

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



**Tuesday, 11 November 2008**

**at 4.30 pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Aiken, Fleet, Griffin, Kaiser, London, McKenna, Preece, Shaw and Simmons,

Co-opted Members: David Relton and 3 vacancies

Resident Representatives: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Joan Steel and Sally Vokes

Young Peoples Representatives: Arran Frame, Dean Jeffries, Chris Lund, Gillian Pounder,  
Graham Skinner and Danielle Howie.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
3. **MINUTES**
  - 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October *(to follow)*
4. **RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items
5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items

6. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY  
FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

- 6.1 Children's Services Department: Budget and Policy Framework Initial  
Consultation Proposals 2009/10 – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

7. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Draft Final Report –  
*Children's Services Scrutiny Forum (to follow)*

8. **ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

9. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday, 13 January 2009, commencing at 4.30 pm in the  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

23 OCTOBER 2008

The meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Martyn Aiken, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Francis London,  
Chris McKenna and Arthur Preece.

Co-opted Member: David Relton

Resident Representative: Joan Steel

Young Peoples Representative: Gillian Pounder

Also present: Kelly Goulding and Leigh Bradley, Barnardos Participation Team.

Officers: Sally Robinson, Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist  
Services)  
John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager  
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **52. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Kaiser and Simmons, Resident Representative, Sally Vokes, and  
Young Peoples Representatives Arran Frame and Chris Lund..

### **53. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

### **54. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2008 were confirmed.

The Chair referred to a recent press article in relation to foster care services in the Hartlepool Mail which featured a foster carer who lives in Hartlepool and had complained about foster care support from a Local Authority. It had been brought to the attention of the Chair, that the Local Authority in question was

not Hartlepool Borough Council. The Chair had subsequently raised the issue with the Public relations officer who had contacted the paper who acknowledged the issue and were to print a retraction.

**55. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum**

No items.

**56. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

No items.

**57. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

No items.

**58. Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool BC's Foster Care Service – Evidence from Viewpoint Survey** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported on the results for the Viewpoint questionnaire, which was distributed in April 2006 to all active panel members. A response rate of 70.9% (864 completed questionnaires) was achieved. The Viewpoint survey included eight questions relating to Foster Caring, the results of which were set out in Appendix A to the Report.

The vast majority of respondents were not aware of how to become a foster carer and what help, training and support there was for carers. Less than a quarter of respondents around April 2006 had seen or heard advertising, information or articles relating to foster caring. Of these 195 respondents over half had seen or heard of foster caring through the local newspaper and television.

Articles in the local magazines and newspapers, leaflets through doors and posters around Hartlepool seemed to be the most likely way for foster caring to be broadcast to those respondents of the Viewpoint survey. Although just under half of respondents thought that Hartbeat, local radio and the Council's internet site might also be successful mediums.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**59. Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool BC's Foster Care Service – Feedback from visit to Darlington BC**  
(Scrutiny Support Officer)

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that as part of the evidence gathering process, Members of the Forum visited Darlington Borough Council. The report set out the findings of the Members who had attended the visit. The Chair commented that it had been a very worthwhile visit which highlighted how Hartlepool's fostering problems were different to other agencies. The visit also highlighted the value of a stable fostering team. The Darlington team had been together for several years and the sharing of knowledge and information on families and children between the team was a particular advantage.

The Assistant Director reported for the Forum's information that the interviews for the Hartlepool Fostering Team Leader were to be held in the first week in November.

**Decision**

That the report and the comments of Members be noted.

**60. Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool BC's Foster Care Service – Evidence from Hartlepool BC's Foster Care Staff** (Scrutiny Support Officer)

The Scrutiny Support Officer submitted for the forum's information written evidence collated from the responses of staff from Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service. Staff had been given the opportunity to attend the meeting, should they so wish but it was understood that none had chosen to attend the meeting.

The Chair and Members welcomed the comments from the staff which they acknowledged was beneficial to the overall review. The chair commented that any assistance that the forum could bring in terms of recommending additional budgetary provision would need to be undertaken sooner, rather than later, to comply with the budget timetable. The Assistant Director commented that she appreciated the comments of the Chair. The Fostering Team had been allocated additional budget provision for this year but there had been delays in filling the posts as had been reported at the previous meeting.

Members commented that there appeared to be some problems within the team judging from the comments set out in the report. The Assistant Director acknowledged that the team was at a low ebb but did feel this situation would be greatly improved once all the posts were filled. In response to Members questions the Assistant Director indicated that the department was using training secondments to train social workers.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

## **61. Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool BC's Foster Care Service – Draft Final Report Recommendations** (Scrutiny Support Officer)

The Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that normally there would be an informal meeting of the forum to discuss the draft recommendations but due to the tight timescales involved there was unfortunately insufficient time in this process. A draft final report would be submitted to the meeting of the forum on 11 November 2008.

The Scrutiny Support Officer highlighted the principal issues that had been raised by the forum during its deliberations at previous meetings. Members discussed the issues before agreeing the draft recommendations as set out below.

### **Decision**

- (a) That the current review of the Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service be completed as a matter of urgency in order to stabilise recruitment and retention difficulties;
- (b) That innovative approaches in the future marketing of the foster care service be further explored in the following areas:-
  - (i) Lack of family group provision;
  - (ii) Identification of suitable location(s) in the Town for a permanent advertisement for the recruitment of foster carers; and
  - (iii) Through untapped mediums, such as Radio Hartlepool and leaflets in doctors surgeries, libraries and shopping centres.
- (c) That the delivery of future training programmes for new Foster Carers:-
  - (i) Be delivered in-house at set times of the year;
  - (ii) Ensures opportunities for extending such training to external foster carers be explored; and
  - (iii) Where in-house delivery capacity issues occur, that support is sought from other Local Authorities or independent foster care agencies.
- (d) That the Foster Care Service Section on the Council's website be updated to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information.

The meeting concluded at 5.35 p.m.

JANE SHAW

CHAIR

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

11 November 2008



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT: BUDGET  
AND POLICY FRAMEWORK INITIAL  
CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2009/10

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to consider the Children's Services departmental pressures, priorities and efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) held on 31 October 2008, consideration was given to the Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework consultation proposals for 2009/10 to 2011/12.
- 2.2 At this meeting it was agreed that the initial consultation proposals be considered on a departmental basis by the appropriate Scrutiny Forum. Any comments / observations would then be fed back to the meeting of the SCC to be held on 28 November 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 15 December 2008.
- 2.3 As such attached as **Appendices A to C** are the Children's Services departmental pressures, priorities and efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10 as follows:-

**Appendix A** - Schedule of Budget Pressures 2009/2010;

**Appendix B** - Schedule of Budget Priorities 2009/2010; and

**Appendix C** - Schedule of Budget Efficiencies 2009/2010.

- 2.4 To assist Members of this Scrutiny Forum in the consideration of the Children's Services departmental initial proposals, arrangements have been made for the Director of Children's Services to be in attendance and an invitation to this meeting has also been extended to the relevant Portfolio Holder (attendance subject to availability).

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum:-

- (a) considers the Children's Services departmental pressures, priorities and efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework initial consultation proposals for 2009/10; and
- (b) formulates any comments and observations to be presented by the Chair of this Scrutiny Forum to the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 28 November 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 15 December 2008.

**Contact Officer:-** James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523 647  
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.



CS	Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability .	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	All Diversity strand(s)	No Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS		CSD S&SS	Looked After Children	4. Csa	The increased costs of care proceedings resulting from the Public Law Outline are expected to continue at an annual cost of at least £100,000 per year. This was highlighted when the 2008/09 budget was set and is being funded from contingencies in the current year.	Pressure	100	0	0	0	3. High	4. Almost certain	12	Red	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS		CSD S&SS	Agency Residential	4. Csa	Anticipated commitments for the provision of residential care to children looked after exceed base budget. Commitments based on current children remaining in placement (which is anticipated) and no new placements being made. Budget volatile and subject to change based on presenting needs of children, costs may increase further.	Pressure	100	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	All	Yes	0	
CS		CSD S&SS	Fostering Agency	4. Csa	Anticipated commitments for independent foster placements for children looked after, based on current numbers in 08/09 financial year. Numbers unlikely to reduce.	Pressure	275	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	All	Yes	0	
CS		CSD P&SI	Integrated Working	4. Csa	Revenue implications of implementing electronic assessment and social care records. Implementation of these systems is required by DCSF and failure to do so would lead to significant adverse inspection outcome. These systems underpin the development of integrated working to secure better outcomes for children	Pressure	20	0	0	0	3. High	4. Almost certain	12	Red	Neutral	All	No	0	Grants from government only covered capital investment not ongoing revenue costs.
CS		CSD P&SI	Parent Partnership	3. H&C	Funding to increase the capacity of the Acorn Therapeutic Team to deliver Parent Partnership Services as required by Special Educational Needs regulation. New national exemplar standards have been issued by DCSF in 2007 and further capacity is needed if the service is to reach these standards.	Pressure	5	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	Disability	No	0	This will allow a 'top up' of funding available in the budget to recruit additional staffing to provide additional hours.

[illegible]

## Children's Services - Priorities

[illegible]

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES**

CS Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability .	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS	CSD R&SS	Admin	2. LLL	In setting the 2008/09 budget the department had to incorporate £100k for the back scanning of social care records to comply with legislation. This exercise involves temporary staffing and equipment costs and the exercise should be completed by 31st March 2009.	Efficiency		100	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	-4	Temporary contracts will not be extended for 4 staff.
CS	CSD R&SS	Premature Retirement Costs	2. LLL	The department is continuing to experience reduced costs on its PRC (Premature Retirement Costs) budget as former employees and their dependents die. Based on current commitments, savings of £30,000 are projected in 2009/10.	Efficiency		30	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD P&SI	Youth	8.5IC	A mini restructure as part of integrated working between Connexions and the Youth Service will result in a managerial post being saved. This will release a vacant post yielding a net saving of £40k. There would be no adverse impact on provision for young people.	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	This will involve the transfer of a mainstream funded post to PAYP grant funding with longer term risk if grant is discontinued. Currently secure until 2010/2011.
CS	CSD S&SS	Exmoor Grove	3. H&C	Staffing and premises savings have been identified resulting from changes to the shift patterns and opening hours at Exmoor Grove with no adverse impact on service delivery or children accessing service.	Efficiency		90	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD S&SS	Resource Centres	4. Csa	Efficiencies from maintenance and building costs associated with family resource centres.	Efficiency		20	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD R&SS	Admin Support	2. LLL	Reduction in admin support posts across the Children's Services Department through rationalisation of service and maximising potential benefits of current vacancies.	Efficiency		54	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	These savings can be made without redundancy
CS		School Improvement Partners	2. LLL	Review arrangements in relation to School Improvement Partners and OfSTED inspections to maximise income and reduce costs.	Efficiency		12	6	0	0	1. Low	2. Possible	2	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	Some minimal impact on services to schools.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES**

CS Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability .	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS			Co-ordinators	2. LLL	Deletion of Outdoor Education Co-ordinator post.	Efficiency	40	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	Currently a vacant post.
CS		School Development & Curriculum	2. LLL	This budget is used to support "one-off" initiatives and to help those schools in challenging circumstances. Deletion of this funding may increase the risk of schools moving into Ofsted or cause for concern category and/or pupil performance declining.	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0	Possible adverse impact on schools
CS	CSD R&SS		Pupil Support	2. LLL	Further reduce the subsidy paid to support attendance at Lanehead and Carlton Outdoor Centres by pupils from low income families. Hartlepool currently provides higher subsidies than Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils although the gap narrowed as a result of the 2008/09 budget.	Efficiency	5	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD R&SS		Admin Support	2. LLL	Reduction of admin support posts across the Children's Services Department through rationalisation of service.	Efficiency	126	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	5	These savings can be made whilst maintaining appropriate service levels but could lead to up to 5 redundancies.
CS	CSD R&SS		Primary Swimming	2. LLL	Savings could be made from the use of swimming pools and rationalisation of staff employed to deliver the primary swimming programme. This could involve redundancy costs and/or one off costs to buy out existing contracts.	Efficiency	10	0	0	0	2. Medium	3. Likely	6	Amber	Neutral	All	No	1	
CS	CSD S&SS		Commissioning	4. Csa	Efficiencies could be realised via improved commissioning and procurement practice with external suppliers of daycare.	Efficiency	26	0	0	0	2. Medium	2. Possible	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0	
							593	6	0										

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**11 November 2008**



**Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum**

**Subject: FINAL REPORT – HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARE SERVICE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service.

### **2. SETTING THE SCENE**

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 16 June 2008, Members determined their Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year. The topic of 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service' was agreed to inform a major in-depth Scrutiny Inquiry for the Forum's 2008/09 work programme.
- 2.2 Whilst recognising the importance of the Foster Care Service delivered by Hartlepool Borough Council, Members agreed that the investigation should also focus on the areas of Kinship Care Arrangements and Special Guardianship Orders.
- 2.3 Fostering is defined as "looking after a child or young person in your home and caring for them while their own parents are unable to do so"<sup>1</sup>. Whilst in foster care, children are referred to as 'looked after', that is they are accommodated at their own request (aged 16 and over) or at the request of the parent / person with parental responsibility under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, or are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order. Typically looked after children are between the ages of birth and eighteen, although some arrangements will extend beyond eighteen.
- 2.4 A Foster Care Service is defined as an organisation which "recruits, trains, assess and approves foster carers to care for children and young people who require a foster care placement"<sup>1</sup>. The Local Authority is responsible for the placement of looked after children into foster care placements provided

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<sup>1</sup> The Fostering Network – 'Thinking of Fostering?', 2007

by an appropriate foster care service. Foster care services are provided by a Local Authority or an Independent Foster Agency and must adhere to the Fostering Services Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services issued under the provisions of the Care Standards Act 2000.

- 2.5 The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) ensure foster care services comply with the regulations and minimum standards. Ofsted inspected Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service on 10 August 2007 and reported that "the overall quality rating is good"<sup>1</sup>, where 'good' is defined as meaning that "the provision is strong"<sup>2</sup>.

### **3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to review Hartlepool Borough Council's recruitment and retention activity in relation to Foster Carers, including the provision of guidance and support to foster, kinship and special guardianship carers.

### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of the role and responsibility of Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service;
  - (b) To assess the marketing campaign targeted at potential foster carers who are 'new' to the Authority;
  - (c) To compare the recruitment and retention rates in Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service both locally and nationally, drawing on models of best practice;
  - (d) To examine the Fostering Service's placement strategy with specific reference to the following areas:-
    - (i) The use and role of Independent Foster Agencies;
    - (ii) The level of support and advice provided to foster carers; and
    - (iii) Comparison of remuneration levels for foster carers locally and nationally,

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted – 'Inspection Report: Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering', 10 August 2007, p.4

<sup>2</sup> Ofsted – 'Inspection Report: Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering', 10 August 2007, p.3

- (e) To investigate the provision of support to kinship carers and compare its equability to Hartlepool Borough Council's foster carers; and
- (f) To review the Authority's implementation of special guardianship arrangements.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

- 5.1 The membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

Councillors Aiken, Fleet, Griffin, Kaiser, London (Vice Chair), McKenna, Preece, Shaw (Chair) and Simmons

Co-opted Members: David Relton

Resident Representatives: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Joan Steel and Sally Vokes

Young People's Representatives: Arran Frame, Dean Jeffries, Chris Lund, Gillian Pounder

## **6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

- 6.1 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from 21 July 2008 to 11 November 2008 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (i) Detailed presentations and reports from Hartlepool Borough Council Officers which was enhanced with verbal evidence;
- (ii) Evidence from the Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Children's Services;
- (iii) Site visit by Members to Darlington Borough Council held on 9 October 2008, to examine the good practice that exists within a neighbouring Local Authority in relation to foster care;
- (iv) Verbal evidence from representatives from the National Fostering Agency;
- (v) Verbal evidence from a representative from the Foster Carers Association;
- (vi) Evidence from Hartlepool Young Voices;



- (vii) Written evidence from looked after children from Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service; and
- (viii) Written evidence from staff employed by Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service.

## **FINDINGS**

### **7 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARE SERVICE**

- 7.1 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum were interested to understand the context by which Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service operated. In order to understand the role and responsibility that the Foster Care Service had towards the looked after children of Hartlepool, Members considered a number of sources of information that are detailed below:-

#### **Evidence from the Children's Services Department**

- 7.2 At the meeting of the Forum on 26 August 2008 the Head of Business Unit (Young Persons) presented a report which encapsulated the role and responsibility of Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service.
- 7.3 Members were interested to learn that there were two distinct services provided by Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service, the first service for registered foster carers and potential foster carers aimed to:-
- (a) carry out initial visits to people expressing an interest in becoming foster carers;
  - (b) organise preparation training for applicants;
  - (c) undertake competency based assessments of applicants;
  - (d) put in place support systems for approved foster carers;
  - (e) ensure that post-approval training for foster carers took place; and
  - (f) consult with carers over development of service.

The second service for social work staff needing a placement for a child aims to:-

- (a) have a duty social worker available during office hours Monday to Friday;

- (b) that there is a provision of a range of foster care placements for children looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council;
  - (c) liaise with other agencies to identify suitable placements where none are available within Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service; and
  - (d) ensure there is a provision of carers for use by the Emergency Duty Team for placements at evenings, weekends and bank holidays.
- 7.4 Members were informed that from 1 August 2008 there were 162 children who were classed as looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council. Of these 162 looked after children:-
- (a) 133 (82%) were placed in foster care placements; and
  - (b) 87 (54%) were placed in foster care placements provided by Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service.
- 7.5 It was stated to Members that currently Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service had 79 approved and active Foster Carers.

#### **Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services**

- 7.6 At the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Members heard evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services that despite Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service receiving a 'glowing' report by Ofsted in 2007, it was acknowledged that the service was undergoing a period of change and review. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) was a recent appointment and was currently undertaking a review of Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service. The Foster Care Service was currently working with an Acting Manager and two vacancies were being filled by agency workers.

### **8 MARKETING HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARE SERVICE**

- 8.1 Members of the Forum were keen to learn how Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service was marketed, to encourage new foster carers to apply. In order to understand the various marketing methods used, Members drew on evidence from a number of sources that are detailed below:-

#### **Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services**

- 8.2 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services emphasised the need for promotion of the Council's Foster Care Provision and recommended that some thought should be given to the advertising and promotion of the benefits from current foster carers to friends and family. The Portfolio Holder also reminded members that previously, Hartlepool United Football Club had taken part in a promotional

event for Fostering Fortnight with the release of balloons on the cenotaph in Victoria Road. The football club had also carried advertising banners at the ground and in the matchday programme.

### **Evidence from Children's Services Department**

- 8.3 At the meeting of the Forum on 6 October 2008 the Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) informed Members that marketing for new or returning foster carers, was continuing through the normal routes of the local newspapers and the Council's Hartbeat magazine. It was also highlighted to Members that the 'drip drip' method of marketing seemed to be as effective as the large events at a fraction of the cost and by way of illustration, Members were informed of the large promotion in 2005 involving Hartlepool United Football Club had seen almost twice as many people expressing an interest in foster care, yet the actual approved foster carers was less than had been achieved during 2004.

### **Evidence from Viewpoint Survey**

- 8.4 Members had also taken into consideration feedback from Hartlepool Borough Council's Viewpoint Survey that was carried out in April 2006. Respondents to the Viewpoint Survey had indicated that less than a quarter of them had seen or heard advertising, information or articles relating to foster care via any of the marketing mediums. Although Viewpoint respondents felt that articles in local magazines, newspapers, leaflets through the door and posters around Hartlepool were the most likely method of ensuring that people became aware of the need for and information on foster carers.

## **9 YOUNG REPRESENTATIVES FINDINGS INTO THE MARKETING OF FOSTER CARE SERVICES**

- 9.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum tasked the co-opted Young Representatives to undertake a detailed investigation into the marketing of foster caring, which were presented to Members on 6 October 2008. The Young Representatives separated their findings into a number of different areas that are detailed as follows:-

### **Current Foster Carers**

- 9.2 Foster Carers currently working for Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service were questioned about what marketing methods had encouraged them to become foster carers. The information collated by the young people was that the majority of foster carers had become interested through contact with friends, word of mouth and hearsay, with very few saying that they had been influenced by marketing initiatives or sources of information on the internet or in the local newspapers. That was not to say that these areas could not become effective marketing channels.
- 9.3 The Foster Carers interviewed by the Young Representatives were also asked about appropriate methods of marketing of Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service. Foster Carers reported that they felt that it was appropriate for

promotion to be provided through mediums such as local newspapers, local radio (including the recently launched Radio Hartlepool), posters and billboards throughout the Town. There was also the suggestion of an Open Day, so that prospective foster carers could learn about what foster caring entails from current foster carers, an event that Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Carers were happy to be involved with.

### **Website Promotion**

- 9.4 The Young Representatives reported to the Forum that Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service was difficult to locate and the content off putting as it was brief and wasn't particularly 'eye-catching'. Although there was a corporate style that needed to be adhered to, Members agreed that accessibility of information should be a major focus for a service that was continually looking at recruitment of new foster carers.
- 9.5 In examining websites provided by Independent Foster Agencies, the Young Representatives highlighted that these websites were excellent by comparison to Hartlepool Borough Council's website. The Independent Foster Agency websites were a lot more user friendly, with information being easier to find and the addition of answers to questions that might be posed by young people going into foster care.

### **Newspaper Advertisement**

- 9.6 Recently the Council's Hartbeat magazine had carried an advert looking at recruitment of more foster carers for Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service (attached as **Appendix A**). The Young Representatives felt that the advert gave a very depressing message about the young people who were likely to be in need of Foster Care. It was possible such a message might portray the idea that looked after children all had emotional problems, which was not always the case. There was also a lack of clarity over the message, with the Young Representatives reporting that something along the lines of 'do you want to foster?' might be more direct, clear and promote a greater response than the advertisement from Hartbeat.
- 9.7 With evidence received from the Forum in relation to the lack of foster carers for younger children (see section 11.5) the wisdom of using a teenager in the Hartbeat advert was discussed. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) agreed that target campaigning was something that was currently being examined as part of the review of the Foster Care Service delivered by Hartlepool Borough Council.

## **10 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FOSTER CARERS**

- 10.1 The Assistant Director was welcomed to the 6 October 2008 meeting of the Forum to present evidence relating to the recruitment and retention of Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Carers. Members were presented with **Table1** (overleaf), which detailed expression of interest to become a foster carer, along with the number of approved carers and the total number of foster carers on Hartlepool Borough Council Foster Care Service's books:-

**Table1: Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service's Recruitment and Retention Rates**

<b>Month and Year</b>	<b>Expressions of Interest</b>	<b>New Approved Foster Carers</b>	<b>Total of Foster Carers</b>
March 2003	67	10	45
March 2004	72	18	55
March 2005	165	10	64
March 2006	99	9	77
March 2007	133	15	77
March 2008	108	12	80
Sept 2008	57	10	79

- 10.2 Members were pleased to hear that there was another eight potential foster carers to be approved, but with the retirement of three current foster carers, the total number of foster carers by the end of March 2009 is likely to be around the eight four mark.
- 10.3 The Forum noted that the increased interest in becoming a foster carer by the end of March 2005 had been due to a large publicity event that Members had already heard evidence on from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services. Members also noted that such an event had not been reflected in an increase in newly approved foster carers, although the Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) agreed that it was not possible to report whether foster carers recruited in subsequent years had been influenced by the event.
- 10.4 The Forum was informed that every year there was a loss of foster carers due to retirement or changes in personal circumstances. Members were, however, delighted to hear that since 2004 no foster carers from Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service had left to join an Independent Foster Agency, which was something that other Local Authority's had seen happen to their foster carers. Members noted that the introduction of new pay rates in 2004 was probably the reason that no foster carers in Hartlepool have moved from the Council to an Independent Foster Agency.

## **11 HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PLACEMENT STRATEGY**

- 11.1 In examining the Placement Strategy utilised by Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service, Members sought evidence in a number of areas that are detailed as follows:-

### **Independent Foster Agencies**

- 11.2 The Head of Business Unit (Young Persons) informed the Forum on the 26 August 2008 that Hartlepool Borough Council were currently placing 32 young people with independent foster care agencies. To Members concerns this was revealed to be costing Hartlepool Borough Council in the region of £1.3 million per year. In the majority of cases the need for the utilisation of

independent foster care placements was due to a lack of capacity within the Council's own Foster Care Service.

- 11.3 In order to assist reduce the costs of using independent foster care placements, the Council had embarked on a tendering process for a preferred partner to provide these surplus placements. Subsequently the Forum welcomed representatives from the National Foster Agency to the meeting of the Forum on the 8 September 2008. Members of the Children's Services Forum were informed that the National Fostering Agency had recently been chosen as the preferred independent foster agency to be utilised by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- 11.4 Members were pleased to hear of the willingness of the National Foster Agency to work in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council and the emphasis that the National Foster Agency was not in the market to 'poach' foster carers from the Council and would encourage the direction of potential new foster carers to the Local Authority where that was felt more appropriate.
- 11.5 Representatives from the National Foster Agency did highlight to Members that there was some surprise that Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service was struggling to recruit foster carers to take on younger children, as this went against the national trend, where the older teens were more difficult to find appropriate foster carers for.

### **Support to Foster Carers**

- 11.6 The Children's Services Forum met on 8 September 2008 and some concerns were raised by Members in relation to the ability of the National Foster Agency to have a support work to foster carer ratio of 1:10, as opposed to Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service ratio of 1:26. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) reassured Members that after all posts had been recruited to that this number would fall to 1:20 and be in line with other Local Authorities in the area that were averaging between one support worker to eighteen or twenty foster carers, although it was highlighted to Members that the national guidance was one worker to fourteen or fifteen foster carers.
- 11.7 Evidence gathered from the Chair of the Foster Carers Association informed Members that the concern from foster carers was not surrounding the level of support, but the delay and lack of training. Some foster carers had waited more than eighteen months to be trained, with many foster carers being lost to independent foster agencies who could deliver a training programme within a six month window. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) admitted that such delays were unacceptable, but once the Service review had been completed and all vacant posts filled then support worker would be in a better position to ensure that training was completely without unnecessary delays.

- 11.8 Evidence from looked after children who were cared for by Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service drew concern from Members about the level of support provided to foster children. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) reassured Members that the ratio of Social Workers to Looked after Children was 1:20/25 with the optimum figure being around the 1:18 mark.

### **Remuneration Levels**

- 11.9 On 26 August 2008 Members received a detailed breakdown of the remuneration levels across the Local Authorities. Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service allowances were inline with the current Fostering Network's recommended weekly allowances and this was matched by other Local Authorities in the North East region such as Darlington, Gateshead, Northumberland and Stockton-on-Tees.
- 11.10 It was under the fee payment scheme that Hartlepool differed from other Local Authorities and **Table2** (overleaf) demonstrates the different fee payments provided by Local Authorities during 2007/08.
- 11.11 The fee payment scheme operated by Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service was a major factor in the retention of a number of foster carers, due to the remuneration package which put the Local Authority on a more even playing field with the independent foster care agencies.

**Table2: Foster Care Fee Payment Schemes 2007/08**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Darlington	Payment dependent on experience and qualifications.	£30-70 (not per child)
Durham	Payment for Skills Band C Band D Band E	£73.29 £226.24 £378.56
Gateshead	Contract Carers (max fees for 2 children)	£207.22
Hartlepool	Band One Band Two Band Three Band Four Band Five	£0 £76 £151 £226 £378
Middlesbrough	Band A Band B Band C	£0 £50 £150
Newcastle	Standard Expenses Payment ACORN (10+)	£56.21 £287.83
Northumberland	Full time carers fee payment 2 <sup>nd</sup> bed fee New Start	£173.88 £61.74 £25,000 per year
North Tyneside	Mainstream Carers Fee Specialist Weekly Fee	£90 £125
Redcar and Cleveland	Band A Band B Band C Specialist Teenage Scheme	£0 £50 £100 £500 £300
South Tyneside	Band A Band B Band C Pathway	£20 £40 £60 £287.54
Stockton-on-Tees	Level 2 Level 3	£125 £350
Sunderland	Level 2 (age related enhancement) Level 3 (plus age related enhancement)	£9.98-28.25 £187.02

## 12 KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENTS

- 12.1 The Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) was present at the meeting of the Forum on 6 October 2008 to present evidence in relation to Kinship Care Arrangements that exists for children looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council. Members were informed of the definitions that could result in a placement being referred to as a Kinship Care Arrangement:-



- (a) Where the child cannot live with their parents and is living away from the parental home with a relative or friend;
  - (b) Where the placement has in some way been assisted / initiated and / or is support by children's social care; and
  - (c) Where the child would otherwise be with foster carers, in residential care, independent living or adopted.
- 12.2 Members were interested to learn that in Hartlepool there were nine foster carers who had been approved as Kinship Carers, although it was more usual for Kinship Carers to move to Special Guardianship Orders. The Assistant Director (Safeguarding Services) reported to Members that such arrangements had seen a decline in Kinship Carer placements from a high of 22% of looked after children in 2002/03 to the current level of 8% in 2007/08.
- 12.3 The Forum was delighted to hear that as Kinship Carers were approved Foster Carers, this meant that they were remunerated via the fostering allowance.

### 13 SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS

- 13.1 During the meeting of the 6 October 2008, Members of the Children's Services Forum heard evidence in relation to the Special Guardianship Orders that had been granted by Hartlepool Borough Council. Members were informed by the Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) that Special Guardianship Orders were authorised where there were no chances of the looked after child returning to their birth parents during their childhood, but where it was in the best interests of the child for them to become the legal responsibility of the carer looking after them.
- 13.2 Members of the Children's Services Forum received evidence as highlighted in **Table3** (below) relating to the number of Special Guardianship Order authorised by Hartlepool Borough Council over previous years:-

**Table3: Special Guardianship Orders Approved by Hartlepool Borough Council**

Period	Number Special Guardianship Orders Approved
September 2006 – March 2007	3
April 2007 – March 2008	14
April 2008 – September 2008	4

- 13.3 Members received clarification that with carers becoming legally responsible for the looked after child, the Local Authority could withdraw the need to continue with fostering allowances. Members were reassured that it was the responsibility of the Council's Adoption Panel to formally ratify Special Guardianship Orders and they had the power to look at any financial support

to a Special Guardianship Order where that was felt appropriate. However, one of the aims of a Special Guardianship Order was to reduce the number of children looked after by the Local Authority and subsequently reduce the overall costs and financial liabilities placed upon Hartlepool Borough Council.

- 13.4 The Forum noted that the result of Special Guardianship Orders had sometimes resulted in Foster Carers resigning from the position of an approved Foster Carer within Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service.

## **14 EVIDENCE FROM A NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITY**

- 14.1 In order to further enhance their investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service, Members sought evidence from another local authority that was considered to be demonstrating good practice. Evidence gathered by Members from this source is detailed as follows:-

### **Visit to Darlington Borough Council**

- 14.2 On 9 October 2008, Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum visited Darlington Borough Council's Foster Care Service to gather evidence on how they delivered an effective Local Authority foster care service. The evidence gathered by Members who undertook the visit is detailed as follows:-
- (a) Darlington Borough Council currently has 137 looked after children, 71 of whom are looked after by 56 of the Borough Council's Foster Carers;
  - (b) That Darlington Borough Council's Foster Care team is a very stable team with very few changes in staff. Currently it is made up of one manager, one administrator, one support officer and four social workers;
  - (c) Although the Council remunerates their Foster Carers at the same level as Hartlepool (in line with the Fostering Network minimum rate) the fee payment scheme is at a much lower level;
  - (d) There are specific problems recruiting Foster Carers for the older teenager, which is in line with national trend but different to those experienced in Hartlepool;
  - (e) Possibly due to the lower fee payment scheme in Darlington, the Authority has recently lost a Foster Carer to an Independent Foster Agency.
  - (f) Training is an issue for Foster Carers in Darlington as the Council tries to fit sessions around working families. Remuneration of Foster Carers in Darlington has engendered a theory that the Council cannot be prescriptive about when training sessions are run, unlike the

independent foster agencies where foster caring, in financial terms, can be seen as a career.

- (g) The ratio of Foster Carers to Support Workers is 15:1, although currently due to long-term sickness that ratio is 18:1;
- (h) Darlington Borough Council hold three training sessions a year meaning that potentially new Foster Carers only have a potential maximum of four months between expressing an interest in training and starting their foster care training; and
- (i) During 2007 Darlington Borough Council had 66 people registering an interest in becoming a foster carer; this resulted in a conversion rate of 9 fully trained foster carers. During the same period Darlington Borough Council lost 8 foster carers, due to a variety of reasons.

## **15 CONCLUSIONS**

### **15.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-**

- (a) That Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service is providing an excellent service during a period of time where there are many changes to staffing both within and around the Service;
- (b) That Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Carers are providing a commendable support mechanism for the looked after children in Hartlepool;
- (c) That the marketing strategy for the recruitment of new foster carers lacks permanence and focus;
- (d) That staffing levels within Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service is not yet at full capacity, but would eventually be resolved once recruitment had been completed;
- (e) That support worker to foster carer ratio was particularly high due to the issues raised in conclusion (d);
- (f) That there were sufficient social workers to support young people in care of the Local Authority and that despite press coverage to the contrary no children were at risk;
- (g) That the reliance on independent foster care placements was sometimes a necessity when emergency situations arose and where there were not suitable placements available from Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service;
- (h) That Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service did not have a prominent focus within the Council's website;

- (i) That remuneration levels for foster carers in Hartlepool was extremely effective in helping the retention of foster carers and halted the movement of carers to independent foster agencies; and
- (j) That potential new foster carers were facing unnecessary delays in becoming trained, with frustration leading to some foster carers moving into the independent sector.

## **16 RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:- recommend

- (a) That the current review of the Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service be completed as a matter of urgency in order to stabilise recruitment and retention difficulties;
- (b) That innovative approaches in the future marketing of the foster care service be further explored in the following areas:-
  - (i) Lack of family group provision;
  - (ii) Identification of suitable location(s) in the Town for a permanent advertisement for the recruitment of foster carers; and
  - (iii) Through untapped mediums, such as Radio Hartlepool and leaflets in doctors surgeries, libraries and shopping centres.
- (c) That the delivery of future training programmes for new Foster Carers:-
  - (i) Be delivered in-house at set times of the year;
  - (ii) Ensures opportunities for extending such training to external foster carers be explored; and
  - (iii) Where in-house delivery capacity issues occur, that support is sought from other Local Authorities or independent foster care agencies.
- (d) That the Foster Care Service Section on the Council's website be updated to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

### Hartlepool Borough Council:

Councillor Cath Hill – Portfolio Holder for Children's Services;

Sally Robinson – Assistant Director of Children's Services (Safeguarding and Specialist Services);

Sue Johnson – Assistant Director of Children's Services (Planning and Service Integration);

Ian Merritt – Head of Commissioning and Children's Partnership;

John Robinson – Children's Fund Manager;

Jim Murdoch – Head of Business Unit (Young Persons);

Pam Swainson – Participation Officer

### External Representatives:

Paul Stomont – Team Manager (North Region), National Fostering Agency;

Gill Hall – National Fostering Agency;

Joanne Vayro, Chair of the Foster Carers Association;

Hilary Tillotson – Team Manager (Fostering), Darlington Borough Council;

Lindsey Holmes –

Hannah Shaw –

David Whittingham –

Kelly Goulding –

Leigh Bradley –

Beth Hawkrige – DCSM (Participation), Barnardos;

Nikki Pearson – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Jill Bousfield – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Jackie McGarry – Connexions / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Rebecca Wise – West View Project

**COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW  
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**November 2008**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) The Fostering Network (2007) *Thinking of Fostering?*, Available from: [http://www.fostering.net/start\\_fostering/faqs/what.php](http://www.fostering.net/start_fostering/faqs/what.php) (Accessed 16 October 2008)
- (b) Graham, S., Bostock, J. (August 2007) *Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering*, [online], Ofsted, Available from: <http://tiny.cc/IHmKY> (Accessed 21 July 2008)
- (c) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 21 July 2008.
- (d) Report of the Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Setting the Scene Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 26 August 2008.
- (e) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Children's Services – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 26 August 2008.
- (f) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Evidence from an Independent Foster Agency – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 8 September 2008.

- (g) Report of the Scrutiny Support Office entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Evidence from Foster Carers – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 8 September 2008.
- (h) Report of the Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services) entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Kinship Care Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (i) Report of the Head of Business Unit (Young Persons) entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Impact of Special Guardianship Orders' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (j) Report of the Head of Business Unit (Young Persons) entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (k) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Evidence from Young People in Foster Care – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (l) Written Evidence from Young People in care of Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service entitled 'Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (m) Presentation by Hartlepool Young Voices entitled 'Investigation – How Fostering is Advertised' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 October 2008.
- (n) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Evidence from Viewpoint Survey' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 October 2008.
- (o) Viewpoint Survey – April 2006.
- (p) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Feedback from Site Visit – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 October 2008.
- (q) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Provision – Evidence from Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Staff' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 October 2008.

- (r) Report of the Scrutiny Support Office entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Draft Final Report Recommendations' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 October 2008.
- (s) Hartbeat Magazine, September 2008.
- (t) Minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 21 July 2008, 26 August 2008, 8 September 2008, 6 October 2008 and 23 October 2008.



## Appendix A

Hartlepool Borough Council Foster Care Service advert from Hartbeat Magazine, September 2008.



**Can you  
remember what  
it was like being  
a teenager?**

Imagine how much harder that would have  
been without someone who cared about you

**We are looking for foster carers for all ages.**

Generous fostering allowances and fees are payable, training and support  
from the Fostering Team will be provided, but, more importantly, you could  
make a very real difference to the lives of local children and young people.

**Please contact the  
placement Team on  
01429 284444**

