Assessment of Post-Adoption Support Needs

Table 13:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total

2015/16	0	1	3	2	1	2	7	2	18	4	1	1	42
---------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	-----------

8.6 Number of referrals to Adoption Support Fund

Table 14:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2015/16	0	1	0	1	0	7	2	18	4	3	8	2	46

8.7 New Adoption Allowance Agreed

Table 15:

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
2015/16	0	1	8	1	3	0	4	0	3	2	0	1	23

The total number of children in receipt of an adoption allowance in 2015-16 =159
(expenditure £815.5k)

Contact Plans and 'The Post Box'

The Adoption Service operates an efficient and proactive Post Box system. This promotes the exchange of information in accordance with contact plans and agreements to assist the child and birth parents through varying stages of development. There are robust mechanisms to monitor and control information exchanged to safeguard the child and placement. The Adoption Service scan and retain information exchanged between adopters, adopted children and birth family members to have a backup of the information received in the event of this being required.

The provision of adoption support in maintaining indirect contact plans between adopters, adopted children and birth family members has increased in the last 5 years and can be complex and resource intensive. This reflects the increase in the number of children placed.

The opportunities presented by social networking sites such as Facebook also present considerable challenges in adoption placements as this has become a mechanism for tracing or unsolicited contact. This has caused significant distress to adopters and the dangers of this are highlighted within the ICP training.

9 Life Story Work Consultations

Month	Social Workers	Social Work Assistant	Residential Workers	Foster Carers	Adopters	Others e.g social workers, etc	Total
April	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
June	0	0	0	2	7	0	9
July	3	0	0	4	7	0	14
Aug	3	0	0	3	7	0	13
Sept	2	0	0	3	5	1	11
Oct	6	4	0	2	10	0	22
Nov	2	0	0	2	5	0	9
Dec	2	1	0	1	2	1	7
Jan 16	3	0	0	3	6	0	12
Feb	2	2	0	3	7	0	14
Mar	2	4	0	2	9	0	17
Total	23	7	0	23	56	2	128
2014/15	22	17	8	23	29	4	103
2013/14	85	43	22	34	58	19	261

Table 16:

10 Feedback from Adopters:

The Adoption team has received positive feedback at all stages of the adoption process.

11 Key Priorities for 2015/16

The Adoption Service "Statement of Purpose" 2015/16 sets out the aims and objectives of the team.

The main priorities of The Adoption Service will continue to focus on Recruitment & Assessment, Family Finding and Adoption Support.

- Recruitment & Assessment of adopters will be prioritised and targeted in order that in- house resources are available locally and within the region for children who need adoption placements. This will be directly linked to the needs of children with a plan of adoption.
- Family Finding will be proactive in order to provide placement choice and to avoid unnecessary delays in placing children in new families. In order to do this children are allocated a Family Finder on referral to the Adoption Service so their needs can be considered and they can be featured appropriately. This will allow every child with a plan of adoption to have the greatest opportunity to be matched with an adoptive family who can meet their needs throughout their lives as soon as possible.
- The Adoption Support Fund has brought changes to Adoption support services as the funding for therapeutic support has moved to an external fund managed by a Government appointed organisation. There is an obligation on the part of the Local Authority to assess the Adoption Support needs of any adopted child within Durham County Council. It is the Local Authority's responsibility to make this obligation known and the main impact of this has been felt within the Full circle Team rather than the adoption team as they provide the majority of therapeutic interventions within County Durham.
- The priority of the Adoption Service is to make and sustain stable adoption placements and to ensure that the lifelong needs of those affected by adoption are met.
- The Government have announced plans to regionalise adoption services in order to consolidate resources and reduce delay for children with a plan of adoption. This will present opportunities and challenges for the Adoption Service in the future.

12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The Adoption Service continues to focus on achieving the best outcomes for children and to prevent delay in achieving permanence for the child with a plan of adoption and children remain the focus and the centre of everything we do.

See Appendix 2 which shows positive performance by DCC in relation to key targets in comparison to the national and regional picture.

The past year has brought new challenges which are reflected nationally including:

- The decrease in the numbers of children with a plan of adoption
- The reduction in the numbers of people coming forward to adopt
- The increase in the number of adopters who do not feel they have the necessary skills to consider older children or children with complex needs
- The increase in the number of birth parents who have sought to appeal the granting of the Placement Order at the point the adopters make their application for the Adoption Order. This has led to a significant increase in

the continued support required for Adopters at this time, as well as delay for both children and adopters alike

There will be more challenges ahead in 2016/17 for the Adoption Service and the Adoption Panel. These have been highlighted in the report above. The key priority areas to continue in the new financial year include:

- The drive to match and place children with adoption plans swiftly (in accordance with the timescale/targets set by DfE)
- The continued recruitment of adoptive carers to meet the needs of Durham children so that these children can be placed with their prospective adopters without undue delay,
- The continued assessment of adopters within the timescales set by DfE

Detailed action plans have been developed for each of these priorities, for implementation by the service.

Bronwen Keegan
Operations Manager
Fostering, Adoption and Full Circle

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The provision of post adoption support is currently provided via a government grant, which is time limited to 2020. A budget pressure is possible thereafter.

Staffing – There are no implications for staffing. The Adoption Service is stable and experienced.

Risk – Liability to recruit adopters would limit placement choice, changes in national policy and Family Court practice can impact significantly on adoption practice.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – Efforts are made to ensure all children are considered for adoption, including those with complex and special needs.

Accommodation – No implications

Crime and Disorder – No implications

Human Rights – The right to a family life is established in family practice

Consultation – No implications

Procurement – No implications

Disability Issues – Children with a disability are targeted for specific adoption recruitment activity and support

Legal Implications – None at present, although government have signalled likely future change in legislation in this area

Appendix 2

Quarterly Adoption Survey Quarter 4 2015-16 (Period: 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) - Adoption data

Coverage: Local Authorities in England

		Children waiting					Progress through the adoption process					Timeliness for children who have been adopted	
		With a decision but not yet placed as at	With a placement order but not yet placed as at	With a placement order but not yet placed (18 months or more since entering care) as at	Average length of time spent waiting (since entering care) for those with a placement order not yet placed (days)	Percentage of children waiting with a placement order at 31 Mar 2016 per looked after children at 31 Mar 2015	Number of ADM decisions	Number of placement orders granted	Number of children matched with adoptive families	Number of children placed with adoptive families	Number of children adopted	(AS1) Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	(AS2) Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family
		31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2016	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16
ENGLAND		3,190	2,050	640	543	3	4,780	3,870	4,170	4,220	4,310	522	244
NORTH EAST		220	130	50	538	3	310	250	250	270	250	563	211
841	Darlington	15	15	x	449	7	15	15	5	5	10	x	x
840	Durham	30	25	x	389	4	55	50	50	50	30	420	173
390	Gateshead	30	15	5	538	4	30	30	25	25	30	696	170
805	Hartlepool	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	10	10	x	x
806	Middlesbrough	15	15	10	682	4	10	10	10	15	15	531	141
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	30	15	10	765	3	30	25	25	25	25	479	157
392	North Tyneside	10	x	x	x	x	20	15	15	15	20	563	278
929	Northumberland	30	10	0	x	3	35	20	35	35	35	704	246
807	Redcar and Cleveland	x	x	0	x	x	5	5	x	x	10	x	x
393	South Tyneside	5	x	x	x	x	20	25	15	25	20	467	x
808	Stockton-on-Tees	x	x	0	x	x	15	10	10	15	20	656	340
394	Sunderland	50	25	15	615	4	65	40	35	35	30	594	188

OTHER ST. NEIGHBOURS		470	310	100	541	2	740	630	700	720	790	512	255
876	Halton	20	15	0	363	7	30	25	10	10	15	446	135
342	St. Helens	10	10	x	x	2	25	25	35	35	50	603	359
359	Wigan	15	10	x	x	2	40	35	45	50	40	457	220
370	Barnsley	20	20	x	443	7	40	35	25	25	35	541	255
384	Wakefield	30	25	10	656	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Note: DfE rounds counts to the nearest 5 at local authority level, nearest 10 at national and regional level. (x) means data has been suppressed due to low numbers i.e. less than 5. (..) means no data was submitted.

Quarterly Adoption Survey Quarter 4 2015-16 (Period: 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016) - Adopter data

Coverage: Local Authorities in England

		Progress through the adoption process				Prospective adopters waiting			Timeliness for adopters					
		Number of registrations	Number of approvals	Number of adoptive families matched to children	Number of adoptive families with children placed with them	Number of adoption orders granted	Number of prospective adoptive families not yet approved	Number of approved adoptive families waiting to be matched with children	Number of adoptive families approved			Number of adoptive families matched		
		Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	Q1 - Q4 2015-16	31 Mar 2016	31 Mar 2016	within 6 months of registration in 2015-16	after 6 months of registration in 2015-16	Information not available	within 3 months of approval in 2015-16	after 3 months of approval in 2015-16	Information not available
ENGLAND		2,700	2,940	2,570	2,540	2,600	1,710	2,520	780	1,870	290	680	1,850	30
NORTH EAST		170	200	170	170	160	120	200	60	120	10	40	140	x
841	Darlington	x	5	x	x	5	5	10	0	5	0	0	x	0
840	Durham	30	35	35	30	25	10	25	20	15	0	5	30	0
390	Gateshead	15	10	15	15	15	15	10	0	10	x	5	10	0
805	Hartlepool	5	15	10	10	10	25	15	x	10	x	0	10	0
806	Middlesbrough	10	15	x	x	5	x	15	0	10	x	x	x	0
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	25	40	30	30	25	20	55	5	35	0	x	25	0
392	North Tyneside	10	15	10	10	15	5	5	x	10	x	x	10	0
929	Northumberland	10	10	5	10	10	x	15	x	x	x	x	x	0
807	Redcar and Cleveland	5	10	x	x	5	x	10	0	10	0	0	x	0
393	South Tyneside	20	20	25	25	15	10	10	20	0	x	x	20	x
808	Stockton-on-Tees	15	10	5	5	10	10	15	x	10	0	0	5	0
394	Sunderland	20	20	20	20	15	10	5	5	10	x	10	10	0

OTHER ST. NEIGHBOURS		340	480	420	410	430	230	430	130	300	50	130	290	x
876	Halton	x	10	5	x	0	x	5	x	x	0	x	x	0
342	St. Helens	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
359	Wigan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
370	Barnsley	35	25	25	20	15	20	15	x	20	x	10	15	0
384	Wakefield	..	..	..	..	..	x	15	..	..	..	..	..	..

Note: DfE rounds counts to the nearest 5 at local authority level, nearest 10 at national and regional level. (x) means data has been suppressed due to low numbers i.e. less than 5. (..) means no data was submitted.

CYPS Overview & Scrutiny

9 November 2016



Annual Report of the Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service 2015/16

Report Carole Payne, Head of Children's Services

1 Purpose of the Report

The National Minimum Standards for Fostering (2011) require that Fostering Agencies report the activity of the fostering service to its governing bodies. The purpose of presenting this report therefore is to comply with the legislation and ensure the activity presented within this report progresses through appropriate management meetings and onto Cabinet.

2 Context

The purpose of presenting this report on the activity of the fostering service and related panel activity for the period 2015/16 is to apprise senior officers and Members on the business of the service which looks after the majority of our looked after children. The fostering service is key to the department fulfilling its duties to looked after children. The ongoing developments within the service are fundamental to the department achieving improved outcomes for our children and efficiencies over the forthcoming years. Section 8 highlights the key priorities which are the focus for development over the short, medium and long term.

The report outlines the activity of the service in relation to key strategic priorities and the work of the Fostering Panels throughout the year.

The Corporate Parenting Panel take an active and focussed interest in the services delivered for Durham's looked after children. Reporting on key areas of activity ensures Members have a comprehensive knowledge of what is happening at the 'front line' and ensure they have oversight of key areas of service delivery in order to effectively challenge and drive up service standards to ensure outcomes for children are constantly improving.

Elected members are represented on each of the Fostering and Adoption Panels.

3 Future Priorities

The annual report of the Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service Sets out 4 main priorities for the next year, designed to improve and expand this key area of service:

- Development of a robust Marketing Strategy to increase the number of fostering applicants to Durham to meet 100% of Durham's needs and achieve vacant capacity. This will enable matching of needs to carer skills and reduce reliance on external resources;
- Further Development of The Fostering Plus Scheme in order to provide a family based service to care for some of our children with most complex needs;
- Implementation of a review of the fostering service to ensure the resources channelled into the service are utilised in the most effective and efficient way and that the service is able to meet future demand;
- Deliver initiatives already in train to promote fostering, such as Durham County Council liveried vehicles, a concerted social media campaign and targeted recruitment to specialist fostering programmes.

4 Recommendation

That the CYPS Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- Approve the attached Annual Report of the Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service 2015/16;
- Approve the future priorities;
- Support initiative to promote fostering.

Contact: Carole Payne, Head of Children's Services Tel: 03000 268657

Durham County Council Fostering Service

The Annual Report of The Fostering Panels and the Fostering Service 2015-16



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1. INTRODUCTION

The information presented in this report relates to the activity within Durham County Council Fostering Service and the activity of the three Fostering Panels

This report demonstrates that 2015/16 was another busy year for both the Fostering Service and the Fostering Panels. The work of the Panels and its membership is central to The Fostering Service and the Service is most appreciative of the skills, knowledge and commitment of all of its Panel members.

Legal perspective

The legislation, guidance and regulation relating to Fostering Services and Fostering Panel are enshrined in;

- The Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011,
- Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011.
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services.
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2010
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: The Care Planning Placement and Case Review
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st July 2013.
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2015, which came into force on 1st April 2015

2. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE

2.1 CONTEXT

The Fostering Service comprises four separate teams and during the year benefitted from stability within the staff group. The teams within the service are

- The Short Term Support Team

- The Permanence Team
- The Recruitment Team
- The Placement and Kinship Team

This provides:

- A focus on the recruitment of foster carers
- A focus on children and young people requiring a permanent or long term foster care
- A focus on the assessment and support of Family and Friends foster carers
- A focus on children requiring short term foster placements and the identification of the best match for them
- A focus on maximising the resources of the Fostering Service

Achievements in 2015/16

The Fostering Service, foster carers and Panels have achieved the following:

- There has been a continued, albeit gradual net increase in the number of mainstream carer households. This has risen from 226 on 31st March 2015 to 234 on 31st March 2016 taking into account de-registrations as well as registrations.
- There has been a continued increase in the number of approved placements in the Fostering Service. In the last three years this has risen from 513 placements in March 2013 to 630 placements.
- There has been an increase in the number of children placed in family and friends foster care over the year from 88 to 101 (see Section 3 for looked after children statistics).
- There has been an increase in matched permanent placements - 109 in 2014 to 170 in 2016.
- The approval of Family and Friends foster carers has continued to be an important aspect of the work of the Fostering Service. Importantly, 51 children successfully achieved permanence with family/connected people by becoming subject of Adoption, Special Guardianship Orders, Residence Orders or Child Arrangement Orders during 2015/16
- Over the 12 months period, the average length of time to complete a Form F Fostering assessment from application to approval at panel is 4.70 months. This is important for attracting potential foster carers who are keen for the assessment to be completed as quickly as possible and regularly ask how long the assessment will take.

Changes and Developments in 2015/16

There have been a number of changes to the management within the Fostering Service:

- In June 2015, Bronwen Smith was appointed temporary Operations Manager Fostering, Adoption and Full Circle, following Dorothy Alexander moving to Specialist Projects post.
- Bronwen Smith's substantive post was back-filled by Jessica Cowan, and currently Andy Jennings is in post on a temporary basis.
- Lorraine Botcherby was appointed to the permanent post of Team Manager Permanence Team in October 2015

The Fostering Service has also worked on the following developments/changes:

- Review and consolidation following the Payment for Skills Review. This has helped to raise standards and improve consistency across the fostering service. There has been a reduction in the number of children in respite care, as the changes to Payment for Skills discourages foster carers from routinely taking respite. This has improved placement stability. We have also achieved significant financial savings.
- Continued development of the Fostering Plus initiative which aims to provide a multi-agency approach to meet the needs of both children/young people with the most complex needs and challenging behaviour, through providing increased support to foster carers. Although we have not achieved the target for recruitment of foster carers, the Fostering Plus Support workers have been providing "wrap around" support to children and mainstream carer's which has been invaluable in promoting placement stability and providing practical support to foster carers in crisis
- We continue to prioritise promoting placement stability for children and young people. Our NI62 and NI63 indicators (for short and long term stability respectively) remain good, and the Looked After and Permanence Management Team meet on a monthly basis to review placement stability, and also to focus on achieving permanence for children. The Panels approved the match of 45 children to permanent carers, including two sibling groups for 4 children and smaller sibling groups too
- Development of a "welcome pack" to ensure new carers have information about the support they can receive, and fostering policies and procedures at the point of approval.
- Development of the Launch Pad support group for newly approved carers to offer tailored support to carers in their first year. This group developed as a result of consultation which highlighted the need for bespoke support in year one. This also gives carers an opportunity to build relationships with others which offers mutual support as well as reinforcing key messages from the service to achieve positive outcomes for children.
- Re-establishment of the support group for Family and Friend carers on a quarterly basis, enabling carers to receive both support and training. This has strengthened informal networks for carers and identified and identified other areas of support, for example "The Relative Experience" voluntary service

- Continued development of the training provided to foster carers through the provision of additional courses to meet their needs. We promote a strong culture of learning for foster carers
- Ongoing promotion of the M8's group for foster carers own children. Research indicates that where children are engaged with the fostering task, outcomes are more positive for all involved parties. The group meets during every school holiday period, with approximately 20 young people attending. Feedback from the young people evidences that they value the opportunity to share their experiences and any concerns they have about fostering
- Work is ongoing towards the continued Investing in Children status for 2016 – 18. This is based upon the views of children and young people and how this has impacted upon the development of the service
- The Service has been involved in reviewing the process for temporary approval of Family and Friends foster carers to ensure that children are in regulated and supported care arrangements. Panel training will be developed to update panel members to reflect the changes that have taken place.
- Work has been undertaken to update the Fostering website, so that it is more user friendly and a stronger marketing tool. Changes have been positive, and work is ongoing with the DCC web team to make further improvements. Feedback to date in relation to the improvements from foster carers has been positive.
- Promotion of educational achievement for children continues to be an important focus and we have a consultation session planned for carers to look at how they can raise aspirations for the children and young people they care for. We are also developing regular training from the Virtual School Team for foster carers to ensure they are up to date with best practice in supporting children to achieve their potential. An increasing number of young people are attending University or moving into employment
- Promotion of improved health outcomes for children – the work of The Full Circle Therapeutic Team is very important in promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people and increasing the understanding that foster carers have of a range of issues, including attachment
- In line with best practice, foster carers are to be invited to Panel from 1st July 2016 for any reviews presented. This will ensure we are an open and transparent service, and provide formal acknowledgement of the work that foster carers do, as well as giving them an opportunity to share their experiences with the Panel
- Representation on the Missing and Exploited Group and the Child Sexual Exploitation group. This ensures that the fostering perspective is included and that key messages can be disseminated within the fostering service
- Consolidation of the policy changes required by “Staying Put: arrangements for care leavers aged 18 years and above, and service

wide meetings to ensure consistent practice facilitated by the Fostering Service. This enables young people to receive ongoing support as they move towards independence, whilst remaining with their previous foster carer's, where both the foster carer and the young person want the placement to continue and the social worker is in agreement

- Work is ongoing to implement the amendments made to the Care Planning and Fostering (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 1st April 2015. These amendments predominantly focus on how local authorities support looked after children who are placed in long-term fostering arrangements.
- Close partnership working continues to be developed on an individual and service wide level to achieve best outcomes for children. We have quarterly development sessions for all staff in the Looked After and Permanence Service

2.2 FOSTER CARER INFORMATION

Numbers and type of foster care provision

Table 1 below gives the breakdown of foster carers by the type of foster care they provide

Type of Care	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Short Term Care	129	135	108	101	98
Both Short Term and Permanent Care	27	35	69	70	85
Permanent Care	45	39	42	55	51
TOTAL MAINSTREAM	201	209	219	226	234
Family & Friends Care	20	26	36	39	44
Family & Friends Temp Approved	33	30	45	32	28
TOTAL FAMILY&FRIENDS	53	56	81	71	72
Foster carer support respite	07	05	04	00	00
TOTAL MAINSTREAM AND FAMILY & FRIENDS	261	270	304	297	306

The above shows that on 31st March 2015 there were 306 registered foster carers, which included 28 carers who had temporary approval under Regulation 24 of The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010

This data represents a snapshot picture on this date. However, it masks the movement of carers during the year particularly Family and Friend carers, a proportion of whom are approved and de-registered within the year when a permanent order is made, for example, Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangement Order (refer to approval and de-registration details)

Summary and Analysis

- In relation to mainstream foster carers (short term approval; dual approval for short term and permanence approval ;and permanence approval) there has been a net increase of 8 foster carers (226 to 234 carers) when the number of mainstream de-registrations are taken into account. This is the same increase as last year. It reflects:
 - the difficulty in attracting new carers to the service.
 - an increase in carers counselled out during the assessment process if they were deemed unsuitable
 - the natural loss of carers through normal life events, eg retirement, ill health etc
- The biggest increase in the approval category of carers relates to those carers who are approved for both permanent and short term care. This has risen from a total of 70 carers able to offer both short term and long term placements to 85 carers. This relates to a change of policy in the assessment process where assessments for dual approval for both short term and permanence are completed with carers who have the potential in the future to consider a long term placement. It also relates to a change of policy in the consideration of permanent carers having the capacity and ability to offer short term placements alongside a permanent placement if this is appropriate in relation to the children already placed permanently.

This provides

 - Greater placement choice through flexibility of terms of approval.
 - Allows foster carers to gain experience of fostering before committing to a long term placement.
 - Is efficient in use of resources as dual approval registration in the original assessment avoids the subsequent need to complete a reassessment for permanence.
- The number of permanent only carers has fallen slightly, as has the number of short term only carers, but as stated above both categories have greater capacity due to the increase in carers approved for both types of fostering.
- It is particularly important that the number of carers who are approved for permanence has increased from 125 to 136. This is because of the continuing increase in the number of children requiring permanent families. This has been achieved by:-
 - The recruitment strategy which has had a specific campaign to attract new mainstream permanent carers.
 - The reassessment of current carers for permanence for a particular child/children already in placement short-term
 - The promotion of the need for permanent carers across the service.
 - Promoting wide approval categories for carers which includes for short term and permanent placements as stated above.

- Two new carers were assessed and approved for Fostering Plus which is a new initiative in relation to caring for children with particularly complex behaviours.
- There was a continued slight increase in carers who are fully approved Family and Friend Foster Carers which has risen from 39 to 44 carers. However this masks the actual number of carers who were approved during the year and were subsequently de-registered when permanent orders were made in respect of children in placement. (See de-registration information)
- In relation to carers with temporary approval this number fluctuates considerably throughout the year and the number does not represent the throughput during the year. Temporary approval is only initially granted for 16 weeks.
- The category of foster carers support respite is currently not utilised. These were relatives and friends of approved foster carers who were willing to care for a child if the foster carers required respite.

Ethnicity of children and carers on 31/03/16

	Foster Children	Foster Carers
White		
British	424	540
Irish	00	02
Any other white background	05	07
Mixed		
White and Black Caribbean	02	00
White and Black African	00	00
White and Black Asian	01	00
03	03	
Asian	00	01
Black/Black British		
Black Caribbean	00	00
Black African	01	01
Any other Black	00	01
Any other ethnic group	01	02
	437	554

Analysis

- The majority of Foster Carers approved by Durham County Council are White British and the majority of children Looked After are White British.

Location of Approved Foster Carers

Table 2 below shows approved foster carers by geographic location. It excludes Family & Friends carers as they do not offer placements to unconnected children and therefore the foster carer geographical characteristics are not relevant.

Locality	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Derwentside	37	40	39	41	41
Durham & Chester le Street	53	53	55	60	63
Easington	29	26	27	27	28
The Dales	33	33	35	35	33
Sedgefield	26	29	33	34	36
Out of County South	9	13	17	9	12
Out of County North	14	15	13	20	21
TOTAL	201	209	219	226	234

Analysis

- The locality of approved mainstream foster carers is not evenly distributed.
- Approximately a quarter of all carers live within Chester-le Street and Durham and this has continued to increase. This is the most populated area within Co Durham and centrally located and therefore within easy travelling distance for all Durham children.
- Only one locality within Co Durham has seen a decrease in approved carers. This is the Dales. All others have either remained static or increased slightly.
- The number of carers living outside the DCC boundary has risen. In most cases they live just outside the county boundary and many live in the east with easy access to the Easington area. In particular there is a group of carers living in Houghton-le Spring and another cluster in Darlington.
- Two thirds of carers living outside the County boundary offer permanent placements.

Foster Carer Approvals 2015-2016

Table 3 shows approval of foster carers by type of provision

Type	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
New mainstream foster carers	33	21	27	24	22
Reassessment of	11	12	15	13	5

carers					
Family and Friend Carers	17	33	28	41	39
Total	62	66	70	78	66

Analysis

- The number of Family and Friends approvals has fallen very slightly from the previous year
- There was a slight decrease in the number of mainstream carers approved in comparison to the previous year. This was partly due to a decrease in the number of prospective foster carers coming forward.
- It was also partly due to the number of assessments which were started, but were not completed due to issues which arose during the assessment. There were 12 assessments which were not completed. The reasons were as follows:
 - Significant debt not disclosed.(1)
 - Withdrew because of ill health of family members (3)
 - Withdrew because of effect on their son (1)
 - Couple decided to have their own child and therefore timing not right. (1)
 - Couple pursuing adoption (1)
 - Pets behaviour (1)
 - Negative references (1)
 - Failed to disclose their own child had been fostered.(1)
 - Home conditions not satisfactory (1)
 - Carer already approved as an IFA carer remained with the agency (1)
- The number of reassessments of short term carers for permanence also reduced .This was anticipated because of the change to assessing prospective carers for long term fostering as well as short term fostering if they are motivated and have the potential.
- No reassessments were undertaken due to concerns about the carers' suitability to foster.

Foster Carer De-registrations

Table 4 shows Foster Carer De-registrations by provision

Type	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Short term carers only	6	8	6	8	12
Permanent carers	0	4	8	7	05
Temporary	12	42	49	55	31

approval					
Family & Friends care	5	27	14	35	32
Foster carer support respite	3	1	1	4	0
Partner of carer who has separated		1	1		0
TOTAL	26	83	79	109	80

Analysis

- 80 carers were de-registered during the year 2015-2016.
- The majority of de-registrations were Family and Friends foster carers who were either temporarily approved or fully approved:
- Temporary approved Family and Friends carers de-registration decreased to 31 compared to 55 the previous year.
- Fully approved Family and Friend carers who were de-registered remained at a similar level to the previous year.
- 17 mainstream carers were de-registered which is a similar number to last year. This is lower than national figures which estimate that 10-15% of carers leave the service each year.

Table 5 shows Foster Carer De-registrations by reason for de-registration

Reason for De-registration	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Family circumstances <i>ie house move, change of employment, health, birth/deaths</i>	1	3	8	2	5
Retired/Resigned	3	15	9	19	8
Carer withdrew from process (following temporary approval)	-	-	3	4	5
Concerns from the Service	2	2	5	9	4
Child moved on/ to independence	1		1	3	0
Child returned to family	2	17	11	17	13
Supported lodgings/staying put conversion	2	-	3	3	1
Legal orders in respect of children	12	36	31	50	40
- SGO	10	25	19	41	34
- CAO	-	-	-	5	5
- RO/IRO	2	11	13	3	1
- Adoption	-	-	-	1	1
Other					4
TOTAL	26	83	79	109	80

It is important to recognise that foster carers own family situations impact on their ability/availability to foster and can result in them deciding not to continue fostering for example life events such as births, deaths, relationship breakdowns and employment changes.

Analysis

- 50% of the de-registrations were because a legal order had been made in respect of children being cared for. These were all positive outcomes and secured permanence for these children.
- In total 40 Family and Friends foster carers were de-registered as the result of Court Orders which secured permanence for children meaning they were no longer Looked After
 - 34 carers became Special Guardians
 - 5 carers were granted Child Arrangement Orders.
 - 1 carer had an Adoption Order granted
- 13 Family and Friends carers de-registered because young people returned home to family.
- 17 mainstream carers resigned for the following reasons:
 - 6 carers retired from fostering after long service
 - 2 carers resigned following unplanned endings of placements

- 5 carers family circumstances changed – ill health, births, employment
- 2 carers resigned following concerns raised with them about the care they provided
- 2 carers were de-registered following concerns about their suitability to foster
- One of these carers above chose to appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM). The IRM agreed with the recommendation from Durham Fostering Service and the carers were de-registered.

Views of foster carers regarding the fostering assessment

October 2015 – assessment and training described as “good, very comprehensive, training very good and enjoyable, it did open our eyes”

July 2015 – “enjoyed the assessment and initial training, leaned a lot and thought about things in a different way. You learn a lot about yourself”

March 2016 - “the preparation which has been done has been outstanding”

Views of foster carers and children and young people about the Fostering Service

We seek to obtain the views of children and young people and foster carers using a variety of methods:

- Foster carer annual reviews
- Fostering Panel
- Monthly supervision with foster carers
- Consultation meetings
- Regular support groups facilitated by Fostering Supervising Social Workers
- Specific focus group meetings
- Use of survey monkey for recruitment
- Close liaison with children’s social workers and Independent Reviewing officers
- Attendance at Looked After Reviews, Care Team Meetings etc where possible.

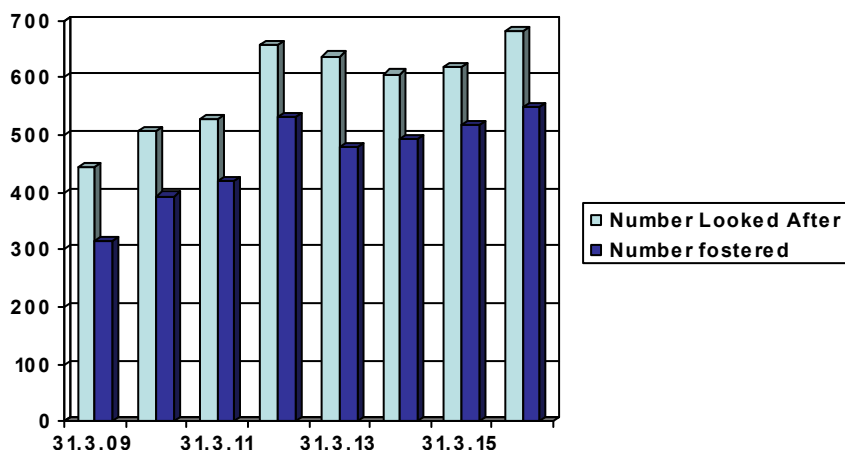
Foster Carers advise us that they feel well supported by the Fostering Service, for example:

- A foster care at her annual review described her Fostering Supervising Social Worker as “a God send” and was impressed with her hard work, support and sound advice (June 2015)
- A foster carer said they felt well supported and reported regular communication from their Fostering Supervising Social Worker (Feb 2016)

3. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Table 6 shows number of Looked After Children and fostered children

This gives the number of Looked After Children in Durham on 31st March each year and the number placed with foster carers on these dates during the same period.

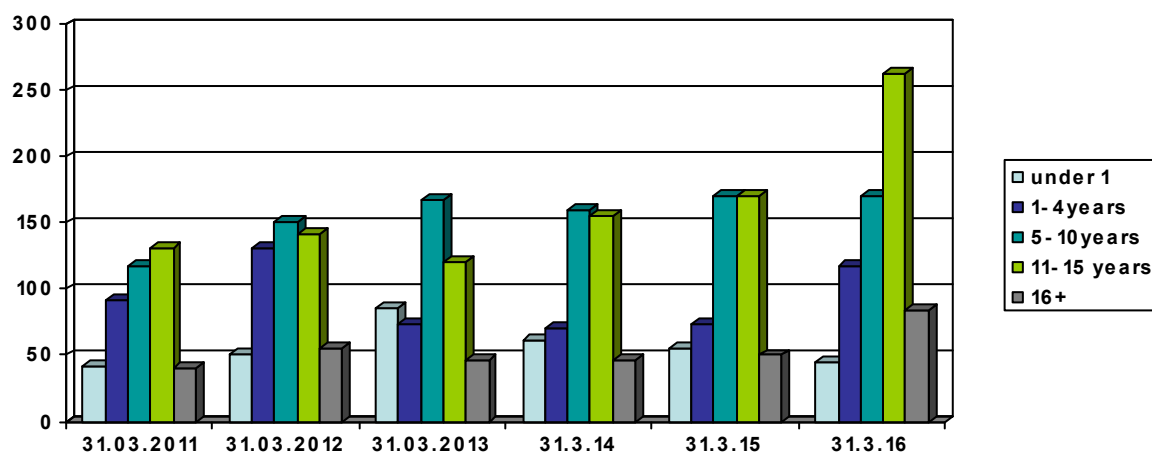


Analysis

- The number of Looked After Children has increased since last year from 619 to 680. The trajectory is upwards for the last three years.
- The number of children placed in foster care has increased for the last four years.

The number of children placed with foster carers by age

Table 7 below gives the number of children placed with foster carers by age range on 31st March each year



Analysis Need

- The number of baby placements has fallen slightly
- The number of 1-4 years old has increased from 73 children to 118 children
- The number of children 5-10 years old has remained static
- The number of children 11-15 years old has increased considerably.
- The number of young people over 16 years has also increased

Views of children

Children and young people are invited to provide feedback for their foster carer's annual review, and their social worker assists them to provide this. The feedback, which is in the form of a questionnaire is evaluated, and discussed at the review.

The Fostering Supervising Social worker speaks with the children in placement when they visit, and liaises closely with the child's social worker so that any issues or concerns about the child or the foster carer are picked up quickly

An analysis of the feedback provides evidence that children and young people feel safe and well cared for in their foster placements

Views of birth parents

Feedback is sought from birth parents where appropriate for the foster carer's annual review. Very few questionnaires are returned, but verbal feedback is occasionally provided, which is discussed at the review. Any issues raised by birth parents are addressed by the Fostering Service and the child's social worker

4. IRO INFORMATION

The IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) Service chair foster carer annual reviews. Foster Carer reviews is a separate statutory function under the Children Act (1989), Guidance and Regulations (2011), the National Minimum Standards (DfE 2011a) and the Fostering Service (England) Regulations (DfE 2011b) and this forms the regulatory framework for fostering services in England under the Care Standards Act 2000. Standards require the Foster Carer Review to be chaired by an independent person.

The Fostering Service Regulations state that Foster Carers are required to have a review not more than one year from approval and thereafter at intervals of not more than a year or whenever the Service consider it necessary. First review, contentious reviews and reviews every 3 years are presented to the Fostering Panel.

When chairing foster care reviews the IRO is responsible for scrutinising the Local Authority's recommendations in relation to foster carer's approval and to make recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker about what carers'

future approvals should entail. This in turn enables the local authority to appropriately match children with carer's specific skills and expertise ensuring that children are safeguarded in their foster placement and their care needs are met.

The reviewing processes also allows the IRO service to scrutinise the training needs and developed skills of carers to ensure that carers are banded at the appropriate level and that they are receiving good support from the service.

Table 8 shows the number of foster carer reviews completed

	2014/15	2015/16
Number of Foster care reviews	230	272
Number of reviews held within time-scale	99.2%	98.2%

5. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL FOSTERING PANELS

In broad terms the role of a Fostering Panel is to:

- provide an independent perspective, informed by a range of expertise and skills
- monitor and quality assure social work practice in the best interests of children and young people placed in foster care.
- provide recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker that accurately reflect the facts of the case presented to it in relation to the approval of foster carers, matches of children for permanence and children's plans

The Legal Framework of Fostering Panels is contained in Appendix 1.

In April 2013, the Fostering Service established a third Panel to manage the increasing volume of work reflecting the increased activity of the service.

The current configuration of Fostering Panels is

- Two Permanence Panels (including Family and Friends work)
- One Panel focussing primarily on short term carers

This framework has ensured that matters are presented to Panel in a timely manner. Further consideration will be required to the structure of the Panels should the current volume of work continue to increase.

5.1 Membership of the Panels

On 1st April 2011 The Fostering Services (England) Regulation 2011 came into effect. This resulted in changes to the composition, quoracy and processes in Panel.

It is recognised that Panels operate most effectively when there is a diverse membership with an understanding of the fostering tasks and the needs of children. Panel composition therefore includes a wide range of professional backgrounds, adults who have experienced foster care/adoption, and foster carers from other agencies as well as elected members.

Prospective Panel members complete an application form and are interviewed for the post. Disclosure and Barring checks are undertaken and personal references taken up. There is a clear induction process, induction pack and an opportunity to observe a Panel prior to sitting as a member. Panel members are expected to sign a confidentiality statement and receive an annual appraisal. They are also offered the opportunity to attend training, including specific panel training.

A new Fostering Panel Induction Handbook has been developed and distributed to Panel members giving substantial information about fostering and Panel processes and practices.

5.2 The Role and Function of the Permanence and Fostering Panels

The Fostering Panels are required to:

- Consider each application of prospective foster carers for approval as foster carers offering placements of a short term nature or permanent placements.
- Make recommendations to the Fostering Service regarding the terms of approval for those applicants and their suitability to become foster carers.
- Consider those applications made by Family and Friends following their temporary approval as foster carers under Regulation 24 of The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 to:
 - offer permanent or short term placements and
 - to recommend whether or not the applicants are suitable to become foster carers for named child/children.
- Consider all First Annual Foster Care reviews (regulatory requirement) and subsequently Foster Carer reviews every 3 years (Durham County Council policy)
- To consider any contentious reviews of approved foster carers and make recommendations regarding terms of approval and continued registration.
- Ensure feedback to the Agency Decision Maker and Senior Managers of the Durham County Council on Fostering Service policy, procedures and practice matters

5.3 Agency Adviser to the Fostering Panels

Each Fostering Panel is supported by an Agency Adviser. During the period of this report the Agency Advisers to the Panels were:

- Paul Lundie and Lorraine Botcherby (Team Managers, Permanence Team) for the Permanence Panel
- Andy Jennings and Jessica Cowan (Temporary Team Managers) for the second Permanence Panel
- Florence Coulter (Team Manager, Recruitment Team) for the Fostering Panel

Agency Decision Maker

During this period The Agency Decision Makers for the Fostering Panels were:

- Karen Robb, Strategic Manager, Looked After Children and Permanence
- Dorothy Alexander, Operations Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Full Circle.
- Bronwen Smith, Operations Manager, Fostering, Adoption and Full Circle

5.4 The Independent Review Mechanism

From April 2009 the Independent Review Mechanism was extended to cover fostering matters having previously been only focussed on adoption issues. It provides an independent review of the suitability of fostering applications presented to it from potential and current foster carers in cases where the decision has been not to approve them as a foster carer, or to terminate or change the terms of their approval. This year one Durham applicants or foster carers made representations to the Independent Review Mechanism.

5.5 Training

The training needs of Panel members are identified through their individual annual appraisals, Panel activity and processes.

Panel have access and training programme information which has given them access to CAMHS, LACES and the general courses which are available to Foster Carers.

All Panel members have also completed e-learning Data Protection training. During the year training was provided to Panel regarding the new structure of Children's Services, an update on the Fostering Regulations and Standards, and training delivered by young people related to their perspectives

Fostering Panel Business Meetings

These meetings occur twice a year. These meetings consist of the Chairs, Vice Chairs, Agency Advisers, Panel members and Senior Managers.

They are chaired by the Strategic Manager, Looked After Children and Permanence or Operation Manager, Fostering and Adoption. The purpose of these meetings is to share information, to promote consistency across the Panels, to improve Panel practice/processes, to identify training needs and to discuss strategic Service Developments which may impact on Panel business.

Permanence Review/Placement Stability Meetings

Bi-monthly Permanence Review Group meetings are held to monitor the progress of all aspects of permanence and placement stability. These meetings are attended by Operation Managers and Team Managers across Looked After and Permanence Service. They ensure that all plans of permanence are progressed within the desired timescales and children's carers are reviewed to ensure any drift and delay is addressed.

6 THE FOSTERING PANEL

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 stipulated the establishment of a Central List of panel members and Durham's Central List includes health, education, foster carers, care experienced members, County Councillors and social workers.

The membership and experience of individuals serving on the Fostering Panel is as follows:

Chair Independent, Cherryl Pharoah
Vice Chair Social Work Representative, Kathy Welch, Team Manager
Vice Chair Education Representative, Susan Dolphin, Education Team Manager

Core members from the central list		
County Councillor	DCC	Anne Bonner
Foster Carer	Independent	Dorothy Gibson
Social Work Representatives	DCC	Bayna Brown
Social worker	Independent	Anne Welsh
Looked After Nurse	Independent	Claire Roebuck
Care experienced	Independent	Sarah Dawson

Additional central list members attend when required.

The Fostering Panel, in accordance with regulations, is chaired independently of the Fostering Service. Gareth Lambert, a BAAF Trainer/Consultant had been appointed and completed his induction period, but unfortunately was unable to take up the post due to the demise of BAAF.

We are delighted that a new Chair, Cherryl Pharoah, has taken up the role and she brings to the post a long established career in Children's Services and experience of chairing Panels.

During the year the Panel welcomed one new Panel member, Bayna Brown, who is a Team Manager in Durham Residential Services with extensive experience of Looked After Children.

6.1 Fostering Panel Activity

The Panel met 11 times during the year.

Summary of Panel Activity

Table 9 below summarises Panel Activity

Activity	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Form F assessments of short term carers presented to Panel *	34	20	15	17	20
Reassessments presented to Panel			5	3	4
Review of short term carers	29	32	69	36	35
Deregistration of short term carers	07	8	0	8	7
Matches of children with carers				3	13

* Please note this includes assessments re-presented to Panel because of initial deferments

Analysis

- The number of Form F's presented to this Panel increased slightly from 17 to 20. Similar to the previous year, a number of the assessments were undertaken for foster carers who would be approved for permanence only and therefore they were presented to the 2 Permanence Panels.
- There were 4 reassessments of carers. Three were reassessments of short term carers to provide permanent care for child/children in placement. One was a reassessment of a carer as a single carer following the break up with her partner.
- The number of foster care reviews presented to Panel remained at a similar level.
- There were two reviews which were brought to Panel because of concerns about the standard of care provided. Panel considered the information and recommended de-registration in both cases. This was subsequently endorsed by the Agency Decision Maker

- The number of de-registrations was similar to the previous years but remains below the national average for de-registrations of carers.
- Panel’s workload was expanded to consider reassessments and matches for carers whose original approval was presented at the Panel for short term. The match of 13 children placed with 8 different families were recommended for approval by Panel.

6.2 The Terms of Foster Carers Approval at the Fostering Panel

There has been a change in policy to approve carers for a wider age range but within this having a clear assessment of the best match in terms of age

Table 10 below gives a breakdown of carers by preference for age of placements

Age Range	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
0 – 2 years only	2	1	2	1	0
Under 11 years	11	12	9	13	15
11 years plus	5	2	2	1	1
Wide age range	8	2	1	2	4
TOTAL	26	17	14	17	20

Analysis

- The majority of newly approved carers’ skills lie in the 0-11 age group with 15 carers being approved for this category.
- No carers were approved for babies only, in line with the priorities in the service, but 8 carers terms of approvals included approval to care for babies.
- 4 households were approved and are able to foster children with a very wide age range. This relates to their considerable previous experience.
- 1 household only was particularly interested in fostering teenagers.

6.3 Foster Carers by Locality

Table 11 gives a breakdown of new foster carers by area

Area	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Durham & Chester-le Street	9	7	2	5	3	7
Derwentside	5	5	6	1	6	3
Easington	4	1	0	0	1	2
Sedgefield	1	3	5	2	3	3
The Dales	3	7	2	4	3	2
Out of County	3	3	2	2	1	3
TOTAL	25	26	17	14	17	20

Analysis

- There was an uneven distribution across the County of carers approved
- The highest numbers of new carers live in the Durham area which is the most central locality.
- There was no targeted marketing of any geographical area during this year.
- The carers living out of the county live near the border of County Durham in Darlington and the Sunderland area

6.4 Foster Carer Reviews

Table 12 below shows the type of reviews.

Type	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
First reviews	25	24	20	10	12
Reviews called following a specific issue	4	4	2	1	1
3 year reviews		4	47	25	19
TOTAL	29	32	69	36	32

Analysis

- There was a similar number of reviews presented to Panel this year.
- The majority of reviews presented to Panel were third reviews – 19 in the year.
- Two foster carer reviews were presented to Panel as a result of concern. The Panel recommended de-registration and this was endorsed by the Agency Decision Maker

De-registrations

There were 6 de-registrations of short term foster carers and **Table 13** below show the reasons for de-registration.

Reason	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Family circumstances <i>ie house move, change of employment, health, birth/deaths</i>	3	4	7	5	3
Retired/Resigned	1	3	1	3	2
Carer withdrew from process					
Concerns from the Service	2	1			2
Foster carer respite support no longer needed	1	1			
Child moved on/ to independence					
Child returned to family					
Supported lodgings/staying put conversion					
Legal orders in respect of children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SGO - CAO - RO/IRO - Adoption 					
TOTAL	7	9	8	8	7

Analysis

- There were less de-registrations of short term carers this year than previous years.
- 1 couple retired.
- 2 carer's health problem resulted in resignation.
- 1 couple resigned due to a change of employment

- 2 carers were de-registered because of concerns. The Panel recommended de-registration in both cases which was endorsed by the Agency Decision Maker. One couple appealed this decision through the Independent Review Mechanism who also recommended de-registration and the Agency Decision Maker subsequently confirmed this decision.
- 1 carer resigned. There were concerns about the care she provided and she resigned prior to the matter being presented to panel.

6.4 Key Themes from The Fostering Panel

Quality of Reports

- The quality of reports to Panel this year has been good with Panel regularly commenting about the high standard of the Foster Carer assessments. Importantly feedback from carers in Panel confirms their view that the reports were accurate and thorough.

Positive Views from Panel

- Panel members in their appraisals commented positively about the management of the Service and Chairing of the Panels.
- Panel members were appreciative of the high quality of administrative support to Panels.

Feedback from applicants & social workers about Panel

Applicants and social workers are given the opportunity to feedback via a questionnaire when they attend Panel. 2015-16 feedback examples included:

- The Panel were fair and relevant with their questions. We were treated with respect.
- Although it was a daunting experience, we were made to feel at ease immediately. We were given the opportunity to answer and ask questions.
- A good experience as appropriate questions were asked and it was nice the answers we gave were listened to, knew a lot about us which was reassuring.
- At first terrified- but within minutes of arriving we were met, made to relax, feel lots better. We felt it was really pleasant, were fairly treated and listened to

The majority of returned questionnaires stated they had waited approximately 5 minutes, although a couple stated they waited a longer period.

Most applicants stated they did not have any suggestions for improvements. However, one carer stated that the panel could be more diverse which had already been identified as an action.

7 PERMANENCE PANELS APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

The membership and experience of individuals serving on the Permanence Panel A is as follows:

Chair	Alison Walton (Independent)
Vice Chair	Elizabeth Varley (Independent - Education)

Regular members from the central list:

Representative for Children	Sarah Dawson
Foster Carer	Andrea Lawson (Independent)
Health (Medical Advisor)	Dr Jo Poot (Independent)
County Councillor	Cllr Mamie Simmons
Social Work Representative	Deborah Hood
Social Work Representative	Ann Haigh

Additional central list members attend when required

The membership and experience of individuals serving on the Permanence Panel B is as follows:

Chair	Sheila Sunter (Independent)
Vice Chair	Dave Hodgson (Social Work Representative)

Regular members from the central list:

Representative for Children	Sarah Dawson
Health	Zoe Lister (Independent)
Education	Pamela Norman (Independent)
County Councillor	Cllr Maureen Stanton
Social Work Representative	Delia Jack

Additional central list members attend when required.

Each of the Permanence Panels are chaired by someone independent of the Agency, in accordance with regulations.

- Alison Walton became the Independent Chair of Permanence Panel A, initially on a temporary basis from June 2015 and on a permanent basis from October 2015. Alison is an experienced Social Worker and Senior Manager in children's social care.
- Sheila Sunter continues as the Independent Chair of Permanence Panel B. Sheila is an experienced Social Worker and Team Manager in children's social care.

Sheila and Alison bring a wealth of experience in family placement, Looked After children and child care to their chairing roles. Dr Jo Poot, Consultant

Paediatrician became the Medical Advisor to the Permanence Panels in 2015/16 and attends as a continuing member of Permanence Panel A.

During the year there have been changes in the composition of the Panels:

- Councillor Maureen Stanton joined Panel B in April 2015.
- Fostering Supervising Social Worker, Permanence Maxine Santos was replaced by Deborah Hood of the same team, in April 2015.
- Delia Jack, Fostering Supervising Social Worker, Recruitment & Assessment was a member of Panel B throughout the 2015/16 year.
- Independent Foster Carer Andrea Lawson from Sunderland City Council, replaced Andrea Brady in the same role in May 2015.
- Dave Hodgson, Senior Practitioner, Short Term, became Vice Chair of Panel B in October 2015, replacing Alison Walton upon her taking over the Independent Chair of Panel A on a permanent basis.

7.1 Permanence Panel Activity

Panel A met 11 times and Panel B met 10 times during the year. There was one Extraordinary Panel meeting held on 30 March 2016.

Table 14 - Summary of Permanence Panel Activity

Panel Workload		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Approvals of permanence foster Carers		2	12	6	2
Approvals of permanence foster Carers via reassessment		11	11	9	0
Approval of Family Friends foster carers (Form C)		30	28	41	39
Approval of children as suitable for permanence via long term fostering		47	52	22	24
Match of children approved for permanence with an IFA permanence foster carers		1 (2 children)	11 (14 children)	9 (9 children)	7 (8 children)
Match of children approved for permanence with permanence foster carers		13 (15 children)	22 (29 children)	42 (54 children)	16 (24 children)
Reviews of foster carers	1 st Reviews	9	14	22	18
	3 rd Reviews	3	42	25	16
	Other	0	0	0	2
	Total	12	56	47	36
De registrations of foster carers		71	70	97	73

Analysis

- The significantly increased level of Family Friends Foster Carers recommended for approval at Panel over 2014/15 has broadly been maintained (39).
- In fact the number of children matched to permanent foster carers (32) is greater than the number of children's plans approved for requiring permanence through long term fostering in each of the last 2 years (24 and 22).
- The 24 children's plans recommended by Panel in the last year for children requiring permanence through long term fostering represents consistent performance with the previous year, 2014/15, following two years in which a significant backlog of cases was addressed.
- Slightly more First annual reviews (18) as required by regulations, were presented to Panel, than other reviews at the discretion of the Fostering Service, which would include those recommending change of approvals, contentious issues and 3 yearly reviews (16).
- Deregistrations returned to their 2013/14 levels, with almost three quarters (72.6%) following the granting of Court orders as to the long term residence of one or more children, one or more children returning to live with parents or other family members or a young person achieving independence. Each of these represent a positive permanent outcome for the children concerned.

7.2 Approval of Permanence Plans for Children/Matching

Table 16 shows approval of permanence plans for children and their match with permanent carers

Permanence Plans/Matching	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Approval of children as suitable for permanent placement	47	52	22	24
Match of children approved for permanence with an IFA permanence foster carers	1 (2 children)	11 (15 children)	9 (9 children)	7 (8 children)
Match of children approved for permanence with permanence foster carers	13 (15 children)	22 (29 children)	42 (54 children)	16 (24 children)

Analysis

- There have been 24 children's plans recommended by Panel in the last year for children requiring permanence through long term fostering. This represents consistent performance with the previous year, 2014/15, following two years in which a significant backlog of cases was addressed.

- The Permanence Team continues to work closely with the Adoption Team and on occasions when a plan of adoption cannot be achieved within the child's timescale, these cases are transferred to the Permanence Team so permanence via long term fostering can be considered; usually reflecting the contingency agreed at Court upon the granting of the Care Order.
- There have been 8 children matched with Independent Fostering Agency carers over this period, which is again consistent with the previous year.
- 24 children were matched with 'In House' carers in this year, which is consistent with the average performance for 2012/14.
- The number of children matched to permanent foster carers (32) is greater than the number of children's plans approved for requiring permanence through long term fostering in each of the last 2 years (24 and 22).

Foster Carer Reviews

There were 36 reviews of foster carers presented to Panel and Table 17 below shows the type of reviews.

TYPE	No
First Reviews	18
Third Annual Reviews	16
Other Reviews	2
TOTAL	36

Analysis

- The first annual review is presented to Panel in accordance with regulations. 18 such reviews were considered by Permanence Panels in year.
- Third annual reviews are presented to Panel and subsequent reviews at least 3 yearly, providing independent scrutiny of the progress and development made by foster carers at various stages of their fostering careers. 16 such reviews were referred to Panels.
- Reviews are also presented to Panel when a significant issue is raised and/or a change in approval is recommended. 2 of these were considered.

De-registrations

There were 73 de-registrations of permanent foster carers which also incorporate Relative Friend Carers. Table 18 below shows the reasons for de-registration.

Reason	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Carer moved	0	0	0	0
Carer unable to meet standards and uncooperative/unsuited to care	0	6	8	0
Carer adopted child	0	0	1	1
Residence Order/Child Arrangement Order granted	11	13	5	5
Special Guardianship Order granted	25	19	63	33
Breakdown/disruption of placement	3	2	0	0
Move to supported lodgings scheme	0	3	2	0
Changes in family circumstances	1	0	0	0
Rehabilitation to family	17	11	10	13
Retirement	0	1	0	4
Young person moved to independence	0	1	0	1
Resignations	9	3	3	7
Change of Care Plan	5	0	0	0
Child moved to foster care/adoption		4	1	1
Carer withdrew		3	4	8
Another family member came forward		3	0	0
Remains on independent TC basis		1	0	0
TOTAL	71	70	97	73

Analysis

- The trend for more than half of de-registrations to follow the granting of Court orders as to the long term residence of one or more children has continued, with 53.4% following the granting of Adoption (1), Residence or Child Arrangement (5) or Special Guardianship (33) Orders. These cases represent positive outcomes for children under Court scrutiny.
- Taken together with the number of de-registrations (13) following one or more children returning to live with parents or other family members, without the need for such Orders, and 1 de-registration following a young person achieving independence, 72.6% of de-registrations followed one or more children achieving a form of permanence.
- 8 relative friend carers withdrew as they requested not to continue with the assessments.
- 4 mainstream permanent carers retired.
- 6 mainstream permanent carers resigned due to various reasons.

Family and Friends Foster Carers

Table 19

Approvals	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Approval of Family Friends foster carers (Form C)	33	28	41	39

Analysis

- The significantly increased level of Family Friends Foster Carers recommended for approval at Panel over 2014/15 has been maintained, reflecting positive consideration of the child's family network within the assessment process, in line with the Children Act 1989 and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010.
- The BAAF Form C Assessment tool has been continually used across Durham County and there have been 39 Relative and Friend Assessments presented to Panel and approved this year.

7.3 Key Themes from Permanence Panel

- Within the reports presented to Panel this year, the Fostering Service's Form F Reports remain comprehensive. Matching Reports from Fostering Supervising Social Workers and children's Social Workers have also continued to be to a good standard.
- Form C Assessments of kinship, friends and family connected persons to the child, have maintained improvement, with few exceptions requiring deferment for additional information.
- Contact issues and the health needs of both applicants and children, have been key themes within Form C assessments, as has consideration of how both younger and older applicants will manage currently placed younger children during their teenage years.
- A significant issue towards the close of the year has been a delay in the return of some DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) enhanced clearances and a number of Medical assessments for Form C applicants under regulation 24, necessitating a greater number of extensions of temporary approval for assessment under regulation 25 and the re-scheduling of Panels' business.
- The quality of Child Permanence Reports (CPR) has been good, informing positive Panel recommendations and Agency decisions as to the need for permanence via long term fostering.
- The improvement in the representation of children's views within reports presented to Permanence Panels in 2014/15 has been maintained and further embedded in practice in 2015/16.

- Panel continues to be served very well by dedicated administrative support, including an Extraordinary Panel meeting required to meet demand in March 2016.
- The Panels' workload continues to be significant, and further work has been undertaken by the Agency Advisors and Panel Administrators to enhance quality assurance and timeliness at all stages of the process, prior to and following Panel, in the coming year.

7.4 FEEDBACK FROM PERMANENCE PANEL

Feedback questionnaires are offered to all applicants and professionals who attend Panel. Pre-paid envelopes are provided so that they can be completed later and sent to the Panel Administrator if this is preferred.

Feedback from professionals attending Panel

- Professionals reported that their experience of attending Panel was positive.
- They stated that Panel members were welcoming, introduced themselves and were friendly.
- They felt questions were fair, that answers were listened to, that Panel members were sensitive, and Panel was objective and gave appropriate consideration.
- Waiting times were generally satisfactory ie 0-15 minutes but 1 hour 25 minutes in one case.

Feedback from applicants

- Applicants reported that the process of attending Panel was explained to them before Panel.
- They said that they were shown to the Panel room if they had not attended before.
- Waiting times were satisfactory ie 0-20 minutes.
- They felt listened to, treated with respect and had the opportunity to ask questions within Panel.
- The Panel Chair and Agency Advisor clearly explained the Panel's recommendation outside Panel, immediately following it being made, and explained the process of consideration by the Agency Decision Maker.

8. Conclusion and Future Priorities

The majority of looked after children are placed within Durham's fostering service. It has become increasingly challenging to manage the growing demand for placements in-house due to the increase in the looked after children population. Use of Independent Fostering Agencies has grown as a result. This does not necessarily provide better outcomes for children, but it does have an adverse effect on resources for the County as expenditure increases in line with increased usage.

Achieving efficiencies, despite the increase in the looked after children population, is predicated upon significant developments taking place regarding the fostering service. On that basis there are four specific priority areas to focus upon over the forthcoming year. These are as follows:

- Development of a robust Marketing Strategy to increase the number of fostering applicants to Durham to meet 100% of Durham's needs and achieve vacant capacity. This will enable matching of needs to carer skills and reduce reliance on external resources;
- Further Development of the Fostering Plus Scheme in order to provide a family based service to care for some of our children with most complex needs;
- Implementation of a review of the fostering service to ensure the resources channelled into the service are utilised in the most effective and efficient way and that the service is able to meet future demand;
- Deliver initiatives already in train to promote fostering, such as Durham County Council liveried vehicles, a concerted social media campaign and targeted recruitment to specialist fostering programmes.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The development of the Fostering Plus model aims to reduce expenditure regarding children with complex needs by diverting the need for them to be cared for in internal residential care and in high cost external fostering and residential placements where appropriate.

Investment into the Fostering Marketing Strategy on an ‘Invest to Save’ basis aims to reduce expenditure in the long term by achieving sufficient capacity of internal resources to meet the needs of Durham’s looked after children

Staffing – The Fostering Review may have staffing implications but it is too premature at this stage to provide any detail

Risk – Failure to develop the Fostering Service risks the Council’s ability to meet demand for looked after children.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The fostering service endeavours to ensure the carer population is reflective of the children it serves

Accommodation – No implications

Crime and Disorder – No implications

Human Rights – Provision and ongoing development of fostering services aims to ensure all children who need to be cared for away from their home have the opportunity where possible to live within a family setting.

Consultation – No implications

Procurement – No implications

Disability Issues – The Fostering Recruitment Campaign aims to recruit carers who can meet the needs of looked after children who are disabled. They form one of the targeted groups for fostering recruitment

Legal Implications – No implications

APPENDIX 2

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PANELS

ACTS

The Children Act 1989
The Data Protection Act 1998
The Protection of Children Act 1999
The Adoption and Children Act 2002
The Children Act 2004

REGULATIONS

Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review
(England) Regulations 2010
The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and
Fostering Services (Miscellaneous Amendments)
Regulations 2013

STANDARDS

UK National Standards for Foster Care 1999
Code of Practice on the recruitment, assessment,
approval, training, management and support of carers
1999
Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011

GUIDANCE

The Children Act 1989 Guidance vol 4: Fostering
Services 2011
The Children Act 1989 Guidance vol 2: Care Planning,
Placement and Case Review 2011
Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local
Authorities 2011
Effective Fostering Panels BAAF 2011

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**Children and Young People's Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

09 November 2016



**Durham Local Safeguarding Children
Board Annual Report 2015-16**

**Report of Jane Geraghty, Independent Chair Local Safeguarding
Children Board**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015-16 (attached at Appendix 2).

Background

2. Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. It is independently chaired (as required by statute) and consists of senior representatives of all the principle stakeholders working together to safeguard children and young people in County Durham.
3. Its statutory objectives are to:
 - a. Coordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - b. Ensure the effectiveness of its work.
4. The LSCB's primary responsibility is to provide a way for local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in County Durham and to ensure that they do so effectively.
5. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) requires each Local Safeguarding Children Board to produce and publish an Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.
6. The LSCB has had a year of development during 2015/16. Following the Local Government Association peer review in October 2014 a self-improvement plan was implemented which culminated in a "good" Ofsted rating in May 2016.

Annual Report

7. The Durham LSCB Annual Report 2015/16 sets out the work of multi-agency partners to ensure effective arrangements are in place to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and young people from abuse and neglect.

8. The report describes the work undertaken against the 2015-16 priorities and sets out the future priorities for 2016-19. It describes the local governance arrangements and structure of Durham LSCB; the linkages to other strategic partnerships across County Durham; and working with other LSCBs.
9. The report also provides an overview of the performance monitoring framework as well as providing a brief summary of safeguarding privately fostered children; the use of restraint in secure centres; Serious Case Reviews; Child Death Reviews; and the single and multi-agency training provision.

LSCB Priorities for 2016-19

10. Durham LSCB held a development day in February 2016 to review progress on the priorities; consider key challenges; and to set its future priorities. In setting the priorities for 2016-19 the Board considered a number of presentations and information sources which resulted in reaffirming the following strategic priorities:
 - **Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation**
 - **Improving Early Help**
 - **Reducing Neglect (contributory factors are domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse; parental mental health)**
 - **Reducing self-harm and improving young people's self-esteem**
 - **Increase the voice of the child**
 - **Ensuring that each agency is accountable for delivery of its own safeguarding responsibilities**

Achievements and Progress Highlights

11. Below are some examples of achievements and progress made by the LSCB in 2015/16:
 - Refreshed the Early Help and Neglect Strategy to include more focus on Hidden Harm (domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse and parental mental health).
 - Developed the Early Help and Neglect Practice Guidance to provide updated toolkits and strategies for practitioners to use and implement.
 - Revised the 0-19 Level of Need threshold document which provides a quick-reference guide to support professionals in their decision-making.
 - Development and launch of the 'ERASE' brand and website has increased our capability to raise awareness about Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
 - Delivered taxi driver awareness training of CSE with over 1,000 trained to date.
 - Delivered a comprehensive training plan for frontline staff and managers and extending the number of e-learning packages available with the aim of impacting on frontline practice.
 - Revamped the performance scorecard to provide a realistic number of outcome measures that are aligned to our priorities.
 - Completed the section 11 audit which provided evidence that organisations safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young

people and followed this with a number of Challenge Clinics to hold organisations to account.

- Completed a number of multi-agency audits including attendance by relevant organisations at Section 47 Strategy Meetings.
- Increased visibility and partnership working through implementation of the LSCB Marketing and Communication Strategy, including revising the LSCB website and developing a LSCB Newsletter.
- Increased the voice of the child by widening the engagement networks for children and young people.
- Developed and implemented a child death review database. This allows the LSCB to identify and monitor developing trends through better analysis of data.
- Carried out a number of Lessons Learned events for managers and frontline staff following publication of Serious Case Reviews.

Areas for Development – Ofsted Inspection

12. Following the Ofsted inspection an action plan was put in place to address the recommendations made to the LSCB which included:

- ensuring that quality assurance and performance management processes are further developed to offer a detailed and comprehensive picture of the quality and impact of frontline practice in all service areas to underpin strategic understanding, challenge and development.
- ensuring that quality assurance and audit work contribute to understanding the impact of training and the embedding of lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews.
- developing more effective feedback processes from children, young people and families who have received child protection services to support ongoing service improvement.

Conclusion

13. The Durham LSCB Annual Report 2015-16 was agreed at the LSCB Board Meeting on the 22 September 2016.

14. The report is available on the Durham LSCB Website www.durham-lscb.org.uk and will be disseminated through partners own organisational governance structures.

Recommendations

15. The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the content of this report.
- b. Accept the LSCB Annual Report for information as an overview of the work undertaken in 2015-16 and priorities for action in 2016-17.

Contact: Jacqui Doherty, LSCB Business Unit Manager Tel 03000 263989

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance

Yearly financial contributions to Durham LSCB are received from partner agencies and are detailed in the LSCB Annual Report.

Staffing

The priorities identified in the LSCB Annual Report will be delivered using existing resources. Durham County Council will contribute to the delivery of the priorities in partnership with other responsible authorities.

Risk

No adverse implications.

Equality and Diversity/ Public Sector Equality Duty

The LSCB Annual Report identifies the actions to safeguard the needs of vulnerable children and young people.

Accommodation

No adverse implications.

Crime and disorder

The LSCB Annual Report reflects priorities and action that impact positively on crime and disorder in County Durham. The report shows effective partnership working with the Safe Durham Partnership.

Human rights

No adverse implications.

Consultation

Consultation with partner agencies and stakeholders has been undertaken as part of the development of the LSCB Annual Report.

Procurement

No adverse implications.

Disability Issues

No adverse implications.

Legal Implications

Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. Working Together to Safeguard Children (Statutory Guidance) requires each Local Safeguarding Children Board to produce and publish an Annual Report evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

Appendix 2:
Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015-16

Attached in a separate file.

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Annual Report

2015 / 2016

Safeguarding Children in County Durham



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1. Foreword by Independent Chair

This is the second Annual Report published since I became the Independent Chair of Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The role of the Chair is to bring independent scrutiny and challenge to the work of the LSCB. Since being appointed I have immersed myself in scrutinising the work and development of the Durham LSCB and I am continually encouraged by the good work of our partners in County Durham.

2015/16 has been a year of huge progress for Durham LSCB.

Following the peer review in October 2014 we have embarked on a journey of self-improvement which culminated in a rigorous and successful Ofsted inspection in February 2016.

Whilst the inspection by Ofsted rated Durham LSCB as 'Good' there is no room for complacency and I will continue to scrutinise, challenge and ask the difficult questions of partner organisations. I will do this constructively and will always seek continued improvement in services. The recommendations made by Ofsted will be implemented as part of our Business Plan for 2016/17.

The LSCB Annual Report 2015/16 provides local people with an account of the Board's work over the past year to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across County Durham. The report reflects the activity of Durham LSCB and its sub-groups against its priorities for 2015/16.

Over the last year we have improved performance in key areas and responded to continued reforms and changes to public services in a way that strengthens our partnership working.

The annual report covers the major changes and improvements of our partners' service delivery, where they link with the Board's overall strategies and the impact we have had. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities we will take forward into 2016/17.

As always, the children and young people of County Durham are at the heart of all we do and our vision of **'Every child and young person in County Durham feels safe and grows up safe from harm'** continues to drive us forward.

We will continue to increase the 'voice of the child' in our plans and actions and to understanding more fully the experience of the child or young person receiving help and support.

My thanks go to the many partner agencies for their hard work and dedication during a time of huge demand and whose commitment and motivation helps deliver our shared priorities.

I would also like to welcome two new lay members; Elaine Trotter and Amanda Taylor-Saunders to the Durham LSCB Board along with NHS England, Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust as new member organisations.

Jane Geraghty
Independent Chair



2. Introduction

Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which describes how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people in County Durham. Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in County Durham and to ensure that they do so effectively.

[Section 3](#) of the report highlights some statistical information about County Durham and provides a local context for our work. It provides information on our local challenges that drive local work and innovation.

In [Section 4](#) we describe the local governance arrangements and structure of Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board, the linkages to other strategic partnerships across County Durham and working with other LSCBs.

In [Section 5](#) we highlight some of the achievements and the progress that has been made in the last year as well as reporting on the work undertaken against the 2015/16 priorities.

[Section 6](#) covers our Performance Monitoring Framework and Quality Assurance Plan. It describes the multi-agency audits we have undertaken. It also provides an overview of safeguarding privately fostered children, the use of restraint in Aycliffe Secure Services Centre, Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews.

[Section 7](#) outlines our single and multi-agency training provision. It describes the work we have undertaken to strengthen and enhance the quality of training while avoiding duplication and promoting the importance of inter-agency working. This section also describes the marketing and communication activity of the LSCB.

Lastly, [Section 8](#) provides the priorities Durham LSCB will take forward into 2016/17.

The Annual Report 2015/16 demonstrates the extent to which the functions of the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board, as set out in the national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (March 2015) are being effectively discharged.



The information presented in this Annual Report is drawn from a wide range of sources from across the County Durham Partnership. These include the County Durham Integrated Needs Assessment (INA); Lessons Learned from Local Serious Case Reviews; the Local Child Sexual Exploitation Profile; the Child Death Review Annual Report; the Safe Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment; Durham Constabulary Threat and Tactical Assessment; and a range of Durham LSCB strategy documents and action plans.

Ofsted Inspection of Durham LSCB

Ofsted carried out an inspection of Durham County Council's Children's Services and a review of Durham LSCB over a four-week period in February and March 2016. The inspection is part of a Single Inspection Framework (SIF) introduced by Ofsted in 2013.

Ofsted rated the effectiveness of Durham LSCB as **'Good'**. In their inspection document Ofsted reported that:

- Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board is an ambitious and reflective Board whose effectiveness and functioning has significantly improved since the peer review of October 2014
- There is a culture of openness and challenge
- Durham LSCB has clear governance arrangements with partner Boards, with whom there are aligned priorities
- An appropriately resourced and well-managed business unit provides good support to the Board
- A timely and thorough Section 11 audit and challenge process ensures that safeguarding is a priority
- The Early Help offer is well resourced and embedded, with clear strategic direction
- Responses to child sexual exploitation are well coordinated at both a strategic and operational level
- Effective processes are in place for reviewing and disseminating learning from serious, child death and other case reviews

- The Board has effective systems for the planning, monitoring and oversight of training activity, clearly linked to Board priorities, and training requirements arising from Serious Case Reviews

Following the Ofsted review an action plan was put in place to address the recommendations, this includes:

- Ensuring that quality assurance and performance management processes are further developed to offer a detailed and comprehensive picture of the quality and impact of frontline practice in all service areas to underpin strategic understanding, challenge and development
- Ensuring that quality assurance and audit work contribute to understanding the impact of training and the embedding of lessons learned from case reviews
- Developing more effective feedback processes from children, young people and families who have received child protection services to support ongoing service improvement



Ofsted Inspection rated
Durham LSCB as **'Good'**



Download: [Ofsted Inspection of Durham LSCB 2016](#).

3. Local Data

In 2015, there were an estimated 519,695 people living in County Durham. The county stretches from the rural North Pennine Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the West to the Heritage Coastline in the East and is the home to a range of treasures including Durham Cathedral and Castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The County has 12 major centres of population including Durham City, Chester-le-Street, Newton Aycliffe, Consett and Peterlee.

Between 2001 and 2015, the 0-17 population in County Durham has fallen by 5.9% compared to a national increase of 4.2% over the same period.

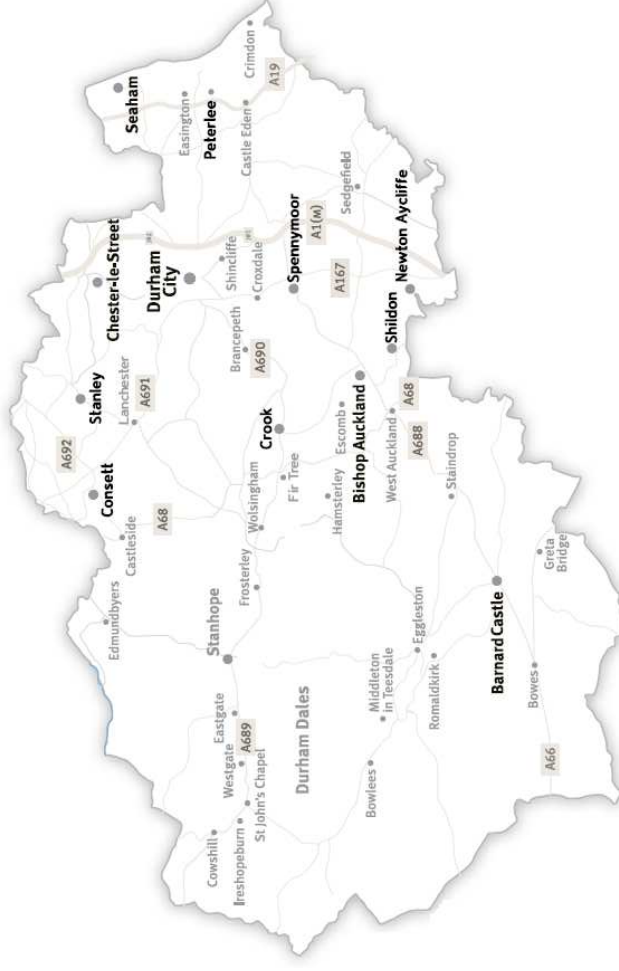
The fall in the 10 to 14 age group is due to low birth rates in the period 2000/2002. However, an increase in births since 2008 has meant a rise in the number of children aged under 10 years.

These changes will have future implications with regards to school place provision which is mapped through the work of Durham County Council in its pupil projection work.

Projections for the county indicate that the number of children and young people will grow, increasing from 5.6% growth by 2024 to 7.6% growth by 2039. Growth across England will continue to rise over this period, with 8.6% growth by 2024 and 10.6% growth by 2039.

Data source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Child poverty in County Durham is higher than the England average, with 22.5% of children under 16 years living in poverty. Growing up in poverty has a significant impact on the development of children and young people both during their childhood and beyond. Work is being undertaken to address child poverty through a Poverty Action Group chaired by Durham County Council.



Children on a Child Protection Plan

Provisional data at 31 March 2016 indicates that 350 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan (34.9 per 10,000 population aged 0-18).



were subject to a **Child Protection Plan** down 3% on last year

The percentage of Child Protection Plans that lasted two years or more is **provisionally** 2.7%.

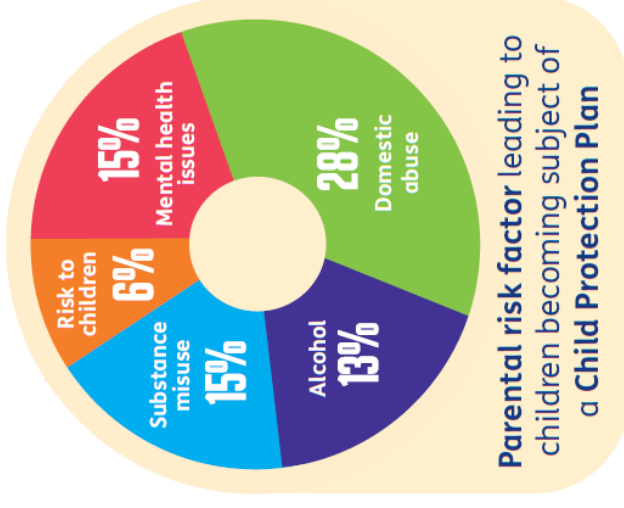
The figures for children on a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, within two years of the previous plan have fallen to 7.6%. This is a reduction of 2.5% on 2014/15 figures.

Provisional figures for the most frequent reason for children being placed on a Child Protection Plan in 2015/16 was Neglect (301/466).

Provisional figures show that **61.7% of children** who were made subject of a Child Protection Plan under five years old, (2015-16) were made so due to Neglect.

Provisional figures shows that domestic abuse continues to be the main parental risk factor leading to children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan, accounting for **28% of child protection conferences** recorded for 2015/16.

Parental mental health, substance misuse and alcohol misuse, are the next most common.



Looked After Children

When children become Looked After it is important to provide them with placement stability and provide opportunities to improve outcomes and equip them for life beyond the care system. We know that by understanding the reasons why children become Looked After enables agencies to target their early help and family support services.

Provisional figures state that the number of Looked After children at 31 March 2016 was 680. This is 67.8 per 10,000 of the population aged 0-18.



Number of Looked After children

7. Governance and Structure

Local Safeguarding Children Board

Each local area is required by Law to have a Local Safeguarding Children Board. The LSCB is a statutory body established in legislation (Children Act 2004) and works according to national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'.

Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the locality, and to ensure that they will do so effectively.

The functions of the LSCB are:

- **To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area**

This includes:

- the action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention
- training of persons who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children
- recruitment and supervision of persons who work with children
- investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children
- safety and welfare of children who are privately fostered

- investigation of allegations concerning persons who work with children
- co-operating with neighbouring children's services authorities and their Board partners
- **To communicate and raise awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**
- **To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and their Board partners individually and collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve**
- **To participate in the planning of services for children in the area of the authority**
- **To undertake reviews of serious cases and advising the authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned**

To fulfil this role, Durham LSCB uses data to:

- assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including Early Help
- assess whether LSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory safeguarding obligations
- quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multi-agency training to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

LSCB Membership and Governance

Local Safeguarding Children Boards are a statutory partnership made up of local agencies. In County Durham there is a longstanding and a high level of commitment amongst partner agencies to develop and improve arrangements to protect and safeguard children from harm and to share responsibility and accountability for those services.

In 2015/16 NHS England, Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust have been added as new member organisations.

A full membership list is available in this annual report at [Appendix 1](#).

Over the last year Durham LSCB has undertaken a governance review, this included refreshing the Terms of Reference; reviewing and widening the Lay Member role; identifying gaps in membership and refreshing the local safeguarding framework.

The governance and effectiveness arrangements form the formal agreement between the Board and all partner agencies. It outlines accountability; key purposes; functions and tasks; membership; and agreed standards and expectations of LSCB members.

A Safeguarding Framework has been agreed jointly with Durham LSCB; Durham Safeguarding Adults Board; the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Children and Families Partnership and the Safe Durham Partnership and details how the partnerships work together to protect vulnerable children and adults from harm.

Durham LSCB continues to be chaired by an independent person, an arrangement that has been in place since 2011. Jane Geraghty became the Independent Chair of the Board in October 2014, and is supported by the Vice Chair Gill Findley, Director of Nursing, Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and North Durham CCG.

The Chair has a crucial role ensuring the Board operates independently, to challenge senior representatives and agencies whilst scrutinising services to seek continued improvement.

The Board is supported by the LSCB Business Unit which sits in Planning and Service Strategy within the Local Authority. This has improved the links with other partnership structures and strengthened the joint working on a range of strategies such as the County Durham Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, the Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation Practice Guidance and the Early Help and Neglect Strategy.

LSCB Board Meetings and Attendance

The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board meets bi-monthly and attendance is monitored and reported annually as part of the Board's governance and effectiveness arrangements.

The Board continue to experience good attendance with new members adding value.

Learning and Improvement

Durham LSCB continually monitors the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of multi-agency practice through the Performance Management Framework.

Where gaps are identified, implications for the LSCB are considered and progressed through business planning arrangements and the work of the LSCB sub-groups.

LSCB action plans against priorities and performance are reported, monitored and challenged.

We will continue to:

- monitor partner compliance with the statutory requirement to have effective safeguarding arrangements in place (Section 11)
- carry out multi-agency audits and identify lessons to be learned and make recommendations for future improvement
- produce a series of multi-agency audit reports to inform the LSCB Board of the quality of work being undertaken and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people
- develop a series of performance scorecards for priority areas

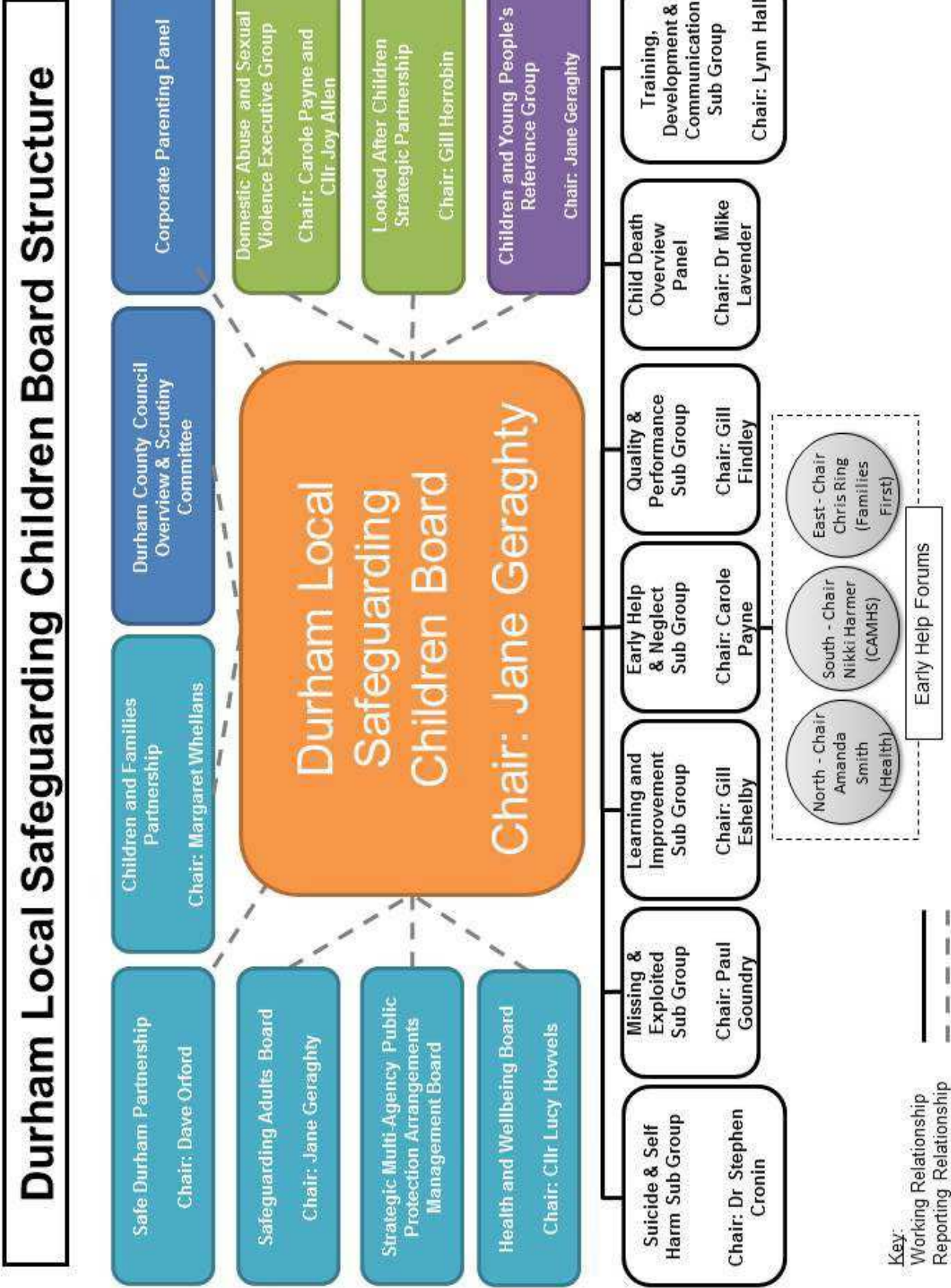
We continue to implement the recommendations from Serious Case Reviews and host learning events where key messages and the lessons learned from the published Serious Case Reviews we have undertaken are shared with practitioners and agencies.

Serious Case Reviews are published on the Durham LSCB website for a period of 12 months.

Outcomes and findings feed into our learning and improvement structures to promote a culture of continuous improvement across the LSCB.

The Child Death Overview Panel for Durham and Darlington share key learning from child deaths. Action plans are implemented and reviewed by the Child Death Overview Panel at each meeting.





Sub Groups

Durham LSCB has in place a number of sub-groups, taking forward the priorities of the Board. Each group delivers on identified actions, projects and initiatives. Regular updates and performance are reported into the LSCB.

Suicide and Self Harm Sub-group – This group is developing a support pathway for practitioners and tackles the causal factors for suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm issues for young people.

Missing and Exploited Sub-group – This group focusses on monitoring activity and improving services and responses to reported missing and absent children and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Learning and Improvement Sub-group – This group considers serious incidents, commissions Serious Case Reviews (SCR), oversees and monitors progress on agreed actions from SCRs.

Early Help and Neglect Sub-group – This group reviews and improves the referral pathways and access to help and support for families at an earlier stage of need and thereby reduce the number of families entering the system in crisis. This group supports three Early Help Locality Forums for a range of multi-agency practitioners.

Quality and Performance Sub-group – This group oversees the quality and standards of safeguarding practice across the partnership to ensure that the LSCB fulfils its statutory function. Performance is monitored and analysis of the effectiveness of procedures is undertaken through LSCB audits. The group plans and monitors the LSCB audit programme.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) – This is a joint group of both Durham and Darlington LSCBs. It has responsibility for reviewing the available information on all child deaths and ensures that a review of every death of a child normally resident in County Durham is undertaken.

Training, Development and Communications Sub-group – This group reviews, plans and develops the delivery of multi-agency training programmes using information from Learning Lessons Reviews, Serious Case Reviews as well as national and regional guidance. This group also has responsibility for the development and delivery of the LSCB Marketing and Communication Strategy.

Children and Young People’s Reference Group – This group has been set up to actively engage with children and young people and seek their views on a range of safeguarding issues.

In addition the following groups have links to the LSCB Board.

Looked After Children Strategic Partnership – This group has a reporting relationship to the LSCB; it aims to improve educational achievements; to improve post-16 services and to improve the health and emotional well-being of Looked After children and young people.

Corporate Parenting Panel – The Corporate Parenting Panel monitors and ensures the well-being of children who are Looked After by the Council. The LSCB Annual Report is presented to this group.

Linkages across other partnerships and services

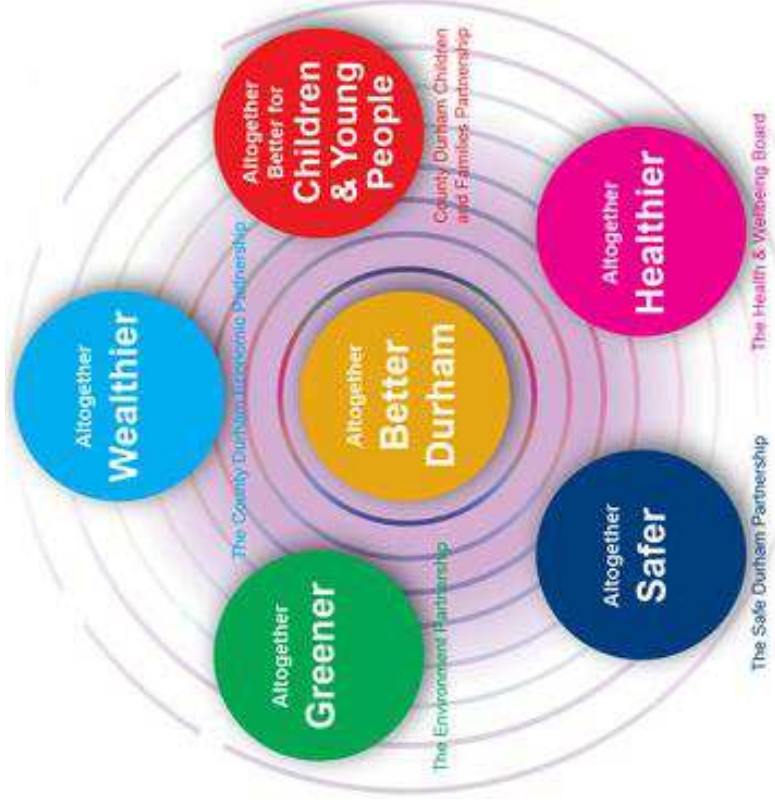
Durham LSCB works with a wide range of agencies from across the Children and Families Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board and Safe Durham Partnership. Together these Partnerships, (along with Environmental and Economic themes), work under the County Durham Partnership towards the overarching vision of an 'Altogether Better Durham'.

Each of the five thematic partnerships has a specific focus:

- **The Children and Families Partnership** - Works to ensure effective services are delivered in the most efficient way to improve the lives of children, young people and families in County Durham
- **The Health and Wellbeing Board** - Promotes integrated working between commissioners of health services, public health and social care services, for the purposes of improving the health and wellbeing of the people in the area
- **The Safe Durham Partnership** - Tackles crime, disorder, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the environment and seeks to reduce re-offending
- **The Environment Partnership** - Aims to transform and sustain the environment within County Durham, maximising partnership arrangements to support the economy and the wellbeing of local communities
- **The Economic Partnership** - Aims to make County Durham a place where people want to live, work, invest and visit whilst

enabling our residents and businesses to achieve their potential

We will continue to engage and challenge these partnerships where appropriate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in County Durham.



 **More Information:** Find out more information about the [County Durham Partnership](#).

Working with other LSCBs

Durham LSCB works collaboratively with other Local Safeguarding Children Boards to share learning and agree safeguarding policies and procedures which impact on children and families and cross our Local Authority boundaries.

There is work across the region promoting good practice in areas such as Child Sexual Exploitation, training, policies and procedures and lessons learned. We are an active member of the LSCB Regional Business Managers Group.

The regional priorities identified focus on the key issues of Child Sexual Exploitation and neglect.

Information Sharing

This remains an important issue highlighted in learning from Serious Case Reviews both nationally and in County Durham.

We will continue to keep a focus on information sharing supporting and promoting good practice across multi-agency teams.

We continue to maintain and promote the local 'Collaborative Working and Information Sharing between Professionals to protect Vulnerable Adults, Young People and Children' protocol. This provides guidance for professionals on sharing information with others, both within and outside of their organisation.

Wood review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards

In December 2015 the Prime Minister announced a review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), in England.


The review sets out a new framework for improving the organisation and delivery of multi-agency arrangements to protect and safeguard children. The review argues that *'on a scale of prescriptive to permissive arrangements, the pendulum has locked itself too close to a belief that we should say how things should be done as opposed to what outcomes we want for children and young people'*.

The review also covers the role and function of LSCBs within the context of local strategic multi-agency working, including the Child Death Review process and a proposed centralisation of Serious Case Reviews.

Although there are potential implications to consider from both the Wood review and the Government's response, the Durham LSCB Board will wait for further information to become available.

The arrangements set out in the Children and Social Work Bill do not at present cover the reviews or any provisions relating to LSCBs.

 **Download:** [Wood report: review of the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards](#)

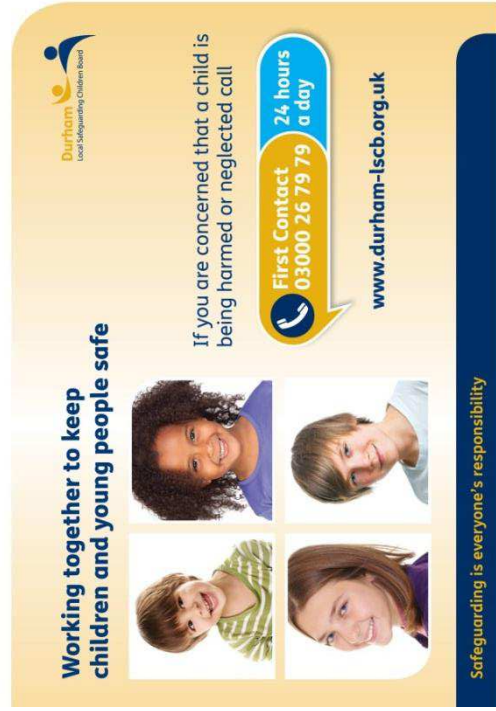
 **Download:** [The government's response to the Wood's review](#)

5. Achievements and progress against 2015/16 Priorities

LSCB Priorities 2015/16

The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board agreed the following priorities for 2015/16:

- Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Improving Early Help
- Reducing Neglect (contributory factors are domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse; parental mental health)
- Reducing self-harm and improving young people's self-esteem
- Increase the voice of the child
- Ensuring that each agency is accountable for delivery of its own safeguarding responsibilities



Achievements and Progress Highlights

- We have refreshed the Early Help and Neglect Strategy to include more focus on Hidden Harm (domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse and parental mental health)
- We have developed the Early Help and Neglect Practice Guidance to provide updated toolkits and strategies for practitioners to use and implement
- The 0-19 Level of Need threshold document has been revised and provides a quick-reference guide to support professionals in their decision-making, including conducting further assessments, referring to other services and understanding the likely thresholds for higher levels of intervention
- We have reviewed the Single Assessment Procedures to reflect the added focus on Neglect and Hidden Harm
- The Home Environment Assessment Tool has been developed and piloted giving practitioners a better understanding of external influences on the family
- The development and launch of the ERASE website has increased our capability to raise awareness about CSE
- The creation of a multi-agency ERASE team to tackle CSE and disrupt offenders
- We have delivered taxi driver awareness training of CSE with over 1,000 trained to date
- We have worked with Durham Police to develop a proportionate response to issues of 'Sexting' and without criminalising children

- Intervene to Protect a Child training (identifying and targeting perpetrators of CSE) has been supported with over 1,000 trained so far
- Multi-agency inspections of Durham Police found (LSCB) partnership work in tackling CSE as 'excellent'
- The performance scorecard has been revamped to provide a realistic outcome measures that are aligned to our priorities
- A new risk register and a risk reporting methodology has been developed to support the use of a live risk register with effective controls and assurances
- We have completed the Section 11 audit and a number of multi-agency audits. We have followed this up with a number of challenge clinics to hold organisations to account
- We have robust planning and monitoring of Serious Case Reviews and sharing of learning. This has led to specific Learning Lessons events for GPs and Early Years services
- We have engaged with young people who want to share their first-hand experience. They have delivered sessions as part of our Lesson Learned events and other conferences
- Increased visibility and partnership working through the LSCB Marketing and Communication Strategy
- Thematic reviews are built into the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) process
- A child death review database has been developed and implemented. This allows us to identify and monitor developing trends through better analysis of data

Challenge and Impact

The LSCB has a role as a responsible authority for monitoring licence applications under the Licensing Act 2003. We challenge applicants on their actions to protect children and young people if they are not in line with our licensing objectives. The impact of this can be seen when the LSCB or its partners instigate a licensing review for failure to uphold licensing objectives. A licensing review may result in a licence being revoked or amended.

The LSCB Risk Register and Challenge Log has been established requiring partners to present mitigating actions to reduce risks and record challenges made to agencies. This is reviewed at each Durham LSCB Board meeting.

A challenge from the Chair of the LSCB was to improve the voice of the child. This has resulted in collaborative work with children's groups, voluntary and community sector, Area Action Partnerships, the Youth Offending Service and other services such as 'Investing in Children' with the development of the Children's and Young People's Reference Group for the LSCB as a central point of engagement.

These young people have met with members of the LSCB and their views have been taken into account in the LSCB work plan and our priority setting arrangements. An example of a direct impact of listening to these young people is the continued inclusion of the self-harm priority for the LSCB and the community visits undertaken.

The Children's and Young People's Reference Group works to establish and record young people's views. The LSCB then

challenged partners to include and use these views to develop and change services and practice.

The Early Help and Neglect Sub-Group continue to challenge partners to improve the Early Help responses; this has led to the introduction of domestic abuse workers based with One Point teams and drug and alcohol workers engaging in the Early Help Forums and within the Police Central Referral Unit.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) challenges agencies if agreed actions from recommendations are not progressed in time and escalation processes are in place. This includes convening an extraordinary meeting to address themes identified through the CDOP process.

Similarly, the Learning & Improvement Sub Group monitors actions for learning following a Serious Case Review– challenge letters are sent to Chief Officers to ensure actions are progressed in a timely way.

We monitor and challenge the use of restraint in secure settings and provide an update in this Annual Report.

We have introduced challenge clinics to hold organisations to account following the Section 11 audit and multi-agency audits in 2015/16.

Challenge also takes place at a senior level through a Chief Officers Safeguarding Group which includes the County Council's Chief Executive, Independent Chair of the LSCB, Corporate Director of

Children and Adults Services, Chief Officers of the Clinical Commissioning Groups, the local NHS Foundation Trust, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust and Police Chief Constable as well as other senior managers.

This forum allows the opportunity to challenge and share information to ensure line of sight on safeguarding issues including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Ensure training programmes are joined up with the LSCB's
- Ensure quality of frontline practice
- Share outcomes of multi-agency audits and action plans

We have strengthened our joint working with a range of partnerships on shared or similar priorities. Examples include:

- **The Safe Durham Partnership** – working together and contributing to the development of actions in respect of domestic abuse; alcohol misuse, substance misuse. Aligning and improving work within sexual violence, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation
- **The Children and Families Partnership** – working together to increase the voice of the child such as the student voice survey, young people who offend and Early Help provision
- **The Health and Wellbeing Board** – through greater integration of self-harm and suicide prevention agenda and contributing to the development of the self-harm and suicide pathway

Progress on LSCB priorities 2015/16

Priority 1 – Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can have a serious long-term impact on every aspect of children's lives, health and education. It damages the lives of families and carers, which can lead to family break-ups.

Our 2015 analysis of CSE in County Durham found strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. There are a range of risks associated with missing children including sexual exploitation, mental health, alcohol or drug misuse issues with the motivation for going missing including family conflict or relationship issues.

Online CSE continues as the most common model. The local offender profile is one of 'street grooming' and use of social media to exploit children.

The analysis suggested that community intelligence being gathered or submitted could be improved. In response we have begun to develop stronger relationships with communities through Area Action Partnerships (AAP), raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation and how to report concerns or intelligence of CSE.

All 14 AAPs have featured CSE in their newsletters which have a reach in excess of 12,600 people. We have planned to attend all 14 AAPs Board meetings throughout 2016 to deliver CSE messages to community leaders.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Area Action Partnerships](#).

We have carried out LSCB audits for both CSE incidents to assess child protection practice and improve outcomes for children who go missing. This has led to the introduction of a dedicated multi-agency ERASE team that focusses on early identification and support of young people at risk of CSE and tackles suspected offenders using problem solving tactics.

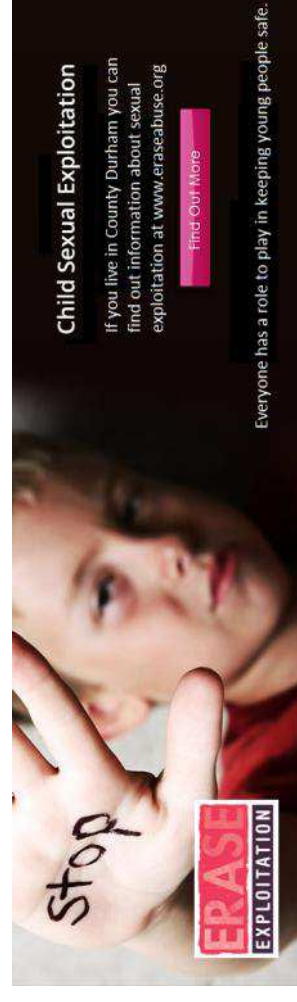
We continue to implement the County Durham Child Sexual Exploitation and Action Plan to prevent, protect and pursue all forms of CSE including online child abuse as well as contact offences.

As part of the CSE marketing plan we have created the 'ERASE' brand (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.



In January 2016 we launched the ERASE website and offers professionals, parents and carers advice on how to communicate with their children about who they speak to on and off-line.

NEW! Launched new ERASE website



Durham Constabulary became the first Force in the UK to adopt a new training package aimed at protecting children from abuse. 'Intervene to Protect a Child' (IPC) is a proactive training tactic which has had significant success in the United States. Over 1,000 police officers and other agency staff such as children and adult services, housing, neighbourhood wardens and probation officers have been trained in this innovative technique.

We have widened our CSE training and awareness to those services not traditionally associated with safeguarding. This has led to a programme of training for taxi drivers with over 1,000 trained to date. We contributed to a review of the taxi licensing conditions and in March 2016 safeguarding training was made a mandatory condition.

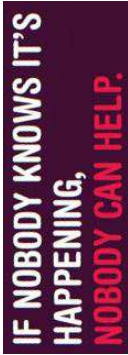


OVER 1000

Taxi drivers have attended **CSE awareness training**

The taxi driver CSE and safeguarding children training has had a positive impact and resulted in a taxi driver who attended the training taking action to prevent an 11 year old from being exploited.

The training will continue throughout 2016 and will extend the invitation to other external services such as hotels, take away outlets, off-licence trade and internally to staff such as Housing, Environmental Services and Neighbourhood Wardens.



 **Download:** [County Durham Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy.](#)

Further activity includes:

- The Missing and Exploited Group has increased its membership to include a representative from the National Probation Service, County Durham Safeguarding Adults Board and DISC representing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender young people
- Developed ERASE materials on the prevention and awareness of CSE
- Education Services and the Police have delivered joint training to secondary schools, further education colleges and a number of alternative providers to raise awareness of CSE
- Delivered an ERASE Young People's Conference in June 2015 in conjunction with Stanley AAP. The event saw Year 9 pupils attend workshop sessions based on CSE, grooming, online safety, and appropriate relationships. The young people then planned actions to provide feedback to their individual schools
- Delivered an ERASE practitioner problem solving conference with the voice of the child visible in the testimonies from victims of the Rotherham child abuse investigations
- Agreed key messages from the LSCB Communication Strategy on Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation
- CSE and online safety awareness sessions have been delivered with Out of School activity leaders

 **More Information:** Find out more information about Child Sexual Exploitation on the [ERASE website.](#)

The region continues its commitment to addressing Child Sexual Exploitation and has established a North East Tackling Exploitation Board. It includes representatives from Local Authorities, the Police, NHS England and a local academic. Durham is represented by the Head of Children's Services and the Detective Superintendent Lead for Safeguarding.



The National Police Chief Council (formerly ACPO) has begun to develop a regional problem profile and Durham LSCB partners have contributed extensively to this.

In February 2016 the Government began a consultation exercise to update the definition of Child Sexual Exploitation. The proposed changes are intended to remove any ambiguity and ensure that across all sectors practitioners are working to the same definition. The proposed definition reflects the increased understanding of this form of abuse. Durham LSCB and its partners have contributed to this consultation and will adopt the final new statutory definition once it has been published.

Priority 2 – Improving Early Help

The majority of children and young people in County Durham will grow up and reach their potential in a supportive environment. However, some children, young people and their families face difficulties and problems. Additional help and support needs to be available at the earliest opportunity to stop these challenges from escalating and negatively impacting on their future.

Durham LSCB recognises Early Help as a key priority area for making significant impact on outcomes for children. Early Help has been embedded as a key principle in a broad range of partnership work and has many cross cutting themes and objectives promoted by the LSCB.

Early Help and Neglect Strategy

Over the last year we have refreshed and updated the Early Help and Neglect Strategy to reflect our ongoing progress and make the link between Neglect and Hidden Harm (e.g. substance misuse) more explicit.

The Early Help and Neglect Strategy provides an overarching framework for the work of all partners in County Durham. It links to a suite of more detailed practice tools to enable practitioners to respond effectively to identified need.

Children, young people and their families have different levels of need depending on their individual circumstances and quite often these change over time with some families moving between universal, targeted and specialist services.

Children can be helped in three broad ways:

1. **Prevention** → So that problems do not arise in the first place
2. **Early Intervention** → So that problems are cut off at an early stage
3. **Protection/ Targeted intervention / treatment** → So that something is in place for needs or problems that are serious or will endure.

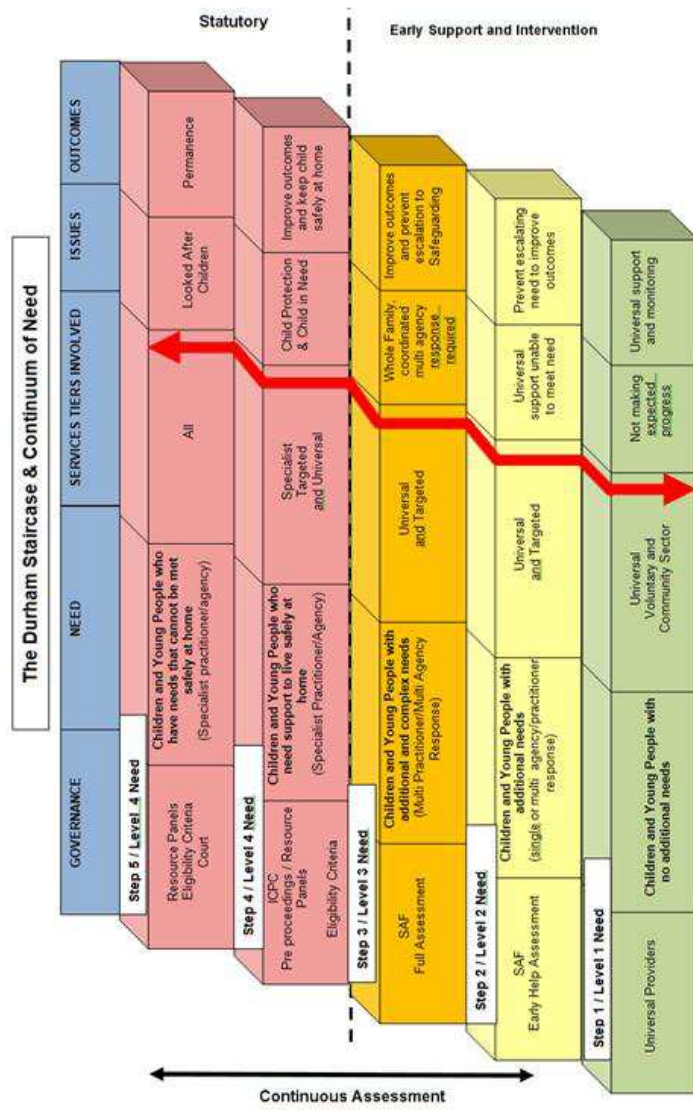
At any of the three stages, there will be a need for some level of help which requires services to be equipped and able to respond to these changing needs and demands.

Central to this approach is a focus on increasing independence for families and communities, supporting and building resilience. It is a way of thinking and working that views children, young people and their families as equal partners with an emphasis on doing 'with' rather than doing 'to'.

 [Download: Early Help and Neglect Strategy.](#)

Durham Continuum of Need and the 0-19 Level of Need
 Following on from the refreshed strategy the Durham Continuum of Need and the 0-19 Level of Need have been extensively reworked and published.

The continuum of need is designed to reflect the fact that children and young people's needs and those of their families may change over time. Regardless of which 'step' children, young people and families are identified on they will be supported at the earliest opportunity and continue to be supported by the relevant services as they move up and down the staircase.



The 0-19 threshold indicators are designed to provide practitioners with an overarching view on what level of support and intervention a family might need and provide a quick-reference guide to support professionals in their decision-making, including conducting further assessments, referring to other services and understanding the likely thresholds for higher levels of intervention.

The impact of the Early Help intervention can be seen through a range of activity in Children's Centres, One Point, Families First services and the continued development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

The national Troubled Families Programme (known as Stronger Families in County Durham) has been extended for a further five years from 2015/16 and will reach an additional 400,000 families across England.



For Durham this means an additional 4,360 families will be supported. The expanded programme continues to reach out to families with a broad range of problems, including poor school attendance, unemployment, youth crime, domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health problems. We know these are indicators of neglect and Durham LSCB will continue to support and challenge the work of the Stronger Families Programme.

 **More Information:** Find out more information on the [Stronger Families Programme](#).

Early Help Forums


The Early Help Forums are now well established across the County and is used as a line of communication between the LSCB and frontline practitioners. It has facilitated effective communication and collaborative working arrangements as well as identifying gaps in Early Help provision for children and families.

The forums highlight and problem solve ongoing challenges in the implementation and delivery of effective Early Help provision. All outstanding challenges which are not mitigated through the Early Help Forums are escalated for the attention of the Early Help and Neglect Sub Group. Ongoing challenges include engagement with schools and adult mental health services.

The forums have conducted three multi-agency audits covering attendance at Team Around the Family; chronologies; and school referrals in to First Contact.

Forums have also undertaken an annual joint development event focussed on Sandstories. (Sandstories bring insight and understanding on the impact of the neglect and maltreatment of children providing staff with a unique view of family lives which may be damaging to children).

Furthermore the forums show potential in addressing gaps in delivery by identifying services provided through the voluntary and community sector and facilitating access to these services.

 **Download:** [0-19 Level of Need](#).

Priority 3 – Reducing Neglect

The greatest single cause of children needing protection and care in County Durham is neglect. **Provisional figures** show that 466 children became subject to a Child Protection Plan in 2015/16 and 230 were under five years old when they became subject to a Child Protection Plan. Neglect is a long term, chronic form of harm to children, and services offering Early Help should be able to impact positively on outcomes for this group of children – either in reducing levels of neglect or in reducing delay that many children experience before decisions are made about ‘good enough’ parenting.

Parental issues of domestic abuse, mental health, alcohol misuse and substance misuse continue to be key issues which cause neglect in County Durham and are known collectively as Hidden Harm factors.

Durham LSCB continues to challenge partners to improve responses to Early Help and Neglect. In 2015 we have seen the introduction of domestic abuse outreach workers in the One Point and Families First teams and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. We have carried out an audit of agency cooperation where substance misuse is identified as a parental risk factor contributing to a Child Protection Plan. Drug and alcohol workers and domestic abuse outreach workers are now engaged in the Early Help Forums.

Plans for 2016 include the role out in October of Operation Encompass – to provide early sharing of information with schools to enable the provision of timely care and support for the child. If a domestic incident occurred the previous evening and a child was in the house, the police will contact a nominated key adult at the school

the child attends prior to the start of the school day. Appropriate support will then be available for that child.

We have implemented the provision of specialist training for multi-agency practitioners supporting children identified as at risk or subject to neglect by their parent/carers. We have used improved national guidance and lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews to develop this training further and cover Early Help, child development and the long term impact of Neglect on children.

To support the refreshed Early Help and Neglect Strategy we have developed a Neglect Practice Guidance to assist practitioners across services to identify early signs of neglect and develop more responsive and timely interventions to address concerns about neglect. The practice guidance seeks to ensure that practitioners focus their attention on:

- patterns of parental behaviour and the impact this behaviour may be having on the child’s physical, emotional, psychological and behavioural development and wellbeing
- reducing the effect of growing up in poverty and assessing a family’s economic wellbeing
- the impact on the child’s attachment behaviours
- the child’s day to day lived experience over time

To complete this work a new Home Environment Assessment Tool will be launched in 2016.

 **Download:** [Neglect Practice Guidance](#) and the [Single Assessment Procedures](#).

Contributory factors of neglect

Alcohol

Children and young people experience poor outcomes due to *parental alcohol misuse* including foetal alcohol syndrome, school attainment, inferior health and wellbeing, neglect, greater likelihood of exposure to crime and alcohol-related domestic violence. Balance (the North East Alcohol Office) estimate that the number of children living with a parent(s) who drink alcohol at high risk levels in County Durham is 49,353.



Alcohol is a common vulnerability factor in incidence of Child Sexual Exploitation and grooming.

The amount of young people drinking in the UK is reducing however, those young people who do drink alcohol are drinking more in volume and more frequently.

Durham LSCB has strong links to the Alcohol Harm Reduction Group and have contributed to the closer working of treatment services, Early Help and services to support children, young people and their families.

Over the last year a young people's worker has been integrated into the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

 **More Information:** Find out more information on [alcohol in County Durham](#).

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is the main parental risk factor leading to a Child Protection Plan. In County Durham the levels of domestic abuse related incidents reported to the police have seen a continuous but small increase since 2009/10. Domestic abuse continues to be under-reported.

Harbour is commissioned by Durham County Council and provides a holistic service focussed on early intervention. In addition, domestic abuse support workers are integrated into Families First teams and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Durham LSCB has links to the County Durham Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) and we will continue to promote the need for domestic abuse services to support children, young people and their families.

Our LSCB training programme in relation to domestic abuse focusses on improving the understanding of risk factors; equipping practitioners with knowledge and skills to undertake effective risk assessment and ensuring practitioners are clear about referral pathways and key points of contact. Durham LSCB and the Safe Durham Partnership domestic abuse training were aligned in 2015 with a multi-agency set of trainers now delivering the training.

 **More Information:** Find out more information on [domestic abuse services in County Durham](#).



Priority 4 – Reducing self-harm and improving young people’s self-esteem

Self harm is a key issue for the county. The number of 10-24 year olds admitted to hospital due to self-harm (523.5 per 100,000 population) is higher than the England average (412.1 per 100,000).

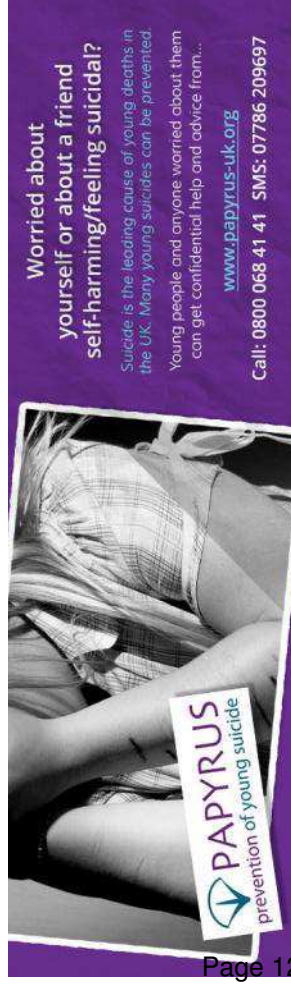
HIGHER 

The number of 10-24 year olds admitted to hospital for self-harm is higher than England average

In the 2014/15 Annual Report we reported as a direct impact of listening to these young people the inclusion of the self-harm priority for the LSCB. We made links with the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board’s work to tackle the causal factors for suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm.

This resulted in some innovated work including young people speaking about their own personal experiences of self-harm at a Durham LSCB Lessons Learned event and the County Durham Suicide Prevention Conference.

A Self-Harm Sub Group has now been established to develop a self-harm support pathway, practice guidance and training package for




practitioners in line with the level of need threshold work done for Early Help.

The pathway is aimed at practitioners and tackles the causal factors for suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm issues of children and young people.



The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has reviewed service provision and will develop a Single Point of Access in 2016/17.

We will continue with partners and services to work with families on prevention and improving the quality of mental health care across the county. This will include involvement in the development of Children and Young People’s Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience transformation plan across partners.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [County Durham Suicide Prevention](#).

Priority 5 – Increase the voice of the Child

Durham LSCB actively engages and seeks the views of children and young people on wider safeguarding issues.

We continued to improve the way we involve young people, throughout 2015/16 and worked collaboratively with 'Investing In Children' and the Children and Young People's Reference Group.

Members of the LSCB Board have conducted community visits alongside these young people to see first-hand their concerns. The young people meet with members of the LSCB on a regular basis and their views have been taken into account in the LSCB work plan and our priority setting arrangements such as the continued inclusion of the self-harm priority for the LSCB 2015-16. Durham LSCB is scheduled to receive Investing in Children status in June 2016.



The Student Voice survey was commissioned by the Children & Families Partnership and is undertaken with Secondary Schools to seek the views of children and young people in County Durham on a range of relevant issues to assist Partnerships and Schools create an evidence base to assist future planning, service development and performance activities.

The survey was undertaken electronically by students in Years 7, 9 and 11, and also Year 13 where schools have a sixth form, with responses received from 8,148 individual students in total.

The survey highlighted issues such as:

- Over 10% of students identified themselves as a Young Carer This reinforces the importance of the Young Carers Charter in County Durham and the need for schools to safely identify and support young carers in their school
- 33% of students stated they have been bullied. Public Health and Education are working closely on the resilience programme including working with schools to tackle bullying
- Over half of the 369 students who responded that they are unhappy stated that they have no-one to talk to when feeling vulnerable. Schools are being supported to work on a whole school approach to mental wellbeing
- 23.3% of Year 11 students responded that they drink 'during the week', 'most weekends', 'every weekend' or 'every day'. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy includes a focus on the *Altogether Better* for Children and Young People theme and

specific actions for the Drug and Alcohol Service to support schools in tackling drug and alcohol issues

We will continue to use the evidence base provided by the Student Voice survey to challenge partners and support the continuous improvement of services for children and young people.

We have engaged with young people who want to share their first-hand experience. They have delivered sessions as part of our Lesson Learned events, the County Durham Suicide Prevention Conference and the ERASE development and problem solving conference.



“I wanted to express my own heartfelt appreciation for the rare opportunity, as a professional, to hear the accounts of actual people whose lives have been so massively impacted upon.”


The result of this involvement by young people and their openness to share has been very effective. Feedback from practitioners has been very positive and has improved the learning of those involved.

“Both as a professional and a parent, their stories preyed on my mind for the rest of the day. They provided a more thought provoking human element and a deeper comprehension of their far reaching experiences and for that I feel very privileged.”

We have actively engaged young people from various backgrounds and abilities within identified vulnerable groups that face additional barriers for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual, special educational needs and gypsy, roma traveller children. Durham Community Action has carried this engagement work and shared this with Durham LSCB.

Engagement activities were appropriate to the audience and included a mixture of interactive discussions, post-it note feedback, decision stickers, etc. The majority of the children and young people who took part feel safe most of the time and it is specific situations where they feel they need support either due to perceptions or due to incidents they or their peers have experienced.

This direct link to young people and understanding the ‘Voice of the Child’ has brought a positive and different perspective into the LSCB. It has directly shaped new actions across all LSCB sub groups and challenged the development of service provision such as the planned interventions of Early Help services.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Investing In Children](#).

Priority 6 – Ensuring each agency is accountable for delivery of its own safeguarding responsibilities

This priority is delivered through scrutinising the audit function of Durham LSCB and is covered in more detail in [Section 6 Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance](#).

The LSCB Board recognises the importance of self-improvement, to be effective it needs to continuously learn from its own experiences and that of others. For example the LSCB Chair has met with a range of frontline staff to discuss issues, ideas and improvements.

Partners have undertaken a range of steps to develop joint practice and values to improve our effectiveness - keeping the child's journey at the forefront of what we do.

We have clarified our business objectives and aligned our LSCB operations against our objectives. Over the last year we have:

- improved our performance reports and implemented a new dataset to better reflect priorities
- strengthened the scrutiny and challenge role and have developed a framework for evidencing impact and difference
- strengthened the engagement and participation of children and young people in the work of the Board
- aligned the Board's activities with other partnerships
- improved the visibility and influence of the Board
- strengthened the engagement and participation of frontline staff including involvement in audit work

Emerging issues - Cyber Crime

Cyber Crime was highlighted as an emerging issue for the Safe Durham Partnership in 2015. There are strong links with Durham LSCB priorities in its work to prevent vulnerable young people being drawn into terrorism and sexual exploitation through the use of social media and the internet.

Representatives from Durham Constabulary Cyber Crime Team, Durham County Council Community Safety Team and the Local Safeguarding Children Board have delivered seminars covering Child Sexual Exploitation, Counter Terrorism and Cyber Crime. The seminars were attended by 120 professionals from the out-of-school sector.

A task and finish group is now in place and has developed a Cyber Crime Action Plan. The LSCB will contribute to this work in areas such as cyberbullying, grooming and other safeguarding issues.

The regional police forces have secured the services of Get Safe Online with the development of a 'Get Safe Online in Durham' website which has an extensive safeguarding section.



More Information: Find out more information on [Get Safe Online in Durham](#).

More Information: Find out more information on [Counter Terrorism and the Prevention of Violent Extremism](#)

6. Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Section 11 Audit

The Section 11 Audit is Durham LSCB's primary audit to examine the safeguarding arrangements within agencies and provides the Board with assurance that agencies are doing what they can to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people.

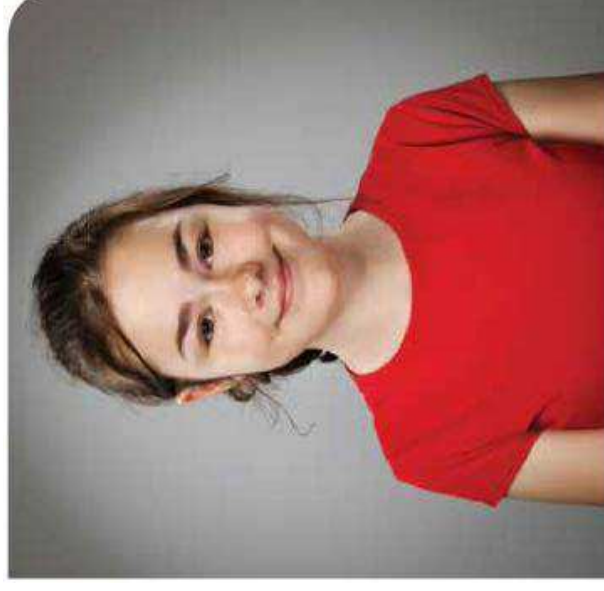
Agencies identified a total of 80 separate actions compiled into a Section 11 action plan to be monitored by the LSCB Board.

The responses received provide the LSCB with an overview of what the main issues and challenges are for agencies and also outlines key areas of service development. These responses will inform the questions to be included in the 2016/17 audit.

Section 11 Audit Findings

- Senior management commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is strong but further guidance on appropriate evidence should be included in future audits
- There is a clear commitment to communicate to staff and service users an agency's responsibilities towards children
- Agencies identified the need to the need to keep their policies up to date
- Good practice relating to structural awareness of safeguarding responsibilities within organisations was seen. Structure charts and named roles were consistently highlighted throughout the responses

- Activity to engage with children and young people in the development of safeguarding services was inconsistent and provides potential for further challenge
- There is strong commitment to ensuring staff maintain safeguarding knowledge and access to a broader range of development opportunities as well as mandatory safeguarding training
- Further evidence will be required in future Section 11 audits to show the level of understanding of the content of relevant policies / procedures
- There is a good level of compliance in effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- There is consistent awareness of the importance of information sharing



Multi-Agency Audits

We have developed a new audit toolkit, based on examples of good practice, to enable its use over a wide range of circumstances. Questions reflect the scope and the specific needs of the children, or processes being audited to meet the requirements of the planned audit.

In 2015/16 we carried out five multi-agency audits covering the following subjects

- Child Protection Strategy Meetings
- Agency cooperation where substance misuse is identified as a parental risk factor contributing to Child Protection Plan
- Team Around the Family Meetings
- Multi-Agency Chronologies
- School Referrals for Early Help

Child Protection Strategy Meeting Audit

The main findings from the child protection strategy meeting audit showed compliance with procedures has been subject to interpretation while IT systems can leave a gap in recording the progression to Initial Child Protection Conference if there is any variability in the lead-in to a conference.

A review of the procedures regarding Strategy Meetings will be undertaken in 2016/17 and a further audit will be planned for the end of 2016.

Agency Cooperation Audit

The audit of agency cooperation where substance misuse is identified as a parental risk factor contributing to a Child Protection Plan, found the majority of cases audited there was good evidence of proper and appropriate multi-agency co-operation. The audit also found variability in the IT systems used for recording client data across the different LSCB partner agencies.

The drug and alcohol service will undertake a review of their data systems as a wider review of their service in 2016. This audit will then be repeated following the review.

Audit of Team Around the Family Meetings

The audit of Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings found strong evidence that the child's needs had been identified appropriately and interventions were planned to improve things.

In all cases family improvement milestones were identified with good examples found such as a family agreement in place; improved attendance and behaviour in school; implemented daily routine; self-esteem and confidence building opportunities; parental skills training; financial and household management and improved home environment conditions.

However, these milestones did vary in quality and there was little evidence of comments from parents. Results of the audit were shared with the Early Help and Neglect Sub Group. An action plan was developed for those areas that required improvement with assigned managers and remedial action progressed within their service area.

Audit of Multi-Agency Chronologies

The audit of multi-agency chronologies found the general standard of completion was very high and all chronologies were up-to-date.

Not all chronologies audited showed that a chronology commenced when an agency first started their involvement with a child or family, however, all chronologies did begin when a first 'significant' event happened.

A best practice example was identified and circulated to all Early Help Forums and the Early Help and Neglect Sub Group.

Audit of School Referrals for Early Help

The audit of school referrals for Early Help found that each referral made by the school was appropriate. The cases examined highlighted the complexity of cases with clear evidence that convening of a Team Around the Family (TAF) as early as possible when concerns arise, is beneficial.

It noted that identifying a TAF Lead Professional through the school holidays should be highlighted in the LSCB and school safeguarding training so that a Lead Professional is clearly identified and a handover planned.

Since the audit the LSCB and school safeguarding training has been reviewed to cover the requirement of an identified TAF Lead Professional through the school holidays.

Safeguarding Privately Fostered Children

The Durham LSCB Board monitors the local arrangements for safeguarding children who are privately fostered.

On an annual basis the Board is provided with a full report setting out Durham County Council's strategy and specific arrangements to raise awareness in the community monitor and support children who are in such placements.


The main considerations of the report identify that notifications remain low and these children remain a hidden and possibly vulnerable population. Durham LSCB has challenged the Local Authority and partners to increase the number of new notifications through targeting of awareness raising in key agencies who are most likely to become aware of the changing nature of households.

Other actions include:

- monitoring of compliance with visiting to be incorporated into monthly performance clinics
- improving compliance with the statutory responsibilities on visiting
- gathering the views of parents / carers / children and young people in relation to their private fostering arrangement



 **Download:** [Annual Private Fostering Report](#).

 **More Information:** Find out more about [Private Fostering](#).

The Use of Restraint – Safeguarding Young People in Secure Settings

County Durham is among a small number of Local Authorities who have secure services within its boundaries.

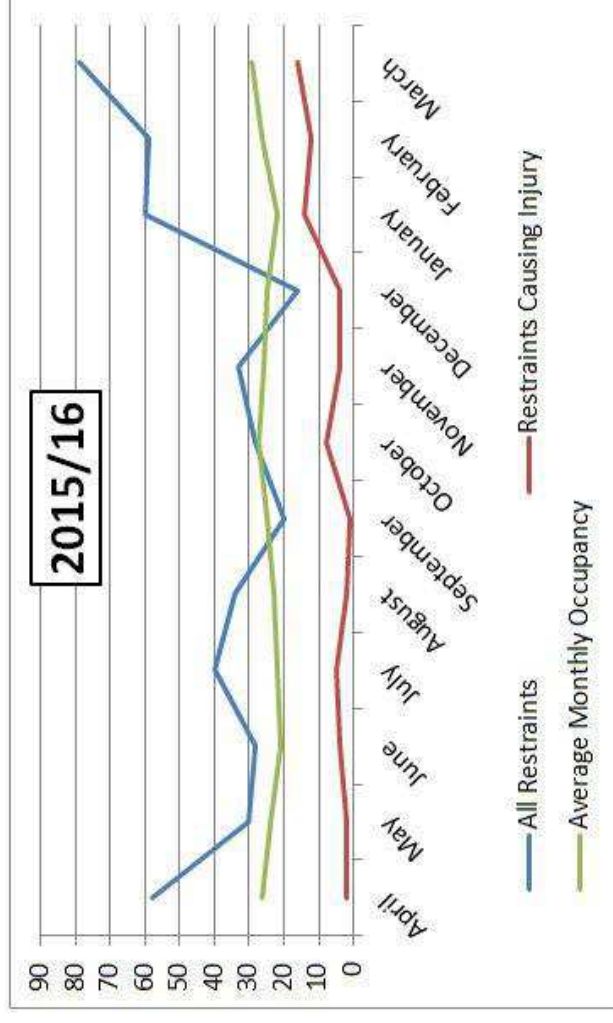
In conjunction with Durham County Council, Durham LSCB monitors the use of restraint at Aycliffe Secure Services Centre. Many of the children are placed by Local Authorities outside the area and by the criminal courts. Since 2011 and in line with Working Together guidance we have reported on the use of restraint within County Durham.

Aycliffe Secure Services Centre houses a changing population of young people aged between 11 and 17, both male and female, who have been referred through the courts because they are a risk to themselves or others, or because there is a concern about their involvement with criminal activities.

The centre has five children's homes and a 'step down' facility with an additional 24 beds commissioned by the Youth Justice Board.

Local Authorities from outside of the area can also commission places for young people on welfare grounds if the courts decide that young people meet the legislative criteria required to place them in a secure setting.

Restraint incidents with all young people had seen an overall trend reduction throughout 2015. However, there was a sharp increase early in 2016.



This increase was largely due to changes in the resident population with several young people leaving and being replaced by young people new to Aycliffe Secure Services Centre.

This disruption to routine and group dynamics amongst young people within the centre can lead to an increase in incidents and the centre management constantly seek to identify in advance, events that might lead to unrest.

Due to the nature of secure settings, planned events are often subject to unexpected disruption relating to issues such as court proceedings and available resources within partner agencies.

Injuries as result of restraint are graded using the set criteria:

Level 1 – Minor Injury - no medical treatment such as red marks on the skin, welts, superficial cuts and scratches, bruises which do not require medical treatment, including first aid

Level 2 – Minor Injury - requiring medical treatment such as significant cuts, scratches, grazes, bloody noses, concussion, serious bruising and sprains where medical treatment is given by staff/nurse

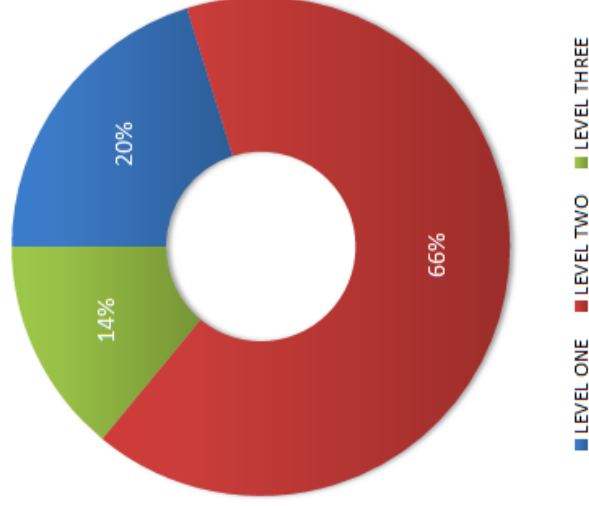
Level 3 – Serious Injury requiring hospital treatment - includes serious cuts, fractures, loss of consciousness and damage to internal organs.

There were a total of 485 incidents which required restraint during 2015-16; this is fewer than in 2014-15 (494).

These restraints led to 74 injuries to young people, more than the previous year with a ratio of three injuries to every 17 restraints.

57% of all injuries occurred between January and March 2016 when the spike of restraint incidents were recorded.

No. of Injuries by Level



Throughout 2015/16 Aycliffe Secure Services Centre staff have been implementing alternative approaches to practice to try and minimise the use of restraint overall.

This includes positive reinforcement techniques with staff and key-workers specific targeted work to develop positive working relationships with young people.

Staff, key-workers and managers of the centre work with young people to understand the causes and effect of their challenging behaviour and work together to develop strategies designed to prevent restraint.

Working together, the staff and young people have focused on effective communication, coping mechanisms, likes and dislikes and de-escalation techniques that the young person feels will work.

In addition, all young people who are placed on behaviour support plans or are at a higher risk of forcing a restraint is put on an engagement and activity / development plan.

This clearly identifies the activities on offer to the young person and is used as incentives to re-engage and re-integrate them back into the group.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Aycliffe Secure Centre](#).

7.8 Serious Case Review Function

We have instigated one Serious Case Review in 2015/16 and one Learning Lessons Review.

We have also delivered eight Learning Lessons events in 2015/16 for practitioners and agencies with two specific events for Early Years staff and GPs.

These have provided time for professional reflection of key messages and recurrent themes running through the published Serious Case Reviews.

These are:

- the role of males within a family setting / household who have contact with children and young people
- multi-agency engagement with safeguarding processes
- information sharing and professionals working in silo
- increasing the voice of the child
- over reliance upon the social worker - lack of professional challenge
- the importance of cross-referencing, checking previous records, and taking account of historical information in making decisions

We continue to implement the recommendations from Serious Case Reviews both multi-agency and single agency recommendations. Action plans are reviewed by the Learning and Improvement Sub Group bi-monthly.

We will continue to host a range of learning lessons events following Serious Case Reviews publications.



 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Serious Case Reviews](#).

Child Death Overview Panel

It is the responsibility of Local Safeguarding Children Boards to ensure that a review of every death of a child normally resident in their area is undertaken by a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

A joint CDOP has been agreed by Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board and Darlington Safeguarding Children Board. The Child Death Overview Panel is a sub-committee of both Durham and Darlington LSCBs. It is responsible for reviewing the available information on all child deaths and is accountable to the LSCB Chair.

There are two interrelated processes for reviewing child deaths:

- **Rapid Response** by a group of key professionals who come together for the purpose of enquiring into and evaluating each **unexpected death**; and
- An overview of **all deaths** up to the age of 18 years (excluding both those babies that are stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy carried out within the law) in Durham and Darlington areas, undertaken by a panel

The Child Death Overview Panel continues to undertake its role with sensitivity and has identified and implemented a range of recommendations that are improving child safety and welfare.

There were 36 child death reviews in County Durham in 2015/16. Of the 36 child deaths there were:

- 20 Rapid Responses (this is a process for gathering key professionals to enquire into and evaluate circumstances of a sudden and unexpected death)

- 26 deaths that have been or will be considered at a Local Case Discussion meeting (for most unexpected deaths a local case discussion takes place when all the information has been gathered and all agencies involved with the child and family before and at the time of their death are invited to the meeting.)

Analysis of Key Findings

The key findings of the Child Death Reviews are summarised below:

- Where cases were subject of a Serious Case Review and a robust action plan was developed which will be monitored by the Learning & Improvement Group. Key points include the relaunch of the Early Help & Neglect Strategy and the development of a suicide / self-harm pathway and education package
- Seven cases were subject of a Root Cause Analysis and an action plan developed which will be monitored by the Child Death Overview Panel until its completion. For example, management of discharge, monitoring of babies during labour and delivery, and regular update of training around neonatal resuscitation
- One review identified the need to formalise the information sharing process for children who are expected to die at home prior to discharge to ensure that there are no safeguarding issues. A multi-agency working group has been formed to progress this and Durham Constabulary has formulated draft guidance for expected deaths. New guidance will be finalised in 2016/17

Areas of Good Practice

Example 1. County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust were inspected by the Human Tissue Authority in 2015. This successful inspection noted the dialogue / inspection of child death processes which involved the Rapid Response team.

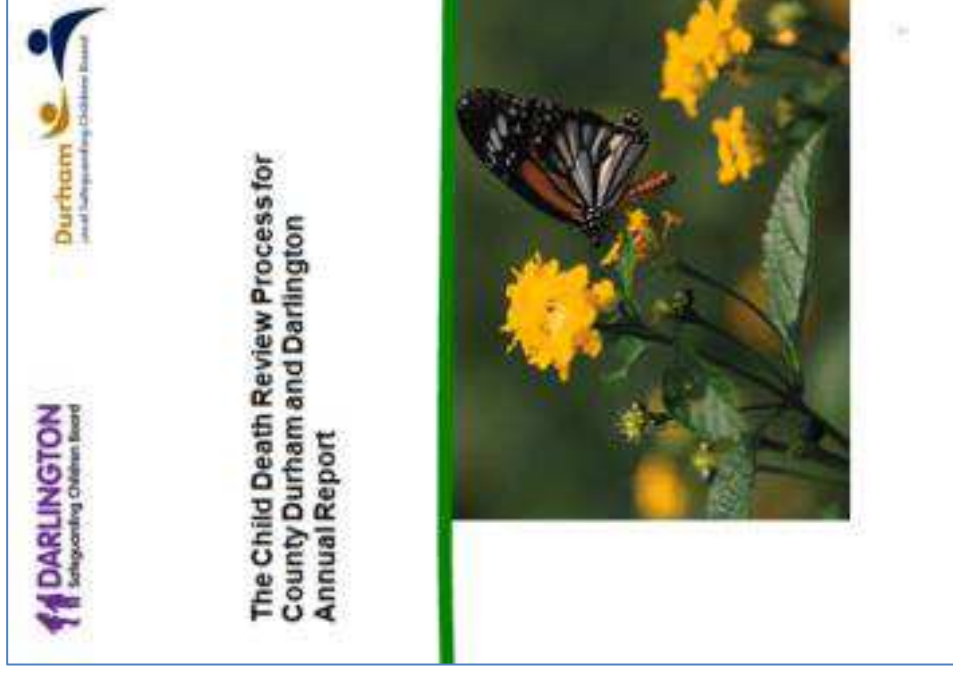
Example 2. Following a tragic accident, Durham County Council commissioned an assessment of water safety in the river (and all water ways in County Durham) in keeping with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents guidelines. This information has been shared with colleagues from the Environmental Agency and Fire & Rescue Service to ensure awareness of the areas in relation to the topography.

A range of safety measures have been put in place; signs have been installed at both entrances to the site of the incident; information leaflets have been sent to all local residents about water safety awareness; and regular inspections of drainage/safety pathways at the site are carried out.

Water safety education for schools was provided in advance of Water Safety Week in targeted areas.

The Child Death Overview Panel considered it commendable that the Local Authority promptly took appropriate measures to ensure the protection of children and young people in the area with regards to water safety.

The Child Death Review Annual Report is published each year and is available on both LSCB websites.



 **Download:** [Child Death Review Annual Report 2015-16.](#)

Policy and Procedures

Durham LSCB proactively reviews policies and procedures as systems change and are developed. A range of procedures and practice guidance have been updated in 2015/16. These include:

- Updated Single Assessment Framework and referral form
- Refreshed Early Help and Neglect Strategy
- New Neglect Practice Guidance
- New 0-19 Level of Need thresholds document
- New Home Environment Risk Assessment Tool
- Updated CSE intelligence information submission form
- Updated Missing Children Procedures
- New Marketing and Communication Strategy
- New Multi-agency Audit Tool

We will also implement the recommendations of the Ofsted inspection for example a time limited task and finish group has been established in 2016 for the procurement of new online child protection procedures.

Performance Monitoring Quality Assurance Forward Plan

The multi-agency audit and quality assurance forward plan lays out the planned work to be undertaken and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people. In 2016/17 we will:

- develop an on-line version of Section 11 audits
- undertake an annual governance review of the LSCB
- maintain consistent use of auditing tools and processes
- identify and develop areas for auditing
- develop reporting formats to include case studies and make the voice of the child more visible
- refine the scorecard and reporting arrangements
- maintain the risk register and the risk reporting methodology with effective controls and assurances
- carry out challenge clinics to hold organisations to account
- develop additional 'Quality' reporting to include areas such as complaints, Serious Case Reviews and child death overview monitoring

7. Training and Communication

Single and Multi-Agency Training Provision

All agencies working with children either directly or indirectly are required to provide training in order to carry out their own roles and responsibilities. This includes being able to recognise and raise concerns about children's safety and welfare.

During the year the LSCB training programme has seen an increased collaboration with a range of organisations; most notably the County Council's Learning and Development Team; County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, Durham Constabulary, Harbour and Barnardos; in the planning, design and delivery of training.

This has strengthened and enhanced the quality of training while avoiding duplication and promoting the importance of inter-agency working.

Durham LSCB continues to support the private, voluntary and community sector through the provision of targeted safeguarding training for example Early Year's providers. We have also incorporated lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews into our training in order to support practitioners and managers to improve their learning, understanding and assessment skills.

All new and existing courses have been updated to reflect the refreshed policy and procedural work undertaken over the last year.

Courses delivered in 2015/16

The LSCB currently offer 13 core courses including Safeguarding Processes and Intervention, Engaging with Families, Child Sexual Exploitation and Neglect.

In addition to the core courses training sessions were also delivered on Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, in collaboration with HALO and County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT).

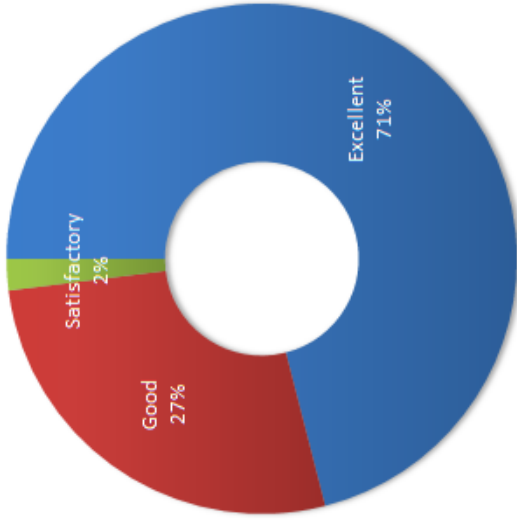


The LSCB has also hosted three training sessions on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), delivered by the National Probation Service; two sessions on Hidden Sentence which were delivered by NEPACS and funded by Think Family and one training event on 'Think Family' delivered in collaboration with Think Family Mentors.

A total of **88 courses** were delivered in 2015-2016. The courses were attended by a total of **1,637 staff and volunteers**.

Impact and Evaluation

The training courses received very positive feedback with 71% of attendees marking the training they received as excellent.



“I now feel confident in asking challenging questions at home visits. In a recent referral following this course, I have no doubt I made the right judgement call”

Follow up evaluations are carried with staff in the three months after attending a training session to assess the longer term impact of training. 98% of those surveyed stated that the training had fulfilled their personal objectives set out within the training.

When asked the question ‘Has the learning impacted on your practice?’ 74% said yes, 4% said no and 22% were unchanged.

“Explaining to parents involved in separation or child/parent/school related issues that their children have a voice...providing time and space so the child can be heard”

e-Learning

There are a range of e-learning courses available on the Durham LSCB website including; Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect, Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Child Sexual Exploitation and PREVENT – Counter Terrorism awareness.

Since the e-learning courses became available:

- **3,352 people** have completed the Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect
- **2,537 people** have completed the Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Child Sexual Exploitation
- **Over 6,000 people** have completed the PREVENT – Counter Terrorism e-learning

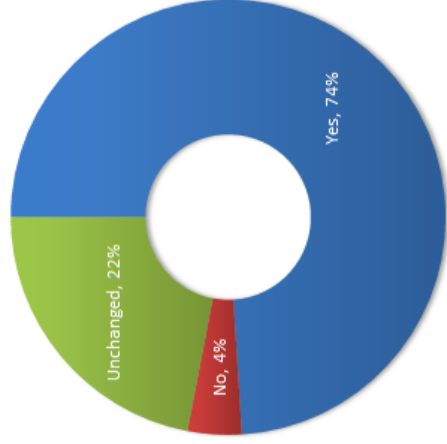
“I have been able to engage and respond to my service users more effectively”

“It has enabled me to support clients to access the correct level of support for their family”

Durham LSCB has purchased a ‘total package’ of e-learning from Virtual College for 2016/17.

This offers a wide variety of safeguarding courses available to staff and volunteers with an unlimited licence available on each course.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [LSCB Training Programme](#).



Marketing and Communications Activity

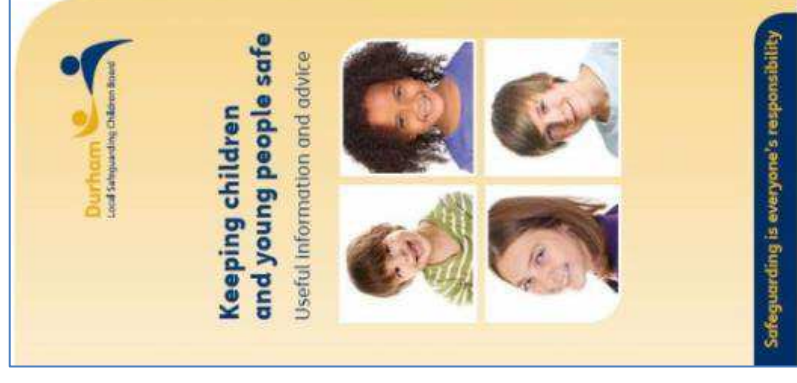
In 2015 the Training, Development and Communications Sub Group was tasked with developing a Marketing and Communications Strategy.

The aim of the strategy is to raise the awareness and increase knowledge and understanding of safeguarding across the LSCB agencies; wider partnership structures in County Durham and the general public.

In developing the refreshed Marketing and Communications Strategy the Training, Development and Communications Sub Group has undertaken a range of actions in 2015/16 including:

- refreshing the LSCB brand and styling
- producing and disseminating safeguarding printed materials (leaflet posters, etc.) for use by all partners (over 6,786 leaflets distributed to venues including One Point Hubs, libraries, GP surgeries, Health Centres and Customer Access Points)
- identifying key communication pathways and themes based on the LSCB priorities (use of appropriate social media to raise awareness and articles in newsletters and publications, etc.)
- uplift of Department for Education 'Together we can tackle child abuse' campaign
- the promotion of ERASE Child Sexual Exploitation website
- developing 'key messages' for use by partners

- developing standard templates to enable consistent branding and messages
- updating LSCB website content (188,582 page views in 2015/16)



 **More Information:** Find out more information about [LSCB Leaflets and Posters](#)

8. Future Priorities

LSCB Priorities 2016/17

The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board agreed and retained the following priorities for 2016/17:

- Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation
- Improving Early Help
- Reducing Neglect (contributory factors are domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse; parental mental health)
- Reducing self-harm and improving young people's self-esteem
- Increase the voice of the child
- Ensuring that each agency is accountable for delivery of its own safeguarding responsibilities

Priority areas of work

Alongside the identified priorities above the LSCB has highlighted priority areas of work for 2016/17:

Leadership

- Benchmark ourselves against 'outstanding' and continue to seek improvements in practice and outcomes
- Expand the voice of the child to show how we listen and respect the views of children
- Update the child protection procedures

- Deliver and support communication campaigns / learning events / factsheets and publications

Challenge

- Undertake Section 11 audits to ensure agencies have processes and procedures in place to the required standard
- Undertake multi-agency audits to ensure partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations including auditing of Early Help
- Record and report single agency audits to the LSCB Board
- Refine and embed the Performance Management Framework to show how children's lives have been improved
- Focus our self-harm work on secondary school support
- Provide more local narrative in the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Annual Report

Learning

- Publish Serious Case Reviews and continue to disseminate and implement learning providing evidence of the impact / change in practice due to Serious Case Review learning
- Continue to develop, deliver and refine the training plan
- Understand the impact of training on practice by developing an impact analysis of training
- Improve the learning and effect of child poverty and neglect
- Conduct an academic seminar to inform practice

These priorities reflect a number of drivers including the 2016 Ofsted inspection of Durham LSCB, Learning Lessons and Serious Case Reviews and the LSCB annual development session.

Plan on Page

Our 'Plan on a Page' identifies actions for 2016-17

Outcome and Business Priorities		Objectives for 2016-19	Actions in 2016-17
Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation	Ensure services are targeted, responsive and effective Embed the prevent, protect and pursue agenda into practice and service		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Complete the delivery of CSE taxi driver awareness sessions in County Durham 2) Deliver CSE awareness sessions to licence premises and fast food outlets 3) Develop an agreed protocol to ensure young people's (up to 23 years of age) needs are met in relation to CSE 4) Develop an escalation process for out of area children at risk 5) Implement Operation Encompass to support children and young people at school who witness domestic abuse and consider links with self-harm 6) Update online safety awareness – including Prevent principles 7) Educate and support schools in relation to CSE 8) Secure funding for the ERASE team 9) Continue to address the Early Help action plan 10) Develop staff to ensure the outcomes framework is embedded into practice
Improving Early Help	Ensure services support families at an earlier stage to prevent child protection intervention Reduce the number of young people subject to child protection plans		
Reducing Neglect (contributory factors are domestic abuse; alcohol misuse; substance misuse; parental mental health)	Ensure that services are targeted, responsive and efficient for children suffering from neglect Reduce the impact of neglect contributory factors on the outcomes of children and young people suffering from neglect		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11) Ensure that young people (aged 16+ years of age) are incorporated into the Early Help and Neglect Strategy 12) Audit the outcome of the implementation of the home environment risk assessment
Reducing self-harm and improving young people's self-esteem	Ensure services are targeted, responsive and effective		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13) Complete the Self Harm/Suicide pathway 14) Implement an agreed education package 15) Audit the implementation and impact of the education package 16) Develop an online communication tool
Increase the voice of the child	Views of children and young people are used to inform services and best practice		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17) Obtain Investing in Children status 18) Review Cafcass Young People's Charter 19) Broaden the voice of the child and harder to reach 20) Employ an apprentice 21) Children and Young People's Reference Group to be expanded 22) Voice of the Child to be evident across all priority areas 23) Improve the Voice of the Child within the child protection process
Ensuring that each agency is accountable for delivery of its own safeguarding responsibilities	Continued development of Leadership, Challenge and Learning (as below)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24) Audit the information sharing protocol 25) Improve information sharing across all priority areas
Leadership	Ensure collective leadership across all agencies Increase access of data and analysis and improve understanding Expand collective learning and improvement Develop effective policies and procedures across all agencies		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26) Deliver refreshed LSCB business plan 27) Deliver a set of SCR themed Lessons Learned events for 2016/17 28) Update the child protection procedures 29) Deliver and support communications, factsheets and publications 30) Ensure Annual Report provides a rigorous assessment of local services.
Challenge	Develop effective systems, processes and polices through audits Use evidence of impact to challenge Ensure audits of practice		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 31) Develop an escalation process of themes and concerns for CDOP 32) Develop an escalation process for the CDOP Action Plan 33) Undertake multi-agency audits to ensure that partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations including auditing of Early Help 34) Record and report single agency audits to the LSCB Board 35) Refine and embed the Performance Management Framework / Scorecard including performance reporting of Early Help
Learning	Ensure that the skills and knowledge of practitioners is effective, using learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCR)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 36) Provide more local narrative in the Child Death Overview Annual Report 37) Publish Serious Case Reviews and continue to disseminate and implement learning 38) Evidence the impact within Serious Case Review learning 39) Progress the thematic tool for Serious Case Reviews 40) Continue to develop, deliver and refine the Training Plan 41) Understand the impact of training on practice by developing an impact analysis 42) Link in with school communication and consultation meetings with young people

LSCB messages to Professionals and Community Children and Young People

- Nothing is more important than making sure you are safe and well cared for. This is about you and we want to know more about how you think young people can be better protected
- If you are worried about your own safety or that of a friend, speak to a professional you trust or speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111

Parents and Carers

- Public agencies are there to support you; getting early help before things get worse really does help
- Tell us what works and what doesn't when professionals are trying to help you and your children
- Make sure you know about the best way to protect your child and take time to understand some of the risks they can face

The Community

- You are in the best place to look out for children and young people if you have a concern call First Contact on **03000 267979** or the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**
- We all share responsibility for protecting children - if you see something, say something

Frontline Staff and Volunteers working with Children

- Make sure children and young people are seen, heard and helped, whatever your role
- Your professional judgement is what ultimately makes a difference and you must invest in developing the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to effectively safeguard children and young people
- Attend all training required for your role
- Be familiar with, and use when necessary, Child Protection Procedures and the Single Assessment Framework
- Understand the importance of talking with colleagues and sharing information. If in doubt, speak to your manager

Local Politicians

- You are leaders in your local area. You can be the eyes and ears of vulnerable children and families. Keep the protection of children at the front of your mind

Chief Executives and Directors

- You set the tone for the culture of your organisation. When you talk, people listen – talk about children and young people
- Ensure your workforce attend relevant LSCB training courses and learning events
- Ensure your agency contributes to the work of Durham LSCB and be Section 11 compliant

The Police

- Robustly pursue offenders and disrupt their attempts to abuse children
- Ensure officers and police staff have the opportunity to train with their colleagues in partner agencies
- Ensure that the voices of all child victims are heard, particularly in relation to listening to evidence where children disclose abuse

Head Teachers and Governors of Schools

- Ensure that your school / academy / educational establishment is compliant with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, 2015)
- You see children more than any other profession and develop some of the most meaningful relationships with them
- Keep engaged with the safeguarding process and continue to identify children who need early help and protection

NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups

- Health services have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning for safeguarding across a range of services. Ensure that the voice of the child is heard
- Discharge your safeguarding duties effectively and ensure that services are commissioned for the most vulnerable children

The Local Media

- Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility is crucial - you can help do this positively



Appendix 1 – LSCB Membership and Staffing

Durham LSCB Membership

- The Board is chaired by an independent person commissioned by the Durham County Council Chief Executive
- National Probation Services – represented by the Head of Durham
- Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company – represented by Head of Services County Durham and Darlington
- North Durham, Dales, Easington & Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Groups – represented by:
 - Director of Nursing (Vice-Chair of Durham LSCB)
- Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children
- Designated Paediatrician
- NHS England – represented by the Deputy Director of Nursing
- Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust – represented by the Associate Director of Nursing (Safeguarding)
- County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust – represented by:
 - Associate Director of Patient Experience & Safeguarding
 - Head of Children and Families

- North Tees & Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – represented by the Deputy Director of Nursing
- Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust – represented by the Deputy Director of Nursing
- City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
- Cafcass (County Durham) – represented by the Service Manager
- County Durham Council represented by:
 - Corporate Director, Children & Adults Services
 - Head of Children's Services
 - Head of Adults Care
 - Head of Education
 - Strategic Manager - Youth Offending Service
 - Director of Public Health County Durham
 - Housing Solutions Manager
- National Offender Management Service – represented by Public Protection Manager
- Durham Constabulary – represented by the Force Lead for Safeguarding (Superintendent Level)
- The Voluntary & Community Sector – represented by the Voluntary Sector Representative
- Schools represented by:
 - Durham Association of Secondary Heads

- Durham Association of Primary Heads
- Durham Association of Special Schools
- Further Education – represented by the Head of Student Services, Bishop Auckland College
- Lay Members – represented by three members of the community whose role is to support stronger public engagement in local child safety issues and to challenge the LSCB on the accessibility by the public and children and young people of its plans and procedures
- Lead Member – represented by the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People Services (participant observer)
- Faith Communities – represented by the Safeguarding Lead for Durham Diocese

LSCB Advisors

The Board is advised by:

- A member of Durham County Council Corporate & Legal Services nominated as the Board’s legal advisor
- The Durham LSCB Business Manager
- Head of Planning and Service Strategy, Children and Adult Services, Durham County Council
- Strategic Manager Policy Planning and Partnerships, Children and Adult Services, Durham County Council

Appendix 2 – LSCB Staffing and Budget

Staffing

The LSCB is supported by the following officers:

- LSCB Business Manager
- LSCB Quality & Performance Co-ordinator (deputises for Business Manager)
- LSCB Strategy and Development Officer
- LSCB Training Co-ordinator
- LSCB Admin Co-ordinator
- LSCB Administrator
- LSCB Admin Apprentice

LSCB Budget

The financial contributions from partner agencies are as follows:

Partner	2015/16 Contribution	2016/17 Contribution
Durham County Council	£171,604	£171,604
Clinical Commissioning Groups	£95,097	£95,097
Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust	£2,680	£2,680
County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	£2,680	£2,680
North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	£2,680	£2,680
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	-	£2,680
Durham Constabulary	£29,285	£29,285
Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company	£1,340	£1,340
National Probation Service	£1,340	£2,032
Further Education Colleges	£2,100	£2,100
Cafcass	£550	£550
Total	£309,356	£312,728

Durham LSCB Annual Report 2015 / 2016 - Safeguarding Children in County Durham

The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report which describes how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people in County Durham. Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local organisations that have a responsibility in respect of child welfare, to agree how they will work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in County Durham and to ensure that they do so effectively.

The children and young people of County Durham are at the heart of all we do and our vision of **'Every child and young person in County Durham feels safe and grows up safe from harm'** continues to drive us forward.

This Annual Report gives an account of the Board's work over the past year to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The report reflects the activity of the LSCB and its sub-groups against its priorities for 2015/16. It covers the major changes and improvements of our partners' service delivery, where they link with the Board's overall strategies and the impact we have had. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities we will take forward into 2016/17.

Equality and Diversity

Durham LSCB strives to promote equal access to safeguarding services, particularly for those children who are unable to communicate, due to their age, disability or first language, with those people or services that are able to protect them.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

 Braille	 Audio	 AAA	Large print		
العربية	Arabic	(中文 (繁體字))	Chinese	اردو	Urdu
پولش	Polish	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Punjabi	Español	Spanish
বাংলা	Bengali	हिन्दी	Hindi	Deutsch	German
Français	French	Türkçe	Turkish	Melayu	Malay

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A copy of this report is available on www.durham-lscb.org.uk



Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility