

Priority Theme Altogether Better for Children and Young People

Through the Altogether Better for Children and Young People theme, we work to ensure that effective services are delivered in the most efficient way to improve the lives of children, young people and families in County Durham, which includes targeting resources at those who are most in need. The council plays a key role in the Children and Families Partnership, whose vision is to have a county where 'all children, young people and families believe, achieve and succeed'.

Achievements 2015-2016

- New 'Families First' teams have been established across the county, made up of social workers, family support workers and other specialist staff who have a wide range of skills and expertise to help children, young people and their families achieve and maintain good progress (Figure C&YP1). The teams also work with the voluntary and community sector to ensure that there are long-term sustainable plans in place for the family when they no longer need our support.
- Established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which works as a central point for the screening, gathering, sharing and analysing of information about children who may be at risk of harm or who may need support services.
- Successfully completed Phase 1 of the Stronger Families programme, to improve poor school attendance, unemployment, youth crime and adult anti-social behaviour, as well as a wide range of local criteria such as health, housing and domestic abuse. By March 2015, 1320 families had a successful intervention (100% of County Durham overall target).
- Engaged with over 8,000 secondary school pupils through the Student Voice Survey to determine their views on a range of subjects and issues to inform our services, in particular our Education services (Figure C&YP3).

Figure C&YP1.

Number of early help assessments completed by One Point service 2014 - 2015



- The council became responsible for commissioning 0-5 years health services including the health visitor service. Whilst carrying out our statutory duties, we have also reviewed commissioning for services for 5-19 year olds and are putting in place an integrated approach to health improvement services and service delivery for 0-19 year olds.

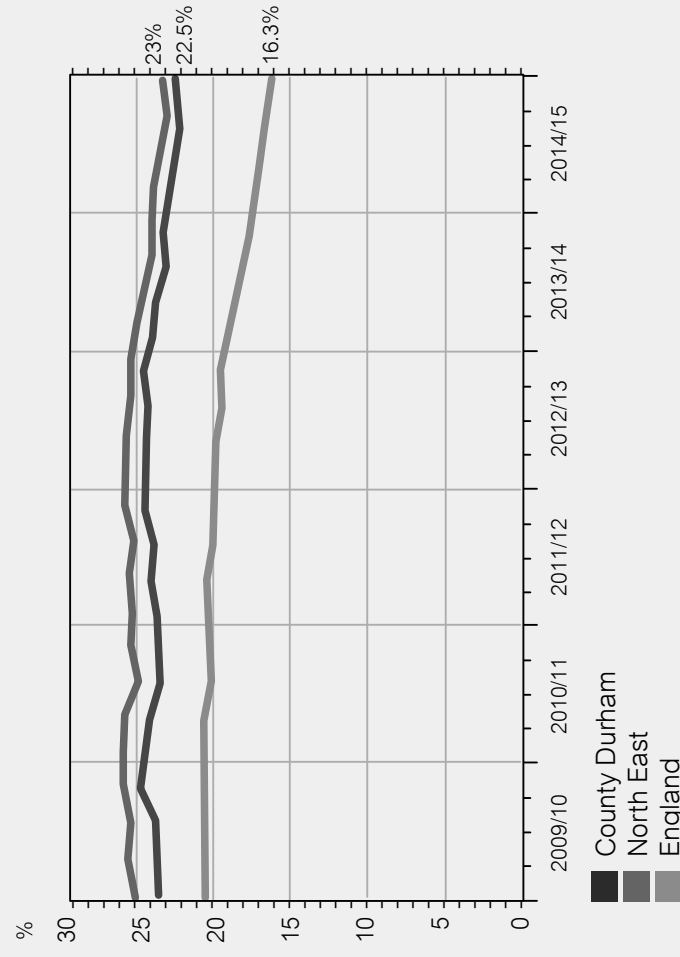
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Issues to address

- As birth rates between 2001 and 2014 have risen and led to an increase of children in the 0-4 age group of 10.5%, we need to ensure our pre-school and early years services are able to meet this demand.
- Children in County Durham have worse than average levels of obesity: 9.3% of children aged 4-5 years and 21.5% of children aged 10 -11 years are classified as obese, indicating that further support is required through our early years service.
- Teenage conception rates in County Durham have been falling over time but, at 33.8 per 1,000 teenage girls (age 15 -17) they are significantly higher than the England average (24.3) and the North East (30.6). We are committed to reducing this rate and improving outcomes for teenage parents.
- Alcohol-related hospital admission rates for under 18s (for 2013/2014) are 69.9 per 100,000 population, higher than the regional (65.8) and national (40.1) rates. This affects the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of young people and can be addressed through providing extra support in schools and working with families.
- Self harm is a key issue for the county. The number of 10-24 year olds admitted to hospital due to self-harm (523.5 per 100,000 population) is higher than the England average (412.1 per 100,000). This needs to be addressed by working with families on prevention and improving the quality of mental health care.
- Child poverty is worse in County Durham than the England average, with 22.7% of children under 16 years living in poverty (Figure C&YP2). Growing up in poverty has a significant impact on the development of children and young people both during their childhood and beyond. Work being undertaken to address child poverty is included under the Altogether Better Council theme.

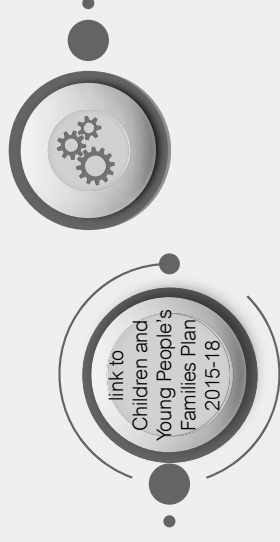
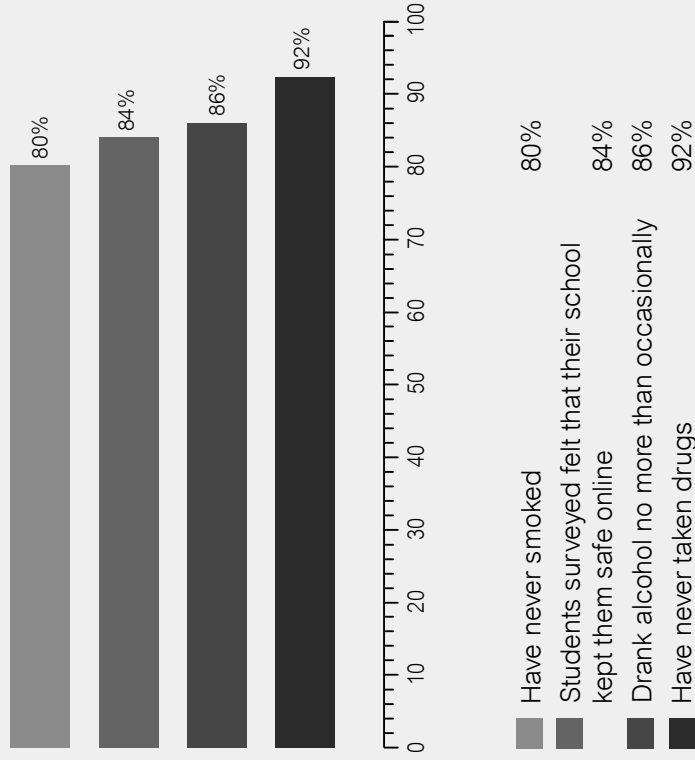
Figure C&YP2.

Percentage of children in poverty 2009/10 to 2014/15



Key Facts and Figures

Figure 3.
Student Voice Survey for Secondary Schools 2015



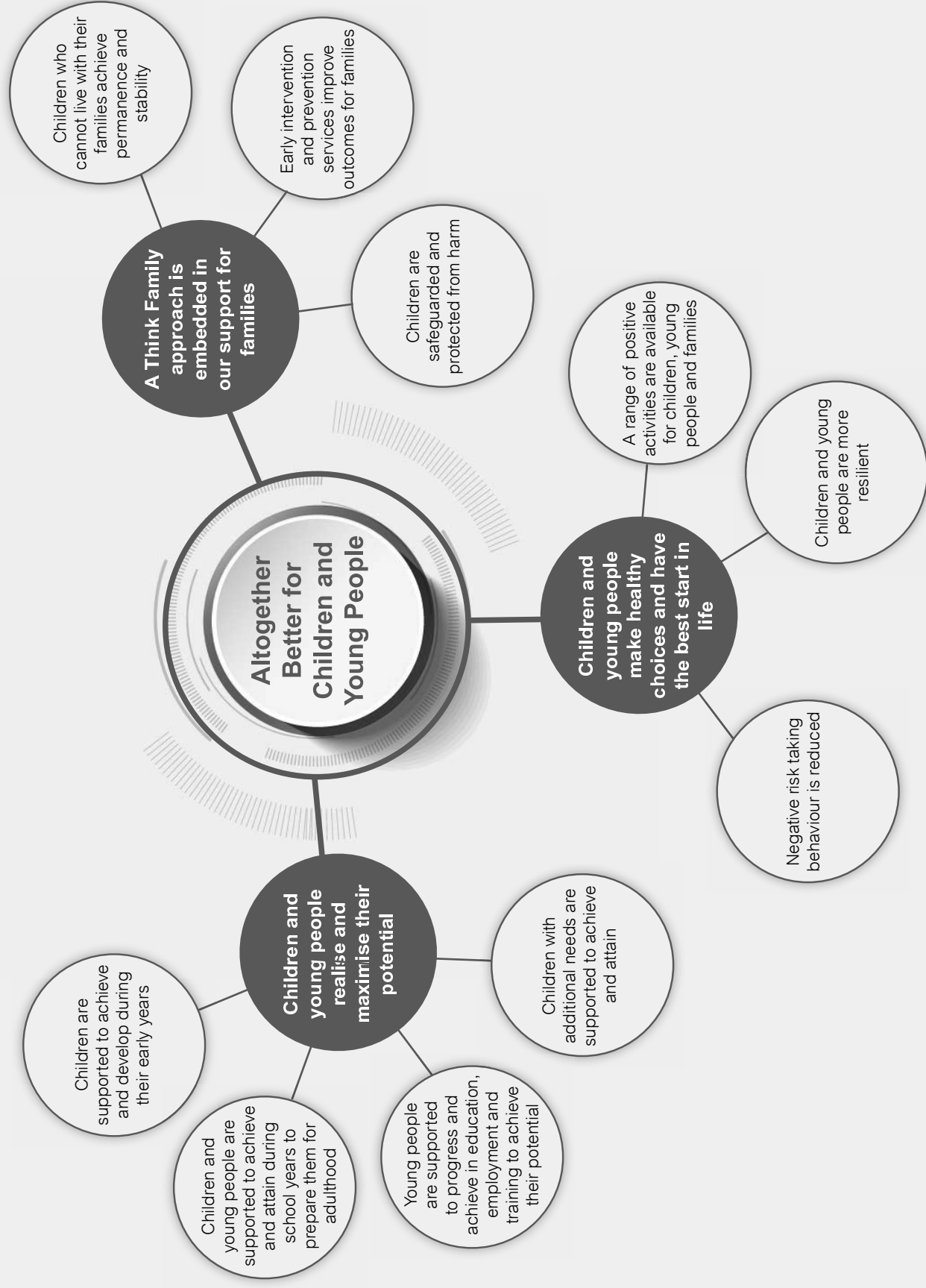
22.1%
 Percentage that children and young people under the age of 20 make up of the population of County Durham

1,220
 Estimated increase in the number of primary aged pupils between 2013/14 and 2023/24

19,700
 Contacts received by Children's Services for support, information and advice received in the year ending 30 November 2015

271
 Schools in the county, comprising 27 academies and 244 local authority maintained schools

Moving Forward - Key Areas of Focus for 2016-2019



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Objective 1

Children and young people realise and maximise their potential

Children are supported to achieve and develop during their early years

- We will:
- Deliver a range of services at a local level for 0-5 year olds
 - Deliver a new vulnerable parent pathway for all vulnerable teenage parents and other vulnerable groups through the use of health visitors and working closely with the Stronger Families programme

Children and young people are supported to achieve and attain during school years to prepare them for adulthood

- We will:
- Implement the 'Team Around the School' model so that early help is provided to young people and families in need of additional support.
 - Offer a programme to mainstream schools, as part of the curriculum, for 5-19 year olds regarding physical and mental health improvement to include topics such as relationships and mental health.

Young people are supported to progress and achieve in education, employment and training to achieve their potential

- We will:
- Lead on the implementation of the 'Durham Works' Youth Employment Initiative to help young people in the county to gain employment.
 - Deliver the 'Believe Achieve and Succeed' Plan, by identifying and co-ordinating activities to increase the participation of young people in learning.

Children with additional needs are supported to achieve and attain

We will ensure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability have improved opportunities by supporting schools and delivering training to enable them to implement services to promote equality and opportunities.

Objective 2

Children and young people make healthy choices and have the best start in life

Negative risk taking behaviour is reduced

We will provide better support to young and vulnerable teen parents and aim to reduce teenage pregnancies

Children and young people are more resilient

- We will:
- Enable children and young people to cope better with difficult situations, by developing a parental support network, a child bereavement service and a peer support programme in schools.
 - Work with health sector and voluntary and community organisations to provide support to young carers to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by their caring roles and responsibilities.

A range of positive activities are available for children, young people and families

- We will:
- Deliver targeted youth support to vulnerable young people through activities in each local area, in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to address various issues including negative and risk taking behaviour.
 - Support play across the county through the provision of fixed play sites.

Objective 3

A Think Family approach is embedded in our support for families

Children are safeguarded and protected from harm

- We will:
- Work with partners to help families facing multiple and complex challenges through delivery of Phase 2 of the Stronger Families Programme in County Durham.
 - Work with partners to ensure that need is met at the most appropriate level and that there is a timely response to high risk cases.
 - Work with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Early intervention and prevention services improve outcomes for families

- We will:
- Implement the Children's Social Care Innovation project to ensure services are effectively joined up and staff work together to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.
 - Maintain safety for all Looked After children.

Children who cannot live with their families achieve permanence and stability

We will ensure that all Looked After Children have a permanence plan which is implemented in a timely manner so that they are provided with a stable, secure, loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.