



## Corporate Parenting Panel

**Date**        **Friday 24 November 2017**  
**Time**        **9.30 am**  
**Venue**       **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### 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 on Friday 20 October 2017 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Looked After Children - Update from Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers
6. Establishment of Sub Groups for Aycliffe Secure Centre and Virtual School - Report of Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Pages 9 - 14)
7. Looked After Children: the Journey into the Looked After System - Report and presentation of Strategic Manager, Child Protection and Disability (Pages 15 - 22)
8. Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report 2016/17 - Report and presentation of Operations Manager, Children and Young People's Services (Pages 23 - 50)
9. Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2016/17 - Report and presentation of LSCB Business Manager, Transformation and Partnerships (Pages 51 - 86)
10. Children in Care Council - Update from Investing in Children and minutes of the Children in Care Council (CICC) meeting held on 24 October 2017 (Pages 87 - 90)
11. Actions and outcomes from the CICC meeting held on 24 October 2017
12. Fostering Digital Roadshow - Update from Councillor McKeon
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

14. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

### **Part B**

#### **Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

15. Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Serious Case Review Process - Presentation of LSCB Business Manager, Transformation and Partnerships (Pages 91 - 94)
16. Regulation 44 visits: Summary Report (including responsive repairs) - Report of Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers (Pages 95 - 124)
17. Service Direct meeting - Update from Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel
18. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

**Helen Lynch**

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
16 November 2017

To: **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

Councillor P Brookes (Chairman)  
Councillor H Smith (Vice-Chair)

Councillors B Bainbridge, H Bennett, J Carr, J Charlton, J Considine, P Crathorne, G Darkes, E Huntington, I Jewell, M McKeon, J Makepeace, O Milburn, C Potts, A Reed, G Richardson, A Savory, E Scott, M Simmons and C Wilson

#### **Co-opted Members**

M Baister  
W Taylor

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**Contact: Jill Parker**

**Tel: 03000 269 711**

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**Durham County Council**

At a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 20 October 2017** at **9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor P Brookes in the Chair**

**Panel Members:**

Councillors H Bennett, J Carr, J Charlton, J Considine, G Darkes, J Grant (substitute Panel member), E Huntington, I Jewell, M McKeon, J Makepeace, C Potts, A Reed, G Richardson, M Simmons and C Wilson

**Co-opted Members:**

M Baister, W Taylor

**Also in attendance:**

Kelsey Clayton (Legal Manager, Children and Adult Services),  
Helen Fergusson (Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers),  
Glenda Henderson (Placement Efficiency Manager),  
Clive Horton (Deputy Head, Virtual School),  
Selwyn Morgans (Manager, Aycliffe Secure Services),  
Karen Robb (Strategic Manager, Looked After and Permanence),  
Ellie Seed (Senior Project Worker, Children in Care Council),  
Christine Stonehouse (Business Lead Inclusion, Standards and Attendance),  
Jayne Watson (Senior Partnership Officer)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Bainbridge, A Savory, E Scott and H Smith.

**2. Substitute Members**

Councillor J Grant substituted for Councillor H Smith.

**3. Minutes**

With the addition of Cllr Reed's name to the list of apologies, and, the amendment of Marie Baister's job title to 'Designated Nurse, Safeguarding and Looked After Children', the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following updates were provided:

- Minute no. 4 – The Chair welcomed the newly appointed co-opted members, Marie Baister and Wendy Taylor to the meeting. The Senior Partnership Officer informed the Panel that work is ongoing to appoint the school representatives and an update on the development of the sub-groups will be brought to the next meeting.

- Minute no. 7 - A report on the Edge of Care service will be brought to the January Panel meeting.
- Minute no. 9 – In relation to the CiCC project to refurbish contact centres, Members Support will be contacted in order to ascertain if funding is available to contribute to this from members' individual budgets.
- Minute no. 10a - Three members have arranged to visit the MASH centre.
- Minute no. 10b – The information from the Westminster Briefing had been circulated to the Panel, for information.
- Minute no. 12 – A visit to Aycliffe Secure Centre has been arranged for 1 December. The Centre Manager, Selwyn Morgans, offered to make alternative arrangements for any members who were unable to attend the visit on 1 December. Those members wishing to make alternative arrangements were asked to liaise with the Senior Partnership Officer.
- Minute no. 13 – The new in-house Regulation 44 arrangements will be implemented from 1 April 2018. Members were informed that they would be contacted by the current provider, by email, during the week commencing 23 October to arrange Regulation 44 visits, and any members who did not receive an email were asked to inform the Senior Partnership Officer.
- Minute no. 14 – Cllr Brookes and Cllr Bennett will attend a meeting with Service Direct in November.
- Minute no. 16 - The feedback from the development session held at the September meeting will be circulated to members for information. The feedback from the session had been shared with the communications and marketing team.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

#### **5. Number of Looked After Children**

The number of looked after children was reported as 797.

#### **6. Durham Virtual School for Looked After Children Annual Report - Progress and Achievement of Durham Looked After Children including those with Special Educational Needs**

The Panel considered a report and presentation delivered by Clive Horton, Deputy Head of the Virtual School, which provided an overview of the Virtual School, including the role of the Virtual Head and the SEND needs of looked after children (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

Councillor Darkes referred to the percentage of looked after children achieving English and Maths GCSE and observed the figure for 2017 was lower than that for 2016. The Deputy Head of the Virtual School replied that the 2016 cohort had been a small and very able group.

The Chair commented that it would be useful to have data as to how Durham's looked after children compare with looked after children regionally and nationally.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation of the Deputy Head of the Virtual School be received.

**7. Placement Efficiency Plan 2017/18 Update**

The Panel considered a report and presentation delivered by Glenda Henderson, Placement Efficiency Manager, which provided an overview of the Placement Efficiency Plan. The Efficiency Plan for 2017/18 was circulated at the meeting (for copy of report, presentation and Efficiency Plan see file of minutes).

Councillor Makepeace asked how external costs would be reduced. The Placement Efficiency Manager replied that there is to be a review in 2018 which will include the renegotiation of the regional framework and the development of the external market provision. The Placement Efficiency Manager stressed the importance of working collaboratively with external providers.

Councillor Grant referred to edge of care services commenting that services of this nature had been offered by establishments in previous years however those establishments had closed. The Strategic Manager for Looked After and Permanence replied that, due to the increase in the number of looked after children, it had been necessary to widen the offer in order to provide more intensive support to families.

**Resolved:**

- That the contents of the report be noted;
- That the Efficiency Plan and presentation be received;
- That the effectiveness of the Efficiency Plan would continue to be monitored throughout the year.

The Chair welcomed Councillor O Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, to the meeting.

**8. Children in Care Council Update**

Ellie Seed, Senior Project Worker, Investing in Children, provided an update on the activities of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) as follows:

- Plans are in place for the meeting with corporate parents, facilitated by the young people of the CiCC at the Methodist Church, North Road, Durham on Tuesday 24 October from 5.30–7.30pm. All Panel members were welcome to attend the meeting and join in with the discussions and activities.
- Three young people had been involved in a Regional CiCC conference with the topic being 'Life in Care for Young People'.
- Two young people had taken part in a 'mystery shopping' exercise and the feedback from this would be shared with the Panel.

- One of the young people involved in the project to refurbish the contact centre at Stanley had asked if she could include suggestions made by service users for future projects. In light of this, service users were being contacted to ask for their input and costings were being sought. The Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers will provide information to the CiCC on the number of contact centres and their locations throughout the county.
- Work was continuing with the younger children and a soft-play event will be held in Consett on 14 November.
- The CiCC are working with the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a piece of work on a child's perspective of a Social Worker.

## **9. CiCC Meeting**

The Chair encouraged Panel members to attend the CiCC meeting on Tuesday 24 October at the Methodist Church, North Road, Durham at 5.30 pm.

At the request of the Chair, the development item on pupil premium plus was considered as the next item of business.

## **10. Pupil Premium Plus Monies**

The Deputy Head of the Virtual School delivered a presentation on pupil premium plus (for copy see file of minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Carr as to whether pupils from other Authorities who are placed in County Durham schools are allocated the same amount of funding as County Durham pupils, the Deputy Head of the Virtual School advised that the amount allocated by other Authorities varies.

The Panel discussed whether there is sufficient information available to carers and special guardians regarding pupil premium plus. Councillor Gunn suggested that this issue could be raised by Councillors through their links with school governing bodies. The Chair suggested that it would be useful for the Deputy Head of the Virtual School to deliver a briefing session with governing bodies on this issue.

There then followed a short discussion session on the questions posed in the presentation and the comments were noted.

## **11. Exclusion of the public**

### **Resolved:**

That under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Councillor O Gunn, Glenda Henderson, Ellie Seed and Chris Stonehouse left the meeting

## **12. Regulation 44 Visits Summary Report**

The Panel considered the Regulation 44 Visits action plans for September 2017. The report outlined the recommendations and associated actions following each Regulation 44 visit (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the Regulation 44 action plans for September be received.

## **13. Responsive Repairs / Service Direct**

The Chair reported no outstanding issues and informed the Panel that an update will be provided, following the meeting with Service Direct in November.

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## Corporate Parenting Panel

24 November 2017



### Establishment of Corporate Parenting Panel Sub Groups for Aycliffe Secure Centre and Virtual School

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## Report of Helen Fergusson, Head of Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Durham County Council

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### Purpose of the Report

- 1 To seek approval for the establishment of two sub groups of the Corporate Parenting Panel, namely Aycliffe Secure Centre Sub Group and Virtual School Sub Group and to provide a terms of reference for each sub group.

### Background and Legislation

- 2 The Children Act 1989 gave all local authorities the statutory responsibility to act as corporate parents to children whose parents cannot look after them.
- 3 The National Children's Bureau's "Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice" 2013 identified the following factors for a Corporate Parenting Panel where Local Authority services for looked after children were judged to be 'good' by Ofsted:
  - a) Demonstrated a strong cross party commitment to looked after children by championing their rights, having high aspirations for their achievement, monitoring children's progress and challenging outcomes
  - b) Clearly understood its role and the responsibilities of the Local Authority to looked after children and planned for and prioritised their needs resulting in a greater focus on improving outcomes
  - c) Actively engage with their young people for example with the Children in Care Council that is well established and have regular and effective links with senior management and elected members.
- 4 Following an inspection of Durham County Council's Children's Services by Ofsted in February/March 2016 the service was judged as requiring improvement. Since this judgement the service has carried out work to address Ofsted's recommendations and with the Council's Transformation Agenda has made significant improvements in relation to political oversight of Children's Services including the revised terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

- 5 At its meeting on 22 March 2017, Durham County Council formally agreed the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. Provision within the terms of reference states that the Corporate Parenting Panel is to act as a governing body for the Virtual School and as a governing body for Aycliffe Secure Centre.
- 6 Terms of reference and membership for the two proposed sub groups are outlined below:

### **Virtual School**

- 7 Terms of reference have been adopted from the Corporate Parenting Panel terms of reference as follows:
  - To monitor looked after children's educational attainment and performance
  - To encourage and support each looked after child to achieve optimum educational outcomes at each stage of their schooling
- 8 Advice and support will be provided to the sub group by appropriate officers of the Council.
- 9 Membership of the Virtual School sub group will be taken from members of the Corporate Parenting Panel including co-opted members, and will be reviewed as and when required by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 10 Proposed membership of the virtual school sub group is as follows:
  - Cllr Heather Smith (chair)
  - Cllr Joanne Carr
  - Clive Horton, Deputy Virtual School Head, Durham County Council
  - TBC: Rhianna Edwards, Head Teacher, Woodham Burn Community Primary School (co-opted member)
  - TBC: Tim Pinkney, Deputy Head Teacher, Ferryhill Business Enterprise College (co-opted member)
  - TBC: Marie Baister, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked After Children, North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (co-opted member)
- 11 The Virtual School sub group will report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on a regular basis with all decisions relating directly to the Virtual School being taken by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## **Aycliffe Secure Centre**

- 12 Terms of reference have been adopted from the Corporate Parenting Panel terms of reference as follows:
  - Support and bring challenge to achieve best outcomes for children who are looked after in secure services
  - Agree the themes and performance, on an annual basis that enhance corporate parenting of looked after children in secure services.
- 13 Advice and support will be given to the sub group by appropriate officers of the Council.
- 14 Membership of the Aycliffe Secure Centre sub group will be taken from members of the Corporate Parenting Panel including co-opted members, and will be reviewed as and when required by the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 15 Proposed membership of Aycliffe Secure Centre sub group is as follows:
  - Cllr Peter Brookes (chair)
  - Cllr Mamie Simmons
  - Cllr Ann Reed
  - Cllr Maura McKeon
  - Selwyn Morgans, Aycliffe Secure Services Centre Manager, Durham County Council
  - Helen Fergusson, Head of Looked After Children and care Leavers, Durham County Council
  - Carole Payne, Head Of Early Help, Assessment and Safeguarding, Durham County Council
  - Aileen Conlon, Head Teacher, Aycliffe Secure Centre, Durham County Council
  - Gill Eshelby, Strategic Manager, County Durham Youth Offending Service, Durham County Council
  - Wendy Taylor (co-opted member)
  - Vacancy (co-opted member) secondary school lead
- 16 The Aycliffe Secure Services sub group will report to the Corporate Parenting Panel on a regular basis with all decisions relating directly to Aycliffe Secure Centre being taken by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

## Recommendations

- 17 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to agree:
- d) The establishment of two sub group of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the Virtual School and Aycliffe Secure Centre
  - e) Terms of reference for each sub group set out in paragraphs 7 and 12 of the report
  - f) That membership of the sub groups are taken from the membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

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**Contact: Jayne Watson, Senior Partnerships Officer, Transformation and Partnerships, Durham County Council. Tel 03000 268371**  
**Email: [Jayne.watson@durham.gov.uk](mailto:Jayne.watson@durham.gov.uk)**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – Expenses may be incurred by co-opted members for travel costs, this will be paid from Democratic Services general member's expenses budget.

**Staffing** – Administration of the sub groups will be undertaken by existing officers of Durham County Council.

**Risk** – N/A

**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** – The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference form part of Durham County Council's Constitution.

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## Corporate Parenting Panel

24 November 2017

### Looked After Children: the Journey into the Looked After System



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## Report of Mark Gurney Strategic Manager Child Protection and Disability and Andrea Houlahan Strategic Manager First Contact and Interventions – Early Help Assessment and Safeguarding Services

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### Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to raise awareness and understanding among members of the Corporate Parenting Panel about the journey of children and young people into the looked after system.
- 2 Mark Gurney Strategic Manager for Child Protection and Disability will deliver a presentation to members of the Corporate Parenting Panel which will describe the various routes into the looked after system and also provide the Panel with some information about current levels of activity across the service.

### Background and Legislation

- 3 The fundamental purpose of children's social care is to make sure that the most vulnerable children can have a safe and dependable foundation from which to grow and flourish.
- 4 Children and Young People's Services in County Durham have the lead responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children with a key aim to provide early help for children and families and protection for those that need it. The primary legislation that underpins this responsibility is the Children Act 1989. A fundamental principle of the Act is that children should be supported within their family – unless it is necessary for their welfare to make arrangements for them to live outside their family.
- 5 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be familiar with the work that the Local Authority undertakes with those children and young people who are looked after in permanent or long term arrangements. This report outlines the journey that children and young people take into those arrangements.
- 6 The Children Act and many of the subsequent amendments to it since its implementation in 1991 (e.g. the Adoption and Children Act 2002) enable local authorities and their partners to make arrangements for children to become looked after in several ways.
- 7 The main ways in which a child can come into the looked after system are outlined in paragraphs 8 – 14 of this report.

- 8 Section 20 of the Children Act 1989: this is usually a voluntary agreement between the parents of the child and the Local Authority and is often used in circumstances where there is family breakdown or where the parents agree to a short term looked after arrangement pending further assessments and/or safeguarding inquiries.
- 9 Occasionally children and/or young people may not have a person able to discharge parental responsibility (such as unaccompanied asylum seekers or abandoned children) and they can also be accommodated under s20 of the Children Act.
- 10 Upon application to the Court under the statutory guidance called the Public Law Outline, the Local Authority may be granted a care order under section 31 of the Children Act. Courts may grant an interim care order for the duration of the proceedings. The Children and Families Act 2014 sets a time-limit of 26 weeks (except by decision of the court) for care proceedings from application to conclusion. Any application requires that a threshold test is applied; the Local Authority must be able to satisfy the court that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm if she or he remains in the care of their parents.
- 11 Before an application for care proceedings can be made, the Public Law Outline (PLO) requires local authorities to consider meeting with the parents and their solicitor and a pre-proceedings meeting. This meeting leads to the issuing of a letter before proceedings, setting out the changes that parents need to make and what the local authority will do to assist them. In Durham, this process is managed and reviewed through the monthly PLO panels.
- 12 Although there is an expectation of holding a pre-proceedings meeting within the Public Law Outline, this should only be if it is safe to do so for the child. If the circumstances require care proceedings to be issued outside of this, then the local authority is required to do so.
- 13 The outcomes from care proceedings can include: no order (child returns home), supervision order (usually the child returns home), care order but placed with parents under the placement with parent regulations, care order (with a view to permanence in foster care or residential care), placement order (which allows the local authority to place the child for adoption). In addition, the court can also grant a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order – usually to family members – which secures the child permanently in an extended family care arrangement.
- 14 The Children Act 1989 also provides for emergency admission into care. This can be either by way of an application to court for an emergency protection order (section 44 of the Children Act 1989) or by the exercise of police powers of protection (section 46 of the Children Act 1989).
- 15 The case studies at Appendix Two of this report, summarise some recent cases where the Local Authority has diverted children away from coming into care as well as the circumstances of a number of children who required the intervention of the Local Authority to become looked after.

- 16 Two critical issues for every child to becoming looked after are care planning and securing permanence. The Care Planning, Placement and Review Guidance (2015) requires all looked after children to have comprehensive care plans and for these to be reviewed by an independent reviewing officer at regular intervals. Permanence means the long term plan for the child's upbringing which ensures a framework of emotional, physical and legal conditions that gives a sense of security, continuity, commitment, identity and belonging.
- 17 The purpose of care planning is to ensure that the child's needs are being appropriately met both now and into the future. Furthermore by the second looked after review (at 4 months) there should be a clear understanding how the child can secure permanence. This can be by a planned return home to parents or via long term looked after arrangements in foster care, residential care, adoption or a placement with connected persons (friends or relatives) through a special guardianship order or child arrangement order.
- 18 Entries to the looked after system therefore, whether by parental consent (section 20), emergency or police protection or through application to the family court all require clear plans and regular monitoring and review.
- 19 In order to gate-keep access to the looked after system, Children and Young People's Service holds a weekly Looked After Placement and Resource Panel. Social workers are required to submit business cases to the Panel so that placements are planned and agreed in advance. In addition each week one of the Strategic Managers is on duty in case there is a request for an emergency admission outside the panel process.
- 20 Interventions that are currently in place to address the issues that lead to children and young people potentially coming into care are:
  - Intensive family support services via community support team including family group conferences, restorative practice based interventions
  - Intensive support from family workers and senior lead professionals in the Families First Teams
  - Pro-active work within the public law outline – in the last year 33% of cases that required a pre-proceedings meeting did **not** proceed to an application to court for care proceedings
  - Stronger Families interventions including practical help, support and access to resources where appropriate
  - Timetabled care planning with rigorous timescales for a return home.

### **Current Service Demands**

- 21 At the time of writing this report (31 October 2017), there were 790 children looked after by Durham County Council. This compares with 732 on 31 October 2016 and 658 on 31 October 2015.

- 22 Of the 790 children on 31 October 2017, 226 were being case managed in the Families First or Child Protection Teams. This means that 28% of children currently looked after are currently on their journey to permanence through the care system.
- 23 Another indicator of service demand is the increase in volume of care proceedings over the last few years. Durham County Council made 297 applications for care proceedings on individual children in the year 2016 – 2017. This compares with a total of 261 applications in the year 2015 – 2016 and 215 in the year 2014 – 2015. 80 applications were made in quarter one of this fiscal year.
- 24 The Department for Education has recently published its annual statistical returns on looked after children. Durham County Council's rate of looked after children is 81 per 10 000 compared to the England average of 62 per 10 000. In 2016 the Durham rate was 68 per 10 000. Whilst there is no doubt that the Council's increase has been significant, the rate remains well below the North East rate which is 92 per 10 000.
- 25 Members will be aware that this significant increase in demand has put pressure on social work services and fostering and residential services. There are a number of reasons behind this increase:
- Changes to the approval of extended family members as temporary foster carers (following the Ofsted inspection in 2016)
  - Improved practice in the recognition of neglect and its impact on children and young people – 73.4% (387/527) children on a child protection plan are under the category of neglect
  - High levels of domestic abuse and problem parental drug and alcohol use underpin many of these cases
  - An increasing number of looked after arrangements are driven by parental mental illness
  - A significant number of women who have had children previously removed through care proceedings are continuing to become pregnant. An analysis of care proceedings since 2014 undertaken by an organisation called Pause identified 127 women who between them had had 424 children removed
  - A high level analysis of the correlation between deprivation and rates of children becoming looked after carried out by Corporate Planning and Performance suggests that there are strong links between the two: rates of children looked after are 1:40 per 10 000 in the most deprived and 1:1300 per 10 000 in the least deprived areas of the County. The rate of becoming looked after in Horden East and Easington Colliery North is 1:12 per 10 000.

## **Service Response**

26 A number of strategies are in place to address this increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after. These include:

- The development of an edge of care service to address family breakdown – aimed at those children and young people 11 and over – including expanding the existing family group conference services
- The development of a pre-birth team which will work with parents who have had children previously removed
- Refocussing the family support services via One Point and Families First Teams so they are targeted on the most vulnerable families
- Work with the voluntary and community sector to both support families but also mitigate the effects of poverty and insecure employment and housing through income maximisation and advice
- A placement sufficiency strategy to increase the number of suitable foster carers within the County and reduce reliance on expensive private sector placements
- Early permanence planning so that those children who enter the looked after system are able to be placed permanently (including returning home) as quickly and safely as possible.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

27 This report has provided members of the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of the child's journey into the looked after system and some of the associated pressures on the system.

28 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are requested to:

- i. Note the content of the presentation
- ii. Comment accordingly on the presentation
- iii. Indicate if more information is required from the service.

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**Contact: Mark Gurney, Strategic Manager Child Protection & Disability**  
**Tel: 03000 265758**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – None

**Staffing** - None

**Risk** – The report outlines the statutory and regulatory background to children and young people becoming looked after. A key part of this work is to ensure that the welfare of children and young people across the County is actively promoted and that they are safeguarded from risk of significant harm.

**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** – The report highlights the legal framework that underpins the delivery of statutory social work services to children and young people becoming looked after in the Council

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## **Appendix Two: Case Studies**

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### **Edge of Care Case**

Child G: 13

G is a 13 year old young person. Support was offered from One Point, School and CAMHS but their behaviour was such that parents were struggling to the point they thought they may need them to become looked after.

Over a number of months we utilised a number of services to support this family. A family Worker provided intensive support around parenting and managing the young person's behaviour. CAMHS remained involved and the family also worked with the Community Support Team (CST) who arranged a Family Group Conference.

G has accessed support for activities outside the home and the extended family have pulled together to support each other.

A number of times we thought G would have to become looked after, however by providing the intense support when things were in crisis and utilising all of the agencies involved and finding more support where possible, the young person remains at home.

### **Public Law Outline Case Study**

Child A: 1 year old

A referral was received from the Community Midwife as parents had a number of children previously removed from their care. The concerns for these children had been significant with enduring harm suffered of a high level (neglect). There was particular concern around emotional abuse as one of their children was significantly emotionally harmed and parents had previously failed to demonstrate any insight around this, they were unable or unwilling to work with professionals to increase their insight and improve their parenting.

A was made subject to a Child Protection Plan (pre-birth) and the Public Law Outline was entered.

Parents engaged fully with the pre-birth assessment and the baby went home from birth, post birth assessment commenced and parents continued to engage fully, they worked hard on maintaining positive changes in terms of their parenting and engaged well with all professionals demonstrating insight into the previous concerns and a motivation to maintain a good level of care to their child, recognising and acknowledging the harm their older children had suffered in their care.

The case is now closed to the LA with a successful outcome.

### **Care Proceedings to Adoption Outcome**

Child B;

Mother, father and child lived in a local authority in the south of England until January 2016. The previous local authority had had concerns that the basic care needs of B were not being met. Professionals were increasingly concerned that the child was suffering from neglectful parenting which included, consistent poor home conditions, lack of stimulation and food, and deterioration of parents' mental health. Furthermore there were concerns that parents would not engage with professionals in a meaningful way and were reluctant to receive support from agencies.

The family moved to County Durham before these concerns could formally be addressed and the child was placed on a child protection plan. It very quickly became apparent that the family were in deep crisis and the parents effectively ceased caring for their child. The social worker and the Emergency Duty team undertook daily visits over a course of 6 days and the home conditions and quality of the child's life continued to deteriorate. Care Proceedings were issued and the child was removed on an interim care order and placed with foster carers.

Subsequently the Local Authority secured a care order and placement order and the child was placed with prospective adopters this summer.

### **Care Proceedings to Special Guardianship**

M and K – aged 12 and 6

M and K were the subject of care proceedings in 2015 and their grandparents became their special guardians (under a Special Guardianship Order) as an outcome of these proceedings. Unfortunately due to unexpected health and family issues the grandparents could no longer continue in this role.

The children were placed with an aunt by family agreement and the aunt was approved as a temporary foster carer under Regulation 24 of the Fostering Regulations.

The aunt has subsequently been fully approved as a foster carer for both children. She has resolved to be their permanent carer and the next step is to support her to become a special guardian for both children herself.

## Corporate Parenting Panel

24 November 2017



### Independent Reviewing Officer Looked After Children Annual Report 2016/17

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## Report of Jac Tyler, Operations Manager, Children & Young People's Services

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### Purpose of the report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service, Looked After Children and Child Protection annual reports for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, in accordance with requirements within the IRO Handbook (2010) and Working Together. The report will also report on key quality themes that the IRO service has identified over the course of the previous 12 months.
- 2 This report should be read alongside the Looked After Children annual report which is attached as Appendix 2.

### Background

- 3 In December 2013, feedback was received from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to create 2 separate annual reports focusing on Looked After Children (LAC) and Child Protection. Up to this date, the reports were combined into a single report.
- 4 These reports draw on the work of the IRO Service individually for both the areas of Looked After Children and Child Protection, identifying the achievements from 2016/17 and areas for further development for 2017/18. It also provides an overview of key quality themes for consideration and further discussion.

### The Role and Function of the IRO

- 5 In Durham, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have a dual function of chairing looked after reviews as well child protection conferences. The role of an IRO in relation to Looked After Reviews is laid down in statute, but not for child protection.
- 6 The law states that all children and young people that become looked after must be appointed an IRO. The IRO Handbook (2010) tells IROs what they should be doing for children and young people who are in care. An IRO has an important role in making sure that children and young people's care plans meet their needs. *IROs are there to make sure that reviews are run properly; that children and young people's views are listened to and their best interests are protected (Young People's Guide to the IRO Handbook).*

- 7 The primary function of a child protection chair is to ensure that the statutory functions required within child protection conferences are delivered in a robust way, in line with Durham's LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) Child Protection Procedures.
- 8 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 provides guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and states the responsibilities of the chair of the child protection conference:
- They are accountable to the Director of Children's Services. Where possible, the same person should chair subsequent child protection reviews;
  - They should be a professional, independent of operational and/or line management responsibilities for the case;
  - They should meet the child and parents in advance to ensure they understand the purpose and the process.
- 9 IROs also make sure that they tell the Local Authority when they are not doing enough for children and young people as their corporate parent. IROs will challenge the Local Authority if they disagree with the Local Authorities plan for a child or young person. IROs will also tell the Local Authority about things that are going particularly well.

### **Key Messages within the Annual Reports**

- 10 There have been significant challenges and developments during this year which included a number of staff changes, a significant increase in the number of Looked After Children and an increase in the number of children subject to Child Protection plans. The IRO service has needed to respond to this increased demand.
- 11 It was recognised that IRO caseloads were high due to the increase in cases and if not addressed would impact upon the capacity to fulfil their responsibilities in line with statutory requirements. It is positive that the proposal for an additional IRO has been agreed. Caseloads will continue to be monitored by the IRO Manager.
- 12 The most important part of an IRO's role is to ensure quality is monitored and achieved for children and young people who are Looked After or subject to Child Protection plans.
- 13 The IRO Service work closely with Children and Young Peoples Services (CYPS) and feedback key messages regarding challenges and positive factors in relation to social work practice and progression of the children plans. A key strength for the IRO service is the commitment of CYPS operational and strategic management level to seek timely resolution and engender positive challenge at every opportunity. This can be evidenced through the day to day culture of positive communication, resolution to disputes raised through the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) at an early stage. A review of performance information has been undertaken in consultation with Children's Services Strategic Managers and Head of Service.

- 14 A number of actions have been put in place to improve performance. These include the tightening up of escalation procedures including strategic manager approval sign off, regular meetings between the IRO Service and CYPS and a positive, proactive approach to challenge and resolution by Operations and Strategic Managers.
- 15 Areas for improvement highlighted by the IRO Service have been in relation to:
- poor quality assessments and plans;
  - delays in progressing plans;
  - meetings going out of timescale.
- 16 CYPS Strategic Managers are asked to consider these on a monthly basis and provide responses as to reasons why and remedial action to be taken to improve. These areas are now being addressed by service managers as priorities.
- 17 Participation of Looked After Children remains a strength within the IRO Service and this is embedded into practice. IROs have continued to encourage children and young people to engage and participate in care planning process and reviews. IROs work hard to support and encourage children, parents and families to contribute fully and appropriately. It is recognised that participation of young people within the child protection process requires improvements. This is a key priority for 2017/18.
- 18 Placement stability remains positive for permanently looked after children in Durham. The IRO service have continued to scrutinise the plans of children where there are delays in achieving permanent plans. This includes children and young people who are subject to voluntary accommodation under S20 for extended periods and plans not ratified at second review.
- 19 The IRO Service continues to strive for improvements in the quality of the service. The service continues to provide quantitative data such as attendance and participation of children and young people, parents and professionals. IROs attend the Children in Care Council meetings which provides an opportunity to share information and listen to the priorities of children looked after. New approaches are also being developed for the engagement of children and young people, where it is envisaged that children and young people will be able to compile their own agendas and share views in preparation for their reviews.
- 20 Improvements to evidence the impact of the IRO can be difficult to collate. Efforts have been made to streamline recordings which will capture data. The IRO Service has continued to make significant steps in implementing improvements and outcomes for children and young people.
- 21 The IRO service is committed to working with partners and developing the service. This can be seen in training courses and development sessions facilitated by the IROs for Children's Services teams and LSCB partners around the role of the IRO. Work at a regional level has also taken place with CAFCASS and NYAS. Each IRO has a lead for a development area within the

service.

## **IRO Service Priorities 2017/18**

- 22 There are 4 key areas identified for development in relation to Looked After for 2017/18. Details of how these are to be achieved are detailed in the body of the report:

Looked After Children:

- a) Increase the numbers of Looked After Children who are actively involved in their review.
- b) Ongoing professional development of IROs and the IRO Service.
- c) Continue to undertake robust quality assurance and oversight of practice and care planning to ensure stability requirements are met and good outcomes achieved for children and young people.
- d) Promote the IRO Service and contribute to wider service development and improvement activity.

## **Recommendations**

- 23 The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:

- (a) Note the contents of the report;
- (b) Note the development of processes to identify, escalate and address practice concerns for looked after children and children with a child protection plan;
- (c) Note the analysis of practice and the identification of areas for improvement required of Children and Young People's Services.

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**Contact: Jac Tyler, Operations Manager IRO Service**  
**Tel: 03000 262155**

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## **Appendix 1 – Implications**

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**Finance** - Rearranged and cancelled meetings are costly to the Local Authority.

**Staffing** - None

**Risk** - Failure to implement the procedures consistently and effectively can lead to higher risk to children and young people.

**Equality and diversity** - E&D issues are fully considered in the course of the IRO Service work.

**Public Sector Equality Duty** - The work of the service takes into account equality and diversity and ensures accessibility. The profile of complainants in relation to equality and diversity is consistent with the equality and diversity profile of County Durham.

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and disorder** - Police colleagues play a full and vital role in the provision of information and decision making in the work of the team.

**Human rights** - Compatible with Human Rights Act.

**Consultation** - None

**Procurement** - None

**Disability issues** - Disability issues are taken into full consideration within the work of the service.

**Legal implications** -The Service consult with legal services colleagues as appropriate in the course of their work.

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**Independent Reviewing Officer  
Looked After Children Annual Report  
2016/17**

## Purpose of the Annual Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the performance of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 in accordance with requirements within the IRO Handbook (2010). In line with the requirements, the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) will also be requested to consider the contents of the report and the recommendations in their role as Corporate Parent.
- 2 This report focuses on performance in relation to Looked After Children (LAC) only. A separate report focusing on Child Protection is published separately and considered by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- 3 The report has been reviewed so it is more accessible for children and young people.

## What do IROs do?

- 4 The law states that all children and young people that become looked after must be appointed an IRO. The IRO Handbook (2010) tells IROs what they should be doing for children and young people who are in care. An IRO has an important role in making sure that children and young people's care plans meet their needs. *IROs are there to make sure that reviews are run properly; that children and young people's views are listened to and their best interests are protected (Young People's Guide to the IRO Handbook).* Further information around the legal and statutory context of the IRO role is in Appendix 1.
- 5 IROs also make sure that they tell the Local Authority when they are not doing enough for children and young people as their corporate parent. IROs will challenge the Local Authority if they disagree with the Local Authorities plan for a child or young person. IROs will also tell Local Authority about things that are going particularly well.
- 6 In Durham, IROs also chair child protection conferences and work within Durham's LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) Child Protection Procedures.

## IRO Service in Durham

- 7 The IRO Service is now positioned in Early Help, Assessment and Child Protection Durham County Council. The Operations Manager for the IRO Service is managed by the Strategic Manager, Children's Quality Reform.
- 8 The IRO Service is managed separately from Children's Looked After Service, which strengthens independence and objectivity. This allows the IROs the opportunity to independently challenge in the best interests of the child.
- 9 There were 12.6 full time equivalent IRO posts in Durham at the end of the reporting year, including 2 vacancies. IROs are based in 3 offices across County Durham: Seaham, Durham and Spennymoor. The IROs in Durham have a broad range of appropriate knowledge and experience. This includes social work team management, adoption, training, fostering and adoption, disabilities, therapeutic services, safeguarding, and looked after services. The stability of the IROs is good and the majority have worked in social work for over 10 years.
- 10 The IRO Handbook advises that the LAC case load for each IRO should be between 50 and 70. The average LAC case load at 31 March 2017 for IROs in Durham was 65.8 LAC, although the IROs also carried a caseload of 39.7 child protection cases which corresponds

to an average of 105 cases per FTE. This is an increase from an average of 89.1 cases per FTE as at 31 March 2016. There has been a review of caseloads and this has resulted in a full time IRO.

- 11 The IRO Handbook states that ‘sufficient’ administrative support should be provided to the IRO in relation to the Looked After Review (LAR). The IROs are supported by a team of dedicated Administration staff that ensure administrative support is provided to deliver an excellent service.
- 12 The IRO handbook states that the IROs must have access to independent legal advice. Reciprocal arrangements have been established between Durham and Darlington Local Authorities’ Legal Services to fulfil this duty. Access to independent legal advice is also provided by Durham’s senior legal advisor, if they are not directly linked with the case in question. The reciprocal arrangements with Darlington Local Authority have not been used in Durham within 2016/17.

### Children and young people in the care of County Durham

- 13 The IROs chair Looked After Reviews (LARs) for all children, including those placed for adoption, those in short break respite care, young people who are remanded into the care of the local authority and those children on Care Orders and placed with their families. The child’s journey through the looked after process is in Appendix 2.
- 14 At 31 March 2017, there were 829 looked after children in County Durham including children receiving respite care. This figure is an increase from 700 overall LAC on 31 March 2016. Appendix 4 provides further information on the LAC profile.
- 15 At 31 March 2017, there were 12 children who received respite care. This is a decrease from 20 children on 31 March 2016.

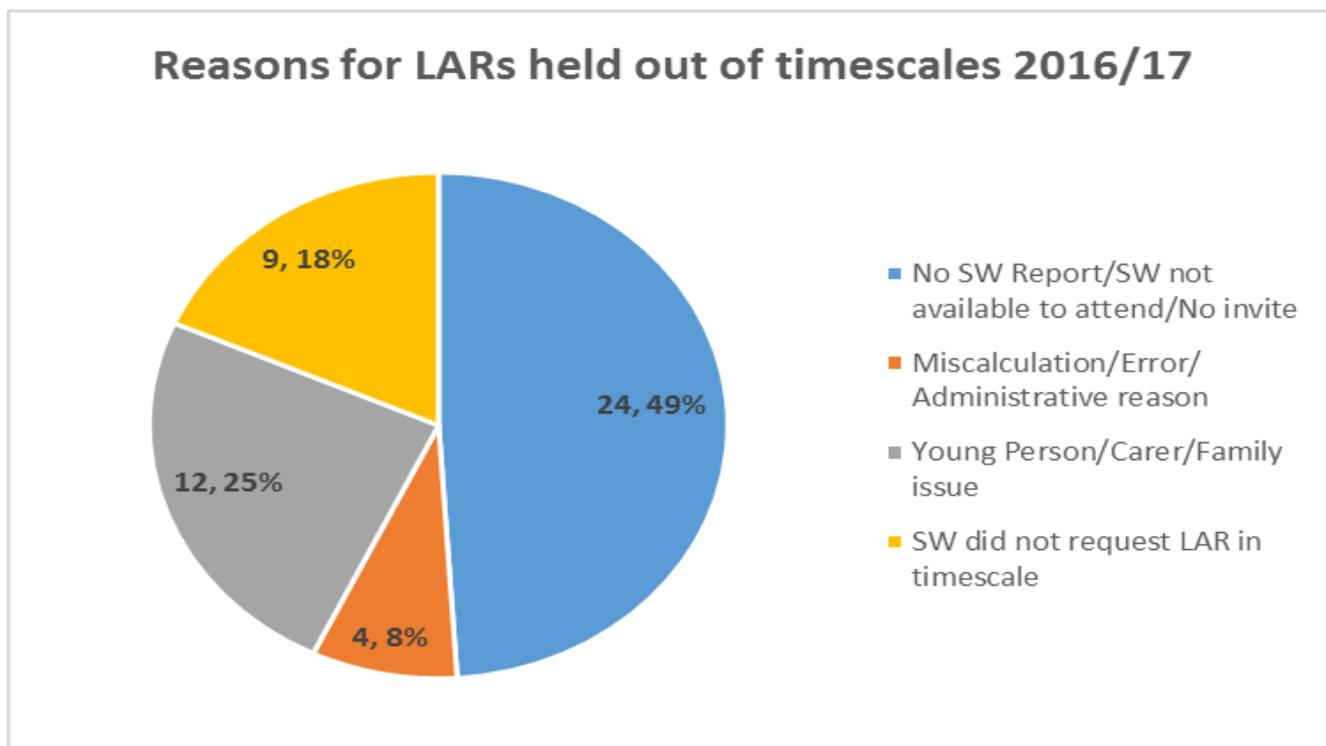
### Timeliness Of Looked After Reviews

- 16 The performance relating to LARs held in timescale is reported using an indicator which calculates how many reviews were undertaken in timescales for children who were looked after for at least 20 working days at 31 March 2017. Table 1 below shows that the vast majority of (93.7%) of reviews were held within timescales. Thirty reviews were held out of timescale which involved 49 children.
  - Ensuring LARs are put in diaries in sufficient time to provide contingency and allow for unexpected requests for changes of date or circumstances out of the control of all parties.
  - Tightening up of escalation procedures for cancelling meetings and Strategic Manager approval.
  - Bringing any meetings rearranged more than twice to the attention of the Strategic Manager for the IRO Service and the relevant Children’s Services Strategic Manager.

Report Period	31 March 2017
Children looked after for at least 20 working days	778
Children looked after cases reviewed within required timescales	729
<b>NI66 Performance</b>	<b>93.7%</b>
Children looked after cases NOT reviewed within required timescales	49

*Provisional until Statistical First Release by DfE in Autumn 2017*

- 17 There are a wide variety of reasons why reviews were not held within timescale, which have been broke down into 4 main areas. In the 49 cases above, these were due to the following reasons:



### Dispute Resolution Process (DRP)

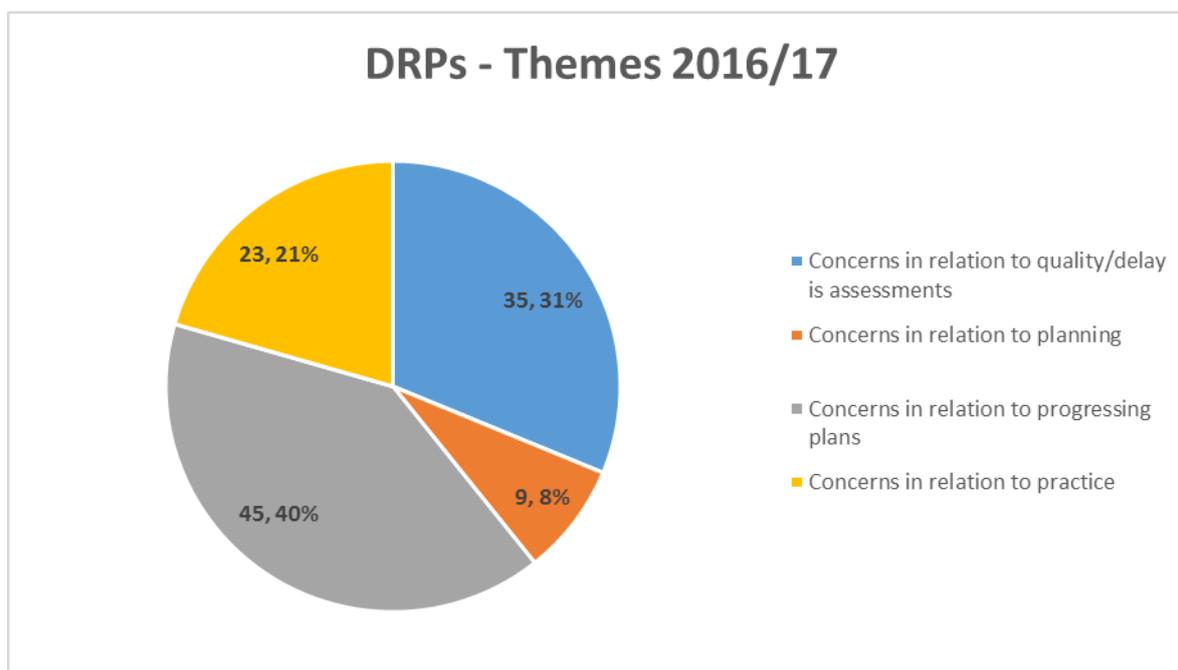
- 18 The Government wants IROs to challenge poor practice. The IRO handbook states that all Local Authorities must have a Dispute Resolution Process (DRP). This is where the Local Authority must work with the IRO to try to sort out any differences they may have in relation to a child's or young person's plan. The idea is that issues can be resolved quickly without the need to escalate to senior managers or for the need to go to court.
- 19 In Durham, the DRP is an 8-stage process that covers both child protection and looked after children and young people (see appendix 3)
- 20 There has been a 33% decrease in DRP's compared to the previous year. There were 112 disputes dealt within 2016/17, amounting to 10.1% of the 1109 LAC during this period. This is in comparison to 164 in 2015/16 representing a decrease of 52 disputes (31.7%). As the table below shows, the vast majority were dealt with via the first stage of the procedure which is informal challenge, indicating the commitment by all parties to the swift resolution of concerns raised by the IRO. There were no disputes dealt with at stages 5-8 of the procedure. Due to a change in recording, these figures cannot be directly compared to 2015/16.

## Disputes raised in relation to LAC – 2016/17

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Total	
Informal Challenge	9	39.13%	10	28.57%	13	50.00%	14	50.00%	46	41.07%
Stage 2	8	34.78%	14	40.00%	7	26.92%	8	28.57%	37	33.04%
Stage 3	5	21.74%	10	28.57%	5	19.23%	4	14.29%	24	21.43%
Stage 4	1	4.35%	1	2.86%	1	3.85%	2	7.14%	5	4.46%
Stages 5 - 8	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## DRP themes

- 21 DRPs are raised in relation to 3 main areas: practice, resources and/or process. The main themes raised this year for LAC within the DRP process are shown below:



- 22 This information is shared on a monthly and quarterly basis with Children's Services Management Team.

## Recommendations & Notes

- 23 Performance of IRO Service around circulating information following looked after reviews is monitored and reported on quarterly. The IRO Handbook states that decisions should be made within 5 working days and the notes of discussion must be circulated within 20 working days of the looked after review being held. This information is collated for both child protection conferences and looked after reviews and is recorded as an overall figure for both child protection and looked after. In 2016/17 there were 92.3% of recommendations and decisions circulated within timescales and there were 73.9% of notes circulated within timescales. The decline in performance is largely due to staffing issues with IRO admin officers. The team is now fully staffed and performance has improved.

## How are we doing?

24 Reach Out Care undertook an evaluation of consolation booklets from the region. The young people who participated stated they found our looked after consultation booklet *'the most user friendly and that the matters contained within, were relevant and creative. They liked the design and the way that it was set up, such as the page detail'*.

25 IRO development sessions have been rolled out with social work teams, with the focus being on improving practice and outcomes for children and young people. These have been well received and there has been a noted improvement in communication and quality of reports/plans.

26 When a child or young person becomes looked after they receive a letter advising them of their IRO and how they can get in contact with them. All children who have a review are offered the opportunity to speak to their IRO prior to and between their reviews. Children and Young People contact their IRO's between reviews via phone, text and email.

27 The following are case examples of the impact of the IRO role:

- The IRO challenged the need of a Care Order for a 16 year old young person who lived with his grandmother and had clearly stated that he did not want to be looked after. The IRO requested that a referral was progressed to NYAS and the young person was supported seek his own legal advice. The Local Authority supported him with an application to court, and the order has now been revoked.
- A 15 year old young person raised dissatisfaction with the IRO around her plan as she wanted this to progress to a return to mother's care, which was not supported by the social worker. The IRO addressed this with the social worker and clear timescales for the completion of assessments were agreed. The young person has since returned home.
- The IRO raised a DRP due to concerns around the proposed plans to reintroduce contact between a 6 year old child and his mother. No preparation work had been undertaken and no assessment around how this may impact upon his emotional wellbeing. A planning meeting took place, where clear expectations were agreed. The overall outcome was a successful contact which took place 3 months later.

28 Professionals have provided examples of the work of the IRO as follows:

- *"I found the IRO to be very good at her job. She was brilliant with the child and made him feel at ease and she was very clear and helpful throughout the meeting"*.
- *"I think that the LAR meeting was conducted in a relaxed yet professional manner. The young person was able to feel part of the meeting, hence she contributed very well and felt part of the decision making process"*.

29 Parents and carers have provided examples of their views of IROs as follows:

- *"The IRO does a great job and I feel she is a good support for the child we look after"*.
- *"My child's IRO was very professional, practical and understanding towards the growing needs of my child and our family. He took on board the individual needs of all services and people involved in my child's care and provided practical advice and*

*support that ensures he and our family get the positive outcomes we need to continue providing a great future for us all”.*

30 Children and young people have provided examples of their views of IROs as follows:

- *“She has my best interests at heart”*
- *“She puts my wishes across to my social worker and carer which sometimes I cannot do myself.”*

## **Engagement with children and young people**

31 It is the role of the IRO to ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to participate within their review, to ensure their voice is heard and they have the opportunity to contribute to decision making.

32 Within Durham, IROs have utilised a number of ways and tools to engage children and young people in their review process. When a child or young person becomes looked after, they are sent a letter from the allocated IRO which contains their contact information. IROs undertake placement visits to children and young people prior to their reviews. In addition, IROs have a contact slip which is given to all children and young people in care.

33 Children and young people are given the opportunity to chair their own reviews. In 2016/17, 56.2% (1224) were deemed not appropriate to chair their own meeting due to age or circumstance. There were 30% (654) of children who were offered but declined to chair their own meeting and 13.8% (300) partly or fully chaired their own meeting.

34 With the input from the Children in Care Council a child friendly agenda has been developed to support young people to chair their meeting. With the support of the IRO a number of children and young people now devise their own agenda. For those children and young people who do not wish to participate within the review process or have a placement visit, the IRO will afford them the opportunity to share their views via the telephone, written or by another facilitative means. Children and young people are offered the opportunity to have an independent visitor or advocate.

35 The IRO Service hold the Investing in Children Award and, over the past 12 months, the IROs have continued to work with the Children in Care Council to assist in developments within the team. Recent feedback from young people was that the care plan was too big. The IRO service has worked alongside Children’s Services to develop a child friendly care plan which is being implemented in September 2017.

36 IROs regularly attend Children in Care Council meetings. This is an opportunity to share information and updates with the children and young people and to seek their views on an ongoing basis. It also provides an opportunity to listen to what the priorities are for the children and young people.

37 Some of the comments received from young people are provided below:



*“if you want anything done they (IRO) always try their best to make it happen”*



*“we get invited to all our meetings and decide who we want there”*



*“my IRO comes out before my review to talk to me. They tell my social worker to get things done.”*



*“they always ask if I want to chair my review”.*

## Outcomes for looked after children

### Health

38 In relation to children looked after for 12 months or more at 31 March 2017, 87.1% had a dental check during the year and 84.8% had the required number of health assessments during the year. The IROs challenge this within looked after reviews to ensure that this happens.

### Education

39 As at the 31 March 2017, 66% of care leavers (relevant and former relevant young people) aged 17 – 21 were in education, employment and training (EET), of these 5.4% were in higher education. There were 34% were not in education, employment and training (NEET). This is an increase from 2015/16 where 56.5% of care leavers were in EET, with 4.0% in higher education.

### Placement stability

40 The IRO monitors the child’s care plan in-between looked after reviews and is informed of any significant events within the child’s life. Placement stability for looked after children in Durham has very slightly declined, however this remains a positive picture for looked after children in Durham. The predicted percentage of children looked after at 31 March 2017 with 3 or more placements during the year (NI62) is 6.6%. This compares to 6% as at 31 March 2016.

41 The percentage of children looked after continuously for 2.5 years or more at 31 March 2017 who were living in the same placement for 2 years or more (NI63) has increased with a final predicted figure of 72.6%. This compares to 69% as at 31 March 2016.

42 The IRO Manager attends the permanency review group which meets quarterly to consider how placement stability can be improved upon. One such development includes consideration of findings from disruption meetings chaired by IROs to plan improvements in placement stability.

43 The number of children who exited the looked after system was 303 in 2016/17. Of all children who left the looked after system, 35.6% returned to the care of their parents, relatives or other person with parental responsibility. This must be seen as being a positive outcome. The IRO ensures that each child has an exit review upon leaving the looked after system with an appropriate plan. A more detailed breakdown of the reasons children ceased to be looked after is attached as Appendix 5.

- 44 Of the care leavers (relevant and former relevant young people) aged 17 – 21 (at the 31 March 2017), 88% were in suitable accommodation. IROs ensure that when a young person leaves the looked after system they have a looked after review which scrutinises the exit plan, ensuring there is a contingency plan.

### Partnership working

- 45 The IRO Service is committed to working in partnership with a range of agencies and groups. Strategic work takes place with the Regional and National IRO Managers groups and the IRO Service in Durham takes the lead on benchmarking for the region. Work is undertaken with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS).
- 46 Work has been ongoing with Children & Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS) and development workshops have taken place for CAFCASS workers and IROs. A communication process is well embedded between the IRO and CAFCASS.

### Corporate Parenting

- 47 The IRO service support the Local Authority by monitoring and scrutinising the performance in relation to the planning for looked after children and young people. They achieve this by producing monthly and quarterly reports which are shared with senior managers.
- 48 IROs hold quarterly communication meetings with Child Protection, Fostering and Looked After Team managers. This enables timely identification of themes for concern for children and young people who are looked after, so remedial action can be taken by Children's Services.
- 49 IROs attend the Children's and Young Peoples Services Team Managers' events, which take place every two months. This is an opportunity for the IROs and the social work team managers to meet to share relevant key issues and current themes.

### What we have achieved?

- 50 The IRO Service set a number of priorities for 2016/17. A summary of progress is provided below.
- a) **Priority: Development of the new approaches for the engagement of children and young people, where it is envisaged that children and young people will be able to compile their own agendas and share views in preparation for their reviews.**  
Update: Work to develop an app has been put on hold due to the forthcoming implementation of new IT system.
- b) **Priority: Development a process in line with the changes brought about by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review published in June 2015.**  
Update: The Looked After Procedures have been updated to reflect the changes set out within Care Planning, Placement and Case Review. The changes are to be implemented in September 2017
- c) **Priority: Continue to ensure children and young people are fully engaged in the process of their reviews and are able to contribute their views and opinions through a range of methods.**  
Update: IROs have the use of electronic tablets which has proved to be a positive tool to engage children and young people within their reviews. Children and young people are

supported to compile their individual agendas which assists them in preparation for chairing and sharing views at their reviews. Looked After consultation booklets are sent to child in advance of their reviews.

- d) Priority: Continue to work with Children's Services to develop child-friendly plans.**  
Update: The Children in Care Council have been fully involved in the design of the template for the child-friendly care plan. Feedback from social workers and children & young people involved in the pilot of the child friendly care plan was extremely positive, this is being implemented in September 2017.
- e) Priority: Continue with an audit programme of IRO performance to achieve a better and more consistent service.**  
Update: The audit tool has a 4 point scale of 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' to all audits undertaken. Four audits are carried out for each IRO per year. Findings and themes are shared with the IROs in team meetings and individually in supervisions to ensure identified actions are achieved. The overall audits have been graded as good or above.
- f) Priority: Identify themes which impact on placement stability using findings from disruption meetings analysis.**  
Update: The IRO service has continued to work closely with Looked After Services and Fostering Services in the scrutiny of permanency planning and challenge in relation to placement stability. A review of the disruption process has taken place; this has recommended the process be updated, and a tracker to be introduced to identify themes. IROs continue to participate in Permanence Review/Placement Stability Meetings which are held every two months.
- g) Priority: Continue to implement the training programme which has been developed for the IROs and promote access to the social work development programme led by Workforce Development.**  
Update: IROs have continued to have the opportunity to participate in training tailored to their role. A training plan is developed for 2017/18 which includes access to management qualifications and support.
- h) Priority: Continue to promote a collaborative and resolution-focused approach to conflicts, disputes or disagreements and ensure communications meetings with Children's Services continue to be promoted and held.**  
Update: Communications meetings between IRO Service and Children's services have continued to take place on a quarterly basis. Lead Officers and IRO manager has continued to participate in various meetings/projects with partner agencies.
- i) Priority: Promote the role of the IRO by undertaking presentations to partner agencies and the judiciary.**  
Update: IROs have undertaken several presentations and training events around the role of the IRO. Feedback has been very positive.
- j) Priority: Undertake a lean review of the invite process.**  
Update: The introduction of a more stream lined and efficient invite process is now embedded. Further changes will be introduced with the introduction of new IT system.
- k) Priority: Work with Children's Services on their audit programme.**  
Update: The IRO services has been involved with undertaking themed audits, which has contributed the quality and performance clinics within children's services.

## What needs to be done for 2017/18?

51 There are a number of priorities for the IRO Service during 2017/18. These are:

**a) Increase the numbers of Looked After Children who are actively involved in their review;**

- Development of approaches for the engagement of children and young people in preparation for their reviews.
- Continue to ensure children and young people are fully engaged in the process of their reviews and are able to contribute their views and opinions through a range of methods.
- Implementation of 'virtual reviews' in line with recommendations within the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Contribute to a review of the Looked After Procedures.

**b) Ongoing professional development of IRO's and the IRO Service;**

- Attend and contribute to the North East IRO managers group and take on board the national developments, legislation and guidance.
- Implement the training programme which has been developed for the IROs and promote access to the social work development programme led by Workforce Development.
- Undertake a review of Quality and Review team structure and functions.
- Monitor IRO allocations and consistency of IRO for children looked after.
- Continue with an audit programme of IRO performance to achieve a better and more consistent service.

**c) Continue to undertake robust quality assurance and oversight of practice and care planning to ensure stability requirements are met and good outcomes achieved for children and young people, to include;**

- IRO's to undertake robust quality assurance and oversight of practice and care planning to ensure statutory requirements are met.
- There is clear evidence of the IRO 'footprint' on the child's record to reflect the impact of the IRO and improving outcomes for children and young people.
- IRO Service continue to develop measures to prevent data breaches from occurring in the course of organising and co-ordinating looked after review conferences.
- Continue to promote a collaborative and resolution-focused approach to conflicts, disputes or disagreements and ensure communications meetings with Children's Services continue to be promoted and held.
- Review the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) and ensure that evidence of informal resolution is captured more effectively.
- Provide detailed analysis of themes from DRPs identified to Children's Services Management Team.
- Identify themes which impact on placement stability using findings from disruption meetings analysis, to promote stability for children within their placements.
- Monitor the performance in respect of LAR held within timescale to further improve performance against indicators.

**d) Promote the IRO Service and contribute to wider service development and improvement activity by;**

- Contribute to the early permanence planning strategy group.
- IRO development sessions with social work teams and academy will continue to be delivered.
- Undertake workshops and seminars to partner agencies.

## Conclusion

- 52 This annual report provides details of the work and performance of the IRO Service.
- 53 During 2016/17 93.7% of looked after reviews were held within the required timescales. The reasons for looked after reviews being held out of timescale were due to having no social worker report, no invite or the social worker being unable to attend, the social worker not requesting a first looked after review within timescale, a miscalculation, error or administrative reason, or for young person/carer/family reasons. A number of actions have been put in place to address this. These include the tightening up of escalation procedures, regular meetings between the IRO Service and Children and Young People's Services and a positive, proactive approach to resolution by the IRO and Children's Services Operations Managers.
- 54 There were 112 disputes raised via the DRP during 2016/17. This figure cannot be directly compared to 2015/16 due to a change in recording. During 2017/18 the IRO Service will continue to work in collaboration with Children's Services to reduce the numbers of re-arranged reviews and seek early resolution to disputes and ensure good outcomes are achieved for children and young people.
- 55 There has been an improvement in placement stability for children looked after continuously for 2.5 years or more as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2. The predicted percentage of children looked after at 31 March 2017 with a final predicted figure of 72.6% living in the same placement for 2 years or more.
- 56 IRO development sessions have been rolled out with Social Work teams and have been well received.
- 57 IROs regularly attend the Children in Care Council meetings which provides an opportunity to share information and listen to the priorities of children looked after. New approaches are also being developed for the engagement of children and young people, where it is envisaged that children and young people will be able to compile their own agendas and share views in preparation for their reviews
- 58 Work undertaken will include the development of systems and processes which ensure that the Care Planning Regulations and IRO handbook are fully implemented and children's plans are progressed in a timely and effective way.

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**Contact:** Jac Tyler, Operations Manager, IRO Service  
**Tel:** 03000 262155 [jac.tyler@durham.gov.uk](mailto:jac.tyler@durham.gov.uk)

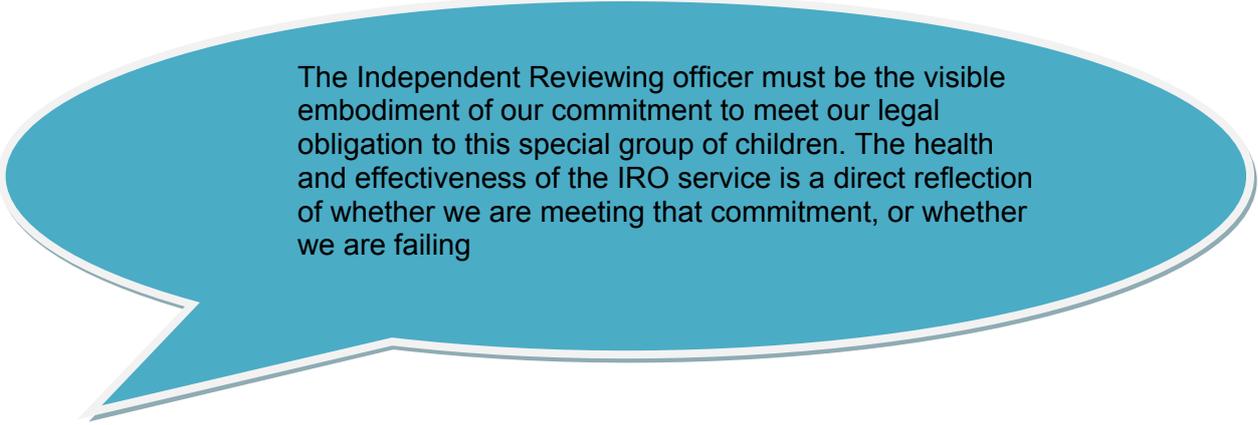
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## Appendix 1

### The Legal and Statutory Context of the IRO Role to Looked After Children

The Independent Reviewing Officers' (IRO) service is set within the framework of the updated IRO handbook, linked to revised Care planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011. The responsibility of the IRO has changed from management of the Review process to a wider overview of the case including regular monitoring and follow-up between Reviews. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for children Looked After and for challenging drift and delay.

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) research 'The Role of the Independent Reviewing officers in England' (March 2014) provides a wealth of information and findings regarding the efficacy of IRO services. The foreword written by Mr Justice Peter Jackson; makes the following comment:



The Independent Reviewing officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligation to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or whether we are failing

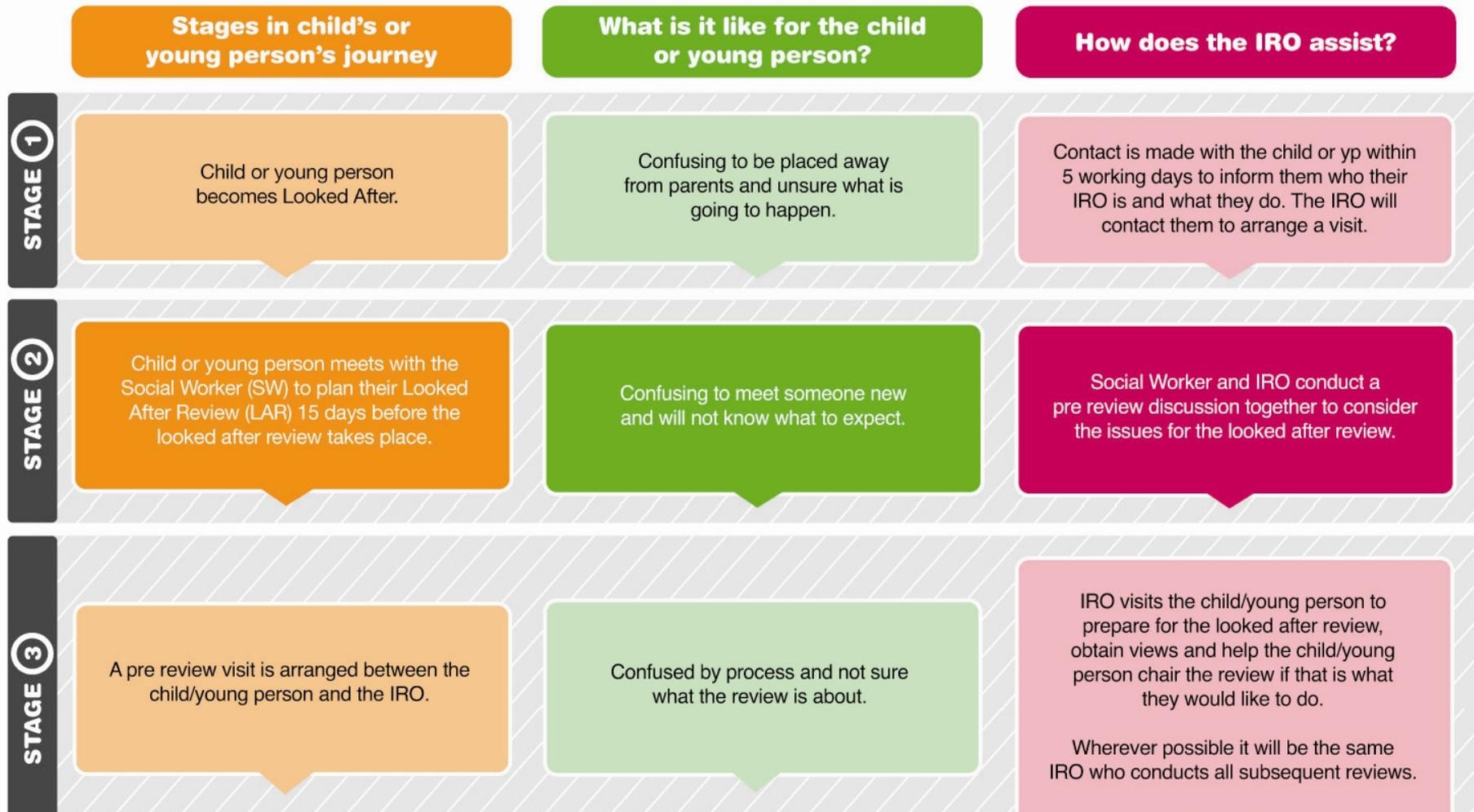
The NCB research outlines a number of important recommendations with three having a particular influence on IROs work plan priorities:

- a) Where IROs identify barriers to their ability to fulfil their role, or systematic failures in the service to looked after children, they must raise this formally with senior managers. These challenges and the response should be included in the Annual Report.
- b) IROs method for monitoring cases and how this activity is recorded should be clarified.
- c) A review of IROs core activities and additional tasks should be undertaken. There is a need to establish whether IROs additional activities compromise independence or capacity.

## Appendix 2 The Child's Journey

Page 42

The child's journey through the looked after process can be daunting and confusing. It is the role of the IRO to ensure that the child or young person's wishes and feelings are taken into account and that their care plans meet their needs through appropriate and proportionate challenge and scrutiny. The information below contains the key stages in the child's journey through the LAC process and how the IRO assists the child or young person in this process.



STAGE 4

Within 20 working days a looked after review is held and short term plan is agreed with recommendations.

Young people comment that they like to chair their own meeting.

The IRO supports the child to provide their views and chair the meeting if appropriate.

The IRO will provide a contact slip for the child to contact and will negotiate the time and place of the next review and who will attend.

The IRO will challenge the local authority on the plan if appropriate, read the assessments and consider if the plan is appropriate for the young person.

STAGE 5

3 month looked after review and permanent plans agreed.

May be confused about the plan and what happens next.

The IRO supports the child to provide their views and chair the meeting if appropriate.

The IRO will provide a contact slip for the child to contact and will negotiate the time and place of the next review and who will attend.

The IRO will read the court bundle and all assessments, discuss with the Children's guardian to determine views on the plan.

If the IRO is unhappy with the progress of the plan they can instigate the DRP process to challenge the LA. If the case is in court the court need to be made aware of the IRO's concerns.

STAGE 6

6 month reviews and permanent plans.

The process continues every 6 months until the child is no longer looked after.

Young people comment that they like to chair their own meeting.

The following is a quote for a young person who chairs their own review:

*"Think it's a good thing and allows me to talk about what I want".*

The IRO supports the child to provide their views and chair the meeting if appropriate.

The IRO conducts monitoring and pre review discussion with the SW and is updated on any significant event. The IRO will consider if a review needs to be held as a result.

The IRO will read the court bundle and all assessments, discuss with the Children's guardian to determine views on the plan.

If the IRO is unhappy with the progress of the plan they can instigate the DRP process to challenge the LA. If the case is in court the court need to be made aware of the IRO's concerns.

## Appendix 3

### DRP Stages

Stage	IRO to send to	To be Copied in for information	Type of Contact	Response required within?
<b>Informal challenge</b>	Social Worker	n/a	Record to be made on IRO index page. Ideally, this stage will involve a 1-1 discussion between the SW and the IRO. The IRO will follow up in an email and make a decision whether to copy the team manager into the correspondence.	1 Working Days
<b>2</b>	Team Manager	Social Worker; Relevant Operations Manager; IRO Operations Manager; Legal Advisor (in PLO or care proceedings).	Form to be emailed. DRP monitoring meeting to be held if required.	3 Working Days
<b>3</b>	Relevant Operations Manager	Strategic Manager Children's Services; Strategic Manager SQD; Legal Manager for Children, Adult & Health; Plus all of above.	Form to be emailed. DRP monitoring meeting to be held if required.	4 Working Days
<b>4</b>	Strategic Manager Children's Services; Strategic Manager Service Quality and Development;	Social Worker; Relevant Operations Manager; IRO Operations Manager; Legal Advisor (in PLO or care proceedings).	Form to be emailed. Meeting to be arranged by IRO Operations Manager. Attendance to include IRO, IRO Operations Manager, Strategic Manager Children's Services; Strategic Manager Service Quality and Development; others to be determined by the Strategic Managers. Outcome to be recorded on DRP Form by IRO.	5 Working Days
<b>5</b>	Head of Children's Services and Head of Planning and Service Strategy	Operations Managers Strategic Managers Legal Advisor (as appropriate).	Form to be emailed. Meeting to be arranged by IRO Operations Manager. Attendance as:  Strategic Managers Operations Managers  Outcome to be recorded on DRP Form by IRO.	5 Working Days
<b>6</b>	Corporate Director of Children and Young Peoples Services; Head of Legal Services	Strategic Managers Legal Advisor (as appropriate). Heads of Service	Form to be emailed and meeting to be arranged by IRO Operations Manager. Attendance as:  Heads of Service Strategic Managers	1 Working Day

			Outcome to be recorded on DRP Form by IRO.	
<b>7</b>	Chief Executive	Heads of Service Corporate Directors	Form to be emailed and meeting to be arranged by IRO Operations Manager. Attendance as: Corporate Director Heads of Service  Outcome to be recorded on DRP Form by IRO.	1 Working Day
<b>8</b>	Referral to CAFCASS	All above to be advised by IRO Operations Manager.		

## Appendix 4 - Looked After Children Profile

### Breakdown of Looked After Children at 31 March 2017

	31 Mar 08	31 Mar 09	31 Mar 10	31 Mar 11	31 Mar 12	31 Mar 13	31 Mar 14	31 Mar 15	31 Mar 16	31 Mar 17
Respite	68	66	64	70	46	37	21	17	20	12
Other LAC	414	444	510	534	657	629	604	619	680	817
<b>Total LAC</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>829</b>

### LAC Demographics as at 31 March 2017 By Gender, Age Group and Ethnicity

Gender	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-17	Difference to previous year
Male	338	352	385	462	+ 77
Female	266	267	295	355	+ 60
<b>Total</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>+ 137</b>

Age Group	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-17	Difference to previous year
Aged under 1	69	57	45	70	+ 25
Aged 1 - 4	93	97	118	130	+ 12
Aged 5 - 9	136	153	170	207	+ 37
Aged 10 -15	220	225	263	312	+ 49
Aged 16 - 17	86	87	84	98	+ 14
Aged 18	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>+ 137</b>

Ethnicity	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-17	Difference to previous year
White	592	604	664	793	+ 129
Mixed	8	11	10	10	0
Asian or Asian British	0	0	2	1	- 1
Black or Black British	1	1	1	1	0
Other	3	3	3	12	+ 9
Information refused or not obtained	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>+ 137</b>

## Breakdown of Looked After Children by Legal Status at 31 March 2017

Legal Status	Number of children at 31 March 2015	Number of children at 31 March 2016	Number of children at 31 March 2017	Difference to previous year
Interim Care Order	35	64	78	+ 14
Full Care Order	328	366	424	+ 58
Voluntary agreement under section 20 single period of accommodation	197	167	239	+ 72
Freed for adoption order	0	0	0	0
Placement order	59	80	74	- 6
On remand, committed for trial, or detained	0	3	2	- 1
Emergency protection order, police protection order, or child assessment order	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>+ 137</b>

## Children and Young People Contributing to their Looked After Reviews

	31-Mar-08	31-Mar-09	31-Mar-10	31-Mar-11	31-Mar-12	31-Mar-13	31-Mar-14	31-Mar-15	31-Mar-16	31-Mar-17
% of children and young people who communicated their views for each of their statutory reviews	98.40%	97.90%	99.40%	99.50%	99.90%	100.00%	99.70%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

*Provisional data only, official figures are published by DfE in Autumn*

**Appendix 5 - Children who ceased to be looked after (excluding respite cases) between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>Difference to previous year</b>
Adoption	73	45	28	53	+ 25
Residence order granted	16	9	13	20	+ 7
Special guardianship order granted	31	54	50	60	+ 10
Returned home to live with parent(s), relative(s) or other person with PR	87	70	103	108	+ 5
Returned home to live with parent(s), relative(s) or other person with no PR	-	-	2	26	+ 24
Moved into independent living	24	23	25	25	0
Died	0	1	0	1	+ 1
Other reason	56	59	31	10	- 20
<b>Total children who ceased to be looked after</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>+ 51</b>
<b>Rate of children who ceased to be looked after per 10,000 population</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>+ 5.1</b>
<b>% of children who were adopted</b>	<b>25.40%</b>	<b>17.20%</b>	<b>11.10%</b>	<b>17.50%</b>	<b>+ 6.4 %</b>
<b>% of children who ceased due to special guardianship</b>	<b>10.80%</b>	<b>20.70%</b>	<b>19.80%</b>	<b>19.80%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

*Provisional data only, official figures are published by DfE in Autumn*

**Independent Reviewing Officer  
Looked After Children Annual Report 2016/17**

**Contact:** Jac Tyler, Operations Manager, IRO Service  
**Tel:** 03000 262155 [jac.tyler@durham.gov.uk](mailto:jac.tyler@durham.gov.uk)

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



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**Corporate Parenting Panel****24 November 2017****Durham Local Safeguarding Children  
Board Annual Report 2016/17**


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


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**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Panel with the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17. The full annual report and the young people's version are available on the LSCB website at [www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk). The full Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17 is attached at Appendix 2 for information.

**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. 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.
4. Statutory Guidance from 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.
5. Throughout April and May 2017 draft versions of the LSCB Annual Report were circulated to the LSCB Board; partner agencies; stakeholders and Corporate Management Team for consultation and comment. The feedback received has been incorporated into the final document.

**Durham LSCB Annual Report**

6. The Durham LSCB Annual Report 2016/17 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.
7. The report describes the work undertaken against the 2016-17 priorities and sets out the future priorities for 2017-20. It describes the local governance arrangements and structure of Durham LSCB; the linkages to other strategic partnerships across County Durham.

8. The report provides an overview of the performance monitoring framework as well as providing a brief summary of the use of restraint in secure centres; Serious Case Reviews; Child Death Reviews; and the LSCB multi-agency training provision.
9. To develop this year's Young People's Annual Report staff have directly engaged with over 70 young people from Durham Constabulary's Police Cadets (spanning key stages 3-5) to act as an editor's group; providing feedback, critique, challenge and shaping how the final document looks.
10. Written in clear language, it provides general safeguarding information from a young person's perspective. The Durham LSCB Annual Report for Young People is primarily an interactive electronic document and is best viewed on a computer, tablet or smartphone.

### **LSCB Priorities for 2017-20**

11. Durham LSCB held a development day in February 2017 to review progress on the priorities; consider key challenges; and to set its future priorities. In setting the priorities for 2017-20 the Board considered a number of presentations and information sources which resulted in the following strategic priorities:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Neglect
- Empowering Young People
- Working Together

### **Achievements and Progress Highlights**

12. Below are some examples of achievements and progress made by the LSCB in 2016/17:

- A new methodology for SCRs developed with learning events to over 700 staff delivered.
- Launch of new online Child Protection Procedures.
- Trained over 1,800 taxi drivers in CSE with safeguarding conditions now built into Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.
- Specialist Briefings – Exploitation, Grooming and Radicalisation / Intervene to Protect a Child / Understanding Victims of Rape and Sexual Abuse Masterclass.
- Updated Child Sexual Exploitation Local Profile.
- Developed a range of tackling neglect toolkits. The Neglect Practice Guidance and Practice Toolkit / 0-19 Level of Need / Home Environment Assessment Tool; all rolled out.
- Updated single assessment procedures reflecting the added focus on neglect and hidden harm.
- Domestic abuse workers based in One Point and part of Early Help Forums are now well established.
- Developed a self-harm support pathway and a self-harm education package for all staff including schools and GP's.
- Introduced web-based multi-agency auditing.

- Website restructured with 13,591 users 97,907 website hits and 11,158 awareness raising materials circulated.
- 84 training courses delivered and attended by 1,520 staff.
- Virtual College 'total package' of e-learning purchased.
- Over 6,000 people have completed the PREVENT duty counter terrorism e-learning.

## **Conclusion**

13. The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17 and Young People's Annual Report 2016-17 was agreed by the LSCB Board on the 08 July 2017.
14. The annual reports are available on the Durham LSCB website at [www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk) and have been disseminated through partners own organisational governance structures.

## **Recommendations**

15. The Corporate Parenting Panel 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 2016/17 and priorities for action in 2017/18.

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

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **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 2016/17**

Attached in a separate file.

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# Annual Report

2016 / 2017

Safeguarding Children

in County Durham

[www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk)

# Contents

1. Foreword by Independent Chair .....	3
2. Introduction .....	4
3. Local Data.....	5
4. Governance and Structure .....	7
5. Achievements against 2016/17 Priorities .....	9
6. Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance .....	18
7. Training and Communication .....	24
8. Future Priorities.....	26
Appendix 1 – LSCB Membership .....	27
Appendix 2 – LSCB Staffing and Budget.....	29

## 1. Foreword by Independent Chair

Welcome to the third Annual Report published since I became the Independent Chair of Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). 2016/17 has been another year of progress for Durham LSCB following the rigorous Ofsted inspection in February 2016. The recommendations made by Ofsted were progressed and implemented as part of our Business Plan for 2016/17.

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. This is a fundamental role of the Independent Chair and I will continue to do this constructively and to seek constant improvement in services. I am repeatedly encouraged by all the good work I see delivered by our partners in County Durham.

This annual report provides local people with an account of the LSCB's work over the past year to improve the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young people across County Durham.

The report reflects the activity of the LSCB and its sub-groups against the agreed priorities for 2016/17. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities we will take forward into 2017/18.

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 have continued to increase the visibility and 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.



Our work has been recognised by Investing In Children and as part of the Children Commissioner's National Takeover Challenge we have worked with young people to develop an interactive Annual Report for Young People.

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 thank and recognise the contribution of our Lay Members and the Children and Young People Portfolio Holder who bring another layer of independent scrutiny to the work of the LSCB.



*Jane Geraghty  
Durham LSCB Independent Chair*

## 1. 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. 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 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.

Section 4 describes the local governance arrangements and structure of Durham LSCB, the linkages to other strategic partnerships across County Durham.

Section 5 highlights 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 2016/17 priorities.

Section 6 covers our Performance Monitoring Framework and describes the multi-agency audits we have undertaken. It also provides an overview of Serious Case Reviews; Child Death Reviews and the use of restraint in Aycliffe Secure Services Centre.

Section 7 outlines our multi-agency training provision and describes the marketing and communication activity undertaken by the LSCB.

Lastly, Section 8 identifies the priorities Durham LSCB will take forward into 2017/18.

The Annual Report 2016/17 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 fulfilled.



*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; Lessons Learned from local Serious Case Reviews; the Child Death Review Annual Report; the Local Child Sexual Exploitation Profile; the Safe Durham Partnership Strategic Assessment and a range of Durham LSCB strategy documents and action plans.*

### 3. Local Data

County Durham stretches from the rural North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the west to the Heritage Coastline in the east and is the home to a range of national treasures including Durham Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The county has a very diverse combination of communities ranging from some of the most sparsely populated rural areas in the country through to the larger towns and Durham City; each area with its own needs and aspirations.



In 2015, there were an estimated **519,695 people** living in County Durham



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



Although levels of deprivation in County Durham have improved we are ranked the **75th most deprived area** out of 326 local authorities in England



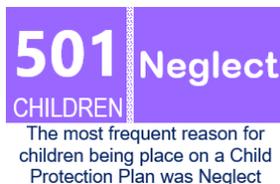
**Child poverty** in County Durham is higher than the England average, with **22.5% of children** under 16 years living in poverty



Data source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

## Local Safeguarding Data 2016/17 (Provisional Data)

**501 children** were subject to a Child Protection Plan (50 per 10,000 population aged 0-18).



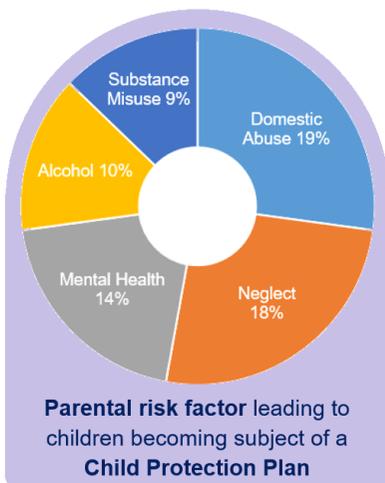
The percentage of Child Protection Plans that **lasted two years or more is 1.5%**.

Children on a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time, within two years of the previous plan has **fallen to 4%**.

**Neglect** was the most frequent reason for children being placed on a Child Protection Plan in 2016/17.

**78.1% of children** who were made subject of a Child Protection Plan under five years old were made so due to neglect.

**Domestic abuse** continues to be the main parental risk factor leading to children becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan, accounting for **19% of child protection conferences** recorded for 2016/17.



Neglect (18%), Mental Health (14%), Alcohol (10%) and Substance Misuse (9%) are also significant factors.

**376** cases discussed at a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

**815 children** are in the Looked After system.



**5 children** are in Private Fostering arrangements.

**37 children** and young people were reported missing from home more than once.

**138** Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) referrals. Of those targeted **80% are girls**. The average age of victims is 12 years old.

**Online Grooming** is the most common model of CSE.

**Over 1160** early help plans completed with a successful outcome with a **40% increase** in the families receiving early help.

**31** separate actions identified from the Section 11 audit.

**3 Serious Case Reviews** and 1 Learning Lessons Review with seven learning events throughout the year for practitioners.

**84 training courses** attended by a total of **1,520** staff. **11,889** e-learning courses completed.

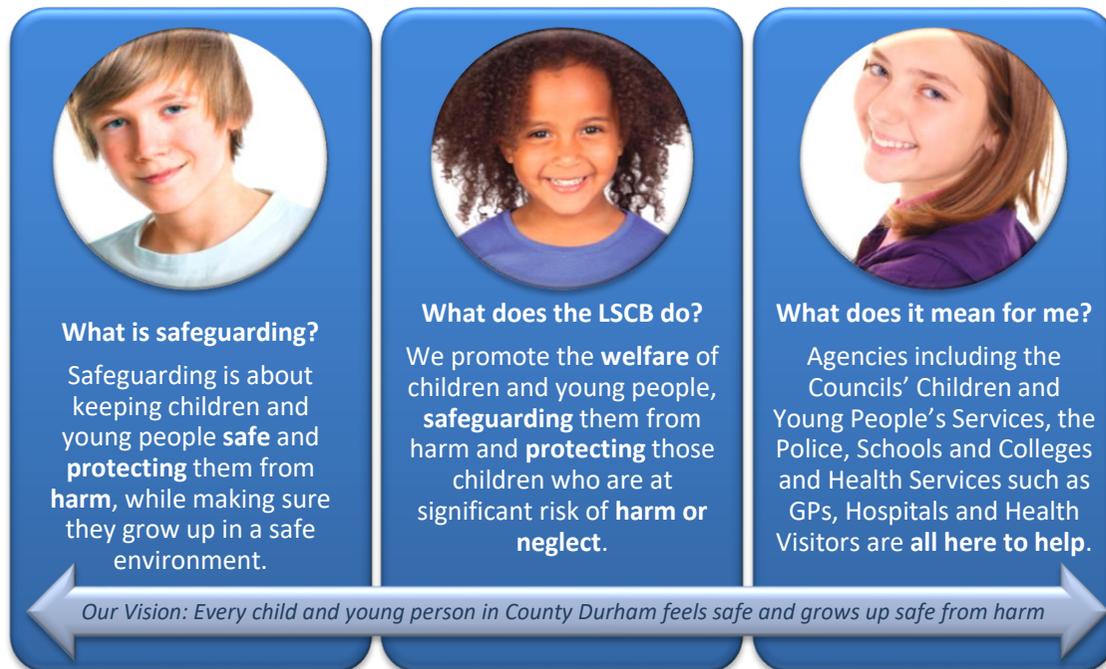


e-learning completed

## 4. 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'.



The infographic consists of three blue rounded rectangular boxes arranged horizontally. Each box contains a circular portrait of a child or young person at the top. Below each portrait is a question and an answer. A large grey arrow at the bottom points from left to right, containing the text: 'Our Vision: Every child and young person in County Durham feels safe and grows up safe from harm'.

What is safeguarding?	What does the LSCB do?	What does it mean for me?
Safeguarding is about keeping children and young people <b>safe</b> and <b>protecting</b> them from <b>harm</b> , while making sure they grow up in a safe environment.	We promote the <b>welfare</b> of children and young people, <b>safeguarding</b> them from harm and <b>protecting</b> those children who are at significant risk of <b>harm or neglect</b> .	Agencies including the Councils' Children and Young People's Services, the Police, Schools and Colleges and Health Services such as GPs, Hospitals and Health Visitors are <b>all here to help</b> .

The functions of the LSCB are:

- **To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area**
- **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 local authority and their Board partners on lessons to be learned**

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.

The Children and Social Work Act received Royal Assent in April 2017 and sets out a new framework for improving the organisation and delivery of multi-agency arrangements to protect and safeguard children. In Durham the established Chief Officers Safeguarding Group will continue to have this as a standing agenda item and will develop and progress local arrangements and future safeguarding models throughout 2017/18.

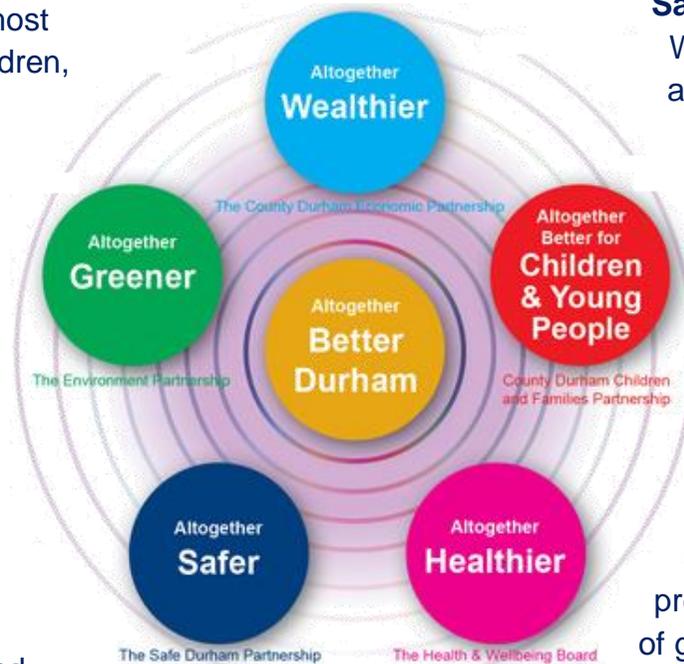
The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board is chaired by an independent person and met bi-monthly in 2016/17. The Board will move to quarterly meetings for 2017/18 with two development sessions taking the total number of meeting back to six a year. Durham LSCB is supported by the LSCB Business Unit which is hosted by the Local Authority.

## Working across Partnerships

Durham LSCB works with a wide range of themed partnerships. Together they form the overarching County Durham Partnership and work towards 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.
- **The Health and Wellbeing Board** – Promotes integrated working between commissioners of health services, public health and social care services, to improve health and wellbeing.
- **The Safe Durham Partnership** – Tackles crime, disorder, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour and to reduce re-offending.
- **The Environment Partnership** – Improves, transforms and sustains the environment to support the economy and the wellbeing of local communities.
- **The Economic Partnership** – Works to make County Durham an area where people want to live, work, invest and visit; whilst enabling residents and businesses to achieve their full economic potential.



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

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

### Safe Durham Partnership

Working together in respect of domestic abuse, alcohol misuse, substance misuse and counter terrorism (PREVENT duty). Aligning and improving work within sexual violence, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

### Children and Families Partnership

Joint working to increase the voice of the child through work that includes the student voice survey and the takeover challenge.

### Health and Wellbeing Board

Greater integration of the self-harm and suicide prevention agenda and the development of a range of guidance and support packages aimed to reduce self-harm and suicides.

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

## 5. Achievements against 2016/17 Priorities

- **Ofsted** rated the effectiveness of Durham LSCB as 'Good' in May 2016. 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'*.
- A **new methodology for SCRs** developed with learning events to over 700 staff. **Impact:** This contributes to the professional development of staff and their understanding of local safeguarding concerns and themes.
- Launch of new online **Child Protection Procedures**. **Impact:** Providing a web based solution that is fully searchable and allows the user to access content from a wide range of devices.
- Interactive **Annual Report for Young People**. **Impact:** To put children at the heart of the development and production of an annual report that provides general safeguarding information from a young person's perspective.
- Trained over **1,800 taxi drivers** in CSE with safeguarding conditions now built into Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. **Impact:** Taxi drivers will continue to receive training and can contribute to the police intelligence picture.
- **Specialist Briefings** – Exploitation, Grooming and Radicalisation / Intervene to Protect a Child / Understanding Victims of Rape and Sexual Abuse Masterclass. **Impact:** These specialist briefing sessions have enabled a wider variety of staff to receive information and guidance that can be incorporated into their working practices.
- Updated **CSE Local Profile** **Impact:** Provides partners with the most up-to-date information and used to coordinate work to protect and support victims while disrupting offenders.
- Developed a range of **tackling neglect toolkits**. The Neglect Practice Guidance and Practice Toolkit / 0-19 Level of Need / Home Environment Assessment Tool; all rolled out. **Impact:** These toolkits will help practitioners identify the indicators of neglect or poor home conditions and the adverse impact these may have on outcomes.
- Updated **single assessment procedures** reflecting the added focus on neglect and hidden harm. **Impact:** It brings together a range of staff, expertise, knowledge and skills to meet needs at the earliest possible opportunity to keep children and young people safe from the risk of adverse outcomes.
- **Domestic abuse workers** based in One Point and part of Early Help Forums are now well established. **Impact:** Improved multi-agency work to reduce the effect of hidden harms on children and young people.
- Developed a **self-harm support pathway** and a self-harm education package for all staff including schools and GP's. **Impact:** Provides a consistent threshold for intervention and support for a range of staff to implement and utilise.
- Introduced **web-based multi-agency auditing**. **Impact:** Reducing demands on partner administration during audit participation.
- Website restructured with 13,591 users **97,907 website hits** and 11,158 awareness raising materials circulated. **Impact:**

Safeguarding information, strategies and guidance documents are now easier to find and more accessible.

- **84 training courses** delivered and attended by 1,520 staff. **Impact:** This supports practitioners, improving their learning, understanding and assessment skills.
- Virtual College 'total package' of **e-learning** purchased. **Impact:** Providing partners with the opportunity to offer a range of safeguarding e-learning to all staff through the unlimited licenses of the total package.
- Over 6,000 people have completed the **PREVENT duty** counter terrorism e-learning. **Impact:** raising the awareness of the PREVENT duty and providing resources for education staff to incorporate PREVENT into their policies and procedures.

## Professional Challenge

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 and instigate a licensing review for failure to uphold licensing objectives.



A continued challenge from the Independent Chair is to improve the voice of the child. This has resulted in collaborative work with children's groups, the voluntary and community sector, the police cadets and Area Action Partnerships. A direct impact of listening to young people is the continued inclusion of the self-harm priority for 2016/17 and the community visits undertaken.

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) challenges agencies if agreed actions are not progressed within timescales and escalation processes are in place. Following a thematic review the CDOP have challenged STP leads / Clinical Network in relation to the findings for maternity services. The findings of the thematic review have also been shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Similarly, the Board monitors actions for learning following a Serious Case Review to ensure actions are progressed and implemented.

The LSCB have introduced challenge clinics to hold organisations to account following the Section 11 audit and multi-agency audits.

Professional challenge also takes place at a senior level through a Chief Officers Safeguarding Group which includes the LSCB Independent Chair, Durham County Council, local Clinical Commissioning Groups, local NHS Foundation Trusts and Durham Constabulary. This forum allows the opportunity to challenge and share information on safeguarding issues including:

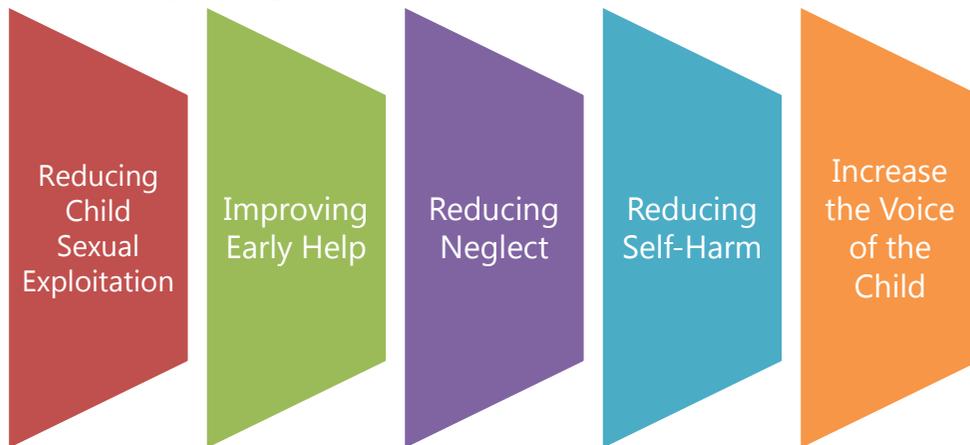
- Lessons learnt and themes from Serious Case Reviews
- Quality, impact and development of frontline practice
- Outcomes of multi-agency audits and action plans
- Emerging safeguarding concerns or trends

## Progress on LSCB priorities 2016/17

### LSCB Priorities 2016/17

Durham LSCB held a development day in February 2016 to review progress on the current priorities; consider key challenges; and to set its future priorities.

In setting the priorities for 2016/17 the Board considered a number of presentations and information sources which resulted in reaffirming the following strategic priorities:



Click on the tab take you to the priority sections in the annual report.

ERASE EXPLOITATION

- **Online Grooming** is the most common model
- Of those young people targeted **80% are girls**
- The **average age** of victims is **12 yrs old**

## Priority 1 – Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation

### What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of **child abuse**
- It can happen to anyone who is **persuaded, bullied or forced** into having **sex or sexual activity** such as taking and sharing naked photos of themselves
- This can be in return for things like **alcohol, money, drugs** or other gifts
- It can happen **online and face to face**
- It **ruins lives** and has serious **long-term effects** on young people and their families

Multi-agency work is coordinated through the LSCB Missing and Exploited group. Its remit is to monitor partner activity and improve the services and responses to reported missing and absent children and the multi-agency response to Child Sexual Exploitation.

Over the past year partner agencies have been subject to various inspections such as Ofsted, HMIC, CQC and peer reviews. Where inspectors have looked at partnership arrangements to protect children from sexual exploitation they have reported good and robust partnership working and systems.

The 2016 analysis of CSE in County Durham identified strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. The motivation for going missing include family conflict, alcohol or drug misuse or relationship issues.

Following consultation in 2016 the DfE have recently revised the definition for Child Sexual Exploitation.

*Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*

In response the Missing and Exploited group have refreshed and published the Durham LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and reviewed all LSCB training and materials to ensure messages tackling sexual exploitation remain consistent.

#### Some of the work we are doing to tackle CSE

- Support the **ERASE brand** - website, media campaign Erase team, young peoples conference, education
- Taxi Licensing – over **1800 drivers trained** and safeguarding included as part of taxi license conditions
- CSE Local Profile / Audits / CSE Strategy to provide partners with the most **up-to-date information** and to protect and support victims while disrupting offenders
- Widened CSE **training and awareness** to Area Action Partnerships (AAP's) Housing, Schools and Colleges, Other Council Services, Voluntary Sector etc
- Refreshed the CSE **Risk Assessment Tool**

#### CSE – Planned work for 2017

Research will be undertaken by the ERASE Team on push and pull factors (motivations) of missing young people in County Durham. This will include a review of return interviews and will also assess the quality of the intelligence gathered.

Hot spot locations will be identified and will be used to inform targeted prevention work under Operation Makesafe. This expands the awareness work conducted with taxi drivers and will focus on hotels, bed & breakfasts and takeaway outlets.

The LSCB will support the police funded Child Advocacy Centre pilot which is aimed at children who are victims of sexual abuse and is intended to improve the victim's journey from report to court and beyond. At the centre of the pilot will be a new 'team around the child' to provide a seamless therapeutic service.

In **school sessions** young people told us that these were some of the things that people use to **manipulate** a young person in to **sexual activity**



 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Missing and Exploited Children](#)

## Priority 2 – Improving Early Help

### What is Early Help?

- Early Help is a phrase we use to explain one of the ways to **support families** who are **having a hard time**
- Every year many families face difficulties; **talking about problems** and **getting help** before things get worse really does work
- Families can **learn new skills** to tackle every day problems
- Getting early help means **less children and families** get to a point where they **feel they can't cope anymore**

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. The Early Help and Neglect sub group reviews and improves the referral pathways and access to help and support for families and supports three Early Help Locality Forums.

Over the last year the Neglect Practice Guidance; 0-19 Level of Need; Home Environment Assessment Tool; Outcome Framework and Practice Toolkit have all been refreshed and updated.

- **40% increase** in the families receiving early help
- Over **1160 early help plans completed** with a successful outcome



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. The impact of this can be seen through a range of activities in Children's Centres, One Point, Families First services and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) delivering early help as mainstream work.

The Early Help Forums are now well established providing an effective line of communication between the LSCB and frontline practitioners. They facilitate collaborative working as well as identifying gaps in early help provision for children and families.

Early Help will be removed as a priority in 2017/18.

### Some of the work to support Early Help

- **Joint working** of PCSOs and One Point Service
- Drug & Alcohol Service delivering **Strengthening Families** Parenting Programme with One Point practitioners
- CAMHS and One Point Youth Workers delivering **Relax Kids** (emotional wellbeing) within Schools
- **Domestic abuse** workers aligned to a One Point Hub to support the effective joint working with children and families
- Learning shared from **Early Help Audits** (Team and the Family / School referrals into First Contact / Chronologies)
- Speech and language **learning workshop** for over 80 members of Early Help Forums

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Early Help](#)

## Priority 3 – Reducing Neglect

### What is Neglect?

- Child neglect is a **failure** to look after a child and could result in **poor health** or development
- Children (including unborn babies), need food, water, shelter, warmth, protection and health care to **grow and develop**
- Children need their parents or carers to **love and care** for them
- Neglect can also include **physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse**

Neglect is a long term, chronic form of harm to children and is the greatest single cause of children needing protection and care in County Durham.



Parental issues of domestic abuse, mental health, alcohol misuse and substance misuse continue to be key issues known collectively as Hidden Harm factors.

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

Durham LSCB continues to challenge partners to improve responses to Neglect.

### Some of the work to tackle Neglect

- Domestic abuse **outreach workers** in One Point, Families First teams and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Audit of agency cooperation where **substance misuse** is identified as a parental risk factor contributing to a Child Protection Plan
- Provision of **specialist training** for multi-agency practitioners supporting children identified as at risk or subject to neglect by their parent or carers
- Utilised improved national guidance and **lessons learned** from Serious Case Reviews to develop a range of practice guidance
- Operation Encompass providing **information to schools and timely care and support for the child** when a domestic abuse incident has occurred the previous evening and the child was in the house

Where the right support and intervention is provided to a child or young person it can have a dramatic effect on them and their life opportunities.

*I know it was \*\*\*\* that got me in care but when I first met you I knew I could trust you; **everything in my life changed**. You helped me understand more about the situation I lived in.*

*You helped organise appointments with CHAMS and school, so I can have extra support for me to cope.*

*I've **laughed** and **cried**, thank you for **listening** to me and reminding me how to stay on the **right track**.*

*You have also made me think of what I would like to be - a social worker, just like you. You are my **inspiration**.*

***Thank you** for being my guardian angel 😊😊*



## Neglect – Planned work for 2017

Durham LSCB recognise that although good progress has been delivered by services to tackle neglect too many children and young people continue to suffer the consequences of growing up in neglectful circumstances.

It is important to remember that **neglect can be fatal** to a child

A greater emphasis on neglect is needed and the LSCB has responded to this. As early help interventions are now embedded into mainstream work the Early Help and Neglect sub group will refocus specifically on neglect.

A new Tackling Neglect Strategy and delivery plan will be developed and be aligned to four strategic objectives:

- **Understand Neglect** – To understand the local picture of neglect; to raise awareness of neglect and the thresholds for intervention.
- **Early Identification** – To improve the recognition and assessment of neglect for children to ensure the most appropriate response is given.
- **Effective Provision** – To offer effective, evidence based interventions that reduce neglect before statutory intervention is required and to act decisively where these do not result in change for the child.
- **Family Focus** – To use the experience of our families and the voice of the child in the development and delivery of services.

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Neglect](#)

## Page 72 Priority 4 – Reducing Self-Harm

### What is Self-Harm?

- **Self-harm** is when you hurt or damage your own body on purpose. It's usually a way of **cop**ing with **emotional stress**
- Over half of people who die by **suicide** have self-harmed before
- Self-harm is linked to **anxiety and depression**, this can be a build-up of intense feelings
- The number of **10-24 year olds** admitted to hospital because of self-harm in County Durham is **lower** than the England average (*Public Health Profiles*)

In previous annual reports we reported that the inclusion of the self-harm priority occurred as a direct impact of listening to young people.

We have made links with the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board's work to tackle the underlying factors for suicide, attempted suicide and self-harm.

Young people say that **conflict with family** members, teachers, **boyfriends and girlfriends** are common reasons for self-harm. This often makes young people feel **pushed away**, left out, feel **embarrassed or ashamed** about self-harming themselves, and that they fear **being judged**.

The Self-Harm sub group has developed a self-harm support pathway, practice guidance and training package for practitioners in line with the 0-19 level of need threshold document.

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

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has reviewed its service provision to develop a Single Point of Access. The referral criteria covers children, young people up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday with mental health needs or distress which is impacting upon their day-to-day functioning and cannot be resolved with appropriate intervention by universal and targeted services.

Self-harm will be removed as a priority in 2017/18.

### Some of the work to tackle Self-Harm

- Development of a **self-harm support pathway**
- Development of a **guidance on standards** for education concerning self-harm
- Development of an agreed **education package** for all staff including schools and GP's
- Development of an agreed **mind-ed package** for all staff
- Developed a **universal package** for schools for all staff

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

## Priority 5 – Increase the voice of the Child

### What is the Voice of the Child?

- The **voice of the child** is a description we use to make sure that services take **young people's views and opinions** into account when they plan services
- Staff working with children and young people want to know **what they think** and how things can be made **better for them**
- Our message to all children and young people involved in services is '*all the people working to keep you safe will always consider what you say and **how you feel***'

Over the last two years Durham LSCB has continued to increase the visibility and the 'voice of the child' in our plans and actions, and to understand more fully the experience of the child or young person receiving help and support.

In 2016 this work was recognised by 'Investing In Children' and the Children and Young People's Reference Group.



Young people have shared their experience of services in workshop and conference events such as lesson learned events, the suicide prevention conference and the ERASE conference.

Page 73

*'They provided a more **thought provoking human element** and a deeper comprehension of their far reaching experiences'*

The LSCB met **young people** in their **local areas** to learn more about what is important to them.



As part of the Children Commissioners Takeover Challenge we have worked with young people to develop an interactive LSCB Annual Report for Young People. Written in clear language, it provides general safeguarding information from a young person's perspective. The work has received a gold commendation from the commissioner.



We have directly engaged with a range of young people to provide the content for each of the sections. Groups within secondary schools and the police cadets have acted as an editor's group; providing feedback and shaping how the final document looks. You can read a copy [here](#).



## 9. Performance Monitoring and Quality Assurance

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 any agreed actions are progressed through the business planning arrangements and the work of the LSCB sub-groups.

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

### Ongoing Quality Assurance

- 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 and feeding into LSCB training
- 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
- Use a series of **performance scorecards** for priority areas

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

Durham LSCB continue to implement the recommendations from Serious Case Reviews.

We host learning events where key messages and the lessons learned from the published Serious Case Reviews undertaken are shared with practitioners and agencies.

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.



## Multi-agency Audits

Within this business year Durham LSCB introduced web-based multi-agency auditing system to reduce demands on partner's administration function during audit participation.

A 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.

This year's Section 11 audit utilised the new web-based system, and included responses from GPs for the first time.

Agencies identified a total of 31 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.

### Section 11 Audit Findings

- All 11 LSCB partner agencies that contributed to the Section 11 audit were able to identify a senior designated individual with responsibility for their safeguarding arrangements
- Agencies provide appropriate resources; time, funding, supervision and support; to frontline practitioners to enable them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively
- Agencies confirmed that guidance and training on information sharing are made available to existing and new staff as part of their induction and on-going training

- Clear commitment to safe recruiting: ensuring staff who have contact with children, young people and families are properly selected and have appropriate checks, records of which are maintained in line with current legislation and guidance
- All GP Practices that responded confirmed they have a clear accountability framework, covering individual, professional and organisational accountability for safeguarding children
- All Schools that responded confirmed they have a regular cycle of professional development to ensure staff are up to date with child protection training and procedures

### Other multi-agency audits undertaken

- Child Sexual Exploitation Cases
- Impact of Neglect Training
- GP Safeguarding Audit (as an addition to Section 11)
- Strategy to Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)
- Information Sharing in Child Protection where substance misuse is a parental risk factor
- Early Help
- Core Group
- Cafcass

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Performance Management and S11 Audit](#)

## The Use of Restraint – Safeguarding Young People in Secure Settings

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

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

Aycliffe Secure Services Centre houses a changing population of young people (aged 11-17) with complex and challenging behaviours. They 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.

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

**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 **683 incidents which required restraint** during 2016-17; an increase of 198 incidents compared to last year. It reflects the increasing vulnerability, trauma and mental health concerns of the population. While the total number of restraint incidents have increased **the proportion of injuries has reduced**.

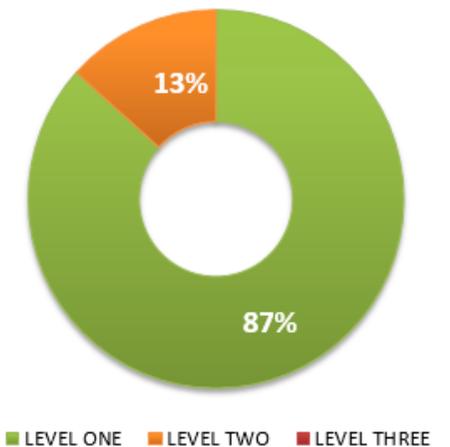
The incidents of restraint in 2016-17 led to **75 injuries** to young people. **87%** of injuries were graded at **level 1**, with the remaining **13%** at **level 2**.

**There were no level 3 restraint related injuries.**

A robust Restraint Minimisation Strategy has seen the implementation of a range of alternative approaches to minimise the use and impact of restraint. This includes intensive individual supervision with young people to understand the causes and effect of their behaviour; positive reinforcement techniques; coping mechanisms and de-escalation techniques that the young person feels will work.

Although the figure for the total injuries as result of restraint remain static, the majority of injuries are now recorded at level 1. This shows the positive impact of these alternative approaches.

**No. of Injuries by Level**



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

## Serious Case Reviews

Durham LSCB have instigated three Serious Case Reviews in 2016/17 and one Learning Lessons Review.

We have delivered five Learning Lessons events throughout the year for practitioners and agencies with two other specific events covering Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

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

### Recurrent themes of published SCRs

- Dealing with families with long term and complex needs
- Public Protection Unit – sex offenders and risk
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) – information sharing, roles & responsibilities and risk management
- Early Help
- Neglect
- Team Around the Family (TAF)
- Hidden male

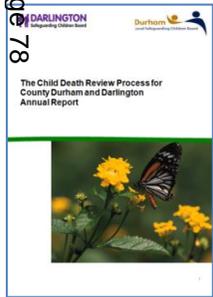
The LSCB continue to implement the recommendations from Serious Case Reviews both multi and single agency recommendations. Action plans are monitored by the LSCB Business Unit and reviewed by the LSCB Board through the six-monthly update report.

We will continue to host a range of learning lessons events following Serious Case Reviews publication to contribute to the professional development of staff and improve their understanding of local safeguarding concerns and themes.



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

## Child Death Overview Panel



It is the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that a review of every death of a child normally resident in their area is undertaken. A joint Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has been agreed by Durham LSCB and Darlington LSCB and is a sub-committee of both Durham and Darlington LSCBs.

### 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

There were 32 child death reviews in County Durham in 2016/17. Of the 32 deaths there were:

- 18 Rapid Responses – this is a process gathering key professionals to enquire into and evaluate circumstances of a sudden and unexpected death.

Where cases were subject of a Serious Case Review a robust action plan was developed and monitored by the CDOP and LSCB Business Unit with updates reported to the LSCB Board.

### Thematic Review of Child Deaths

The CDOP conducted a thematic review of all child deaths where there were modifiable factors discussed by CDOP between April 2014 to May 2016. This is the second thematic review by the CDOP.

Recurrent themes were identified as follows:

Age group	Theme
Perinatal and infant deaths	CTG training
	Escalation policies
	Resuscitation of neonates
	Communication between professionals and units on the transfer of neonatal care
Child deaths	Mandatory training in paediatric resuscitation
	Emergency care plans for children with complex health problems

 **More Information:** Find out more information about [Child Death Reviews](#)

## Policy and Procedures

A new online version of the Durham LSCB Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures were launched on the 18 January 2017.

They provide a web based solution that is fully searchable and allows the user to access content from a wide range of devices.

**Website link** - [www.proceduresonline.com/durham/scb](http://www.proceduresonline.com/durham/scb)

Professionals should add the link above into work related phones, smartphones, tablets and computers to link directly to the procedures when needed.

**Register for updates** – Please [register for updates](#) and you will be automatically updated on any future child protection procedural changes and any new national or local guidance.

**Feedback on the new procedures** – If you have any comments, updates or feedback on the new procedures, you can let us know by completing the [procedures feedback form](#).

### Other procedures updated in 2016/17 include

- Refreshed Early Help and Neglect Strategy
- Updated Collaborative Working and Information Sharing
- New Neglect Practice Guidance
- Updated 0-19 Level of Need Thresholds Document
- New Home Environment Risk Assessment Tool
- New Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Tool
- Updated Child Sexual Exploitation intelligence information submission form
- Updated Missing Children Procedures



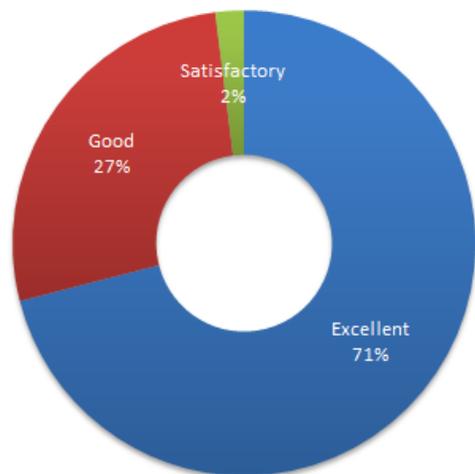
**NEW – Durham LSCB Child Protection Procedures**

The new online procedures provide a web based solution that is fully searchable and allows the user to access the content from a wide range of devices.

[Find Out More](#)

## Page 30 Durham LSCB Training and Communication

Durham LSCB currently offer 13 core courses including Engaging With Families, Safeguarding Processes and Intervention, Neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation. The LSCB has also hosted training sessions on Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Hidden Sentence and Exploitation, Grooming and Radicalisation.



A total of **84 courses** were delivered in 2016/17. The courses were attended by a total of **1,520 staff and volunteers**.

The training courses received very positive feedback with 98% of attendees marking the training as good or excellent.

*'In a recent referral following this course, I now feel confident in asking challenging questions at home visits.'*

*'The importance of looking at the situation through the child's eyes. What it's like for them living in those neglectful environments.'*



*'This training day has helped me to understand the single assessment process and what a good assessment looks like.'*

The range of e-learning courses available to partners of Durham LSCB has increased due to the purchase of the Virtual College 'total package'.



Courses include:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
- Safeguarding Children Refresher Training
- Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Collaborative Working: A Whole Family Approach

The total package provides partners with the opportunity to offer up-to-date safeguarding training via e-learning to all staff through the unlimited licences available for each course. Since the new courses became available in April 2016:

- **5,675** courses have been completed
- **93%** of those completing evaluations stated they would recommend the course to a friend or colleague

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

## Marketing and Communications Activity

Marketing and communications activity for 2016/17 has focused on distribution of LSCB materials, the LSCB Website and local campaigns such as ERASE and the national Child Abuse campaign.

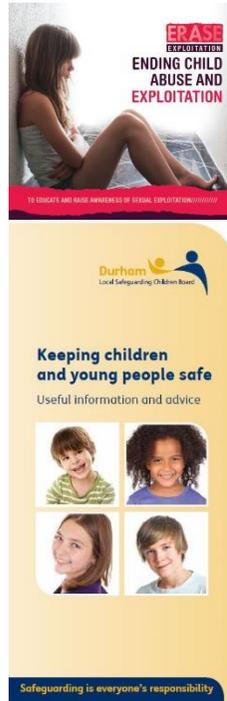


Durham LSCB printed materials to raise awareness of safeguarding children were distributed to contact points such as GP surgeries, Children Centres, Day Nurseries, Customer Access Points and Libraries.

The LSCB website was migrated to Durham County Council servers in June 2016 and all content was refreshed.

### Website stats - July 2016 to end of March 2017

- 13,591 **users**
- 30,265 **sessions**
- 97,907 **page views**
- 29.83% **bounce rate** (this is good as a low bounce rate means that the landing page effectively causes visitors to view more pages and continue on deeper into the web site)

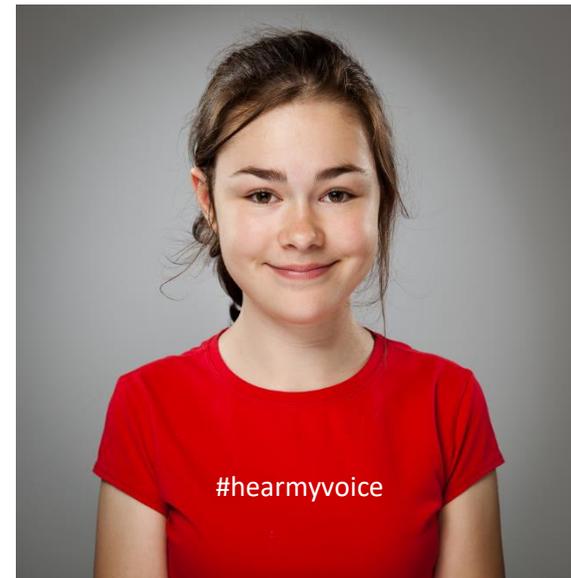


This year also saw the development and introduction of the Annual Report for Young People as part of the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge.

It was officially launched by the Young Person's Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner - Nathan Gaskill - also part of the Takeover Challenge.



An updated version will accompany the full LSCB Annual Report.



Plans for 2017/18 include a poster campaign promoting the hashtag

**#hearmyvoice**

as a simple way for young people to express their views on social media.

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

## 6. Future Priorities

The Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board agreed the following priorities and priority actions for 2017/18:

### Neglect

- **Understand Neglect** – See the local picture of neglect; raise awareness and thresholds for action
- **Early Identification** – Improve the recognition and assessment of neglect
- **Effective Provision** – Refine effective and successful support that helps reduce neglect
- **Family Focus** – Use the experience of our families and the voice of the child in services

### Working Together

- **Thresholds** – Strengthen agreed levels of action across the partnership
- **Focused Intervention** – Making sure children receive focused intervention
- **Remove Barriers** – Understanding the lessons learned and improving outcomes
- **Improve Information Sharing** – Remove the barriers to local sharing of information

### Empowering Young People

- **Voice of the Child** – Every child has a voice within the child protection process
- **Empower Young People** – To recognise abuse, feel confident to report concerns
- **Visibility and Support** – Obtain the child's story and support is child focused
- **Peer Support** – Develop skills for young people to support other young people

### Child Sexual Exploitation

- **Preventing CSE** – Making it more difficult to exploit children and young people
- **Protecting children and young people from CSE** – Identifying and safeguarding those children and young people at risk
- **Pursuing perpetrators of CSE** – Identifying, arresting and prosecuting offenders

## Appendix 1 – LSCB Membership

### 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 and Young People’s Services
  - Head of Children’s Services
  - Head of Adults Care
  - Head of Education
  - Strategic Manager - Youth Offending Service
  - Director of Public Health County Durham
  - Strategic Manager for Housing
- **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. They also have a remit to challenge the LSCB on the accessibility by the public, 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, Durham County Council
- Strategic Manager Policy Planning and Partnerships, Durham County Council

## Contact Details

<a href="#">Durham LSCB</a>	03000 265 770
<a href="#">Durham County Council</a>	03000 260 000
<a href="#">Durham Constabulary</a>	101
<a href="#">County Durham &amp; Darlington NHS Foundation Trust</a>	0191 333 2333
<a href="#">North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)</a>	0191 389 8600
<a href="#">Durham Dales, Easington &amp; Sedgefield CCG</a>	0191 371 3222
<a href="#">Tees, Esk &amp; Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust</a>	01325 552 000
<a href="#">North Tees &amp; Hartlepool Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</a>	01642 617 617
<a href="#">Harrogate &amp; District NHS Foundation Trust</a>	01423 885 959
<a href="#">City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust</a>	0191 565 6256
<a href="#">NHS England North</a>	0113 825 1609
<a href="#">Cafcass (County Durham)</a>	0300 456 4000
<a href="#">Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company</a>	0808 168 4848
<a href="#">National Probation Service North East Division</a>	01325 246 260
<a href="#">National Offender Management Service</a>	0300 047 6325
<a href="#">Schools and Colleges</a>	web link only
<a href="#">Voluntary and Community Sector</a>	web link only

## Appendix 2 – LSCB Staffing and Budget

### Staffing

The LSCB is supported by the following officers:

- LSCB Business Manager
- LSCB Quality & Performance Coordinator
- LSCB Strategy and Development Officer
- LSCB Training Coordinator
- LSCB Admin Coordinator
- LSCB Administrator
- LSCB Admin Apprentice

### LSCB Budget

The financial contributions from partner agencies are as follows:

Partner	2016/17 Contribution	2017/18 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	£2,680
Durham Constabulary	£29,285	£29,285
Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company	£1,340	£1,340
National Probation Service	£2,032	£2,032
Further Education Colleges	£2,100	£2,100
Cafcass	£550	£550
<b>Total</b>	<b>£312,728</b>	<b>£312,728</b>

## Durham LSCB Annual Report 2016 / 2017 - Safeguarding Children in County Durham

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 and young people in County Durham and to ensure that they do so effectively.

The children and young people of County Durham are at the heart of what all LSCB partners do and our vision of **'Every child and young person in County Durham feels safe and grows up safe from harm'** continues to drive services 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 2016/17. It covers the major changes and improvements of our partners' service delivery, where they link with the Board's overall strategies and the impact it has had. It also reports on the Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Reviews undertaken and identifies the priorities to be taken forward into 2017/18.

### 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.

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

 Braille  Audio  Large print

العربية Arabic	(中文 (繁體字)) Chinese	اردو Urdu
polski Polish	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ Punjabi	Español Spanish
বাংলা Bengali	हिन्दी Hindi	Deutsch German
Français French	Türkçe Turkish	Melayu Malay

Email: [lscb@durham.gov.uk](mailto:lscb@durham.gov.uk)

Tel: 03000 265 770

LSCB Business Unit  
County Hall  
Durham  
County Durham  
DH1 5UJ

Email: [lscb@durham.gov.uk](mailto:lscb@durham.gov.uk)

Tel: 03000 265 770

A copy of this report is available on [www.durham-lscb.org.uk](http://www.durham-lscb.org.uk)



**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

CICC CPP Meeting minutes  
24/10/2017

**Attendees**CICC

JW  
AR  
ATS  
CTS  
MB  
RH  
AM

Adults

Peter Brookes  
Joyce Charlton  
Maura Mckeon  
Karen Robb  
Mami Simmons  
Wendy Taylor  
Christine Potts  
Ellie

**Corporate Parenting Session**

For this part of the meeting the CICC had invited members of the Corporate Parenting Panel to their meeting. To start the session we did the 'About me' questionnaire to emphasise what it feels like to be a young person in care and everyone knowing everything about you. Everyone said that there was questions on the sheet that they felt uncomfortable answering as everyone got to read their questionnaire.

***Agree/Disagree Activity***

Around the room we had four corners: Strongly agree, Agree, Strongly disagree and disagree. We read out the following statements and got all members to go to the corner they felt was their view on the statement.

1. Things are getting better for all children and young people in County Durham.
2. Things are getting better for looked after children and young people in Durham.
3. Children and young people in the care system have a voice
4. Children and young people know best

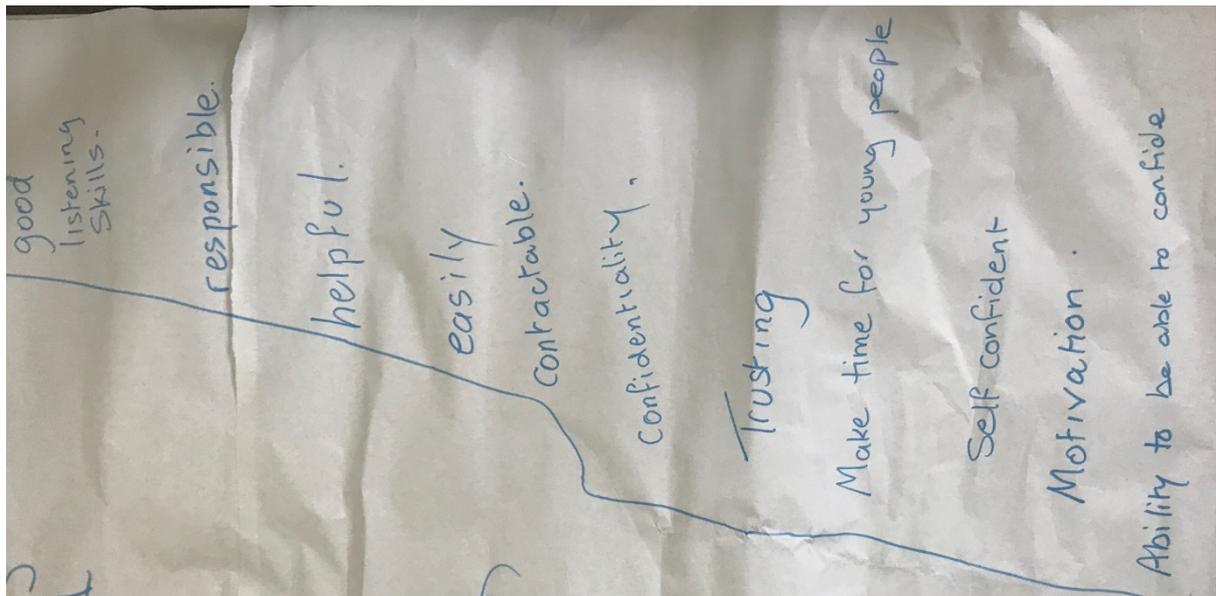
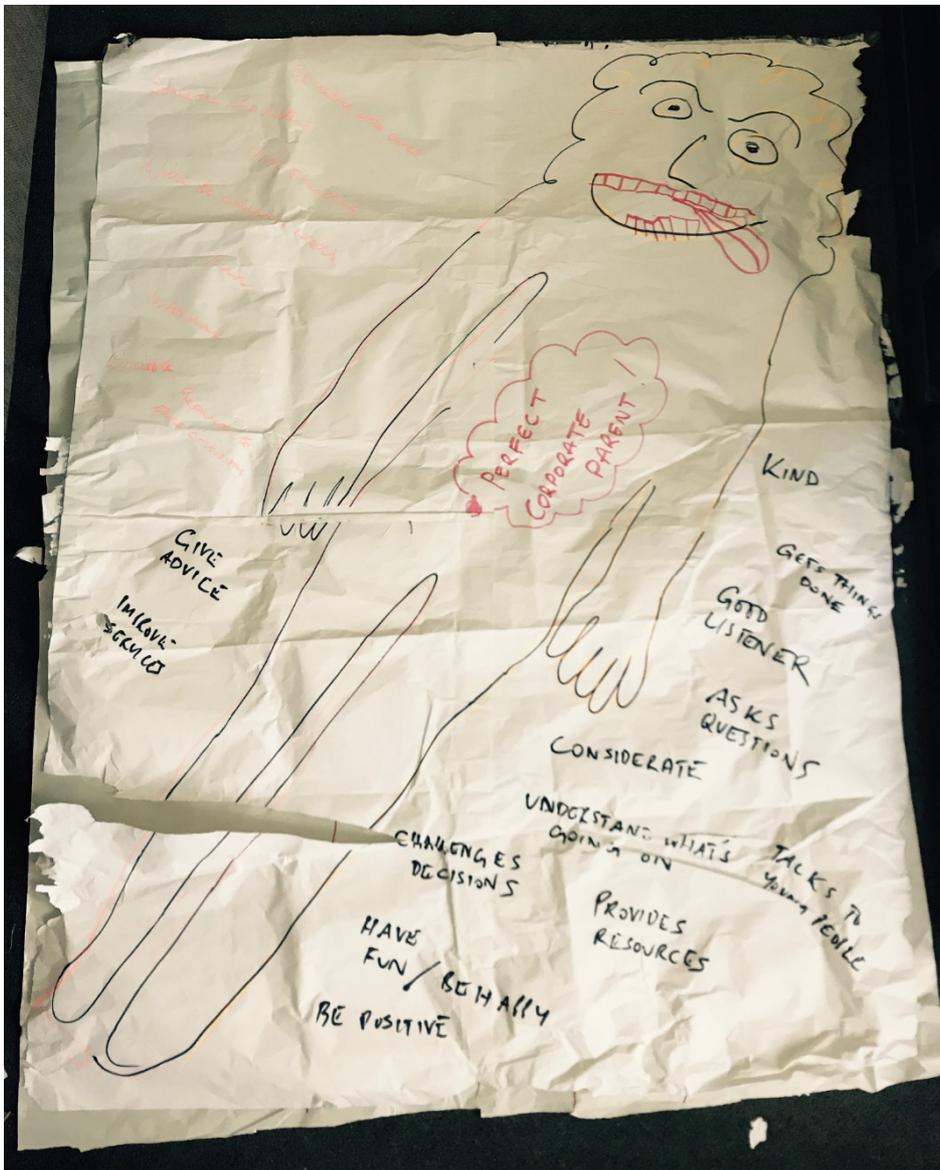
The activity went really well and was good at finding out people's views and perspectives. Discussions took place after each statement

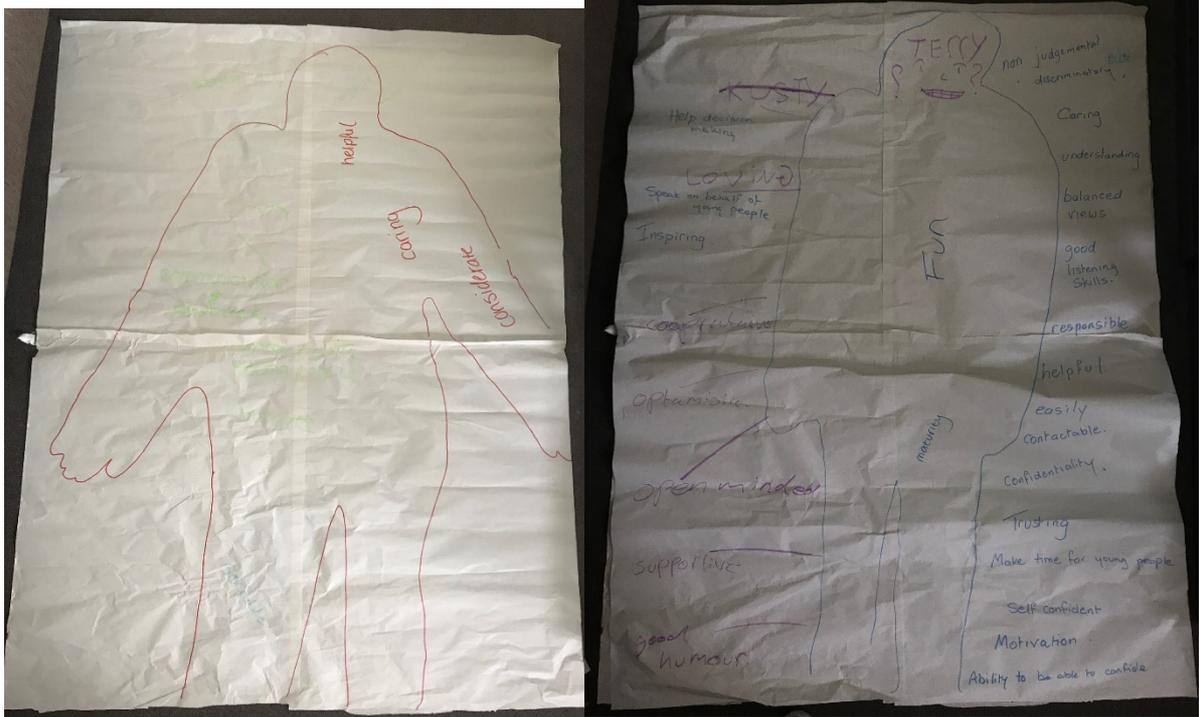
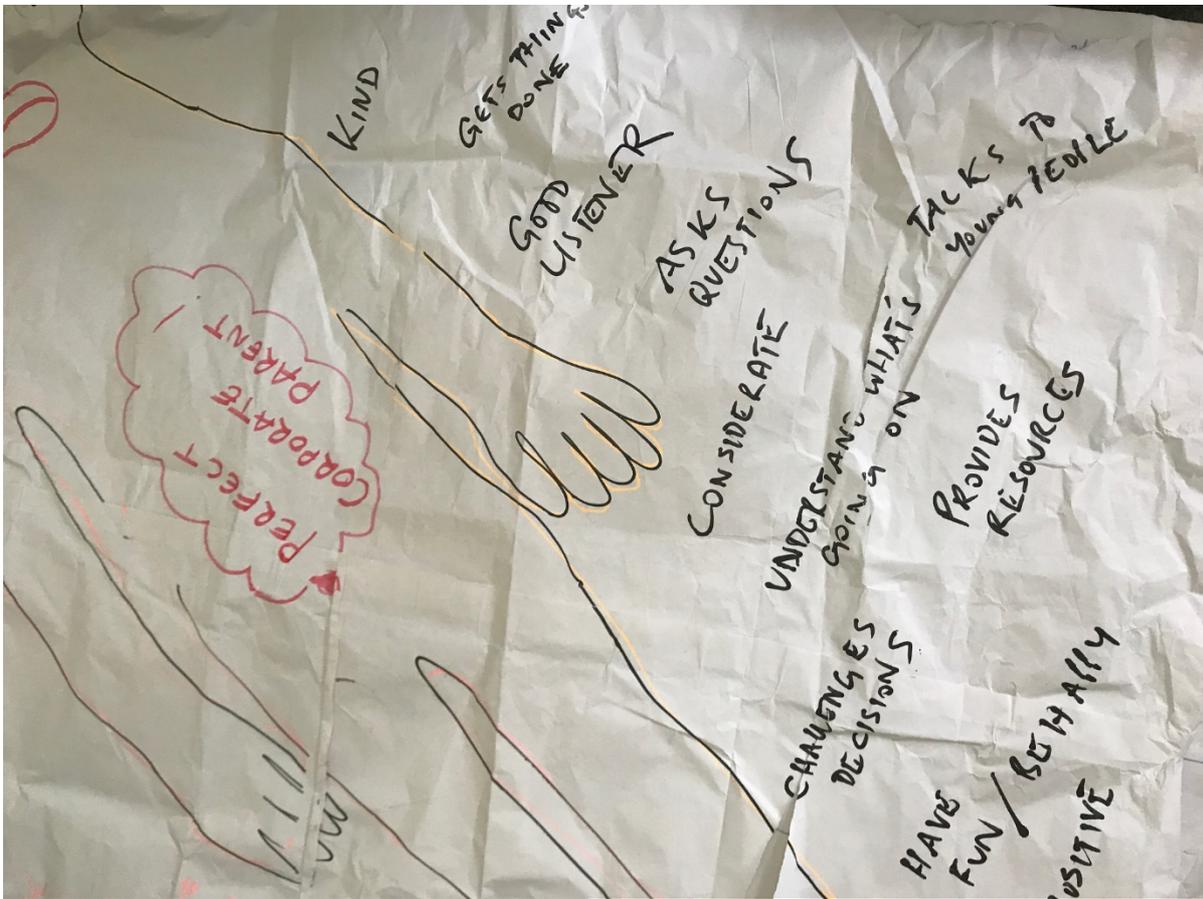
***What Makes The Perfect Corporate Parent?***

Everyone broke into three smaller groups and each group was given 4 pieces of flip chart that had been taped together. Each group had to discuss what they thought makes the perfect corporate parent. They then had to create using the flipchart paper the perfect corporate parent using key words.

The following were suggested from all groups:

- **Have good communication skills**
- **Always give feedback to children and young people**
- **Listens to children and young people and take action**
- **Stick to the complaints guidelines of 5 days to feed-back things/answer any questions**
- **Advocate the voice of LAC**
- **Give good advice / Mentor to LAC**
- **Non Judgemental**
- **Don't discriminate /be open minded**
- **Approachable/accessible**





**Discussion Time**

The next activity included having discussions as a large group regarding the following questions:

1. How can Corporate Parents develop and improve links/relationships with CICC Members and looked after children?

Answers included:

- Regular sessions with CICC Members and CPP Members.
- A page to be created on the CiCC Website about Corporate Parents, who they are, what they do and how to contact your local member.

- More promotion of Corporate parents to LAC through the looked after teams/services
- Corporate Parents to become mentors/offer support to LAC in their area

2. *Often looked after children and young people are portrayed negatively in the media. How can CPP help the CICC to promote the positive work of Looked after children and young people?*

Answer:

- *Positive monthly articles should be produced and published in partnership on a monthly basis.*

3. What are CPP members committing to do? (One promise from each member)

**Each** person was given a star to write on a promise they were going to make following tonight's meeting. This included something they are going to do:

The following was said:

CICC Members

- To continue to be a helpful support for young people in whatever way possible
- To continue to be part of the family we created (cicc)
- Making sure young people have a voice
- Make a change
- Make the change so that young people have the same social worker throughout
- I promise to help chair the meeting and help other young people

CPP/DCC Staff

- Be more active in getting more looked after children's views
- Ensure young people are more actively involved in recruitment of carers and staff and it becomes mandatory
- To explore the possibility of young people's attendance at CICC to be included in foster carer contracts
- Make more young people be heard
- To ensure that all young people are looked after the same and receive any help that they need
- Use my voice to speak to for you
- Listen more

## **Conclusion**

Actions from the meeting:

- Look into DCC involving children and young people in all recruitment of looked after staff.
- Look into foster carers contracts to see if a commitment to engage in supporting their LAC in having a voice and Durham CICC could be added.
- Producing monthly articles in partnership with CICC, Looked after teams and CPP to promote positive stories and images of LAC.
- Creating a page on the CICC Website about Corporate Parents and how to access them
- Offer a training session for CPP to become mentors to LAC in their area
- Continue the 6 monthly sessions for CICC and CPP Members.

**Next CICC Meeting is on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November – 5 till 7pm at North Road Methodist Church Hall, Durham**

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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