



## **Corporate Parenting Panel**

**Date**      **Friday 24 June 2022**

**Time**      **9.30 am**

**Venue**     **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

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### **Business**

#### **Part A**

##### **Items which are open to the press and public**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2022 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Children Looked After - Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care
6. Ofsted Updates - Verbal update from Head of Children's Social Care
7. Proud Moments - Verbal update from Strategic Manager
8. Children in Care Council Update - Presentation of Project Officer, Investing in Children (Pages 9 - 12)
9. Language That Cares - Verbal update from Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
10. Performance Update - Report and Presentation of Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager (Pages 13 - 28)
11. Pre-Birth Service Update - Presentation of Strategic Manager (Pages 29 - 48)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
13. 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)**

14. Regulation 44 Visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes - Report of Head of Children's Social Care and Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children (Pages 49 - 60)
15. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

**Helen Lynch**

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
16 June 2022

To: **The Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel**  
Councillor M Simmons (Chair)  
Councillor M Walton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, B Bainbridge, C Bell, J Charlton, I Cochrane, B Coult, S Deinali, C Fletcher, J Griffiths, O Gunn, T Henderson, C Hood, C Hunt, J Miller, I Roberts, K Robson, K Rooney, S Townsend and C Varty

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

J Bell, L Burns, W Taylor, R Upton, K Watson  
Young persons representative of the Children in Care Council

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**Contact: Jill Hogg**

**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 May 2022** at **9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor M Simmons in the Chair**

**Panel Members:**

Councillors R Adcock-Forster, B Bainbridge, J Charlton, B Coult, S Deinali, J Griffiths, O Gunn, T Henderson, C Hood, C Hunt, B Kellett (for Councillor C Fletcher), K Rooney, S Townsend, C Varty and M Walton

**Co-opted Members:**

J Bell, L Joseph, W Taylor and R Upton

**Also Present:**

Laura Armstrong – Professional Practice Manager  
Laura Counce - Strategic Manager for Children Looked After Resources  
Paula Gibbons – Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast  
Robert Johnson - Project Manager, Investing in Children  
Martyn Stenton – Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children  
Melanie Stubbs - Virtual School Head  
Jayne Watson - Senior Partnerships Officer  
Julian Wilson – Senior Lawyer, Children and Adult Services

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fletcher, Miller and Robson, from co-opted member Caitlyn Gray and from officers Helen Fergusson and Jodie Henderson.

### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor Kellett was in attendance for Councillor Fletcher.

### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The following matters arising were reported.

Item 7 – A poster relating to unaccompanied asylum seeking children had been circulated to the Panel, by email.

Item 8 – In response to the request from Councillor Miller, it was reported that the Art Stops project is being progressed at Wheatley Hill.

Item 9 – The young person, whose poem was read out by Caitlyn, intends to do some further work on the piece and the updated version will be shared with the Panel.

Item 11 – The issue of transport will be explored further and it will be included in the Annual Report 2022-23.

Item 12 – The Panel will be advised of the arrangements for the MASH visit which will take place during the summer.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 Adopt Coast to Coast**

The Panel received a report and presentation delivered by Paula Gibbons, Head of Adopt Coast to Coast which provided an update on activity of the Durham spoke of the Regional Adoption Agency, during the first year of operation from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 (for copy of report and presentation see file of minutes).

The Head of Service was pleased to report positive performance during the year, with Durham having a 19% conversion rate, from enquiry to approval and a total of 36 applications were in progress at 1 April 2022. The Panel noted that marketing activity had focused on embedding the brand and the Head of Service informed the Panel as to how they could provide support by following the service on Facebook and by bringing Adopt Coast to Coast into the conversation. Concluding the presentation, the Head of Service explained the priorities for 2022-23, including specific marketing campaigns for sibling groups and young people with additional health and / or developmental needs. The Head of Adopt Coast to Coast responded to questions and comments as follows.

- In response to an observation from the Panel that the percentage figure for the number of same-sex couples appeared low, the Head of Service pointed out that whilst the percentage figure appeared to be low, the number of same-sex couple adopters was increasing, which reflects the national trend.

The Head of Service referred to recent social media activity which aims to dispel the misconception that same-sex couples cannot adopt.

- In terms of developing the market activity, the Panel referred to the importance of reaching out to communities through partnership working such as police and community partnerships, Area Action Partnerships and town and parish councils. The Head of Service responded that community engagement will be increasingly important in the future as the opportunities for engagement return to normal, following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Head of Service clarified there were approximately 30 children with placement orders currently awaiting adoption and, as all adoption agencies use different methods of conversion, no accurate data was available as to how the region's conversion rate compares nationally. The Head of Service spoke of her intention to raise the issue of benchmarking at the next leader's group meeting.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**6 Number of Children Looked After**

Martyn Stenton, Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children reported the number of looked after children stood at 986, representing a slight decrease on the figure of 989 reported in April. The figure included 30 young people for whom the court process had been delayed due to changes in case law.

**7 Ofsted Updates**

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children reported that an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services took place between 9-20 May. A report is expected at the beginning of July and feedback will be shared with the Panel in due course.

**8 Number of Foster Care Households in 2022/23**

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children provided an update on the number of foster care households, informing the Panel that 29 new foster care households had been recruited and 22 foster care households had left the service which provided a net increase of 7 households.

The Panel received information on recruitment activity taking place which aims to reach the target of 35 new households, with specific marketing campaigns in respect of disabled young people, sibling groups and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The Panel will be provided with an update on the impact of the campaigns in the autumn.

Members discussed ways in which they could assist with recruitment, including leafleting households within Members' respective electoral divisions, local shops, businesses and community buildings. Members commented that it would be useful to have information as to how many new foster carers were being recruited and from which areas, which could help to gauge whether leafleting was having an effect. Members were asked to inform the service when they are leafleting in order that data can be gathered. Members wishing to obtain marketing leaflets were asked to inform the Senior Partnerships Officer.

In response to a question from the Panel as to the amount of pop-ups on social media by private adoption agencies, the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children clarified that private agencies pay to advertise and he added that the service is exploring IT solutions in order to maximise the reach.

The Panel asked whether marketing information could be disseminated to families through school bag-drops and the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children responded that whilst this method would not be considered appropriate, the service was ensuring that positive messages are provided through schools.

## **9 Proud Moments**

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children paid tribute to a young person who gone to great lengths to ensure the facilities at the Care Leaver's Hub were at their best for the visit by the Ofsted inspectors. The Service Manager spoke of how proud he was that the young person had acted of their own volition to ensure the inspectors received a warm welcome.

Laura Counce, Service Manager for Children and Young People's Services, spoke of her pride at a young person who had made a concerted effort to engage in employment after initially showing some reluctance. The young person had secured voluntary work in retail which led to the opportunity to study for level 2 in retail and the young person is now looking forward to a positive future.

The Panel thanked the Chair for her gift of hand-knitted baby clothes for children looked after.

## 10 Children in Care Council Update

Robert Johnson and Luke Joseph provided an update on the work of the Children in Care Council during April (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

It was reported that the Art Stops project is continuing, through the Art and Wellbeing Café. Luke brought along a banner which the young people had produced and he explained the young people are taking it to events and asking participants to contribute to it by adding inspirational comments, quotes and sketches. Panel Members added their contributions.

The young people are continuing to be involved in the refurbishment of family time rooms and they are also becoming involved in interviews for Family Time Workers.

During the month, Durham's Children in Care Council hosted the North East Regional Care Council and one of the young people had met with the judges of Durham 2025 City of Culture bid, to share ideas. Representatives met with the Chief Executive and discussed issues including support for young people impacted by domestic abuse and foster care training.

Younger group members shared ideas for the development of a strategy by County Durham Partnership regarding growing up in County Durham. They are also continuing their work on the 'All About Me' project to develop profiles to help to familiarise themselves with the adults in their circle of care.

The older group reviewed the Corporate Parenting Panel annual report and provided feedback on updates set against the priorities for 2021-22 and both the younger and older groups were involved in setting priority areas for the future. The Senior Partnerships Officer updated the Panel that, at the joint meeting held on 12 May, the young people said they would like the issue of family time to be carried forward for additional work and they suggested personalised care and staff in children's homes and foster care should be topics for the future. The suggestions will be discussed to identify three key priority areas for focus in the annual report.

Robert Johnson, Project Manager, Investing in Children complimented the young people who had facilitated the meeting with Ofsted inspectors and he spoke of one young person with learning difficulties who had shown great courage and with peer support had been able to participate in the meeting.

The Members commented on how much they gain from the joint events and highlighted how moved they are by the stories the young people share. In particular, Members commented that the young people made it clear how much they value honesty from the adults around them.

Members also discussed how they can be of benefit to the young people and commented that they may have skills that they could help the young people to develop for example arts, craft and writing skills. The Chair spoke of how she was heartened that the young people had been fascinated to know what teenage life was like for her and Members suggested that this theme could be developed further, by the Members, who could bring photographs and items from their childhood along to events to share with the young people.

Members also noted the young people's views regarding the use of language. Laura Armstrong, Professional Practice Manager, explained the writing procedure 'Language That Cares' pledged the Council's commitment to using clear language to enable children, young people and families to understand what is being said and written. Panel Members commented that it would be useful to be provided with a refresh on the preferred terminology.

The Panel spoke of their concern when hearing of one young person who had been subject to a large number of changes of social worker within a relatively short period of time and that this was of particular concern as the matter had the subject of a scrutiny review. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children responded that the service is in a better position in terms of staffing and stability and the quarterly performance update would provide further information.

## **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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **12 Regulation 44 visits and Regulatory Body ratings of Children's Residential Homes**

The Strategic Manager for Children Looked After Resources presented the Regulation 44 visits and regulatory body ratings report (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the report be received.

Presentation by Caitlyn and Luke  
CiCC CPP representatives  
and Robert Johnson ~ Investing in Children



## Durham Children in Care Council (CiCC) –May 22 Highlights

- New care experienced young people continue to connect with the liC Art and Wellbeing Café, resulting in several art pieces being completed by these young people. There will be another Artstops initiative in July. Some of these young people are also beginning to connect with CICC meetings.
- 16 young people came together in mid May, facilitating their own CICC meeting with Ofsted, to share a range of projects and developments they have worked on alongside DCC. These young people where fantastic, and look forward to receiving feedback about Ofsted' s visit.
- 14 CICC members meet with CPP representatives to discuss new actions for CPP/ DCC to progress. In sub groups they identify the importance of young people and practitioners getting to now each other better. Along with the important and continued developed to Family Time Service , foster carers and children home staff.

Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People



**Presentation by Caitlyn and Luke  
CiCC CPP representatives  
and Robert Johnson ~ Investing in Children**

## **Durham Children in Care Council (CiCC) –April 22 Highlights**

- The older CiCC group meet in May. One of things they discussed was the new Foster Care Support Model called the 'Mockingbird' . All the young people like the model , asked question and would support these developments further at future meetings.
- The younger group met with Ofsted and are meeting with the Family Time Manger to discuss approaches to continue to develop Family Time further.
- One CiCC member was shortlisted for the Coram Voices Creative Writing Competition. They came 4<sup>th</sup> in their category from across England. They visited London for the finals. The link below explains more about the finals.
- [Winners of Voices 2022 writing competition for children in care revealed at awards hosted by Peter Capaldi | Coram](#)

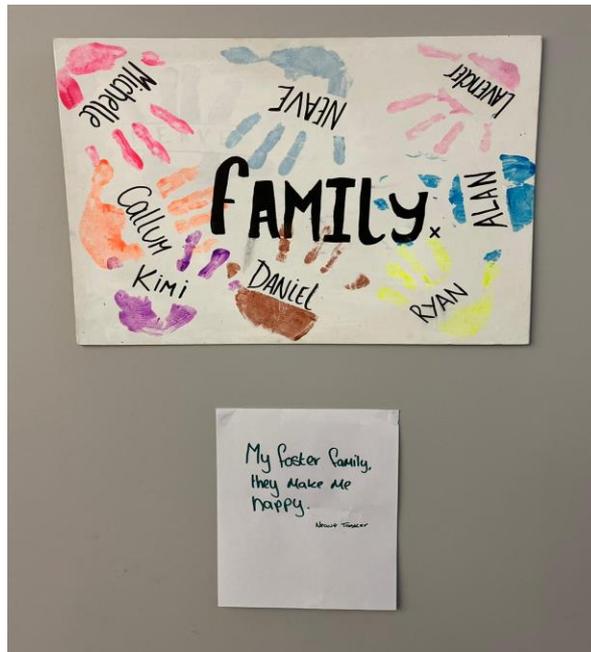


Presentation by Caitlyn and Luke  
CiCC CPP representatives  
and Robert Johnson ~ Investing in Children



## Durham Children in Care Council (CiCC) –April 22 Highlights

- CiCC members facilitated their own #DurhamCiCCCareDay2022 in May– it was a great success with over 60 attendees! . Several poems ,art and photography from the event will be shared across DCC care community when finalised. Below are two pieces , which formed part of an exhibition at #Durham CiCCCareDay2022... . .



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**Corporate Parenting Panel**

**24 June 2022**

**Performance Update**



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**Report of Stephen Tracey, Corporate Equality and Strategy  
Manager, Durham County Council**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

None.

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the presentation is to provide the Corporate Parenting Panel with an overview of performance in relation to children looked after and care leavers.

**Executive summary**

- 2 The Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager will deliver a presentation at the meeting giving an overview of performance.

**Recommendation**

- 3 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note information contained within the presentation and comment accordingly.

## **Background**

- 4 A quarterly performance management framework is presented to Corporate Parenting Panel which is structured around the Local Government Association's Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Parenting Panel members.

## **Conclusion**

- 5 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be sighted on performance in relation to children looked after and care leavers and will have an opportunity to discuss performance at the meeting.

## **Other useful documents**

- Quarterly Performance Scorecard

## **Author**

Stephen Tracey

Tel: 03000 268 029

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

We have a statutory duty to comply with all duties in relation to the children and young people who are in the care of DCC

### **Finance**

N/A

### **Consultation**

N/A

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

N/A

### **Climate Change**

N/A

### **Human Rights**

N/A

### **Crime and Disorder**

N/A

### **Staffing**

N/A

### **Accommodation**

N/A

### **Risk**

N/A

### **Procurement**

N/A

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## County Durham Corporate Parenting Panel: Performance Management Framework

### What are the characteristics of our cohort of children in care and care leavers?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Q1 2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2021/22</i>	<i>Q3 2021/22</i>	<i>Q4 2021/22</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>	<i>Stat Neighbour</i>
Rate of CLA per 10,000 u18 population [Number]	82.9 [833]	90 [914]	93 [949]	92.7 [937]	90 [912]	93 [940]	<b>96</b> [982]	67 (2020/21)	108 (2020/21)	103 (2020/21)
Age and length of time in care				See presentation				N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA Placement breakdown				See presentation				N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed over 20 miles (outside LA boundary)	7	10	9%	Reported Annually	Reported Annually	Reported Annually	Reported Annually	16% (2020/21)	10% (2020/21)	9% (2020/21)
Number of children placed for adoption	25	75	39	34	32	38	<b>38</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA who are unaccompanied asylum seeking children [Number] u18	0.4% [3]	0.1% [1/914]	0.1% [1/949]	0.6% [5/900]	1% [9/917]	1.2% [11/905]	<b>2%</b> [16/982]	5% (2020/21)	1% (2020/21)	2% (2020/21)
Social worker caseloads			See chart 3	See presentation				N/A	N/A	N/A

Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of CLA with a missing incident during the year*	5.0%	5.5%	7.0%	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	14.0%	10% (2020/21)	10% (2020/21)	9% (2020/21)
Percentage of children on Child Exploitation and Vulnerability Tracker that were CLA^							24% [70/289]			
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - Average score	NND	13.6	14.0	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	14	14 (2020/21)	14 (2020/21)	14 (2020/21)
Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Percentage of looked after children aged 10 and above convicted or subject to a Youth Caution or Youth Conditional Caution during the year [number of children]*	4.6% [17]	3% [11]	3% [11]	3% [12]	3% [10]	3% [14]	3% [12]	2% (2020/21)	3% (2020/21)	3% (2020/21)

\*Benchmarking data relates to 2020/21 during COVID Pandemic/lockdowns

^Definition amended at Q4

How are we giving children and young people the chance to express their views, wishes and feelings? How do we know those are being acted on?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 [Provisional]	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Number of CLA accessing an independent visitor			16	21 matched 12 in progress	9 matched 2 in progress	30 CDYJS 9 AFC	69 (59 CDYJS, 10 AFC) 15 waiting for match			

**Are we providing stable environments for children in our care?**

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Q1 2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2021/22</i>	<i>Q3 2021/22</i>	<i>Q4 2021/22</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>	<i>Stat Neighbour</i>
Percentage of CLA with 3 or more placements during the year	10.7% [90 of 840]	7.6% [70 / 922]	8% [73]	10.5% [98]	10% [91]	10.5% [99]	<b>11.3%</b> <b>[111]</b>	9% (2020/21)	8% (2020/21)	8% (2020/21)
Percentage of CLA continuously for 2.5 years or more aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	63.9% [195 of 305]	59.8 [ 201 / 336]	67% [225]	64.6% [265]	72% [302]	67% [348]	<b>63%</b> <b>[237]</b>	70% (2020/21)	67% (2020/21)	68% (2020/21)
Average number of days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions (A10) [Last 12 months]	430 [2015-18]	428 [2016-19]	439 [2018-2021]	417	396	454	<b>466</b>	451 (Sep21)	N/A	N/A
Average time between an LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family (A2) [Last 12 months]	NND	192 [2016-19]	178 [2018-2021]	122	119	159	<b>144</b>	213 (Sep21)	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children adopted from care (as % of total children leaving care) [number of children adopted shown in brackets]	12.3 [39 of 316]	16% [55 / 352]	18% [54 / 304]	23.8% [24]	21% [41]	20.4% [57]	<b>19%</b> <b>[65]</b>	10% (2020/21)	13% (2020/21)	13% (2020/21)
Number of Mainstream Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	26	12	21	5	11	17	<b>29</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	52	91	145	48	85	104	<b>121</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Adopters (Approved in period YTD)	22	25	47	10	16	30	<b>40</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A

## What are we doing to look after the health and wellbeing of children in our care?

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Q1 2021/22	Q2 2021/22	Q3 2021/22	Q4 2021/22	England	North East	Stat Neighbour
Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after	63%	73%	73%	57%	57%	63%	<b>60%</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
CLA with the required number of health assessments	91%	94%	91%	90%	92%	92%	<b>88%</b>	91% (2020/21)	94% (2020/21)	94% (2020/21)
CLA who have had a dental check	85.5%	87%	41%	53%	65%	70%	<b>81%</b>	40% (2020/21)	43% (2020/21)	41% (2020/21)
CLA whose immunisations were up-to-date	99.3%	99.0%	90.0%	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	86% (2020/21)	89% (2020/21)	91% (2020/21)
CLA whose development assessments were up to date	95.0%	97.0%	83.0%	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	89% (2020/21)	92% (2020/21)	98% (2020/21)
% CLA identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	1.9%	2.0%	Data Error	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	Reported annually	3% (2020/21)	3% (2020/21)	4% (2020/21)
Percentage of new presentations to drug and alcohol treatment during period who were CLA [Number] YTD	10% [18 of 185]	10% [21 of 216]	TBC	20% [8/40]	17% [12/69]	16% [17/107]	<b>17%</b> [27/149]	44% (2020/21)	33% (2020/21)	37% (2020/21)
Care leavers aged 17-21 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)		26.3% [25/95]		24.8% [29/117]	29.5% [33/112]	27% (32/120)	<b>29%</b> [32/111]	N/A	N/A	N/A
Care leavers aged 17-25 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)				27.6% [37/134]	30.5% [39/128]	28% (38/137)	<b>30%</b> [39/132]	N/A	N/A	N/A

What are outcomes like for our care leavers?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Q1 2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2021/22</i>	<i>Q3 2021/22</i>	<i>Q4 2021/22</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>	<i>Stat Neighbour</i>
Percentage of care leavers age 18-21 who have stayed with their foster carer	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.0%	14.0%	17% [41]	<b>21%</b> [50]			
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	63.9% [53 of 83]	65% [ 55 / 84 ]	76% [ 59 / 78]	71%	70%	65%	<b>65%</b>	65% (2020/21)	63% (2020/21)	63% (2020/21)
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	96.4% [80 of 83]	90% [ 76 / 84 ]	95% [74 / 78]	95%	93%	92%	<b>92%</b>	91% (2020/21)	94% (2020/21)	93% (2020/21)
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in higher education	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0 / 78]	4%	1%	9%	<b>5%</b>	4% (2020/21)	4% (2020/21)	0% (2020/21)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)	54.0% [87 of 161]	54% [ 94 / 175 ]	56% [110 / 197]	59%	60%	60%	<b>59%</b>	52% (2020/21)	50% (2020/21)	54% (2020/21)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	94.4% [152 of 161]	83% [ 144 / 174 ]	90% [177 / 196]	93%	93%	93%	<b>92%</b>	88% (2020/21)	91% (2020/21)	92% (2020/21)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in higher education	8.7% [14 of 161]	9% [16 / 175 ]	6% [11 / 197]	8%	7%	7%	<b>11%</b>	6% (2020/21)	7% (2020/21)	8% (2020/21)

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# Children Looked After

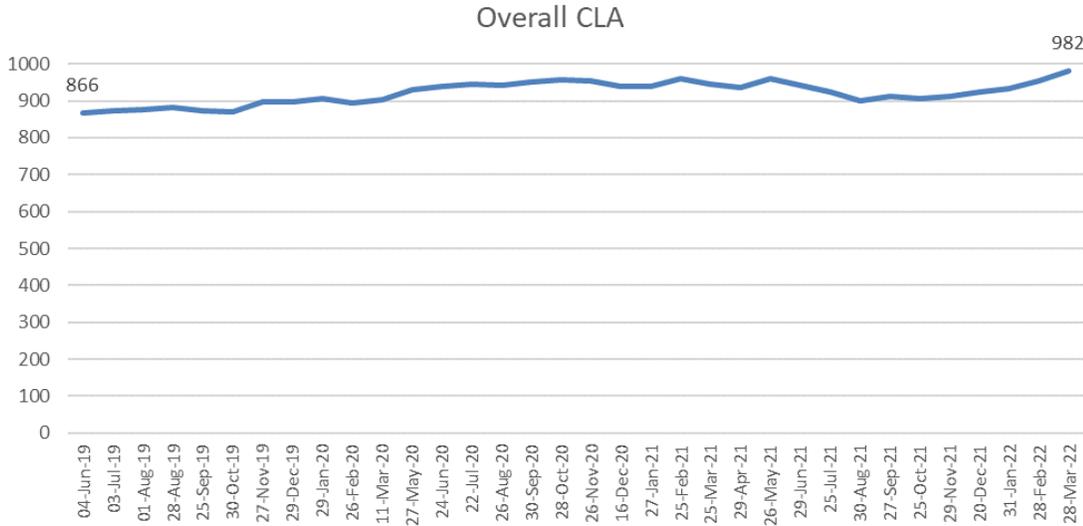
Corporate Parenting Panel

Q4 2021-22

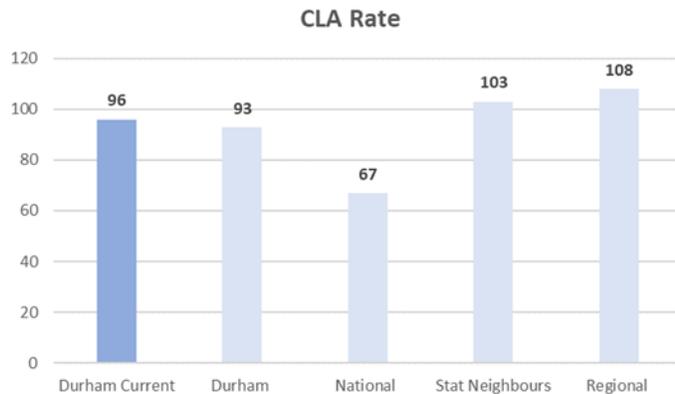


# Children Looked After: 982

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Increase in overall number of CLA but rate remains below regional and statistical neighbour average

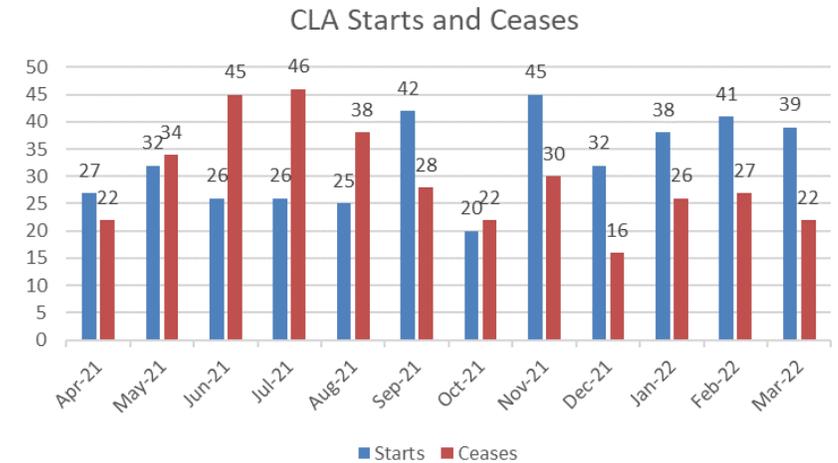


## 16 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

This will increase as UASC move to Durham through the National Transfer Scheme

Age Group	2021/22		2020/21			
	Durham	Durham	Eng	SN	NE	
Under 1	94	24%	29%	20%	22%	23%
1-4 Years	77	20%	20%	18%	24%	23%
5-9 Years	84	21%	21%	17%	22%	22%
10-15 Years	84	21%	22%	26%	24%	23%
16+ Years	54	14%	8%	20%	9%	8%

Reducing u1 CLA starts as % of all CLA starts  
Increase in 16+ starts



393 children became looked after  
356 children left care in 2021/22



All Social Workers in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Teams had fewer than 25 cases, 57% had less than 20

# Placements and Placement Stability

Age	Mar-20	Mar-22	% Diff
0	79	62	-22%
1	46	57	24%
2	48	39	-19%
3	34	38	12%
4	34	27	-21%
5	34	44	29%
6	39	29	-26%
7	35	45	29%
8	57	49	-14%
9	35	44	26%
10	49	65	33%
11	59	49	-17%
12	58	48	-17%
13	62	72	16%
14	59	75	27%
15	54	84	56%
16	57	74	30%
17	63	81	29%
	<b>902</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>9%</b>

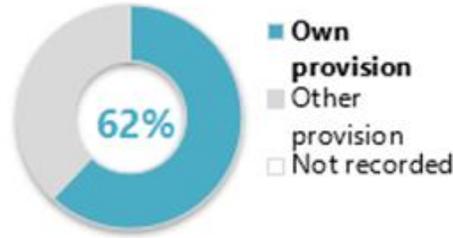
## CLA placements by type and provision

### Foster placements



LA 2020-21 66%  
SNs 2020-21 72%  
Eng 2020-21 71%

### Own provision



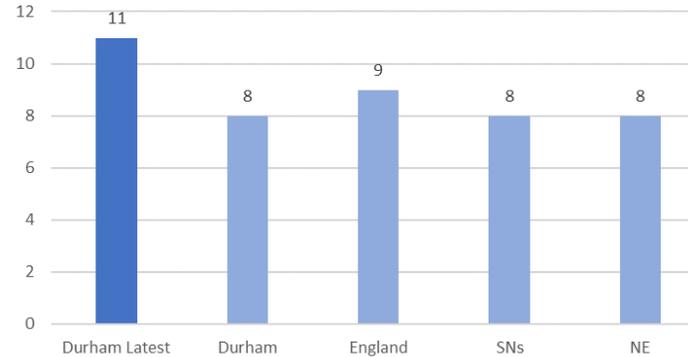
LA 2020-21 56%  
SNs 2020-21 57%  
Eng 2020-21 48%

A higher proportion of children in Durham are placed in foster placements and in in-house provision than in our benchmarks. Both have also increased from 2020/21

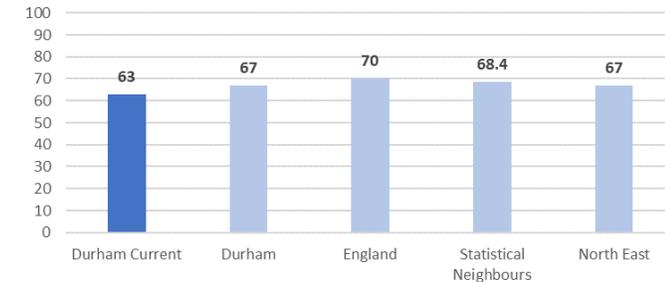
An age breakdown of all children in care at Mar20 and Mar22 shows an overall 9% increase in CLA but a 35% increase in 14-17 year olds

Placement type (open CLA)	Own LA	Private	Other	Total
Foster placement	550	161	12	723
Placed for adoption	11	0	27	38
Placed with parents	0	0	64	64
Independent living	13	24	11	48
Residential employment	0	0	0	0
Residential accommodation	0	0	0	0
Secure Children's Homes	2	1	0	3
Children's Homes	31	69	0	100
Residential Care Home	0	0	0	0
NHS/Health Trust	0	0	1	1
Family Centre	0	0	0	0
Young Offender Institution	0	0	0	0
Residential school	0	0	0	0
Other placements	0	0	0	0
Temporary placement	0	0	0	0
<b>Total placements</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>977</b>

% CLA with 3+ placements in year



% Children looked after for at least 2.5 years and aged under 16 who have been in the same placement for at least 2 years



# Missing Children

Missing Episodes:

921

Missing Children:

127

Following easing of lockdown restrictions we saw an increase in children reported missing

Return to Home Interviews

920 Offered

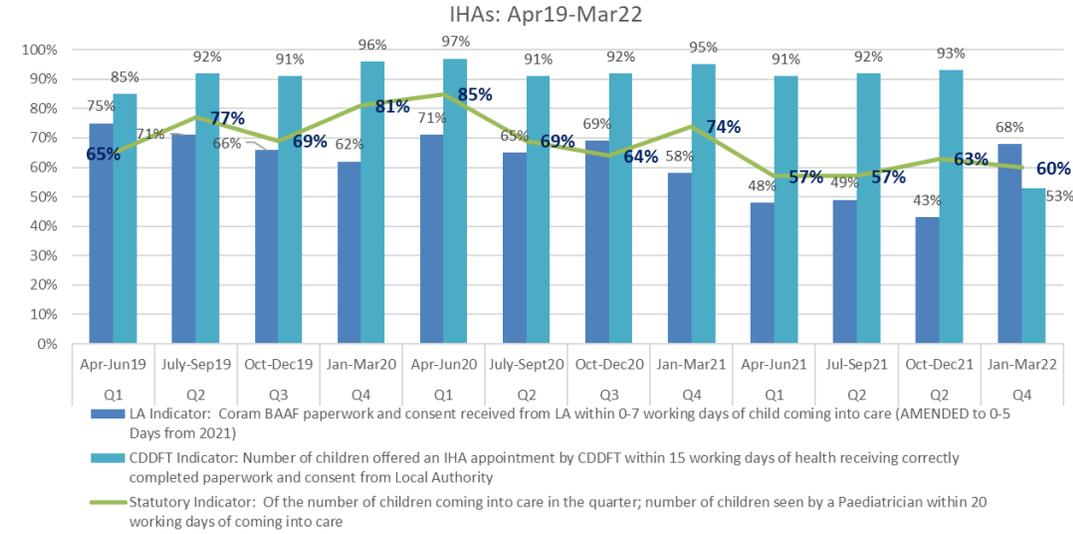
646 Accepted

646 Completed

Instances Children / YP



# Initial Health Assessments



6 in 10 children in care received an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days of coming into care

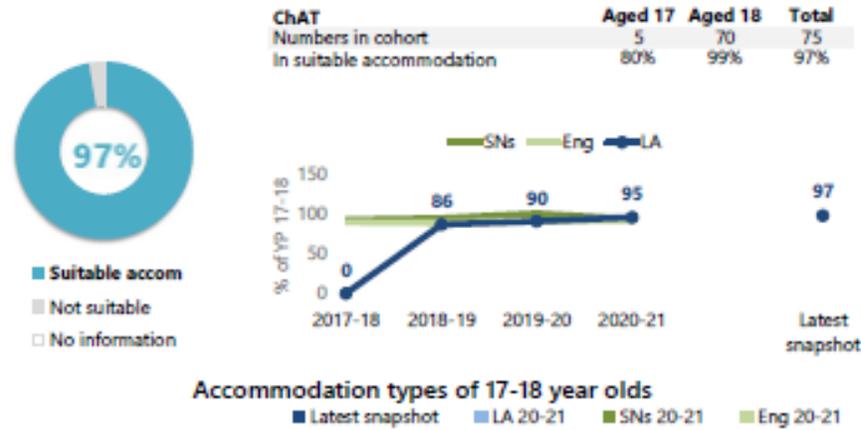
COVID sickness absence impacted the Paediatric Team



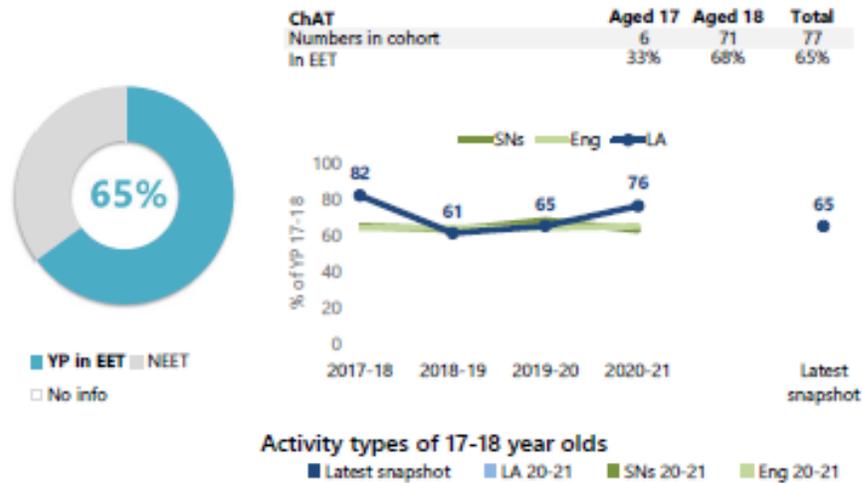
# Care Leavers

Actively working with  
285  
Care Leavers  
aged 17-21

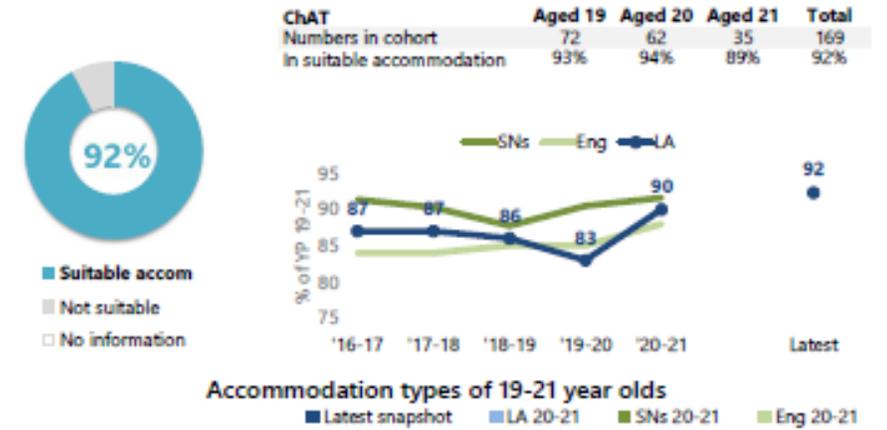
Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds



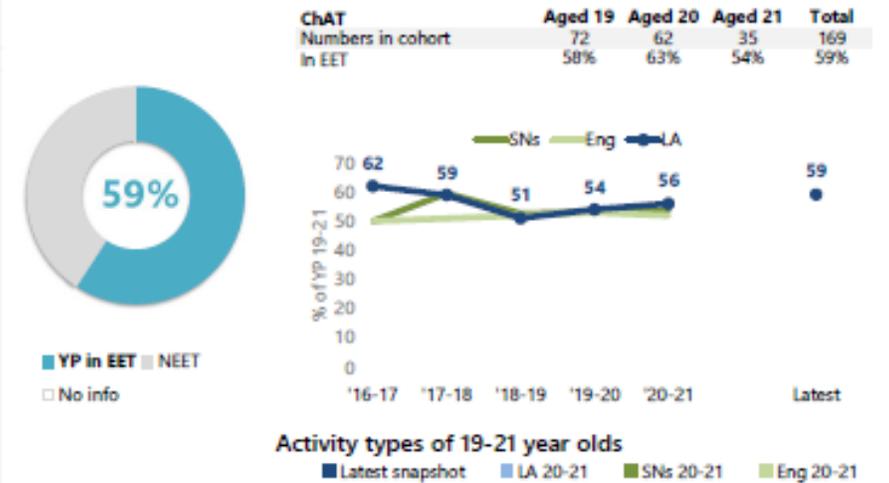
Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 17-18 year olds



Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds



Education, Employment, or Training (EET) of 19-21 year olds



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# Pre-Birth Intervention Service Report

Information for professionals

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## Purpose of report

This report reflects on the impact following the change of criteria for the Pre-birth Intervention Service (PBIS).

Unborn and Babies under 1 in Durham

- 1 Office for National Statistics data identifies that approximately 5% of the County Durham population are aged under 1. More than 5% of the total children open to Children Social Care (CSC) are under the age of 1. Under 1s referred into CSC are more than twice as likely to go onto a child protection plan or become a child in our care (CiC) than all other ages.
- 2 Of contacts into First Contact, it is noted that 45% of unborn born babies and 27% of babies under 1s go straight to a statutory referral. This is in comparison to 23% of the overall contacts. A higher proportion of unborn and babies under 1 contacts are also triaged in the MASH than for other age groups
- 3 A higher proportion of children who are and become CiC in Durham are aged under 1 than in comparators. In 2020/21, Durham had the fifth highest under 1 CiC start rate in the country at 29% of all CLA starts. This has reduced to 24% in 2021 and equated to 27th highest compared to 2020/21 benchmarking data.

## What is the Pre-Birth Intervention Service?

The Pre-birth Intervention Service (PBIS) was re-established in Durham's Families First (FF) Service in May 2018. The model and ambition are to enable babies to remain with their parents, or at least within the birth family where it is safe to do so. This is achieved by completing as much work as possible before the baby is born and by ensuring that the parents receive intensive support to help them to achieve sustainable change. Where this is not in the best interests of the child, then the ambition is to ensure that the baby is permanently placed with alternative carers as soon as is possible after birth and to reduce the number of carers the child experiences.

### Criteria for the PBIS

Following a review of the PBIS criteria undertaken in 2020, it became clear that it was difficult to implement the intervention due to the level of complexities of parents needs and circumstances. A high proportion of the cases resulted in care proceeding and babies being placed permanently outside of parental care. The review demonstrated the need to amend the criteria, which enabled the team to have a renewed focus and to target their intervention towards those parents who would benefit from intensive support and intervention.

The new criteria is set out within the referral criteria document is as follows:

- Teenage mothers under 16 who are still in full time education.

- All active care leavers up to the age of 25, who are currently permanently resident in Durham, and where the unborn meets the requirement for a statutory pre-birth assessment.
- Parents who have had a previous child removed through care proceedings, where there is evidence of some positive change of circumstances.
- Parents with a diagnosed learning disability.

For a referral to be accepted into the team, the following additional criteria must apply:

- The referral must be made prior to 21 weeks gestation, and
- Meaningful consent must have been given by the parents”.

The changes to the criteria were implemented in May 2021 using a phased approach. This was necessary due to the steady stream of complex court cases which had been coming into the PBIS during the latter part of 2020.

## Team profile

The team profile currently consists of a team manager, a social work consultant, 4.4 full time equivalent social workers, and a team co-ordinator. The changes of work undertaken within the team has allowed of an increase in caseload to 12 per FTE.

We are committed to maintaining manageable social worker caseloads. This ensures good quality and timely assessment, whilst enabling the social worker to provide intensive intervention and support to parents.

Consideration is been given to expand the PBIS which will enable widening the scope of the criteria.

## What have we achieved?

At the time of relaunch, there was 29 children open to the PBIS under the old criteria, of these 12 babies remained with their parent(s), 7 babies lived permanently with family members and 10 babies had plans of adoption. There are currently 5 of these babies that remain open to the PBIS.

Due to pressures with the families First Service, it has been necessary for the PBIS to pick up 10 pre-birth cases which have fallen outside of the new pre-birth criteria.

There have been 17 unborn’ s that have been accepted as meeting the criteria since relaunch. It is early days in terms the outcome of the intervention, out of the 17 unborns only 4 babies have been born. One of those children sadly passed away shortly after birth. Care Proceedings have been issued in respect of the other 3 babies. One baby remains home with parents, there is currently a 24/7 support package in place, however this will gradually reduce over a period of time. There are 2 babies which are due shortly, with one planned to return home with parents care under a CP plan and the other has a plan of a mother and baby foster placement.

## One child's story

Below describes the events of one child's journey through the PBIS. This demonstrates the commitment and dedication of the practitioners within the team. It also demonstrates the inter-face with other parts of children's services.

Although outside of the PBIS criteria, the unborn was allocated at 28 weeks gestation. The then unborn, had 6 older brother and sisters who had been permanently outside of parental care, the youngest sister has been adopted some months earlier.



Despite the great lengths the social worker made, parents did not engage with the pre-birth assessment. As there were no alternative family members, the plan was agreed pre-birth as one of adoption.



Baby G was born at 36 gestation, sadly, mother left the maternity ward within 3 hours following the birth.



Baby G was a poorly baby and spent the first 10 days in hospital. The social worker was so worried that baby G was alone, they visited and read to him regularly.



Baby G's sisters adoptive parents were delighted that they had been approached to adopt baby G.



As baby G was born earlier than expected the assessment had not been completed and family had not been approved to have baby G in their care.



The social worker was determined that baby G would be discharged to the care of his future permanent family.



The PBIS, Permanence, Fostering and Adoption teams worked closely together to come up with a plan to ensure the family were approved as carers to prevent baby G having to move to a short-term foster placement.



The carers were initially approved as temporary connected foster carers, after which they were approved for fostering for adoption.



The temporary approval enabled the family to be introduced to baby G whilst he was in hospital and took him home when he was ready to leave.



The social worker continued to visit baby G when the family were unable to.



Placement Orders were granted on 7th December just 12 weeks after his birth, Baby G.

Below is a letter the social worker wrote to baby G to explain the reason he went to live with his adoptive parents.

*Dear baby G*

*Today is a Wednesday and you are four days old. I've come to see you on Monday and Tuesday in the hospital. You were feeling a little bit poorly when I came to see you and you had a tube to help you breathe but I talked to you for a little while and I read you a story before bedtime.*

*You were born a little bit earlier than we expected which might be why you are poorly, we're not sure but I know the nurses are taking good care of you. I ring your nurses a couple of times every day and talk to them to see how you are and I know they are all looking after you. Nurse C seems to look after you the most and she knows when you are cross with her.*

*I went to talk to the judge today to decide where you should stay while we work out who can look after you until you are big. I think your birth mummy really wants to look after you, but she couldn't keep your brothers and sisters safe, and I worried she couldn't keep you safe either.*

*Your birth mummy knows I'm worried about that and she doesn't always want to talk to me because it's hard to have those conversations about how we will keep you safe if birth mummy knows that we're worried that you won't be safe with her. Your birth mummy did see you in the hospital for a little while before she left the hospital and now, we're finding it a little bit hard to find her to talk to her about you and what we need to do. She did know that we were talking to the judge today, but I think she thought it would be too hard to hear the judge say you couldn't go home with her.*

*Your adoptive mummy and daddy look after your sister and they were really excited to be able to look after you as well. I think they can keep you safe and look after you while you're little until the judge makes a decision. Your adoptive mummy and daddy are going to come and see you at the hospital tonight and I'm sure they'll read you a story. I'll keep ringing the nurses, so I know how you are and then I'll come and see you once your adoptive mummy and daddy have taken you home.*

*I hope that explains a little bit why the judge made the decision he did today and why you went to stay with adoptive mummy and daddy and your sister while you were very little.*

*Yours sincerely*

*your social worker*

## What the IRO thought

“

*'I can only say everyone involved with this case kept G to the front of their planning. Decisions and actions were taken in a timely way that avoided delay and being placed under fostering to adopt has provided him with a great start and no disruptions to his care. Moving on from baby G, the PBIS gave birth parents opportunities to engage and express their views, something they refused to take advantage of, but that was their choice. I think the work has been excellent'*

## What the prospective adopters said

“

*'We were grateful that we were approached to care for Baby G and how quickly we could go in to see him in the hospital. We've had a very positive experience adopting from Durham and have recommended Durham to friends who are interested. We were very worried about Baby G when he was first born and it was a comfort to us that the social worker went in to see him, it made me cry when I heard the social worker was reading to him.'*

## Hope boxes

Hope Boxes are provided to mothers when the plan is removal at birth to start early life story work and to provide the mothers with some comfort/hope during the early stages of separation.

The boxes are provided to both the mother and child. It has two comforters within it so the smell of the mother and baby can be added to the smell of one comforter each and then exchanged. A handprint kit and wooden milestones to record birth weight, time etc are also included to allow early milestones to be recorded and memories to be created at an early stage. Life story worksheets designed by the life story coordinator are also included to allow this to start at the earliest opportunity.

The work around the development of the memory boxes was shared at a national meeting of midwifery; the feedback was excellent and identified as 'gold star standard'.



The PBIS are keen to explore any additional elements to the box which would improve the boxes and experience. To do this the team are linking in with the PAUSE team, who work with women who have children who live permanently outside of their care.

The plan moving forward will be for any child being removed at birth across the county will receive a Hope box.

## **Real care Babies**

It is recognised that one of the difficulties of completing pre-birth assessments, is that it is challenging to assess the ability of a parent to meet a child's need when the child is not born. It is also hard to demonstrate to parents, particularly first-time and young parents the needs of such young children in a way that gives them a realistic expectation of the challenges.

One way in which this can be improved is through the use of simulated dolls. Two 'Real care' babies have been purchased to assist in the intervention. The dolls can be set at various levels but will cry at various times of the day for several different reasons and require an appropriate response. These will be supplied to some of the families to assist in assessing their ability to meet the needs of a child. Following the assessment, the dolls are linked up to the computer and information is downloaded in respect of the timeliness of responses, the ability of the parent to meet the needs, if any abusive behaviour such as shaking occurred and also if the doll was left for too long without stimulation or in inappropriate temperatures. This will then be used to feed into assessments and parenting interventions.



In order for the team to start using 'Mickey' and 'Maisie' with families, Maisie has been sent home with Strategic Manager Jac Tyler for a period of testing.



# Birth Certificate



Maisie (ID# BABYFF28)

---

Baby Name

13th                      November                      2021

---

Day                      Month                      Year

Jac Tyler (ID#s 9437D & 00000)

---

Parent Name

8 pounds 5 ounces

---

Weight

19 inches

---

Length

---

Delivered by

---

Realityworks

Live it. Learn it.

## Skills and partnership working

### Parent Assessment Manual Software (PAMS)

PAMS stands for Parent Assessment Manual Software and provides a systematic approach to thoroughly assess parenting capabilities, covering a range of areas from childcare and development through to relationship and support and safety and hygiene. The PAMS assessments are designed to take into account parents who have some level of learning difficulties or a learning disability, which mean that they can be assessed and supported by using practical demonstrations and visual aids.

Following a commitment in Autumn 2020 where PAMS training was secured for 20 practitioners to be trained across teams across Children Social Care. There have been a further commitment to have a further 20 practitioners trained in the spring of 2022. There are currently 4 members of the PBIS trained, with the remainder undertaking the training coming up.

There are currently 5 PAMS assessments ongoing within the team and 6 have been completed over the past year. Having staff trained has saved the council in excess of £27k. Having social workers PAMS trained also ensures that parents have the opportunity to have an assessment tailored to their needs prior to their baby being born.

### Early Help Practitioners

Social Workers work alongside Early Help Practitioners (EHP) from the One Point Service. The intervention focusses on delivering proactive, practical and emotional support to parents that will build upon existing strengths and address gaps in their knowledge and skills to enable parents to safely care for their child or gather evidence to make timely decisions in relation to permanence plans.

### Family Group Conference

There is a dedicated worker from the Family Group Conference (FGC) service aligned to the PBIS. This helps to increase the parent's sense of control and ensures that family networks are central to the safety plan from an early stage.

### PAUSE

Pause aims to reduce the number of children being taken into care and improve the lives of women who have had two or more children permanently removed from their care. Pause provides intensive, ongoing practical and emotional support.

The current contract with Barnardo's to deliver the Pause model county wide was set up in November 2020 and is due to come to an end in July 2022. Pause Durham is actively working with 21 women in total. The 21 women on the programme have had a total of 83 children removed from their care (an average of 4 children per woman). The women range in age from 22 – 40 years old, with an average age of 29 years. It is noted that 38% of the women are care experienced.

Pause is in its early stages of intervention in Durham. However, the feedback for the service and the women has highlighted a number of positives, with none of these women having any further pregnancies during intervention. Consultation is underway to look at insourcing the Pause model in house and aligning this with the PBIS.

### **Pre-Birth and Under One Delivery group**

The PBIS are a key agency within the Pre-Birth and Under One Delivery group. The purpose of the group is to provide strategic and operational oversight of integrated pathways of support across universal, targeted safeguarding and specialist services to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The vision is for vulnerable unborn babies and babies under 1 year old to be identified at the earliest opportunity and their parents/carers provided with the best possible coordinated help and support to care for their babies safely. Where they are unable to, a timely and robust safeguarding response is in place.

### **What other's think**

Some parents have provided examples of their views of the PBIS

The mother and baby placement gave me a solid grounding in parenting which I would not otherwise have had!

I'll keep you posted as always cos you have been mint all the way and supported me above and beyond and I'm so grateful I owe it to you too in a way. Am not getting all sappy bollox like but you have been like guardian angels at times

"I do know in my heart that youse do genuinely want to keep bairns safe from the badness in the world, don't ever stop doing what youse do coz the world needs social workers like youse to filter out the badness and bullshit and wrap them bairns in bubble wrap (not literally).

Some professionals have provided examples of the work within the PBIS:

Judge:

“

*I was very struck by the evidence of social worker and I note that there are an enormous number of organisations trying to assist M. I think that it is extremely sad, it is clear to me that M is in some ways being exploited. However, I accept the social workers evidence in the bundle that there are organisations trying to offer assistance to her.*

IRO:

“

*'I can only say everyone involved with this case kept G to the front of their planning. Decisions and actions were taken in a timely way that avoided delay and being placed under fostering to adopt has provided him with a great start and no disruptions to his care. Moving on from baby G, the PBIS gave birth parents opportunities to engage and express their views, something they refused to take advantage of, but that was their choice. I think the work has been excellent'*

IRO:

“

*Mum described the social worker as amazing. She said she is straight forward and raises worries and praises when needed.*

## What's next

From the report it can be seen that there is a lot of positive and effective work being undertaken within the team, and practitioners are committed and passionate about achieving good outcomes for children. The PBIS are keen to improve and develop the service to ensure outcomes for children continue to be positive, these include:

### Review of the pre-birth criteria

The expansion of the team and continued work on the pre-birth criteria to widen the scope; both of which will result in more families being intensively supported to keep their babies or timely plans for those children who are unable to remain in the care of their parents

Introduce the use of memory/hope boxes across the county when children are removed at birth to improve life story work and as a measure of good practice

Introduce a more family friendly name for the PBIS, following consultation with families

### Pre-birth Clinics

The pre-birth team offers intensive support and intervention to the most vulnerable parents. Given the limitations in the number of children the PBIS can work with it is important that all families open to CSC have the same opportunities access service provision.

Pre-birth clinics have been introduced across the county, the purpose is to offer support and guidance to teams whilst ensuring there is consistency of practice and the progression of plans in timescale for the child.

### Fostering for adoption

Fostering for adoption protects children from experiencing multiple moves within the care system. It provides children with good quality, uninterrupted and consistent care while detailed assessments of their birth family are completed, and decisions are made about the plan for the child.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 there was 53 children aged 1 and under that was placed for adoption, of these only 6 were placed in fostering and adoption placements. This is a relatively low number and is not comparative to our partners within Adopt Coast to Coast.

The pre-birth team will have an active role within the fostering for adoption working group which will be set up in early 2022. The purpose is to review the current procedure, roll out training across the workforce with a view of increasing the number of children who are placed within fostering for adoption placements.

### Graded Care Profile 2

The neglect of children and young people continues to be a key challenge across County Durham. Since July 2020, neglect has accounted for 20% of social care referrals and is the

second highest reason for referral after domestic abuse. In 2020/2021 it was identified as a risk factor in 24% of social care assessments, and there is a clear link between the rate of children on a child protection plan in Durham and deprivation.

GCP2 supports the engagement of parents by identifying strengths as well as areas of concern to enable parents and practitioners to understand clearly where their efforts should be focused. It will also support a better understanding of a parents' capacity to change and ability to sustain that change.

The PBIS are actively involved in the implement the model via the steering group, they will also pilot the use of the GCP2 along with the FF East locality teams.

## **Dashboard**

Data is a critical component which provides insight and a better understanding to help establish baselines, benchmarks, and strategies to improve services and outcomes for children and young people. A pre-birth and under one dashboard is to be developed which will help in providing assurance and confidence around the effectiveness and quality of service being delivered.

## **Conclusion**

It is early days in terms of the impact of the new criteria, however the data is starting to show a positive picture in terms of outcomes for families, with more babies returning home to parent's care, fewer children entering the looked after system and issuing of care proceedings. It is noted that due to pressures in other parts of the service the PBIS are picking up referrals outside of the criteria. This will undoubtedly influence the performance outcome; therefore it will be necessary to review the data of children within the criteria separate from the children.

The number of unborn babies and children under 1, represent a high proportion of referrals into CSC and for children looked after within families first compared to other age groups. The data also suggests that Durham is out of kilter local and national data in term unborn' s and children under 1. There are a number of key priorities to better understand the data and ensure that integrated universal pathways are available for families within Durham.

# Pre-birth intervention & Pause in Durham

# Pre-birth intervention service – criteria

New criteria for pre-birth intervention service;

- Parents who have had a previous child removed through care proceedings, where there is evidence of some positive change of circumstances
- Parents with a diagnosed learning disability
- Teenage mother under 16 who are still in fulltime education
- All care leavers up to the age of 25, who are currently permanently resident in Durham, and where the unborn meets the requirement for a statutory pre-birth assessment

To accept a referral, the following additional criteria must apply;

- The referral must be made prior to 21 weeks gestation
- Meaningful consent must have been given by the parents

# Pre-birth intervention service

## **Summary of current needs of Parent cohort;**

- 9 families where a parent or parents have a learning disability
- 3 mothers who are school age
- 9 parent/s who are care experienced – 2 of which have had previous children removed
- 17 families where a parent has had a previous child removed
- 9 families outside of the criteria due to capacity in families first

## **Children's plans;**

- 14 babies are in the care of their parents
- 4 babies have plans of adoption and 1 plan of Special Guardianship
- 13 are unborn and in assessment stage
- 16 sets of care proceedings

# Pre-birth intervention service

- All families receive the intensive pre and post birth intervention, delivering proactive, practical and emotional support building on strengths and addressing gaps in knowledge
- Hope boxes
- Real care babies
- All Social workers have received training to support them to assess parents with learning disabilities
- Pre-Birth and Under One Delivery group - oversight of integrated pathways of support across universal, targeted safeguarding and specialist services

## **Next steps**

- Reviewing the criteria to widen and expand the scope for referrals
- Pre-birth clinics - ensure there is consistency of practice and the progression of plans across Families First Teams
- Focus on fostering for adoption

# Pause in Durham

- Pause Durham is actively working with 23 women in total – 2 are in pre-engagement stage
- The 21 women on the programme have had a total of 83 children removed from their care.
- The women range in age from 22 – 40 years old.
- 38% of the women are care experienced
- The feedback for the service and the women has highlighted a number of positives, in terms of their confidence, access to sexual health, domestic abuse services, housing and education
- None of the women have had any further pregnancies during intervention

# Pause model in Durham

- Funding is secured to in-source a Pause model in Durham with a plan to integrate this as a seamless service with the Pre Birth Service
- Staff from PAUSE will work in the Durham service
- PAUSE are working with us to develop a model/ criteria to meet the needs of women who have had children previously removed

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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