



Corporate Parenting Panel

Date **Friday 16 December 2022**

Time **9.30 am**

Venue **Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham**

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 25 November 2022 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Number of Children Looked After and Care Leavers - Verbal update from the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
6. Ofsted Updates - Verbal update from the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
7. Proud Moments - Verbal update from the Strategic Manager
8. Children in Care Council Update - Verbal update from the young people of the Children in Care Council
9. Annual Summary Report of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP) - Report of the Practice Lead, Children in Our Care (Pages 9 - 16)
10. Annual Report on the Adoption Service 2021/2022 - Report of the Practice Lead, Children in Our Care (Pages 17 - 24)
11. Performance Update - Report and presentation of the Corporate Equality and Strategy Manager (Pages 25 - 42)
12. Annual Report of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) 2021-22 (For information only) (Pages 43 - 76)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair 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. Regulation 44 Visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes - Report of the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children (Pages 77 - 88)
16. 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
8 December 2022

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

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

Co-opted Members

J Bell, C Brown, J Gamble, S Neale, W Taylor and R Woods
Young persons representative of the Children in Care Council

Contact: Jill Hogg

Tel: 03000 269 711

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Panel** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Friday 25 November 2022** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor M Simmons (Chair)

Members of the Panel:

Councillors M Walton (Vice-chair), R Adcock-Forster, B Coult, S Deinali, O Gunn, T Henderson, B Kellett, J Miller, K Robson, K Rooney and S Townsend

Co-opted Members:

Billie-Leigh, J Gamble, Luke and W Taylor

Also Present:

Laura Counce - Service Manager, Children and Young People
Sharon Davey - Strategic Manager, Looked After and Permanence
Rachel Harris – Service Improvement Manager
Jodie Henderson – Practice Lead, Children and Young People
Rob Johnson – Project Manager, Investing in Children
Lee Peacock - Participation and Engagement Officer
Martyn Stenton – Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children
Melanie Stubbs – Head of the Virtual School
Jayne Watson – Senior Partnerships Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Bell, J Charlton, J Griffiths, C Hunt, A Reed, A Sterling and Co-opted Members, J Bell, C Brown, S Neale and R Woods.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor A Bell was in attendance, substituting for Councillor A Reed.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. Matters arising from the last meeting included the following:

- a discussion on Regulation 44 matters would be held in the private part of the meeting;

- the newly appointed Head of Children’s Social Care, Rachel Farnham will take up her post in the new year;
- the Chair and Vice-Chair are looking into the possibility of creating a pooled budget, to support future projects.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Number of Children Looked After and Care Leavers

Martyn Stenton, Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children informed the Panel that the number of children in care had reduced slightly from 1034 last month to 1028 this month and the figure included 44 children placed for adoption, 30 unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and 228 care leavers.

6 Ofsted Updates

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children updated the Panel on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Aycliffe Secure Centre which was graded ‘good’ overall.

The inspection found education and learning is good, the young people are provided with good help and protection, leadership and management is effective and health is outstanding. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children read an extract from the report which praised the interaction between the staff and young people, how the staff help the young people to manage their feelings and the way staff work together, to encourage young people to make progress and celebrate their achievements. Ofsted found the health team to be excellent and commended the way practitioners encourage the young people to look after their health. The Panel noted the inspection covered activity over the past 17 months, during the gradual return to normal following the pandemic, and acknowledged the inspection framework could not take that into account. The Panel recognised the outcome of the inspection should be considered within the full context of the post-covid period and praised the continued hard work and commitment of the staff and young people at the centre.

Laura Counce, Service Manager, informed the Panel that a number of compliance notices had been issued in respect of Newton Drive Children’s Home which had been judged inadequate in August. As a result, an action plan had been put in place. A monitoring visit by Ofsted held in October found that 4 of the 6 compliance notices issued had been met.

One of the notices could not be met as no further admissions had taken place and the outstanding notice related to a training exercise which was taking place that day. The Panel would be updated on the outcome of the full inspection in due course.

The outcome of the full inspection of Coxhoe Children's Home was good overall, findings included that the young people are provided with good help and protection and outstanding leadership and management.

During the period, a further two full inspections took place and information on those would be shared with the Panel on publication of the reports.

7 Proud Moments

The Practice Lead for Children and Young People, Jodie Henderson, read a letter from a care experienced young person to their social worker, which provided testament to their special relationship. The 'thank you' letter gave a very moving account of how much the social worker meant to the young person, who thanked the social worker for their selflessness, thoughtfulness, patience and empathy. The young person explained how these qualities had helped them to feel safe enough to have hope for the future, to take each day as it comes and had ultimately changed their life for the better. The young person concluded the letter by saying they hoped they had made their social worker proud. The Practice Lead spoke of the positive impact of these words from the young person and how much the social worker valued the sentiments.

8 Children in Care Council Update

Billie-Leigh and Luke delivered a presentation on the dangers of talking to strangers, a subject which had been raised by young people at a recent Children in Care Council meeting (for copy of presentation see file of minutes).

Billie-Leigh and Luke spoke of the somewhat contradictory messages given to young people who are warned of the dangers of talking to strangers, however, children looked after are often expected to engage and share information with adults who they may not be familiar with. Billie-Leigh and Luke reported that the young people feel very passionately that all children and young people should feel safe and they highlighted that there may be occasions when young people do not feel safe in their home and may need to discuss issues with a person outside the home. Therefore, to align with 'Signs of Safety' week Billie-Leigh and Luke asked for the Panel's support to expand the work.

They suggested it would be useful to launch a campaign similar to the national 'Ask for Angela' campaign which enables people to discreetly seek help by using a phrase to indicate that they require help with their situation.

Billie-Leigh recited a poem she wrote for the Signs of Safety conference, which was based on the thoughts of the young people of the Children in Care Council about the everyday objects and moments which give them comfort and make them feel safe. The poem resonated with Panel members and they praised Billie-Leigh's use of evocative imagery.

The Panel expressed support for further work to be undertaken, in addition to the signs of safety work already being carried out through the wider partnership. The Panel suggested that safety messages should be shared in local communities through joint working with parish and town councils, Area Action Partnerships and voluntary organisations. Acknowledging that the work must reflect the voices of the young people, the Panel requested that the Senior Partnerships Officer look into arranging a meeting to discuss how to progress the work.

Councillors Walton, Coult, Gunn, Townsend, Miller and Adcock-Forster indicated that they would like to be involved in the project, as it progresses.

9 Update on progress against themes from CiCC / CPP Joint Meeting

The Practice Lead provided the Panel with a progress update on priority areas identified by the Children in Care Council in May, as themes for focus over a six-month period. The key priority areas identified included staffing in children's homes and foster care, family time and personalised care.

The Panel noted work has continued with regard to the recruitment and training of children's home staff and foster carers, including exploring ways that young people can become more engaged in the recruitment work.

Referring to Family Time, the Panel heard that as a young person moves into the Children Looked After service, family time may take place on a less structured basis. It is recognised that not all young people are the same and some young people feel more comfortable in a more structured setting and the aim is to ensue the best fit for every young person. In response to a question from the Panel, with regard to the timeframe for the new Family Time formats to be put in place, the Practice Manager highlighted that as all sessions will be managed with the young people in a different way, it is difficult to set a specific timescale, however, it is hoped that the changes will be in place within the next six months.

Improvements to personalised care aim to ensure young people are fully engaged in their pathway plans and work is being carried out to develop a scrutiny panel of care experienced young people whose experience can provide an insight into how to drive improvements.

10 Language Update

The Panel noted the Council's commitment to children, young people and their families to use straightforward and family friendly language as outlined in the 'Language That Cares' document. The Panel formed groups to discuss words and phrases that may have negative connotations, including 'intervention', 'challenging behaviour' and 'placement'.

Members observed that 'intervention' implies an action that is being forced upon a person. Officers commented that 'intervention' is often used in education settings, to describe additional support provided and the Head of the Virtual School suggested practitioners should be encouraged to use the word 'support' as an alternative, where appropriate.

The Panel commented that the term 'challenging behaviour' implies both parties in the interaction are finding the situation difficult and it may be the case that professionals dealing with young people who they describe as having 'challenging behaviour' may need additional training. Officers explained that in some cases, a young person's behaviour is their language, for example, when a young person is distressed or confused, they may display this through their behaviour as in some situations it can be the only way they can communicate their feelings. In a similar way, a young person who refuses to engage or is unable to engage at all may also be described as 'challenging'. The Panel noted that 'challenge' can often lead to positive change such as the challenge provided by the Children in Care Council.

The Panel discussed the term 'moving placement', commenting that it was impersonal, implying the subject is an object rather than a person. Luke referred to all the hard work done by practitioners with regard to matching profiles to find young people their perfect home and he expressed the view that using the term 'moving placement' did not do the process justice. Billie-Leigh added that for her, the phrase 'moving placement' conjured up an image of being part of a production line.

The Panel recognised that in some contexts professional terms are appropriate and expected, however children and young people must be provided with information that they can understand and relate to and the 'Language That Cares' document is vital to the work.

11 Independent Reviewing Officer Update

The Panel received the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for 2021-22 presented by Sharon Davey, Strategic Manager for Children Looked After and Permanence (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager explained the dual role of IROs to monitor care planning and ensure that the local authority's care plans are meeting the needs of children and young people. In addition, IROs chair child protection review conferences. The Strategic Manager highlighted that the timeliness of reviews had increased from 90% to 99% and that an Ofsted inspection held in May 2022 found that IROs know their children well and provide effective oversight of care plans. The Panel heard that IROs also chair disruption meetings for young people who have been in their placement for two years or more and who are moved in a managed way. The Strategic Manager highlighted the term 'disruption meeting' and questioned whether a more appropriate term could be found. Billie-Leigh suggested the meetings could be called 'new chapter meetings'.

The Strategic Manager spoke of the important work done with the Children in Care Council, including the production of the IRO animation video which explains the IRO service in a child-friendly way and the 'Mind of My Own' App which is used to gather meaningful feedback from children and young people.

The Panel heard that key priorities for the future include continued work with young people in respect of care planning the strengthening of the voice of children, young people and parents in the review process.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

12 Regulation 44 Visits and Regulatory Body Ratings of Children's Residential Homes

The Service Manager for Children and Young People presented the monthly update on Regulation 44 visits and regulatory body ratings (for copy of report see file of minutes).

The Panel discussed various issues relating to Regulation 44 visits.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

Corporate Parenting Panel

16 December 2022

**Annual Summary Report of the Children
Looked After Strategic Partnership
(CLASP)**



Report of Jodie Henderson, Practice Lead, Children in Care & Care Leavers, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides a summary of the activity of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership (CLASP) for the period August 2021 to August 2022.

Executive Summary

- 2 The CLASP was developed to improve the partnership working between services at a strategic level to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers.
- 3 The group meets bimonthly consists of representatives from Children's Social Care, partner health authorities, youth offending, police, education and housing services, Investing in Children and Advocacy services.
- 4 To increase the influence of the group and to improve the connectivity of work with children in care and care leavers it has been agreed that the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership will provide update reports into the Corporate Parenting Panel on a quarterly basis with a full report on an annual basis.
- 5 In the last year the CLASP has worked to bring together a pilot for care leavers with a dedicated GP practice, established a data reporting set to improve the effectiveness of the partnership, reviewed the timeliness of initial health assessments (IHA) and review health assessments (RHA) and identified a challenge for children placed outside of the area. This work has helped shape the priorities of work moving forwards.

Governance

- 6 The Children Looked After Strategic Partnership will report annually into DSCP.
- 7 The Care Leavers strategic group will report into the CLASP with updates from their multi agency action plan on a quarterly basis.
- 8 The Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Subgroup of the local Transformation Plan will report quarterly into the CLASP
- 9 The Project Board of the Children Looked After Health Needs assessment will report quarterly until the work is complete.
- 10 The Children Exploited Group will report outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers who are missing and / or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation quarterly into the CLASP.
- 11 The chair and/or vice chair of the Children Looked After Strategic Partnership will meet with the Children in Care Council twice yearly to ensure that strategic priorities are developed with children and young people, they are updated on the work of the CLASP and their feedback is taken directly back to the partnership meeting.
- 12 The Children Looked After Health Needs Operational Group will report quarterly into the CLASP.
- 13 The Virtual School will report quarterly into the CLASP.

Recommendation

- 14 The Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note the content of this report and agree the reporting mechanisms moving forward.

Background

The Children Looked After Strategic Partnership work to:

- 15 Deliver services to our Children Looked After and Care Leavers in a way that mirrors as far as possible the way a good parent would support their child
- 16 Work closely with Children Looked After and Care Leavers to ensure that there is a good understanding of their views and experiences and that these views inform the work of the CLASP.
- 17 Develop a good understanding of the needs (and changing needs) of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers and ensure that these are reflected in local strategic needs assessments; strategies; local service provision or are developed to meet need.
- 18 Identify gaps in provision and provide solutions. Develop working groups to focus on understanding areas of need and taking a multi-agency approach to improving outcomes.
- 19 Meet needs of Children Looked After and Care Leavers with SEND.
- 20 Develop and deliver services in a way that recognises the unique circumstances of Children Looked After and Care Leavers, this includes sharing information and developing responses to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.
- 21 Collectively deliver services to Children Looked After and Care Leavers in a way that is joined-up and which supports young people to make a successful transition to adulthood.
- 22 Challenge ourselves to ensure that the children and young people in our care are enjoying happy, fulfilled childhoods and looking forward to their adult lives, with positive foundations and stable relationships
- 23 Scrutinise multi agency performance information and benchmark against regional and national comparators to promote a continuous improvement cycle.
- 24 Consider opportunities for joint commissioning of services and pooled budgets to enhance the quality and provision of services for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.
- 25 Ensure that best practice is shared.
- 26 Develop a multi-agency action plan in the light of the above and monitor progress and impact against the plan.

- 27 Develop an agreed set of multi-agency performance indicators and associated data set to monitor and track progress.

Progress Update

- 28 Within the year the CLASP has refined their data requirements and are now provided with the appropriate data to inform the work of the group on a regular basis.
- 29 This work has included reviews of the health assessments for children in care, the initial and subsequent health assessments, and the quality of these assessments. This has highlighted some concern over the timeliness of referral for initial health assessments which results in additional challenges in achieving the health assessment within the required time. This information has been shared with partners to improve practices.
- 30 The CLASP has focused on the experiences of children in care who have been placed outside of the Durham area. These children are identified as most vulnerable and often face additional barriers to accessing specialist services such as CAMHS. The work of the CLASP has supported the ability to ensure priority is given to children's fully assessed needs and that services are referred at the beginning of a placement being made.
- 31 The group has also focused on children who have been missing from care. There has been an increase in numbers of children missing from care and the group have been keen to understand the mechanisms to prevent this and to understand from young people what their experiences have been when missing and when they have returned.
- 32 The Local Authority Health Assessment subgroup has focussed on understanding the barriers to initial health assessments being completed within timescales and a system has been developed to ensure health are informed swiftly of all Out of County Placements.
- 33 The CLASP members have focused on the impact of COVID and shared data on impact within each agency area. A recovery approach has been taken to support children and young people, such as addressing the need for dental assessments.
- 34 Clear Cut Communications is a tool for assisting children and young people's communication with adults through assessing their speech and language skills– The Virtual School complete a Clear-Cut communication assessment with children within 8 weeks of them coming into care. In some cases where a child has previously been identified as having speech and language difficulties the assessment will not be completed as the information is already known. The

assessment is intended to support a better understanding of the child's cognition and use of language. The intention is that Social Workers will complete the same assessment on all children already in care. The programme of Social Workers completing the training to allow them to carry out the assessment has begun.

Future Priorities

- 35 The group have agreed that in the next quarter a focus will be given to the experiences of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. It is noted that through the national transfer scheme Durham are receiving a relatively high number of children on an increasingly regular basis and the experiences and support for these children as a group is a regional and national priority.
- 36 The CLASP is aware of the placement sufficiency issues nationally and through the data reporting of the need to provide greater placement stability for children in care in Durham. The group intend to consider the challenges and actions that can be taken to improve this picture over the next quarter.
- 37 The needs of children who have suffered lots of unplanned moves is a focus of a working group, the CLASP members seek to understand why this has happened and ensure that the multi-agency approach to preventing placement breakdown is robust.
- 38 Ensuring the needs of children from County Durham who are placed out of area are met including improving compliance of Out of Area (OOA) health assessments within statutory timeframes. Seeking to understand and address the impact on education of children placed Out of Area is also a focus of the CLASP this quarter.
- 39 Continue to ensure the Signs of Safety Model is imbedded in practise throughout all agencies including the use of networks and reunification.
- 40 Use health data and analysis to support service improvement including in areas such as initial and review health assessments, dental checks and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires.
- 41 Understand the needs of those children and young people who are not in Education, Training or Employment, how we measure the outcomes for these children and young people and further develop the multi-agency approach.
- 42 Work together to support Children Looked After in their schools and settings to ensure they are safe, happy and settled and they begin to close the gaps in their learning, following the disruptions created by the pandemic.

- 43 Ensure the mental health needs of children and young people are understood and well supported including the further imbedding of a trauma informed approach.

Conclusion

- 44 The work of the CLASP continues and seeks to improve how services work together to identify and meet the needs of children in care and care leavers.
- 45 The CLASP operates as the officer arm of the Corporate Parenting Panel to undertake improvement activity with an ambitious forward-thinking desire to keep removing barriers and making the lives of children in care and care leavers in Durham as successful as possible.

Author

Lesley Baldry, Operations Manager, Children Looked After & Care Leavers
Tel: 03000 265363

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

There are no financial implications linked to this report.

Consultation

The work of the CLASP is co-produced with children and young people although no additional consultation has taken place in the preparation of this report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

The risk of failing to develop productive working relationships and practices to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers would pose a risk of failure to meet statutory responsibilities to these groups.

Procurement

None.

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Corporate Parenting Panel

16 December 2022

**Annual Report on the Adoption Service
2021/2022**



**Report of Jodie Henderson , Practice Lead, Children in Our Care,
Children’s Social Care, Durham County Council**

Electoral division(s) affected:

None.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide a six monthly review of the Adoption Service for 2022 including the identification of service priorities for 2022/23.

Executive summary

- 2 This bi- annual report sets out the performance and the direction of travel for the Adoption Service as a spoke in the Regional Adoption Agency, Adopt Coast to Coast.

Recommendation

- 3 Corporate Parenting Panel is requested to:
 - (a) Note the contents and agree the proposed priorities.

Background

- 4 From August 2022 to November 2022, the Adoption Service received 97 enquiries, completed 43 initial visits, and 11 adopters approved (Data pulled from Liquid Logic)
- 5 On the 21 November 2022, there were 38 prospective adopters in Stage 2 and 36 prospective adopters in Stage 1, this is potentially 42 families who will complete their adoption journey in 2022/2023
- 6 16 children have been matched at Panel. 14 matches were within the regional adoption agency (RAA), 12 with DCC approved adopters and 0 with our partner spokes. 1 child was placed with adopters approved by voluntary agencies and 1 child placed with another RAA out of area.
- 7 We continue to meet the statutory deadline for all Stage Two assessments, with only one assessment being out of timescale due to unforeseen circumstances. There is ongoing work to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations and how we can align this within the Liquidlogic software system.
- 8 We have a high rate of timely matches with adopters and children. We have 9 families waiting to be linked with a children/child. We currently have only 3 adopters in Durham that have been waiting over six months to be matched – with one couple on hold due to moving home. We have undertaken a regional audit to look at these cases and ensure that we have established good practice and that we continue to ensure that there is limited drift and delay, and that their profile are being explored.
- 9 4 children have been placed this year have been placed under Fostering for Adoption regulations, with one been placed in this reporting period.
- 10 This is a key area of development for Durham, and we are developing processes with families first, placements and the pre birth team to highlight children where this plan would be appropriate. We need to ensure that teams are exploring these plans and that they clearly explore the rationale for not opting out of foster to adopt plan. At this time there is some resistance from the Courts around foster to adopt placements and we are supporting our social workers to effectively address this within the Court and the care plans.
- 11 A Funding Bid has been awarded to develop work with both Fostering and Adoption around concurrency planning. This is a 1 day a week post and will sit within the adoption team and work

closely with colleagues within fostering to establish concurrency planning within Durham children services. This is an exciting pilot project that will hopefully help establish carers/adopters that will care for children who primarily may be consider for fostering as a final plan.

- 12 The aim of this pilot is to build on the foundations of concurrency planning. Supporting the service to develop training around concurrency planning and ensuring that early permanence and planning is a continual area of development and excellence
- 13 27 Adoption Orders have been granted within this period. This has improved since the Somerset Judgment, and we are seeing cases moving forward and final orders being granted. Our permanence team have been commended by his Honour Judge Wood as been the only Authority in the region that regularly give feedback to the Courts in relation to Birth Parents and continue to ensure that their views are heard and that they are supported. There is a high standard of practice within this team and the quality of CPRs produced within the child timeline is outstanding.
- 14 We have 5 new panel members that have been successfully recruited in this period. 4 panel members resigned due to personal circumstances and the 2 panel medical advisors remain on to provide medical information. There has been 10 Adoption Panels within this reporting period
- 15 Panel continues to provide a high level of scrutiny and reflection in relation to the adopters and with matches. The adoption chairs are experienced at coordinating meetings that are productive, challenge with kindness and provide clear recommendations to the ADM.
- 16 There is a drive to appoint social workers onto the Adoption Panel and a commitment to ensure that we have appropriate cover for panel, that allows our social workers to attend and contribute, but also does not impact on their time with children and families. There has been one successful recruitment onto panel and a further four workers across the Children in Care service that will be making an application.
- 17 We continue to supported birth parents/sibling/child post box contact letters. We have supported 19 birth parents in writing their post adoption contact letters, both virtually and face to face, we are also establishing links with other local authorities in relation to post adoption contact to ensure that this communication is received and timely. The post adoption contact continues to work well and there

is a dedicated worker who will provide support to parents and children if this is needed.

- 18 We also have established links with the Pause project and our worker supports Mothers who are working with Pause to support them to write post adoption contact letters and provides a reflective space in which they can address their worries around this. In this reporting period we have supported 3 mothers within this area.
- 19 95 children have been supported through successful assessments of need completed by Social Workers within the adoption team. There have been 28 Applications made the Adoption Support fund to the value of £84,922.50. 21 of these have so far been approved to the value of £65,582.50.
- 20 There is a high volume of adoption support assessments, and we continue to develop our expertise in this area. We are continually supporting our practitioners to attend training and will create depth and understanding when completing assessments and offering advice. For example training in Supporting Adoptive Families: Brain-based Parenting, De-escalation and the Implementation of the PACE Model. This bespoke training will be implemented into our adopters training and shared across the workforce. This is an area of agreed priority across Coast to Coast both in the preadoption and post adoption stage in line with the national agenda.
- 21 15 referrals for non-agency adoption enquiries have been received in this reporting period. We have had 4 Adoption Orders granted and further two waiting for final hearing dates. There has been an increase in enquiries from special guardians in relation to Non-Agency Adoption. Our understanding of this is they need support with understanding their roles and responsibilities under such an order
- 22 We have successfully recruited two permanent adoption social workers into the team, alongside another social worker within the permanence team. This will offer further support to staff and support with both family finding and adoption support and child permanence. There is a stable and support staff team in place, and extensive knowledge and expertise within the team. It is noted that there have been some challenges for the service within the last six months, however the team have come together, and the service delivery remains high.
- 23 There is continued collaboration with the Adoption Team and Full Circle, which continues to develop a streamlined service for families in need.

- 24 Continued collaboration with the partner spokes of Coast to coast remains positive and staff development events have been held. There is a focus on recruitment events, celebration events and shared training. Ideas and learning are freely shared and alignment of working practices are being established. Regional Management events have been established post covid and this encourages collaboration across all borders within the region.

Data Accuracy

- 25 Liquid Logic is almost fully embedded in the Adoption Team for performance reports to be directly produced from the Liquid Logic system. The Adoption Dashboard has now been constructed and reporting areas have been identified. Further evaluation of the dashboard is taking place to ensure that this optimises service delivery.

Service Direction

- 26 Key priority areas for 2022/23:
- (a) Continue to work collaboratively with our partners in Adopt Coast to Coast to recruit, assess and approve adopters in a timely manner.
 - (b) To ensure children's plans of permanence via adoption are progressed without delay
 - (c) Fostering for adoption placements and matches are to be identified at the earliest possible stage in children's planning to prevent delay and ensure minimal moves for children. Work around the development of this continues and plans implemented.
 - (d) Work around continued recruitment of new panel members to the central list. This will ensure quoracy and prevent the possible need to stand a panel down due to lack of available panel members.
 - (e) Continue to embed signs of safety into practice and panel processes in line with the Durham model of social work practice.
 - (f) Increase relationship-based practice with trauma informed service developments, particularly in the development and support of post adoption contact.
 - (g) Continue to identify potential plans of adoption for children as early as possible. This will allow for targeted adopter recruitment at the earliest possible point. Where there is a need for an

adopter able to take sibling groups, older children or children with more complex health or disability needs, thus preventing delay or the need to purchase adopters at a high cost from external providers.

- (h) Continue to promote and recruit adopters across the RAA
- (i) A focus on recruitment into foster to adopt and concurrency placements.

Conclusion

- 27 Please note the contents of the Adoption Service's Annual Report which highlights practice achieved in 2021/22 and sets the direction of travel for the remainder of this financial year.

Author

Rachael Riley – Service Manager Children in our Care

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 3 Adoption and Children Act 2002 places a duty on each local authority to maintain within their area an adoption service designed to meet the needs of:

- (a) children who may be adopted, their parents and guardians,
- (b) persons wishing to adopt a child, and
- (c) adopted persons, their adoptive parents and natural parents

By making arrangements for the adoption of children and for the provision of adoption support services. The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 contain detailed requirements which local authorities must comply with in order to comply with this duty.

Finance

Expenditure on inter agency adoption payments demonstrated a significant decrease in 2020/2021, reversing the trend experienced over the previous three years as the service continues to maximise placements with adopters recruited by the authority directly. While interagency fees are an additional material expense, they are one off payments and cost significantly less than a child in a long-term fostering placement.

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

Risk

None

None

Procurement

None

Corporate Parenting Panel

16 December 2022

Performance Update



**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(s)

- 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

Appendix 1: Implications

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>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Rate of CLA per 10,000 u18 population [Number]	82.9 [833]	90 [914]	93 [949]	96 [982]	100.7 [1027]	70 (2021/22)	110 (2021/22)
Age and length of time in care					See presentation	N/A	N/A
CLA Placement breakdown					See presentation	N/A	N/A
Percentage of CLA placed over 20 miles (outside LA boundary)	7%	10%	9%	10%	12% [126/1030]	16% (2021/22)	10% (2021/22)
Number of children placed for adoption	25	75	39	38	45	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]	2% [16/982]	2% [24/1028]	7% (2021/22)	2% (2020/21)
Social worker caseloads					See presentation	N/A	N/A

Page 30
Do our partner agencies understand their role in supporting us as corporate parents?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Percentage of CLA with a missing incident during the year	5.0%	5.5%	7.0%	9.9%	15% [182/1206]	11% (2021/22)	11% (2021/22)
Percentage of children on Child Exploitation and Vulnerability Tracker that were CLA^				24% [70/289]	22% [79/361]		
Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire - Average score	NND	13.6	14.0	14	14.6	13.8 (2021/22)	14.3 (2021/22)
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]	1.8% [10]	2% (2021/22)	2% (2021/22)

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?

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21 [Provisional]</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Number of CLA accessing an independent visitor			16	69 (59 CDYJS, 10 AFC) 15 waiting for match	37 (35 CDYJS, 2 AFC)		

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>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Percentage of CLA with 3 or more placements during the year	10.7% [90 of 840]	7.6% [70 / 922]	8% [73]	12.4% [122 / 985]	10% [103]	10% (2021/22)	10% (2021/22)
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]	65.8% [244 / 371]	64% [251]	71% (2021/22)	70% (2021/22)
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]	466	472	454 (Q1 2022/23)	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]	144	148	184 (Q1 2022/23)	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]	19% [65]	11% [20/180]	10% (2021/22)	13% (2021/22)
Number of Mainstream Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	26	12	21	29	5	N/A	N/A
Number of Friends and Family Foster Carers (Approved in period YTD)	52	91	145	121	40	N/A	N/A
Number of Adopters (Approved in period YTD)	22	25	47	40	19	N/A	N/A

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

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2018/19</i>	<i>2019/20</i>	<i>2020/21</i>	<i>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of the child becoming looked after	63%	73%	73%	59%	64%	N/A	N/A
CLA with the required number of health assessments	91%	94%	91%	93%	93%	89% (2021/22)	92% (2021/22)
CLA who have had a dental check	85.5%	87%	41%	85%	70%	70% (2021/22)	72% (2021/22)
CLA whose immunisations were up-to-date	99.3%	99.0%	90.0%	90.9%	Reported annually	85% (2021/22)	86% (2021/22)
CLA whose development assessments were up to date (CLA 12+ months and aged 5 or younger at 31 March)	95.0%	97.0%	83.0%	98.9%	Reported annually	89% (2021/22)	95% (2021/22)
% CLA identified as having a substance misuse problem in the year	1.9%	2.0%	Data Error	0.9%	Reported annually	3% (2021/22)	3% (2021/22)
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	17% [27/149]	Data not available	44% (2020/21)	33% (2020/21)
Care leavers aged 17-21 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)		26.3% [25/95]		29% [32/111]	24% [28/118]	N/A	N/A
Care leavers aged 17-25 who are pregnant or mothers (as a % of female care leavers)				30% [39/132]	25% [34/139]	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>2021/22</i>	<i>Q2 2022/23</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>North East</i>
Percentage of care leavers age 18-21 who have stayed with their foster carer	N/A	N/A	N/A	21% [50]	16% [47]		
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in education, employment or training (EET)	63.9% [53 of 83]	65% [55 / 84]	76% [59 / 78]	66% [55 / 83]	66% [27 / 79]	66% (2021/22)	67% (2021/22)
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in suitable accommodation	96.4% [80 of 83]	90% [76 / 84]	95% [74 / 78]	93% [76 / 82]	94% [74 / 79]	90% (2021/22)	93% (2021/22)
Percentage of care leavers aged 17-18 in higher education	0% [0]	0% [0]	0% [0 / 78]	6% [5 / 83]	3% [2/79]	4% (2021/22)	3% (2021/22)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training (EET)	54.0% [87 of 161]	54% [94 / 175]	56% [110 / 197]	61% [129 / 213]	60% [100/166]	55% (2021/22)	52% (2021/22)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in suitable accommodation	94.4% [152 of 161]	83% [144 / 174]	90% [177 / 196]	85% [186 / 218]	96% [160 / 166]	88% (2021/22)	90% (2021/22)
Percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 in higher education	8.7% [14 of 161]	9% [16 / 175]	6% [11 / 197]	8% [18 / 213]	14% [23 / 166]	7% (2021/22)	7% (2021/22)

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Children in our Care

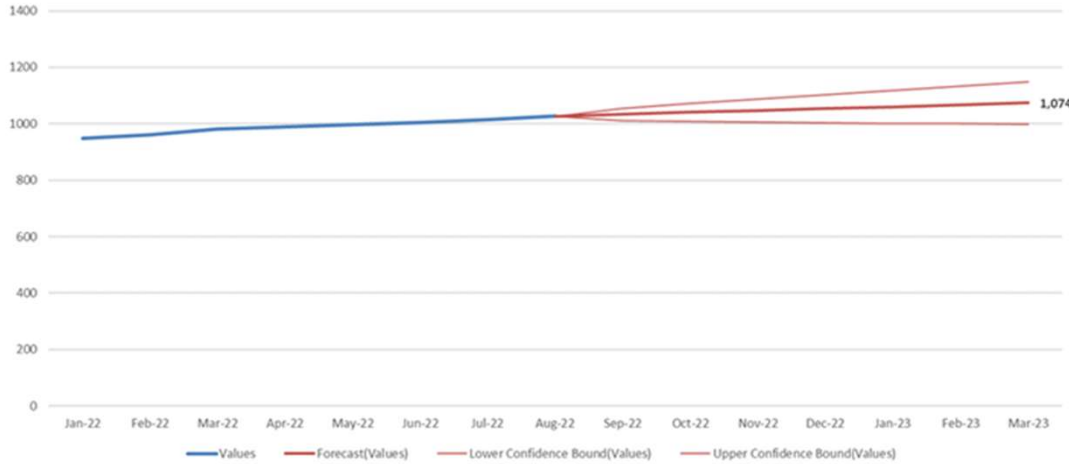
Children Looked After Strategic Partnership

Q2 2022-23



Children in Care: 1,027

CLA Forecast to end of 22/23



Increase in overall number of CiC but rate remains below regional and statistical neighbour average (4th lowest in North East)

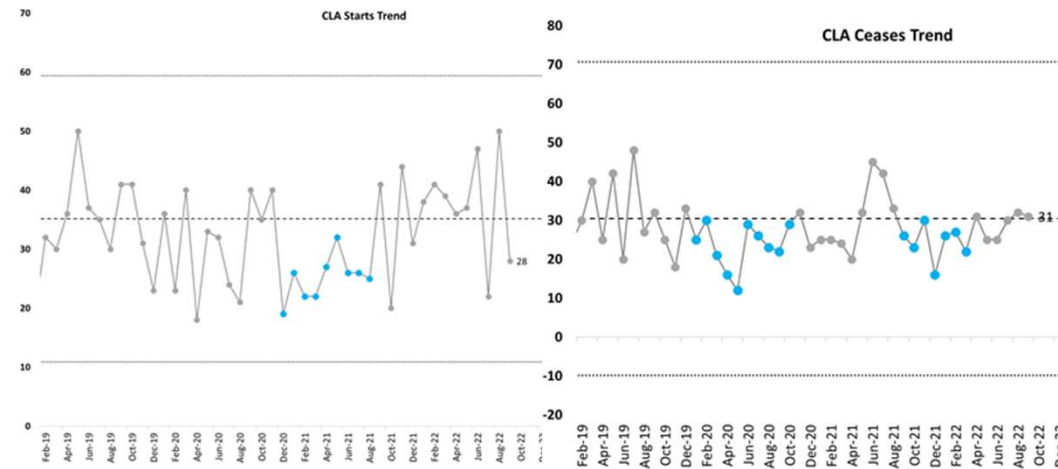
A third of children have been in care for less than 12 months whilst a quarter have been in care for over 5 years

LoT in care	Under 6 Months	6-12 Months	1-2 Years	2-5 Years	5 Years+
No.	206	119	166	276	263
%	20%	12%	16%	27%	26%

24 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

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

Reducing u1 CiC starts as % of all CiC starts Increase in 16+ starts
Increase in 13-15yr olds in care



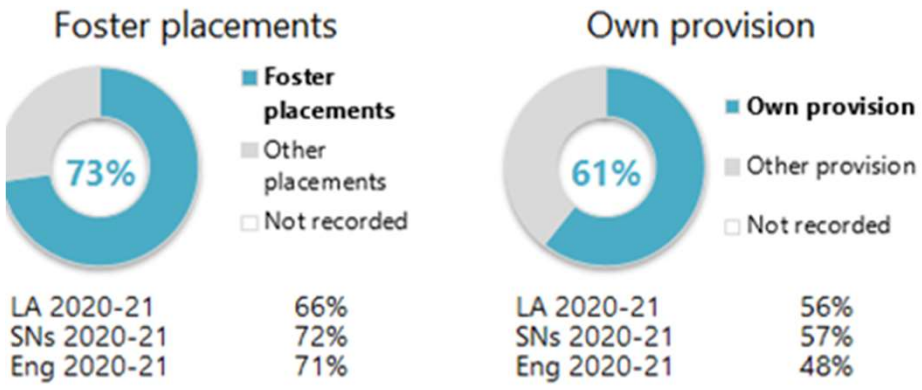
378 children became a child in care
349 children left care in 2021/22



97% of Social Workers in our Children in Care and Care Leavers Teams had fewer than 25 cases, none had 30+

Placements and Placement Stability

CLA placements by type and provision



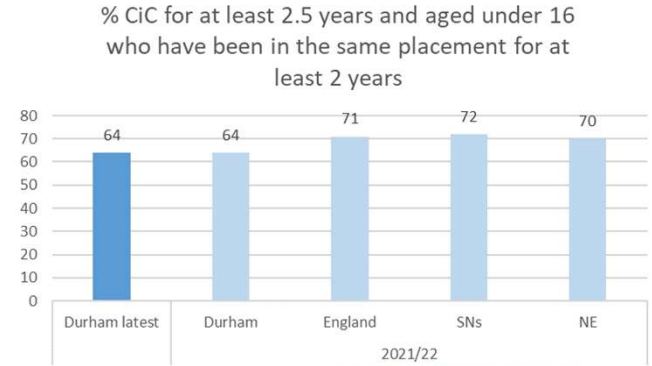
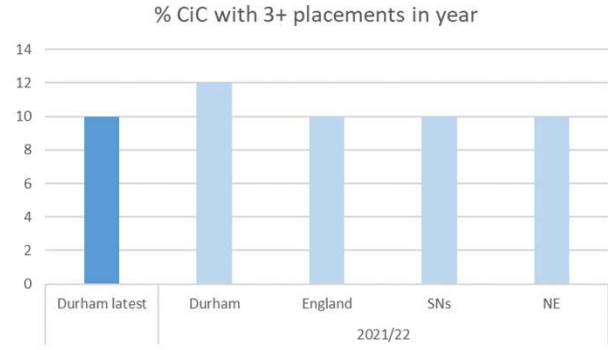
A higher proportion of children in Durham are placed in foster placements and in in-house provision than in our benchmarks. Both have also increased from 2020/21

16% increase in Children in Care from 2019/20 - highest increase in 14-15 year olds and 17 year olds

Placement Stability remains an ongoing area of focus – This has improved but is currently worse than in 2021 benchmarks

CiC at date	2019/20		2022/23 YTD	
	No.	%	No.	%
0	79	9%	66	6%
1	46	5%	48	5%
2	48	5%	42	4%
3	34	4%	43	4%
4	34	4%	39	4%
5	34	4%	39	4%
6	39	4%	43	4%
7	35	4%	43	4%
8	57	6%	55	5%
9	35	4%	62	6%
10	49	5%	53	5%
11	59	7%	58	6%
12	58	6%	44	4%
13	62	7%	70	7%
14	59	7%	78	8%
15	54	6%	88	9%
16	57	6%	76	7%
17	63	7%	88	9%

Placement type (open CLA)	Own LA	Private	Other	Total
Foster placement	571	140	46	757
Placed for adoption	19	0	26	45
Placed with parents	0	0	68	68
Independent living	16	24	13	53
Residential employment	0	0	0	0
Residential accommodation	0	0	0	0
Secure Children's Homes	4	1	1	6
Children's Homes	22	72	6	100
Residential Care Home	0	0	0	0
NHS/Health Trust	0	0	0	0
Family Centre	0	1	0	1
Young Offender Institution	0	0	1	1
Residential school	0	0	0	0
Other placements	0	8	2	10
Temporary placement	0	0	0	0
Total placements	632	246	163	1041



Missing Children

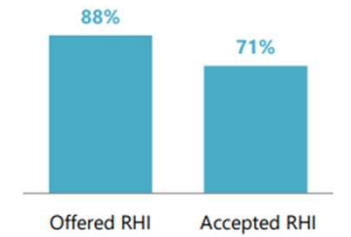
182 of 1206 looked after children had a missing incident in the last 12 months

	Latest data	LA 20-21	SNs 20-21	Eng 20-21
Number of all CLA with a missing incident	182 of 1206	91		
Percentage of all CLA with a missing incident	15%	7%	9%	10%
Total number of missing incidents for all CLA	1806	465		
Average number of incidents per CLA who went missing	9.9	5.1	6.1	6.6

Missing incidents - return home interviews

	Latest data	
Missing children offered return interview	161 of 182	88%
Missing children not offered return interview	2 of 182	1%
Missing children return interview offer not recorded	15 of 182	8%
Missing children where return interview was n/a	4 of 182	2%

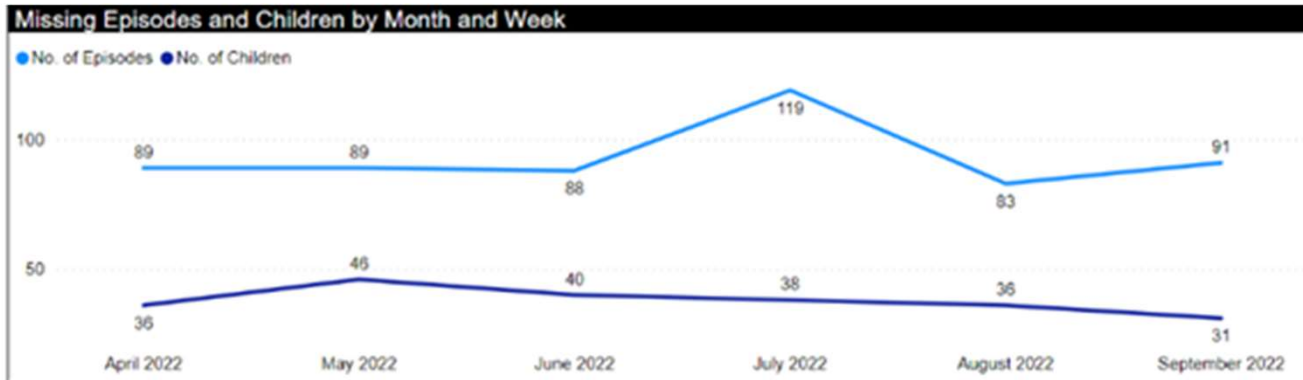
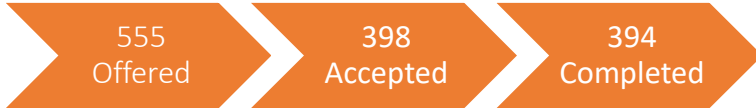
	Latest data	
Missing children accepted return interview	115 of 161	71%
Missing children not accepted return interview	41 of 161	25%
Missing children return interview acceptance not recorded	5 of 161	3%



103
children

559
missing
episodes

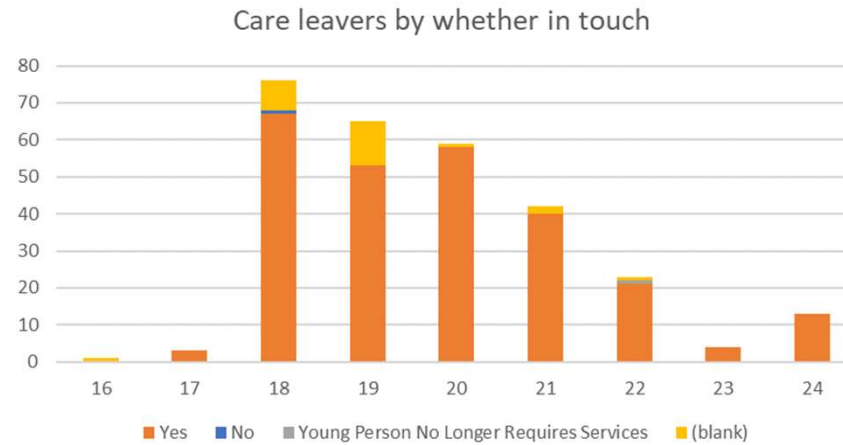
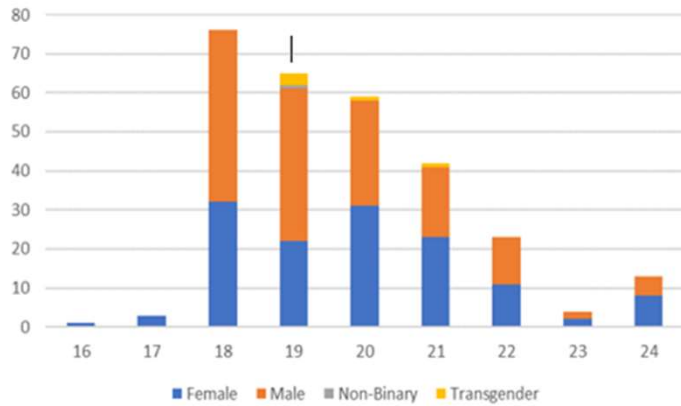
**Return to
Home
Interviews**



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

Care Leavers

285 Care Leavers aged 17-21



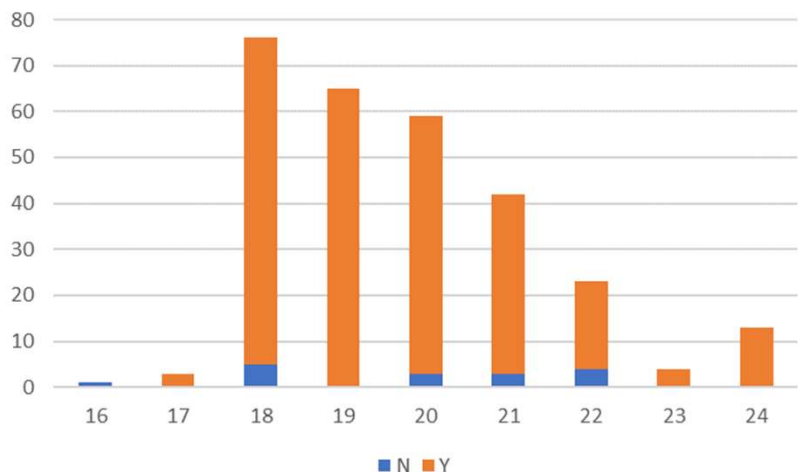
In Touch

17-18yr olds: 89% (70/79)
 19-21yr olds: 91% (151/166)
 22-24yr olds: 95% (38/40)

11 of our care leavers are recorded as being unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC) and are all male aged 18-23.

Currently have 161 YPS team monitoring open cases in addition to the 285 aged 17-21. Work on data recording is ongoing to ensure accuracy

Care Leavers – suitable accommodation

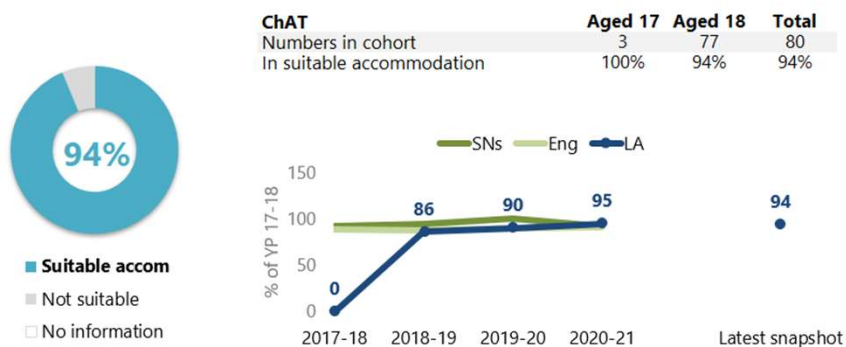


	Suitable accommodation	%	Not in suitable accommodation	Total
17-18	74	94%	5	79
19-21	160	96%	6	166
22-24	36	90%	4	40
Total	270	95%	15	285

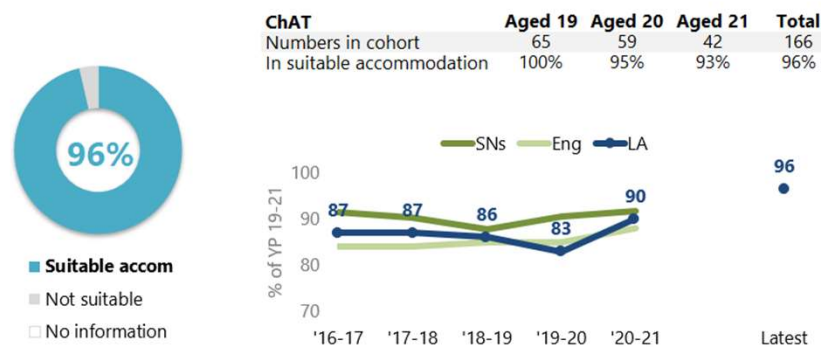
The proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation aged 17-18 is 94% and for ages 19-21 is 96%

Above benchmarks

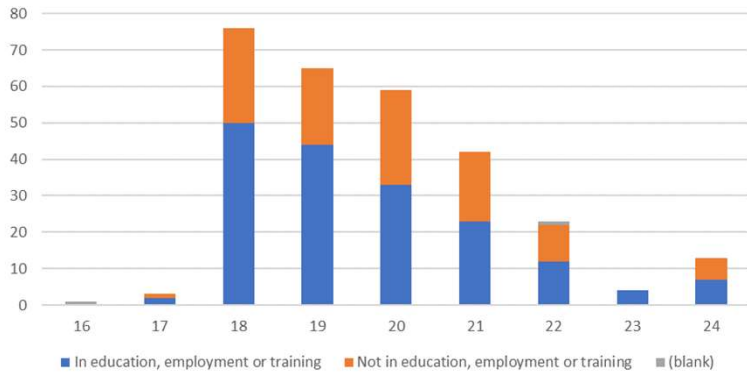
Accommodation suitability of 17-18 year olds



Accommodation suitability of 19-21 year olds



Care Leavers - Education, Employment or Training

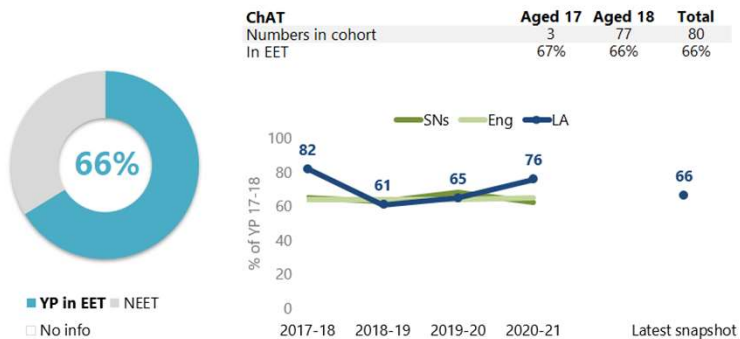


	In education, employment or training (EET)	%	Not in education, employment or training (NEET)	(blank)	Total
17-18	52	66%	27	0	79
19-21	100	60%	66	0	166
22-24	23	58%	16	1	40
Total	175	61%	109	1	285

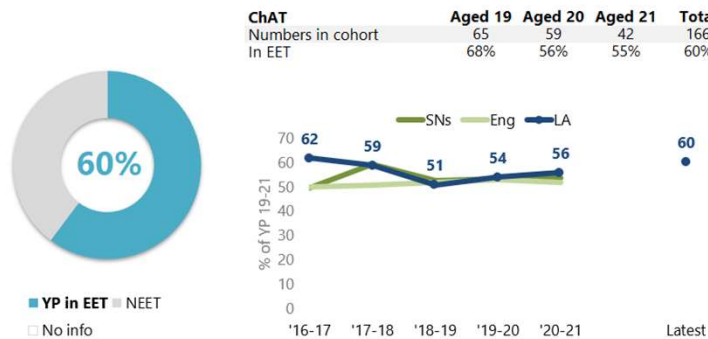
The proportion of care leavers in Education, Employment or Training aged 17-18 is 66% which is slightly higher than benchmarks but has reduced from 76% in 2020/21.

For those aged 19-21 this is 60%; above benchmarks (2020/21 National: 52%, Stat Neighbour: 54%, Regional: 50%)

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



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



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Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2021/2022





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Introduction

As the three statutory partners of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, we present our report covering the period 2021/22. In it we aim to demonstrate how we function and provide assurance that our safeguarding arrangements are effective in keeping children safe.

The current partnership arrangements have now been in place for 3 years and although at times challenging, there is clear evidence that this way of working enables leaders at service delivery and quality assurance levels to maintain ownership of the safeguarding agenda. At the time of penning this introduction we are in the process of reviewing and modifying how we operate as a partnership. We intend to adopt a 'learning hub' type model which will allow us to focus more clearly on the things that matter in order to strengthen partnership working in service delivery. It is envisaged that this will help monitor the impact we have so that we make a real and tangible difference for children and families in County Durham.

We have all endured another year living and working through the COVID-19 Coronavirus and the significant impact it has had both personally and professionally in terms of how we all deliver our services. All partner agencies continued with a positive 'can do' attitude to the challenges faced and have been determined to keep vulnerable children at the forefront of their thinking. This working has been a real strength of the partnership. New ways of working we introduced have been embedded where appropriate into normal practice.

We detail in this report some key areas of success where we have made a real difference for children and families, but also highlight areas where we need added focus to continually improve services across the DSCP and our individual agencies. The latter part of the report looks at how we intend to develop over the coming year.

John Pearce
*Director of Children and
Young People's Services,
Durham County Council*

David Ashton
*Detective Chief
Superintendent, Head of
Crime and Safeguarding,
Durham Constabulary*

Ann Fox/Jeanette Scott
*Directors of Nursing,
North East and North
Cumbria ICB (Central
locality)*



Children and Young People in County Durham

19% total population are children and young people

6.7% of pupils in the January 2022 school census are Black and Minority Ethnic

21,658 (29.1%) of pupils are eligible for free school meals

There are 101,979 children and young people under 18 living in County Durham

Age 0-4	25,658	Age 10-14	30,024
Age 5-9	29,949	Age 15-19	29,348

3763 Children in Need

985 children were looked after

76 children are missing from education

501 children and young people are electively home educated

1590 pupils attend state funded special schools

3% of pupils in the 2022 school census have a first language other than English

10,462 with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support in Durham schools

389 children were subject to a child protection plan

74,472 pupils attend state funded schools (Jan 2022)

2,624 children and young people have Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) including those maintained by other Local Authorities



Schools in County Durham



196 primary schools
including

8 infant only
schools

8 junior only
schools



31 secondary
schools



1 pupil
referral
unit



10 special
schools
(1 academy)



11 nursery
schools

About Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) has a statutory duty to prepare and publish an Annual Report every 12 months which describes how our partners safeguard vulnerable children and young people. Our primary responsibility is to provide a way for the local agencies that have a responsibility for 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. We changed from the old Board structure into a Partnership in April 2019 and are governed by our Partnership Arrangements.

The Annual Report 2021/22 aims to demonstrate the extent to which the functions of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, as set out in the national statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)', have been fulfilled and to provide assurance that the multi-agency safeguarding system is effective.

The work of the partners throughout the entire reporting period continued to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with changes in working practices and activity necessary, but this seems if anything to have strengthened connectivity across the Partnership.

The Vision and Values of the DSCP have remained the consistent driver over the last year with continued emphasis on Child Exploitation and Neglect as well as our focus on the following four Practice Improvement themes:

- Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
- Management Understanding and Decision Making
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Cumulative Harm and Risk Assessment.

The Partnership has been supported by seven strategic sub-groups; Embedding Learning; Performance, Challenge and Impact; the Child Exploitation Group, the Workforce Learning and Development group, Neglect Group and the Child Death Overview Panel.

Our Vision and Values

Our Vision is simple, it's about 'Keeping Children Safe' on the premise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It acts as an umbrella covering all that we do and underpinned through our three Core Values – Tenacity; Curiosity; Openness.

Our Partners

Each local area is required by law to have a Safeguarding Children Partnership. The DSCP is a statutory body established in legislation (Children Act 2017) and works according to national guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018', and in accordance with the local Partnership Arrangements. The statutory guidance provides children's safeguarding with a legal framework, setting out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners.

The statutory bodies are supported by a number of other Relevant Agencies coming from the areas of Criminal Justice; Health; Education and the Voluntary sector.



DSCP Budget 2021-22

The financial contributions from the strategic partners are as follows, with monies from the 4 NHS Trusts being part of the CCG overall total:

Partner	Contribution 2020/21 (£)
Durham County Council	191,604
Clinical Commissioning Groups (ICB)	105,135
Durham Constabulary	39,285
CDDFT – Admin costs for CDOP	6,036
Training fees	5,000
Total	347,060

Safeguarding Children Sub-Groups

The DSCP has seven principal sub-groups – Performance, Challenge and Impact; Embedding Learning; Child Exploitation Group; and the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP).

● Performance, Challenge and Impact Group

The purpose of the Performance, Challenge and Impact group is to monitor the impact and outcomes of partner activity on behalf of the DSCP, as required by Chapter 3 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

The group considers the performance of all agencies involved in safeguarding children using the Vision of the DSCP as a basis from which to assess good practice and concerns, reporting such to the Safeguarding Executive Group, by using data and intelligence.

● Embedding Learning Group

The purpose of the Embedding Learning Group is to improve the quality of multi-agency safeguarding frontline practice through the implementation of a joint, co-ordinated approach which will ensure good outcomes for children which will be evidenced through multi-agency audit, peer review and inspection.

Their work will respond to the recommendations and actions from inspection; audit; serious case reviews/child safeguarding practice reviews; local learning lessons reviews; complaints; performance information; and feedback from children and families. This is to ensure multi-agency safeguarding practice is high quality; makes a difference to children; and enhances learning about what works for children and families.



● Child Exploitation Group

Over the last 2-3 years the DSCP had an unusually high caseload of Serious Case Reviews (SCR) and through the transition across to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) had these to finalise. During the reporting period six serious case reviews were concluded and published. (link to website). Cases have been referred under the CSPR process, but none have progressed to full review. There have been 3 Local Rapid Reviews and one case which was progressed to a Learning Review. With one other case it was agreed that the criteria for a local CSPR had been met, however all the learning had already been identified at the Rapid Review stage meaning there was no added value in undertaking this.

● Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 specifies, 'When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned'.

The CDOP oversees all deaths of children under 18 regardless of cause, of which there have been 28 in the reporting period. All of these are subject to a Child Death Review (CDR) (link to report). The CDOP works closely with the Safeguarding Executive Group to highlight any emerging themes and issues and learning from child death reviews that require further consideration. The CDOP also completes its own Annual Report.

Significant work has taken place to harness the recommendations and learning from all reviews and other areas of both internal and external scrutiny. The Partnership, in an evolving way now determines Practice Improvement Themes which require sustained multi-agency focus going forward, with the governance for progression sitting both with the Embedding Learning Group and CDOP which has its own Thematic Review process. It is within these themed areas that the learning from both Child Death Reviews (CDR) and CSPR's sit.

The purpose of the Workforce Learning and Development is to ensure that safeguarding children training needs are identified, training is delivered to a consistently high standard and that there is a process in place for the partnership to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training. The Workforce Learning and Development has the responsibility to integrate the learning from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and significant events into training. The group will deliver a communications strategy to raise the profile of the DSCP.



The Ongoing Effect Of COVID-19

Covid continued to have an impact on the working arrangements of the DSCP during this reporting period, most notably around our meeting structure which in the main continued to be across Microsoft Teams.

This has ensured extremely strong attendance across partner agencies and will continue to be the model going forward, but with a mix of hybrid style meetings when the need arises. The other key area having effect is across our multi-agency training provision.

There has been significant development on what this offer looks like and forms part of our current Training Strategy, which is heavily focused on remote and digital learning (see Training section).

Safeguarding assurance still formed part of the monthly Embedding Learning Group with an ongoing responsibility to assess and address potential gaps in service delivery in terms of both restriction and capacity, in order to maintain an effective Partnership service as the pandemic evolved.

The group was able to coordinate and maximise the capacity of frontline practitioners across the Partnership to ensure that the most vulnerable children were consistently seen.



Partnership Development Sessions

There have been 2, 6 monthly development sessions in the partnership which included representatives from the relevant agencies.

April 2021 Topic – Signs of Safety Practice Framework

- How do the values underpinning the vision align with the values/ambition of the DSCP?
- Where are the opportunities for the DSCP to embed this framework?

Signs of Safety

We have continued to embed the Signs of Safety framework across the partnership placing a real focus on the strengths within families and the importance of building good quality relationships with children, their families and naturally connected networks.

Our child protection strategy meetings, child protection conferences and child protection plans are all aligned to the signs of safety framework.

We use key Signs of Safety tools such as the Harm Matrix and Scaling questions to help practitioners, families and managers think about how worried we are about a child or young person.

Families and their network are central to the child protection process and there is an expectation that child protection plans are now developed collaboratively with families in child protection conferences. We know through our audit work and the recent Children's Services Ofsted Inspection that practice is improving as a result.

Outcomes

A multi-agency signs of safety group has been established, which considers the progress the delivery of signs of safety, the impact and learning for the partnership. This group will continue with its work through the next year.

October 2021 Topic - Harmful Sexual Behaviour

(Guest speaker – Professor Simon Hackett)

- What gaps are there in our Partnership arrangements re HSB?
- Are we confident staff are skilled in having those difficult conversations?
- Gathering and sharing good practice.

Outcomes

Development of multi-agency thematic plan around awareness, good practice, and communications. Area included in the Child sexual abuse Improvement.

Learning through the Partnership

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Over the past year we have undertaken two rapid reviews. None of these reviews identified the need for a Local Safeguarding Practice Review. One review resulted in a local learning event with practitioners and the other, learning was identified in the rapid review. The actions from these reviews were included within our improvement areas above and have been progressed.

Learning from National Panel

Local learning as well as national reviews such as "Myth of Invisible Men – NAI in under 1's" have helped inform and been informed by the multiagency and improvement plans locally. Key themes from the learning relating to teenage neglect and transition and how this has informed the development of the Asset team and priorities around contextual safeguarding.



Practitioner Led Multi-Agency Audits

The Partnership seeks to challenge partners to continuously improve safeguarding for children and young people in County Durham. Multi-agency, collaborative and practitioner led auditing is scheduled throughout the year and the Partnership aims to complete between 4 and 6 multi-agency audits within the annual reporting period. Along with the Section 11 and Practitioner Survey, our multi agency audit programme informs our direction and understanding of local practice. The focus of audits is determined through discussion between the DSCP Business Manager and the chairs of the two main subgroups, utilizing learning from both groups.

A flexible approach is taken to scheduling the audits and the areas for review to ensure the process remains responsive to the understanding of issues within the partnership and the level of complexity or investigation required. The Embedding Learning sub-group has been responsible for coordinating responses to findings, ensuring all areas for improvement are addressed effectively and that any learning gained from audits is embedded in practice across the partnership.

2021-2022 - Summary Learning Points

- Collaborating effectively, reviewing knowledge and facilitating partner involvement are consistently identified as a key practice to successful safeguarding interventions.
- Leadership characterised by pro-actively engaging partners in the ongoing development of responses, effectively communicating and seeking information in the decision-making process, is probably the single most important area of practice that would benefit from development
- Improved outcomes are observed in situations where practitioners gain confidence from accessing clear procedures, tools and management support
- Measures to ensure a holistic approach to safeguarding issues is the first consideration, to ensure all individuals are considered and the best available support is made available throughout and beyond responses to the initial reason for referral.
- Understanding the lived experience of the child does not fulfil its potential contribution to effective decision making and responses if it does not reflect the lived experience across a range of environments and contexts. The partnership's response is reflected in the adoption of the Improvement Theme "The Lived Experience and Voice of the Child" and the development of Standards of Expectation for consideration of the voice of the child across all partner agencies.

Recurring Themes and Observations from Multi-Agency Audits

The following are the key findings from the multi-agency auditing programme:

System

- Practice benefits when there is consistent supervisory support and case oversight. The most frequently identified benefits are
 - opportunities for reflection on achieving best outcomes
 - exploring approaches to decision making
 - reassurance to practitioners
 - supporting challenge and professional discussion.

This has resulted in the development of training and support planning regarding management understanding and decision making within the partnership training offer.

- Practitioners benefit when there are clearly understood pathways and tools. The most frequently identified benefits are
 - engaging partners in “partnership working”
 - timeliness of action
 - consistency throughout case record.

Think ‘Others’

- Consideration of potential effect of risks on the child’s family, e.g. siblings and extended family members, is frequently missing or not robust in the development of plans and multi-agency responses. Practitioners could be broader in their focus of concern, and this is more frequently identified when seeking to resolve issues within complex family arrangements. This has resulted in the development and promotion of group supervision within partner practice
- Better outcomes are observed when practitioners use tools such as chronology, genogram, harm matrix; and/or apply specific methods such as family network conferencing. As a result, the partnership adopted of the Improvement Theme “Cumulative Harm and Risk Assessment” which has led to development and promotion across communication channels of tools such as the Harm Matrix and multi-agency Chronologies
- Outcomes may improve by formal consideration of options for available support beyond the response to the immediate concern. A lack of engagement with Early Help and specialist agencies in the decision to close a case is often highlighted as a missed opportunity for improving risk assessment and decision effectiveness.

This has led to Early Help working with key partners, children, young people and parents and carers to develop a new Early Help Assessment based on our Signs of Safety practice model.





Working Together

- Effective partnership working, maintained throughout the safeguarding response, is the most frequently highlighted area for development.
 - Pro-active engagement of partners and communication by lead professional
 - Encouraging professional curiosity
 - Maintaining engagement with all partners
 - Seeing the safeguarding need as multi-dimensional
 - Engaging beyond the formal processes, such as strategy meetings
 - Communicating and information sharing as a continuous process
 - Enabling professional discussions by valuing and recording dissenting opinions This has led to the adoption of management understanding and decision making as an Improvement Theme within the partnership, developing standards for Reflective Discussion embedding good practice across partner agencies.

Child Centred

- Overall, the most consistent factor is practitioners maintaining a child-centred approach
- There is often a clear difference between good and bad in the quality of practice with very good examples of practitioners recording the voice or making clear effort to consider factors affecting the lived experience of the child, contrasted with none or little effort in other cases. This area of practice would benefit from consistent standards
- Tools for engagement are often agency centric with a resulting strong but narrow understanding of the child's lived experience. A multi-agency tool would be useful to practitioners in providing a shared expectation of holistic information in risk assessment and decision making. As a result, work on promoting use of the Harm Matrix across the partnership is planned.
- Knowledge of the Voice of the Child is often not shared effectively with partners and so does not always create a full picture of understanding throughout the process of implementing a safeguarding response. This can reduce the effectiveness of decision making. As a result of the adoption of the Improvement Theme "The Lived Experience and Voice of the Child" the partnership has updated the partners 'Professional Pledge' and relaunched the commitment that children are central to all we do and we hold each other to account.

Training and the Delivery of Local and National Learning

The learning from the audits above, local Reviews and national Reviews are analysed to establish common themes and recommendations. This informs the basis of our 6 monthly safeguarding week content but also areas of training and development for training programme where trainers are commissioned who are 'experts' within the topic subject.

In relation to our improvement areas, the Training Programme has been revised to include the learning from these areas

Management Understanding and Decision Making

- Emphasis has been placed on reflective supervision, professional curiosity and challenge in safeguarding week and safeguarding managers/Designated Safeguarding Leads training
- Safeguarding Week was developed by Senior Members of Partner Organisations to come up with a focus topics and facilitators from each agency
- There was a gap identified in training programme which was safeguarding training specifically for Managers and DSL. SOS, Harm Matrix, Multi-Agency Chronologies, Reflective Supervision, Professional Curiosity which have all been highlighted in recent reviews as areas of improvement have been implemented
- Impact forum – giving professionals the opportunity to share how training has impacted on practice and their managers the opportunity to monitor this
- CP Conference training developed with IRO and eLearning package is available on Me Learning. Mock Conference training is also being developed with roll out in September.

Voice and Lived Experience of the Child

- This is a common theme in all training on the DSCP training programme and great emphasis and information is shared on this
- Safeguarding week topic, consistent slide on 20 topics in safeguarding week on this and further plan to carry out a practical session on tools to use
- Development of Safeguarding Managers training which focusses on VOC and lived experiences, how they can evidence and utilise the tools in the workplace, ensure that the practitioners they supervise are using this effectively and that children and young people's voices are being recorded consistently.



Risk Assessment/Cumulative Harm

- Cumulative Harm action plan has been completed
- Embedded into Safeguarding Managers training
- Topic at safeguarding week.

Child Sexual Abuse

- CSA training commissioned by Barnardo's and evaluations are excellent
- CSA delivered by CSA Centre in safeguarding week to bring a national perspective to complement our local knowledge.

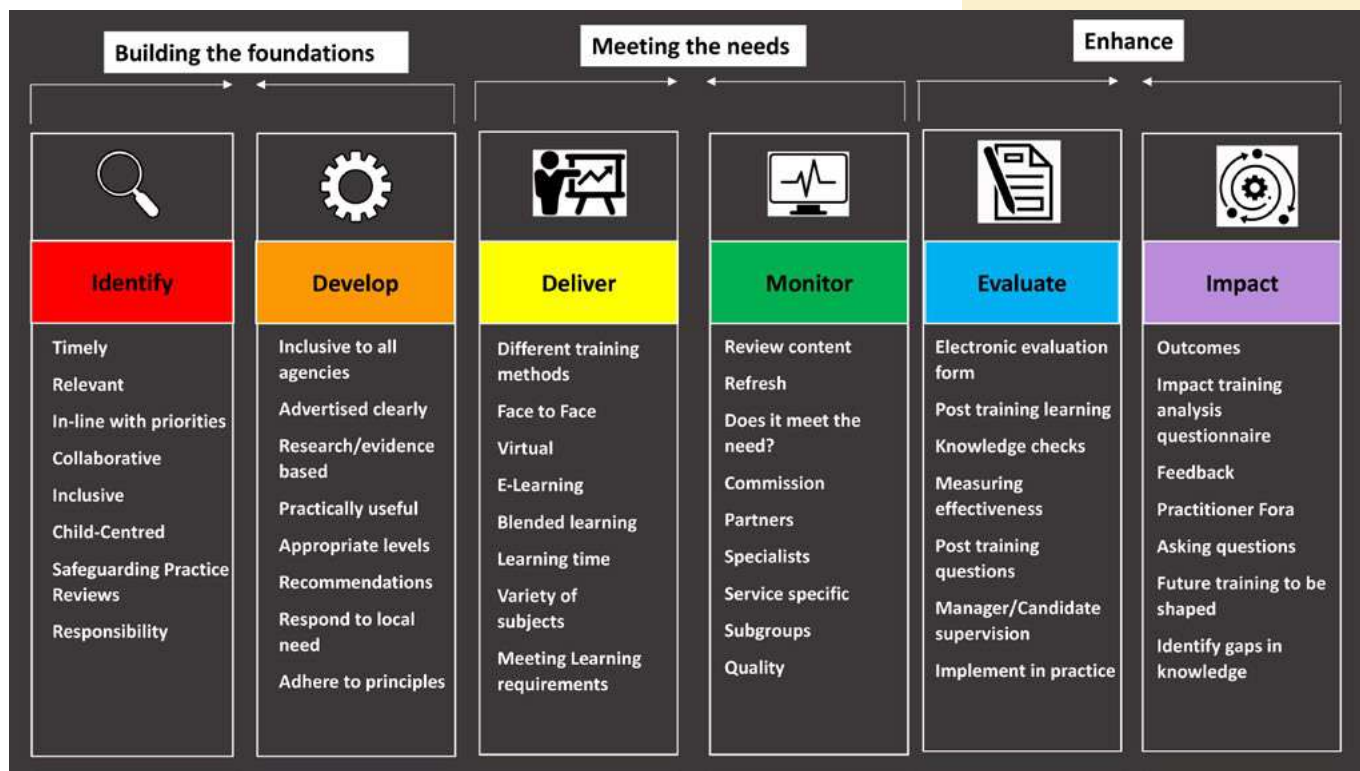
Impact of training on practice is monitored firstly by training evaluations and secondly by Impact Forum which is a new group where all those that have accessed training come together to share how effective the training was, how this has impacted in their work and the difference it has made to children and young people. Safeguarding Managers training then talks about Managers monitor this with the practitioners they supervise.

Evaluation of safeguarding week and the increase in bookings on the same topics on the training programme indicates practitioners were given a taster and wanted to know more about this subject by attending a more in-depth training programme.

Although our safeguarding weeks have been a success, there are lessons to learn with regards to key representatives from partnership to take responsibility in dissemination of information to practitioners and to ensure attendance.

- Advertising on social media requires improvement for next time.





Key Safeguarding Partnership Considerations Looked After Children and Care Leavers

In January 2022 the Looked After Children Service underwent a restructure and is now made up of five teams consisting of a team manager, social workers and a social work consultant. We have embedded a relationship-based practise approach, valuing relationships with children and their families, each other and the partners we work with. This has resulted in positive feedback about the support we give our children and their families.

Partners work with children and their families to proactively support the child to return home when it's safe and in their best interests to so. We have seen an increase in children returning home and are offering support to ensure this is maintained. We are developing strong working relationships with our commissioning services which allows homes to be found for children which can well meet their needs.

In the second half of the reporting period there has been a significant amount of work undertaken aligned to our practice framework, Signs of Safety, to support our multi-agency practitioners proactively identifying naturally connected networks and ensuring they are central to our care planning practice.

Developing Pathway Plans for young people at an earlier stage is a focus of our development work and we are now evidencing more direct work with young people informing their own plans. There has been additional training in areas such as working with parents in a trauma informed way to help parents increase their knowledge of the impact of trauma on their children.

The Care Leaver service is now more streamlined since the restructure in Jan 2022. This has included better partnership working with health, voluntary sector and housing and as a result we are starting to see better

outcomes for our care experienced young people. The Care Leaver Hub opened in February 2022 this has created many opportunities for our care leavers.

Further developments for children looked after include:

- A Pathway is now in place to ensure all children placed out of area are offered a health passport
- Ongoing improvements with the provision of Requests for Health Passports from the Local Authority will need to be maintained for the children placed in Durham
- Due to increase in under1's in Durham becoming looked after, a review of the pre-birth service was undertaken including birth response plans and Early Help. As a result the 'Pause' Board, which works with women who have experienced, or are at risk of, repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care, was established and there is now a Strategic Delivery Group for Vulnerable Pre-Birth and under 1-year olds in County Durham.

Outstanding



Use of Restraint

In conjunction with Durham County Council, the DSCP monitors the use of restraint at Aycliffe Secure Services Centre. The Centre houses a changing population of young people (aged 11-17) with complex needs. The home regularly reports information regarding the use of restraint to the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted, who has judged it as being **outstanding** in all areas (April 2021).

Injuries due to restraint are graded 1-3, with 3 being the most serious involving serious cuts, fractures or loss of consciousness. Of the 408 incidents of restraint recorded for the year, 71% caused no injury at all, and whilst 117 resulted in injury, it is notable that 96% were at level 1, with only 1 being recorded in the highest level 3 category.

Scrutiny involves a regular review of the home's CCTV where randomly selected incidents are reviewed with a manager from the home about the use of restraint, the circumstances leading up to the incident and what happened afterwards. This scrutiny provides assurance to the Partnership that the use of restraint is being monitored in terms of legality and proportionality in cooperation with the centre. The Aycliffe Centre has been judged as outstanding across all areas in its most recent Ofsted inspection.

Early Help Transformation Programme

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced in the November 2021 Spending Review a £200m uplift in funding to support a 3-year extension and refresh of the national Supporting Families programme, known in Durham as Stronger Families. The new programme will focus on building the resilience of vulnerable families and require all areas to have joined up, efficient local early help services, able to identify families in need and provide the right support at the right time.

As of 22 March 2022, Durham achieved significant and sustained outcomes for 995 families in 2021/22 which exceeded the target of 761 set by DLUHC. Since 2015, 6085 families have 'turned around', 5331 families have achieved significant and sustained outcomes and 754 achieving continuous employment.

Activity

Working with key partners, children, young people and parents and carers to develop a new Early Help Assessment based on our Signs of Safety practice model. This will be launched in August 2022. This development will also capture Early Help Assessments and Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangements undertaken across the wider early help system, providing a richer picture of early help offered and the impact on children, young people and families across County Durham.

Locality Early Help Conversations, which continue to be held fortnightly providing an environment to ensure children, young people and families requiring additional help and support have access to the broad range of help across the early help system, resulting in approximately 86% being offered VCS support as part of their offer of support.





Case Study

A young girl was brought to her GP regarding concerns about her emotional wellbeing and bullying at school. The child had recently been discharged from CAMHS and Gran (Child's Carer) was not sure where to turn to for support. The GP discussed Early Help and obtained consent to make an Early Help Request. The GP telephoned the Early Help Triage Team and discussed the worries for the family as well as what was going well.

The GP and Early Help Triage Worker agreed it would be appropriate to discuss the family's needs at a Locality Early Help Conversation. Partners in attendance at the Conversation, including CAMHS, were able to gather and share additional and appropriate information as Gran had consented.

Due to appropriate information sharing the family were referred to the One Point Intensive Family Support Team where a Key Worker was allocated and a Team Around the Family arranged. The partners in attendance committed to providing multi-agency support which was co-ordinated through the One Point Key Worker and the Child and Family Plan which included:

For the Child

Further therapeutic support from CAMHS. Support from One Point in using the Mental Health First Aid Kit (sleep diary, mindfulness/relaxation strategies and a "My Life Journal"). One to one support regarding risk taking behaviours. Collaborate working with school and development of an incentive scheme to encourage school attendance and attend Homework Club.

For Gran

Support for Gran to better manage her own mental health. Parenting support for Gran to assist in managing her Granddaughter's behaviour and mental health. A referral to Adult Social Care for Gran to request an assessment for home adaptations to improve the home environment. A Think Family Employment Advisor to support Gran to look into volunteering opportunities (at Gran's request) to help with Gran's mental health and confidence.

For Both

A Family Support Network identified by child and Gran with the support from Key Worker has enabled those people who are important to the family to support them when things are tricky without the dependency or need for a formal "service" which is far more sustainable. The family continue to work positively with One Point and partners and are making good progress.

ICON

ICON is a parenting programme aimed at giving parents the skills to deal with a crying infant.

Infant crying is normal

Comforting Methods can help

Ok to walk away (for a short period as long as baby is safe)

Never, ever shake a baby

This has been designed to improve parental reaction to crying and specifically to reduce incidents of abusive head trauma. It is an evidenced based programme which is being rolled out nationally, commissioned regionally by NHS England. It is endorsed by The Royal College of General Practitioners and The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

It is delivered across 5 key touchpoints which are mandated as below;

- At the hospital before discharge
- By the community midwife in the baby's first 10 days
- By the health visitor in the first 14 days
- By the health visiting again at three weeks
- By the GP at the six-to-eight-week postnatal check.

ICON roll out In Durham was led by the Designated Nurse and included Early Help and Pre-birth teams. Anyone who is a parent, a prospective parent or has caring responsibilities should be informed of this message and part of ICON's success in Durham is the reinforcement of that message at every 'touchpoint' as well as at opportunistic contact with new or potential parents and carers. Phase 2 of ICON will include increasing the reach of the programme across the DSCP partnership.





Achievements Against Priorities

'When everything is a priority, nothing is!'. Considering this maxim, the partnership continued to recognise there was a need to focus in the right areas in order to make a difference and have impact on our service delivery. Four Practice Improvement themes were identified (see below), with each managed by the Safeguarding Executive and the wider partnership across the period.

Improvement Theme

- The Lived Experience and Voice of Children

Activity

- Standards of Expectation designed and introduced across all partner agencies
- Professional Pledge updated and relaunched commitment children are central to all we do and we hold each other to account
- DSCP training offer designed so that lived experience of children is consistent in all courses
- Impact Forums introduced to assess real difference on practice multi-agency training has
- Audit programme developed so voice and lived experience is considered across all DSCP and single agency audits.

Impact/Difference

- Agencies understand the expected standards when considering lived experience/ voice of children
- Robust processes are in place in each agency to monitor and report on compliance and impact.

Improvement Theme

- Management Understanding and Decision Making

Activity

- Standards for Reflective Discussion developed and embedded into practice across partner agencies
- Professional Pledge updated and relaunched commitment children are central to all we do and we hold each other to account around decisions made
- Risk Assessment/Cumulative Harm embedded into Safeguarding Managers training
- Audit activity and Third-Party Assurance to examine decision making in child protection processes.

Impact/Difference

- Through audit and key scrutiny there is clear evidence of reflective supervision taking place across agencies
- Regular evidence appears of strong supervision and management oversight in a high percentage of cases.

Improvement Theme

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Activity

- Enhanced multi-agency training provision introduced
- Extensive 12 week phased multi-agency Communications Plan developed and implemented
- Good Practice guidance developed
- Focus of DSCP Development Day, October 2021 (Professor Simon Hackett)
- The DSCP revised and relaunched its harmful sexual behaviour procedures in February 2020. A series of briefing was offered across Children's Services to highlight the procedures
- A briefing was also provided to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the Central Referral Unit (CRU) that sits within First Contact
- A referral pathway was agreed with CDYJS and First Contact to ensure that appropriate referrals were shared with CDYJS
- A tool has been developed for practitioners across the partners to use to identify the stages of sexual development for children and young people including behaviours that are healthy through to problematic, inappropriate or concerning and abusive.

Impact/Difference

- Referrals under the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) pathway have increased since the relaunch and County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) who manage the HSB pathway on behalf of the partnership, have observed referral numbers increasing (to CDYJS) from 24 referral between 1/4/19 to 31/3/20 to 152 for the same period 2021 to 2022
- The increase in referrals has seen a much better response from partners in information sharing via the professionals only meetings that take place that include police, health, CDYJS, schools and children's services. This has improved how we can support young people and their parents/primary carers when their child is under police investigation and how we can ensure that their safety and that of others is not compromised through safety planning and when indicated, risk management plans
- The increase in referrals has seen an increase in AIM3 assessments including AIM: Under 12s assessments. These assessments have been undertaken with a social worker and a case manager from CDYJS (one worker has to be trained in the respective AIM assessment framework)
- CDYJS has been able to provide support, consultation and quality assurance oversight for the practitioners undertaking the assessments from a manager who is now trained in the supervision of AIM3
- A range of resources for working with HSB have been collated and are available to practitioners in Children's Services
- CDYJS has been able to provide support for practitioners with interventions when requested
- The tool gives guidance on how to respond to such behaviours. The tool has been promoted through briefing that have taken place in July 2022.



Improvement Theme

- Cumulative Harm and Risk Assessment

Activity

- Cumulative Harm guidance developed and cascaded across communication channels looking at key areas like Harm Matrix and Chronologies
- Practice Expectations 12 month Rollout Plan introduced
- Access into Signs of Safety briefings enhanced and woven into all DSCP training provision.

Impact/Difference

- Through appropriate levels of scrutiny and health check, multi-agency meetings are well facilitated to enable the continued assessment of risk and progress for children and families
- There is a robust analysis of family history, capacity to change and the impact on the child
- There has been improvement as to how professionals use plain language that children and families understand.



Overview by the Independent Chair/Scrutineer of the progress made by the DSCP 2021/22

I was appointed by the DSCP Executive in September 2020 with the remit to not only chair certain meetings, but to act as a critical friend to the DSCP in scrutinising their effectiveness.

The annual report indicates what has been achieved by the partnership in 2021/22 against the continuing significant impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The partnership, agencies and particularly staff have continued to respond well to the pandemic by working together to maintain effective safeguarding arrangements for children and young people throughout the year, despite these challenges.

My first task on appointment was to undertake an independent review of how the partnership was operating and the outcomes and associated impact that it was achieving. This review was published in full and progress against the recommendations were detailed in the DSCP Annual Report for 2020/21.

As a result of this review during 2021/22 the DSCP Executive undertook to restructure the way the partnership functioned focusing on both a stronger assurance model and a learning model detailing how the partnership can understand practice and make improvements in a timely manner. Whilst this remodelling did take some time it is due to be launched in September 2022. The new way of working can be found at appendix one contained in a letter to partners explaining the change, associated rationale, and intended outcomes.

I had previously identified that the DSCP needed to focus more on the positive impact on children, young people, families, and carers from their actions. It is of note that this annual report is structured to include impact and difference across the improvement themes delivered throughout the year. This also included two Professional Development Days covering the subjects of Signs of Safety and Harmful Sexual Behaviour. It is also positive to see the DSCP developing excellent working relationships with Durham University to assist in practitioner development.



The scrutiny panel consisting of three independent voluntary members and the Independent Chair/Scrutineer commenced a review into the effectiveness of Designated Safeguarding Leads in Education towards the end of this reporting year following the review of the Voice of the child the previous year. Their findings will be presented to the DSCP Executive in September 2022. The purpose is to seek assurance, or otherwise, over effective single and multi-agency practice in this area. I would like to thank these independent and voluntary members for their continuing commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people and the practitioners charged with doing so.

Durham Constabulary was the subject of a PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency, and legitimacy) inspection in 2021/22 undertaken by His Majesty Inspector of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Service (HMICFRS). They were awarded a good for protecting vulnerable people. In May 2022 Ofsted conducted an inspection of Durham Local Authority Children's Services where an overall grade of good was given with an outstanding for the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families. Whilst these were single agency inspections, both did cover aspects of multi-agency working to safeguard children and young people, and therefore can give some assurance as to practice in this area.

In conclusion, I believe the DSCP is meeting its statutory obligations and will continue to improve how it achieves this, on delivery of the new operating model during 2022/23.



What's Next for 2022/23

The Partners requested a review to consider the options for a future learning model for the partnership.

A number of frameworks used by other partnerships were considered and it was agreed that the DSCP move towards a new meeting structure.

Changes towards this new model will be progressed into 2022/2023. We will hope to provide our analysis of the impact of this new direction in next year's annual report.

The development of the improvement areas will be progressed and up until the new arrangements are in place, the partnership will continue with the improvement areas below:

- Management Understanding and Decision Making
- Voice and Lived Experience of the Child
- Risk Assessment and Cumulative Harm
- Child Sexual Abuse.

Other priorities across the partnership

- Continue to embed the Signs of Safety Practice Framework across partner agencies
- Improve effectiveness of Partnership scrutiny and the assessment of impact
- Progress the DSCP website
- Maintain the Child Protection procedure updates
- Progress the work of the Child Death Overview panel
- Launch the new DSCP Website.



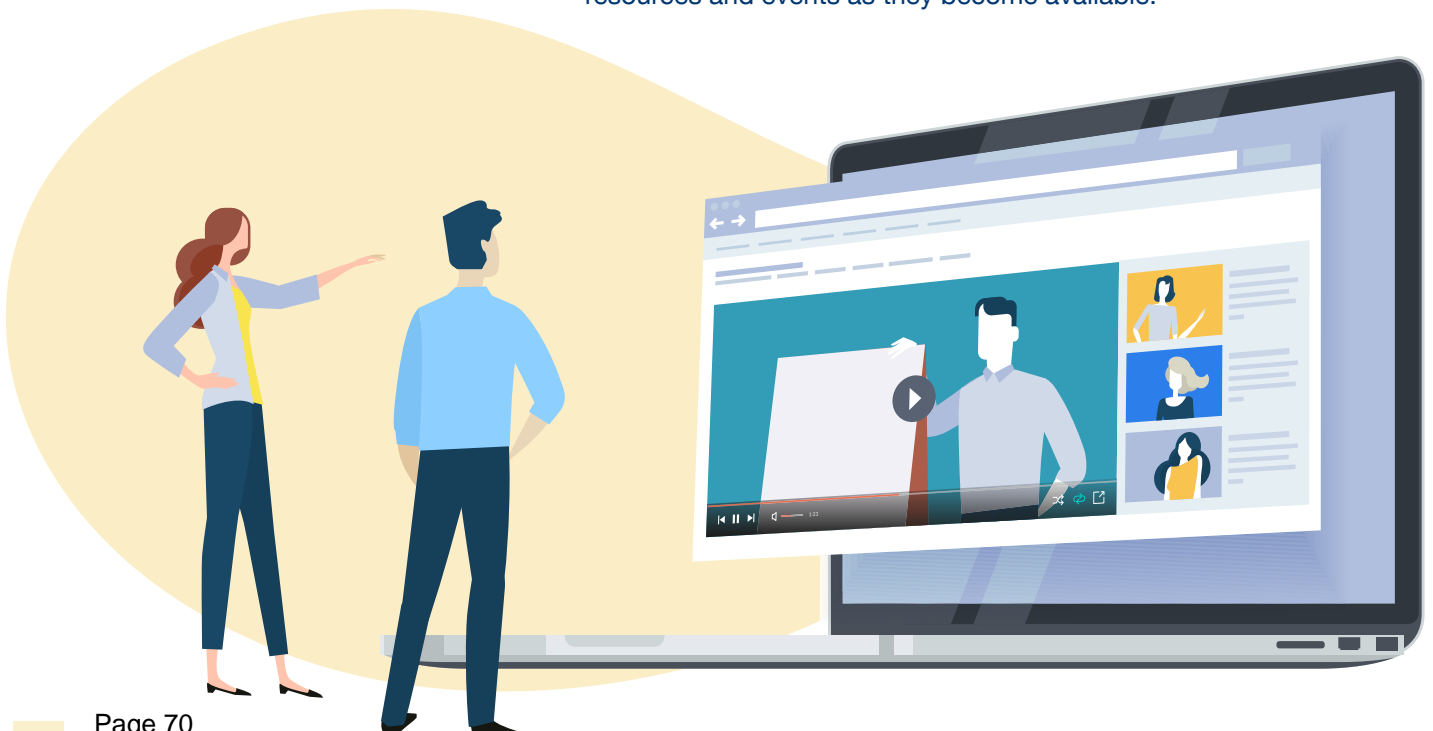
New DSCP Website

The redesign of the website has come from the learning from our audits, reviews and practitioner survey with the intention of focussing on realising the following benefits:

- Creating an effective communication channel within the Partnership
- Improving the accessibility of safeguarding tools and resources to practitioners
- Improve efficiency to partnership administration of training
- Present an effective public facing representation of the Partnership and its work.

Key Features

- Redesigned user experience – users should be able to find what they're looking for in three mouse clicks or less
- A new Training Section, making it easier to examine the whole programme of training
- Individual pages outlining information about each training event
- An integrated booking system to allow users to request a place on training directly from the course information page
- A new 'Resource Library' containing a wide range of practitioner and public resources
- Direct access from the Home Page to most popular downloaded resources
- Easy access to multi-agency child protection procedures
- An archive of the DSCP E-Bulletin and form to subscribe for future editions direct to your inbox
- Thematic sections for practitioners to quickly find and easily access general information and resources relating practice themes such as Domestic Abuse, Signs of Safety and Early Help
- A 'What's New' section on the homepage to highlight news, new resources and events as they become available.



Letter to the Partnership

22nd July 2022

Appendix 1

Dear DSCP Partner,

We wish to inform you of exciting changes to the operating arrangements and meeting structures in the partnership.

Since the launch of the DSCP partnership arrangements in April 2019 the partnerships' structure has been:

- The DSCP executive
- Embedded Learning Group (ELG)
- Challenge and Performance group
- Child Exploitation Group
- Neglect
- Several task and finish groups.

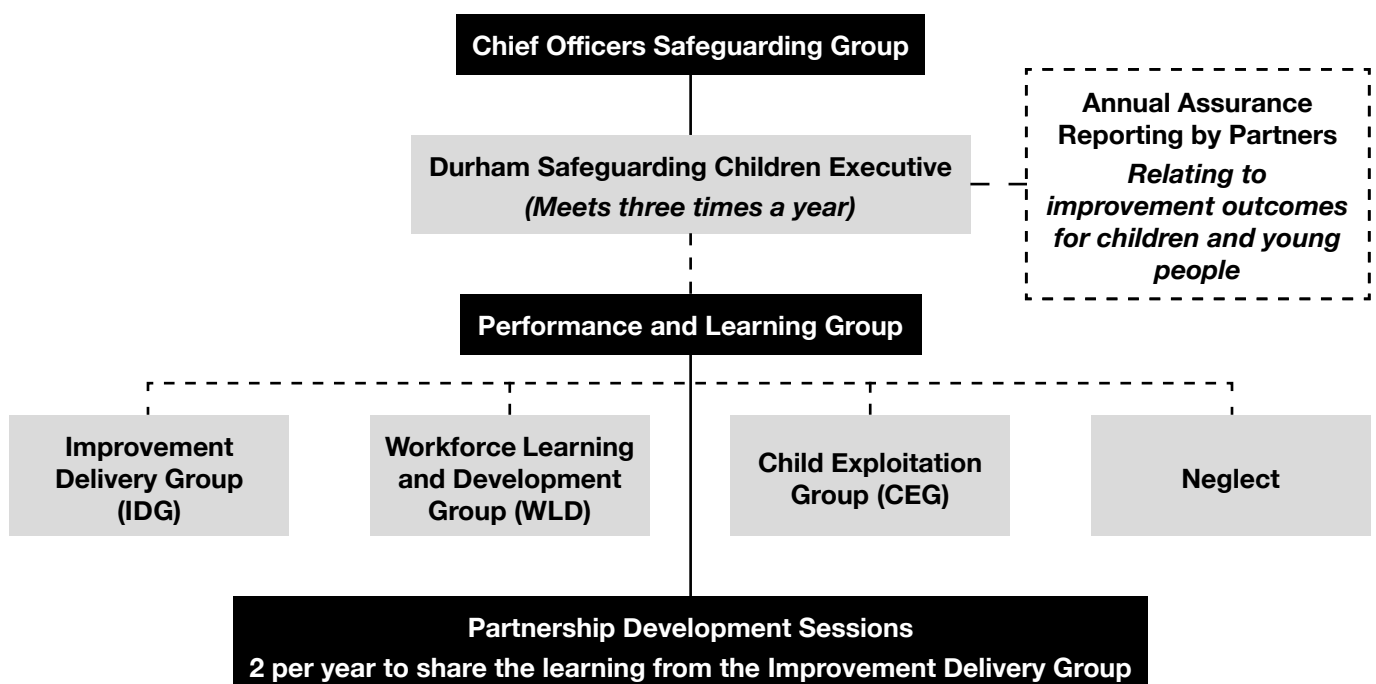
These groups have been very well attended and partner agencies have shown commitment to the work and made significant progress. However, there are several groups with similar attendance and the partnership wanted to look at ways to streamline these groups and focus their emphasis on learning and impact.

We explored how the 2 main groups, the Performance, Impact and Challenge group and the Embedded Learning Group (ELG) can be more responsive to local and national issues and determine areas for improvement by engaging with children and young people and practitioners.

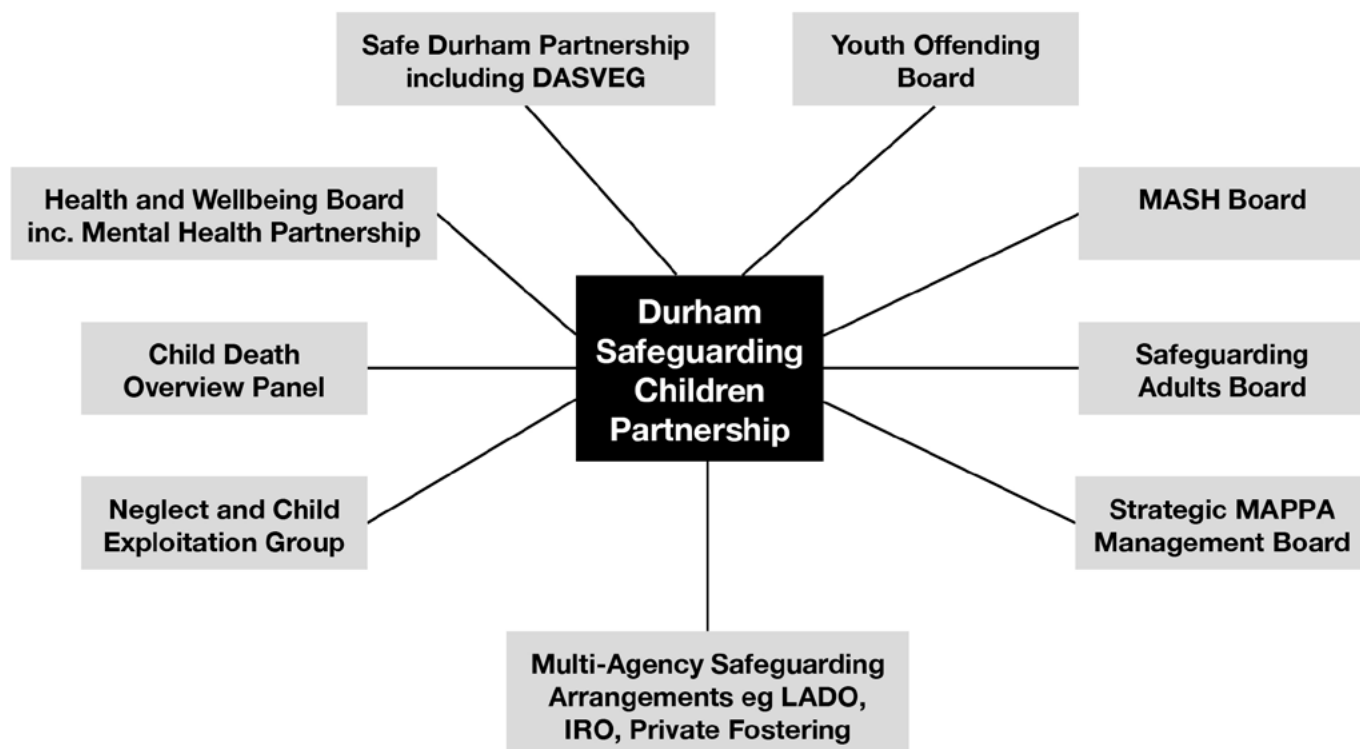
The biggest motivation for this change has been to consider a how the partnership can understand practice and make improvements in a timely manner.

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure

Key - Working Relationship——— Reporting Relationship- - - - -



Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Structure Reporting and Assurance Structure



Safeguarding Executive

The Safeguarding Executive will consist of the 3 safeguarding partners, the independent scrutineer and the Business Manager and will meet quarterly as a business meeting and will consider assurance reports.

Going forward it is proposed that the Safeguarding Executive will have the following functions:

- Provide Strategic direction
- Promote active learning
- Decision makers for Rapid Reviews etc.
- Receive assurance from Partners agencies and consider impact.

The Safeguarding Executive will meet with the two groups (Performance and Learning Group and the Improvement Delivery Group) three times a year to explore the new area for improvement and review the impact of the work completed from the previous theme. The groups together will explore learning both locally and nationally which includes the views of children and young people and the voice of practitioners to determine 3 improvement areas to be explored in the Improving Practice Delivery group (IDG). There will be more of a focus on practice.

It is envisaged that this will feel different for agencies and practitioners from the current meeting set up, and their engagement in the process of determining practice issues, it is hoped that by obtaining information quickly that this will move improvements in practice more reactively.

The Embedded Learning Group and Practice and Performance group have been concluded and the new Performance and Learning group will commence from the 1st September 2022.



Performance and Learning Group

The purpose of the Performance and Learning Group (PLG) will be to:

- Take forward learning priorities for 3 key areas of priority work. The key areas will be identified annually in conjunction with the executive
- Identify key pieces of work for the Improvement Delivery Group (IDG) to take forward and embed into front line practice in the context of the agreed priorities and receive regular progress updates
- Receive exception reports from analysis and then identify of potential Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) for deep dive analysis
- Identifying and ensuring dissemination of good practice, to celebrate and learn
- Analysis of local information and single agency intelligence to identify, scrutinise and determine action required to address any emerging themes
- Identification of partnership training needs, linking in with the Workforce Learning and Development (WLD) to take forward any required commissioning and delivery
- Coordinate and oversee an annual programme of multiagency auditing to provide assurance about improvement and impact, receive findings and ensure that learning is disseminated to front line staff
- Receive and disseminate the learning from rapid reviews and LCSP reviews and near misses
- Work with the Safeguarding Executive and Improvement Delivery Group (IDG) to determine the area of focus for the IDG 3 times a year and review and monitor the impact of the previous improvement area.

It is anticipated that the membership will be representatives from the following agencies:

- Durham Children's Services
- Durham Early Help Services
- Durham Police
- Northeast and Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
- Durham County Council Education
- Voluntary Sector
- Durham and Darlington Probation Service
- Durham Public Health.

Representatives should have the delegated responsibility to take actions for their own agency.



Improvement Delivery Group

The Improvement Delivery Group's purpose will be:

- The Improvement Delivery Group's role is to consider and reflect a range of information from a variety of sources relating to a multi-agency practice issue and to one of the safeguarding partnership's priorities
- The Improvement Delivery Group will consider these frontline challenges and successes and makes suggestions and recommendations to improve multi-agency working which are presented into the Executive Group by the Partnership Improving Practice Group
- The Improvement Delivery Group has been established by Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership to improve the effectiveness of Durham's Safeguarding and child protection practice across partnership agencies
- The aim of the Improvement Delivery Group is to ensure a clear line of sight into practice across the landscape of provision for County Durham's most vulnerable children including those in receipt of Early Help services
- The Improvement Delivery Group will bring together the views of children, their families, and professionals to inform the continuous development of services and approaches aimed at protecting children from harm and making positive differences to their lives. The Improvement Delivery Group will receive direction from the Safeguarding Executive and the Performance and Learning Group to direct the focused areas
- The Improvement Delivery group will have a standing membership of a few key individuals. Depending upon the area of practice in focus, individuals working in that area will be invited into the group to explore the issues and develop an improvement plan 3 times a year. These plans will be endorsed by the Safeguarding Executive and the Performance and Learning Group (PLG).

The Improvement Delivery group will also commence from 1st September 2022, and it is envisaged that the representation will be similar to members within the existing Embedded Learning group.

The other groups have been maintained and there will be no change.

Performance

Exception performance reporting will be addressed within the Performance and Learning Group. The request is that agency SPOCs continue to complete the performance score card and input their agencies information as requested by the Programmes Manager.

This information will then be analysed and presented within an exception report to be presented to the Performance and Learning Group.

Performance will be reviewed and may be revised over coming months.



Assurance

We will be seeking assurance reporting annually and have a proposed forward plan for this and information requested in an assurance and impact report within the Background Papers section of this letter.

Multi-Agency Audits

Multi-Agency Audits will continue and the programme for 2022/23 is attached for information. These audits will be discussed in the Performance and Learning Group. Audit themes may change depending on the work undertaken by the Performance and Learning Group and the Improvement Delivery Group.

Next Steps

- We ask for your assistance in identifying representation from the agencies noted in the Performance and Learning Group and the Improvement Delivery Group sections
- We ask that your Specific Points of Contact for performance continue to provide the requested performance information
- You share these changes across your agencies
- Please see the terms of reference for the groups to assist in identifying a representative
- Please see the new assurance report template which will be used to assure the partnership
- We will continue with our twice a year development session and will share the notes of the Executive and outcome of the work from the Improvement Delivery Group quarterly
- New Teams virtual meeting invites for the Performance and Learning Group and Improving Delivery Group will be sent by mid- August
- Please note the proposed forward plan for assurance reporting and send any queries to the email below
- We ask for continued commitment to the other DSCP processes, e.g., procedures, S11, practitioner surveys, development sessions, safeguarding weeks etc.



Could you please provide the names of your representative and any specific queries or comments to Jacqui.doherty@durham.gov.uk by 5th August 2022.

We thank you for your continued commitment and engagement with the Partnership.

Yours Sincerely

John Pearce, Dave Ashton, Anne Fox and Jeanette Scott
Safeguarding Partners



pp

Jacqui Doherty
DSCP Business Manager

Background Papers

1. WLD Terms of Reference
2. Performance and Learning Terms of Reference
3. Improvement Delivery Group Terms of Reference
4. DSCP Terms of Reference
5. New Operating Structure (PowerPoint)
6. 2022/23 Audit Schedule (PowerPoint)

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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