

CABINET AGENDA



Monday, 12 January 2009

at 9.00 am

in Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CABINET:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Hall, Hargreaves, Hill, Jackson, Payne, and Tumilty

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

To receive the Record of Decision in respect of the meeting held on 22 December 2008 (previously circulated)

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2010 – *Director of Children's Services*

5. KEY DECISIONS

None

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

6.1 Falcon Road Update – *Director of Neighbourhood Services*

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None

9. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

9.1 Final Report – Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – *Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*

9.2 Scrutiny Investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service' – Action Plan – *Director of Children's Services*

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10. EXEMPT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

10.1 Hartlepool People Centre, 21 Raby Road – *Director of Neighbourhood Services* (para 3)

CABINET REPORT

12th January 2009



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN
2009 - 2020

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the Final Draft version of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 – 2020 and refer the plan to Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

2.1 The local authority is required to produce a Children and Young People's Plan under section 17 of the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young People's Plan (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

2.2 The existing Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009 has been reviewed and following consultation with stakeholders a new plan has been prepared to reflect the present and future needs of children and young people within Hartlepool. The current plan expires on 31st March 2009.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

3.1 The Children and Young People's Plan has implications for all children and young people in Hartlepool and as such requires the attention of Cabinet.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 The Children and Young People's Plan comes under the Budget and Policy Framework, key decision, test 2 applies.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 Cabinet 12th January 2009, referral to Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 24th January 2009, recommendations considered by Cabinet 9th March 2009, referral to Council.

6. DECISION REQUIRED

- 6.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the Final Draft version of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 – 2020 and refer the plan to Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN
2009 - 2020

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the Final Draft version of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 – 2020 and refer the plan to Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The local authority is required to produce a Children and Young People's Plan under section 17 of the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young People's Plan (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

2.2 The existing Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009 has been reviewed and following consultation with stakeholders a new plan has been prepared to reflect the present and future needs of children and young people within Hartlepool. The current plan expires on 31st March 2009.

3. PREPARATION OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2009 - 2020

3.1 The plan has been developed following a review of the previous plan and extensive consultation with children, young people and their families and carers. We have also consulted widely with members of staff from within the Council and Primary Care Trust as well as other partners and stakeholders including the Hartlepool Partnership.

3.2 Progress reports have been presented to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services during the course of the preparation of the plan. The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum established a reference group to review and provide feedback to officers who were leading on the preparation of the plan. This group provided representation from elected members and Young Voices.

3.3 The involvement of children and young people in the preparation and production of this plan has been very important. Young Voices have been a key support within this process and thanks are extended to all concerned who have worked hard to ensure that children and young people had an opportunity to have their views on the plan heard.

3.4 The first round of consultation provided a wealth of information that was used to extract the emerging issues that people wanted to see addressed by the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 – 2020. A second round of consultation was aimed at seeking clarification of the emerging issues and determined whether there were any further concerns that people wished to see addressed. It also provided some indication of what the new priorities to be addressed might be. The third and final round of consultation in October 2008, sought to identify the priorities for action from stakeholders for inclusion within the final draft of the Children and Young People's Plan.

4. THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2009 - 2020

4.1 The Plan looks and feels very different to the current version and is considered to be much more user friendly. The Vision Statement is placed at the beginning of the plan so that the reader can see immediately what our aims are.

4.2 The whole of the plan is framed around the Every Child Matters, Five Outcomes:

- Be Healthy;
- Stay Safe;
- Enjoy and Achieve;
- Make a Positive Contribution;
- Economic Well-being.

However, the Department has also identified five priorities which are specific to Hartlepool, that reflect learning from consultations, research and gap analysis. They are:

- Tackling Inequalities;
- Narrowing the Gap;
- Eradicating Child Poverty;
- Living Safely;
- Promoting Emotional Well-being.

4.3 Hartlepool's second Children and Young People's Plan (2009 – 2020) has been drawn up by the Local Authority together with its partners and other stakeholders, under the auspices of the Children's Trust, which will own and drive forward the plan. This Children and Young People's Plan is the overarching strategic commissioning document that will cover all services available to the children and young people of Hartlepool. Its main aim is to ensure that all partners engaged in providing services for children and young people do so in a coordinated way. In the preparation of this plan, partners have begun to work even more closely together and will continue to do so as this long term aspirational plan is reviewed and refreshed.

- 4.4 The decision to develop the plan for the period 2009 – 2020 is based upon a wish to reflect the lifespan of ‘Hartlepool’s Ambition’ the new Community Strategy for Hartlepool and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It will allow us to be much more aspirational in our long term planning in order to address a range of deep seated, intergenerational issues within the town.
- 4.5 This Children and Young People’s Plan identifies the high level strategic priorities for the next eleven years. A number of operational plans across a range of organisations provide the detail of how these strategic priorities will be implemented. The relationship of the Children and Young People’s Plan to these subordinate plans is shown in the “Bookcase” in section 12. Once the plan is in place, a robust system of monitoring and review using Outcome Based Accountability will be established to ensure that the plan remains on track to achieve its outcomes and identify new priorities.
- 4.6 It is important that **all** children and young people benefit from the plan. This includes those children and young people who use mainly universal services: these are services everyone uses such as maternity services at birth, community health services and schools when children get older. To ensure that support is available for children and young people with additional or specialist needs, some cross cutting themes are included in each priority, including support for looked after children and young people, those with Special Educational Needs or disabilities and those from black and minority ethnic communities.
- 4.7 A copy of the final draft of the Children and Young People’s Plan 2009 - 2020 is attached at **Appendix 1**.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 During their financial planning and budget setting cycles, stakeholder organisations will need to reflect the priorities of the Children and Young People’s Plan. Resources will need to be allocated to those activities which seek to address gaps in service and those activities that can be done better. In addition, spending on back office and support functions needs to be minimised so that more funding can be allocated to front line services.
- 5.2 The Children’s Services 2009/10 budget submission reflects this approach in its submission of spending pressures and efficiency savings proposals.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 An Impact Needs Requirements Assessment has been completed for the plan.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the Final Draft version of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 – 2020 and refer the plan to Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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Hartlepool Children's Trust



Children & Young People's Plan 2009 - 2020

FINAL DRAFT COPY

VERSION 7 AS AT 17th DECEMBER 2008

23K KNOW THE WAY

An inter-agency strategic plan for the provision of services to the children and young people of Hartlepool

OUR VISION

Our vision is that ***in Hartlepool we will work together through the Children's Trust to keep children, young people and families at the centre of all the services we provide.***

We will do this by making sure that:

Children and Young People

- are healthy in body and mind;
- are safe;
- have the right support to help them do well at school, college or in training;
- can access the right services when they need them and that they are supported appropriately;
- are encouraged to participate in all aspects of planning whether it is to meet their own individual needs or contribute to strategic planning issues.

Parents/Carers

- are more involved in helping to make things better for their children;
- receive guidance to help build good relationships with their children;
- have access to good quality information;
- are encouraged to participate in all aspects of planning whether it is to meet their own individual needs, the needs of their children or to contribute to consultation on strategic planning issues;
- are supported in fulfilling their responsibilities to their children.

In order to achieve this:

- all services must ensure that support is available to children, young people and families who need it the most and that services meet and are responsive to their needs;
- services available to all children and young people such as community health services and schools continue to provide services that are open and accessible to all;
- the implementation of integrated working practice becomes embedded so that those children and young people with additional needs have earlier access to services;
- all organisations in Hartlepool delivering services that impact on children and young people will have a well trained and knowledgeable workforce equipped to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.

In order to do this we need to develop new skills to respond to the government's new priorities, which are:

- Building resilience through achievement in education, promoting health and well-being including the development of good social and emotional skills and positive parenting which promote better outcomes for children in childhood and later life;
- Greater personalisation by ensuring that services are more responsive to the needs of families, offer support earlier and tailor support according to need;
- Proactive support for those who need it most – reaching out to those children, young people and families who have the most significant needs, but who may be less willing or able to articulate their needs;
- Helping families to break out of the cycle of low achievement so that in future fewer families require intensive support and intervention.

Help children who are young carers make things better for their parents and to make their own lives better.

Young carer

As the parent of an older child with a learning difficulty, it would be useful to have more structured activities and help with life skills for their future life.

Parent

Everything costs money. The more children you have the more it costs.

Parent

I think adults think of children and young people to be thugs or violent towards them, this needs to change.

Young Person

I think it was good to be heard



Child

Parents are an important part of a child's life but other things help too: Friends, school, teachers and being heard.

Young Person

Kids only behave badly to get out of school. Get someone trained to deal with these kids and stop passing the buck.

Grandparent

Life doesn't start and stop between the hours of 9-5. Being a parent with all its problems is 24 hours a day, this includes weekends and bank holidays. This is nearly always when things go wrong and there is no support available.

Parent

IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION FOR HARTLEPOOL

As commissioners and service providers we will work with and through the Children's Trust to better understand the needs of children, young people, families and communities in Hartlepool, listen to what they want and work with them to design, improve and re-commission services.

By enabling all children and young people to achieve their full potential, they will have the confidence and ability to enjoy a fruitful and successful life. Services in Hartlepool should be organised in such a way that they help all children and young people achieve their full potential and maximise their chances in life by providing integrated provision which is of high quality, effective and excellent value for money.

This vision is underpinned by some key principles:

- Children and young people, together with parents or carers and other members of the community, are consulted and participate in the identification of local needs and shaping of service delivery;
- Children and young people have access to equitable universal services, alongside targeted and specialist services and that these are delivered flexibly to meet individual and local needs;
- There is a shared commitment to integrated working practices which are designed to promote the delivery of the five key priorities;
- There is a commitment to partnership working between all stakeholders from the statutory and community and voluntary sectors;
- Resourcing, planning and commissioning are effective and help to develop sustainable services;
- Evidence based practice is used to develop high quality continuous improvement through monitoring and evaluation;
- Inclusion, both social and educational, together with the recognition of diversity, is central to the Children and Young People's Plan.

The multiple nature of the social problems experienced by a large proportion of Hartlepool's population means that a partnership approach is essential if improvements are to be maintained.

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FOREWORD

Foreword by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

I am delighted to introduce the second Children and Young People's Plan for Hartlepool. This plan will commit all of us, who are involved in planning and delivering services to children and young people, to work together to secure the welfare and improve the outcomes for all our children and young people.

I recognise that the Children Act gives the responsibility for preparing and publishing this plan to Hartlepool Borough Council, but I am particularly pleased to be able to thank all of our partners, children, young people, parents and carers and members of the public who have taken part in the preparation of the drafts and the consultation processes that have led to the Plan's publication.



Councillor Cath Hill
Portfolio Holder for
Children's Services
Hartlepool Borough

Foreword by the Director of Children's Services

As Hartlepool's Director of Children's Services, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this second Children and Young People's Plan, although this has been prepared by my Department, it owes its existence to tremendous collaboration between a wide range of partners and stakeholders, not just in Hartlepool, but beyond. It demonstrates the huge commitment we have to working together on the five national outcomes for children.



Adrienne Simcock
Director of Children's
Services Hartlepool
Borough Council

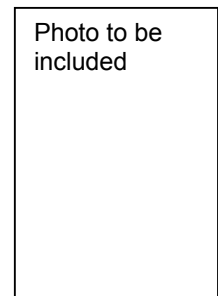
I am particularly pleased that we have been able to focus on listening to our children and young people and reflecting their views and aspirations in 'The Big Plan!' our major strategic planning and commissioning document.

I think that this plan builds upon an excellent beginning and I am sure it will develop even further as we continue to work together over the coming years, especially as we further develop the Children's Trust and work with our partners towards even greater collaboration through integrated commissioning and pooling budgets, for the benefit of the children and young people whom we are all proud to serve.

Foreword by Hartlepool Young Voices

We are genuinely excited to have been so involved in the consultation that has led to the development of this plan for the children and young people of Hartlepool. It has given the team the opportunity, not only to find out what young people in Hartlepool have to say, but to be able to tell them that what they say is really influencing the plans for the future. We love the fact that we are working hand in hand with the adults to create a positive and friendly atmosphere for all the young people in Hartlepool to live in.

We think that there will be challenges, making sure everything in the plan is acted on, but that by working together and listening to each other nothing is impossible. We believe that it is important that young people carry on being involved in making it happen.



Members of
Hartlepool Young
Voices

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Delivering 21st century services to a 21st century generation can be a challenge, however it is important to ensure that children and young people in Hartlepool have the best opportunities that life can offer them no matter what their circumstances.

The Children and Young People's Plan for 2009 – 2020, is a document which has been written on behalf of Hartlepool's Children's Trust, and sets out the vision and the direction of travel for commissioning and service improvements for the next eleven years. The Children's Trust is a themed partnership of the Hartlepool Partnership and is the main body which brings together organisations providing services for children, young people and parents and carers. Other themed partnerships address different issues that impact on a child's life and contribute to this plan, these are highlighted in the new Community Strategy, Hartlepool's Ambition, for 2008 – 2020 under the following headings:

- Jobs and the Economy (achieve economic well-being);
- Lifelong Learning and Skills (enjoy and achieve);
- Health and Well-being (be healthy);
- Community Safety (stay safe and positive contribution);
- Strengthening Communities (positive contribution);
- Culture and Leisure (enjoy and achieve);
- Housing (achieve economic well-being), and
- Environment (achieve economic well-being).

Whilst this timescale seems very long, particularly in the life of a child, there are some significant changes required to services that will take a long time to achieve such as 'eradicating child poverty'. However, there will be major milestones that can be achieved over this period of time, some of which will be addressed within the first 1-2 years of the plan, others of which will take a little longer over 3 to 5 years. There are a number of influences that can change the content of this plan over its lifespan including: a change of government, new government legislation or guidance, funding regimes, or a significant change in local priorities.

To support the development of the new plan a consultation programme was launched in May 2008 and lasted until the end of October 2008. A wide range of people were consulted including children, young people, parents/carers, statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations. The consultation was facilitated in a number of different ways through events, focus groups, questionnaires and meetings. The plan has been enriched by the range of views gathered as part of the consultation process.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to and supported the development of this plan, by providing their views and offering their ideas.

INTRODUCTION

The Children and Young People's Plan is about improving outcomes for children and young people in Hartlepool. They face great opportunities and pressures in our modern day society and we believe that by working together we can improve their lives both now and into the future, creating 21st century services for a 21st century generation. The involvement of children and young people in the development of the plan has enriched the process and has ensured that we remain focussed on achieving positive outcomes for each of them.

Hartlepool's second Children and Young People's Plan (2009 – 2020) has been drawn up by the Local Authority together with its partners and other stakeholders, under the auspices of the Children's Trust, which will own and drive forward the plan. This Children and Young People's Plan is the over-arching strategic commissioning document that will cover all services available to the children and young people of Hartlepool. Its main aim is to ensure that all partners engaged in providing services for children and young people do so in a co-ordinated way. In the preparation of this plan, partners have begun to work even more closely together and will continue to do so as this long term aspirational plan is reviewed and refreshed.

The decision to develop the Plan for the period 2009 – 2020 is based upon a wish to reflect the lifespan of 'Hartlepool's Ambition' the new Community Strategy for Hartlepool and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It will allow us to be much more aspirational in our long term planning in order to address a range of deep seated, intergenerational issues within the town.

There has been agreement nationally on the five outcomes that really matter to the lives of children and young people and these are now law in the Children Act 2004. The five outcomes are:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being

Consultation with children, young people and their parents/carers as well as other key stakeholders has led to the establishment of 5 key priorities for the short, medium and long term. The 5 outcomes are enshrined within the 5 key priorities adopted by the Children's Trust, which are:

- Tackling Inequalities
- Narrowing the Gap
- Eradicating Child Poverty
- Living Safely
- Promoting Emotional Well-being

This Children and Young People's Plan identifies the high level strategic priorities for the next eleven years (2009-2020). A number of operational plans across a range of organisations provide the detail of how these strategic priorities will be implemented. The relationship of the Children and Young People's Plan to these subordinate plans is shown in the "Bookcase" in Section 12. Once the plan is in place, a robust system of monitoring and review using Outcome Based Accountability will be established to ensure that the plan remains on track to achieve its outcomes and identify new priorities.

It is important that **all** children and young people benefit from the plan. This includes those children and young people who use mainly universal services: these are services everyone uses such as maternity services at birth, community health services and schools when children get older. Some children and young people need extra support for example if a child has a disability or is fostered. To ensure that this support is available, some cross cutting themes are tackled in each priority such as: looked after children and young people; those with Special Educational Needs or disabilities; and those from black and minority ethnic communities.

About Hartlepool

Hartlepool is located on the North East coast of England within the Tees Valley sub region. It is a compact town, which is linked to the rest of the region and country by road, rail and sea.

Approximately 90,000 people live in the town of which **22,324 or 24.8%** are children and young people aged 0-18. 1.2% of the overall population are from black and minority ethnic communities and almost a fifth of the population are at or above retirement age. The town combines dense urban areas, an established marina and expanding suburbs with a number of distinct rural villages. It is a proud town steeped in history and maritime heritage and the people of the Borough have a strong sense of local identity.

Hartlepool is a unitary local authority covering the town with a directly elected mayor and cabinet, political structure. Other major service providers sharing the local authority boundary are the Hartlepool Primary Care Trust, the Police Basic Command Unit and the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. The Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and the Probation Service have established locality teams. There is a strong tradition of partnership working in the Borough, more recently through the work of the Hartlepool Partnership, which brings together the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

Statistical information for Hartlepool

According to the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), seven out of Hartlepool's seventeen wards are among the top 10% most deprived in England, with five of these wards being in the top 3%. Unemployment in April 2007 stood at 4.7% compared to 2.5% nationally. The 2001 census indicated that 60.1% of households (22,684) had a car, 8.7% (3,234) were single parent families and 21.4% (7,986) were households with dependant children.

In Hartlepool approximately 372 private landlords are registered on the voluntary landlord accreditation scheme and own 1,551 of the properties in the Borough that are privately let. There is a significant shortage of affordable single room accommodation that can be rented by young people.

Close to a quarter (23.8%) of Hartlepool's residents identified themselves as having a limiting long-term illness in the 2001 Census, compared to less than one in five nationally (17.6%). In 2006, boys born in Hartlepool could expect to live for an average of 74.5 years, and girls for an average of 78.3 years. Both of these are significantly worse than the England averages which are almost 3 years longer for both boys and girls. Life expectancy between different wards within Hartlepool is more striking still, with a gap of over 13 years between boys born in Stranton and boys born in Hart.

In Hartlepool, in 2008, there were:

- 155 looked after children;
- 57 children with a child protection plan;
- 303 children with a statement of special educational needs.

In 2008 there were 606 (January 2008 – October 2008) children in need receiving social care services. **Figure to be updated following analysis of Child in Need Census.**

There are six secondary schools (until August 2009 when Brierton Community School closes), thirty primary schools, one nursery school, one Pupil Referral Unit and two special schools. The schools cater for 1,029 nursery children, 7,472 primary pupils and 6,100 (excluding sixth form) secondary pupils. Of these 2.3% had a statement of special educational needs in 2007, which is in line with national averages. Attendance in primary schools in 2007/08 is slightly higher than the national average at 94.9%. In secondary schools it was 92.8%, which is slightly higher than the national comparator of 92.7%. 26.2% of primary pupils and 20.36% of secondary pupils were eligible for a free school meal; both figures are in line with national averages. There are 13 full day care settings and 66 childminders offering day care places to under fives.

The proportion of 16-19 year olds in education or training is good and the number of young people classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training is below that of statistical neighbours. The number of young people classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training has fallen from 9.8% in 2005 to 8.5% in 2007.

Teenage pregnancy rates in Hartlepool are high (64.5 per 1000 females aged 15-17 in 2006) in comparison with the national average (40.7 per 1000) and regional comparators. This is despite achieving the 2004 interim target of a 15.2% reduction on the 1998 baseline.

465 young people offended in 2007, which represents 4.4% of the 10-17 years population. The overall re-offending rate after 12 months has reduced year on year from the 2002 cohort at 39.6% to the current 2005 cohort at 28.8%, a percentage reduction of 27.3% over the period.

HAVE WE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED 2006 - 2009

'The Big Plan' Hartlepool's first Children and Young People's Plan was published in 2006. The requirement for a plan came from The Children Act 2004, which indicated that the Local Authority department with responsibility for education and children's social care should lead the development of an overarching strategic plan in conjunction with partner organisations such as the Primary Care Trust, Youth Offending Service and Police Authority as well as other stakeholders including children, young people, parents/carers and voluntary and community sector.

What we achieved 2006 – 2009

In May 2008 a comprehensive program of consultation was launched to help shape and develop the new plan. The first element of the consultation was to determine from children, young people and parents/carers where they thought actions arising from the plan had made a difference.

What children and young people tell us:

- They knew they should be eating healthily, reducing their intake of fatty foods and drinking more water;
- They knew that in order to lead a healthier lifestyle they needed to be more active;
- They thought doing vaccinations in schools was positive;
- They thought that workers were well trained;
- They thought there were more children and young people enjoying school;
- They thought the Connexions service was good;
- They thought there were more opportunities to give their opinions;
- Some young people had clear ideas about what they wanted to do when they grew up.

What parents/carers tell us:

- They were aware of the importance of Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccination and that uptake of immunisations had risen;
- They thought there was positive progress with diet, exercise and healthy lifestyles. They thought the idea of schools being awarded healthy eating star ratings was good.
- They thought awareness of teenage pregnancy issues had improved;
- They said short break care was good when available for children and young people with disabilities;
- They thought Care Co-ordination for children and young people with complex needs was a good experience in terms of information received, sharing of information and one person taking the lead;
- Resource workers for disabled children and their families provide good support;
- They thought that bullying was being tackled in schools;
- They thought community policing was working well in some areas and that there was a good relationship between the Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit;
- They thought that speed bumps were a good idea;
- They thought there was more support in schools;
- They thought that children were enjoying school more and are happy;
- The increase of sports in school is seen as a positive;

- They thought that Children's Centres had improved in every area across the town and opened services up to many;
- They thought there were a lot of services for the under 5's;
- They got good support from voluntary sector agencies;
- They thought respect was slowly changing;
- They thought there was hope for the future;
- They thought consultation events were a positive;
- They thought that benefits information had improved for some.

What our own assessment tells us

As well as gathering the views of children, young people and parents/carers, organisations providing services can gauge how well they are performing through national targets and indicators, inspections and local surveys, questionnaires and consultations. One main area of work is the production of the Annual Performance Assessment, this is a self-assessment tool where a significant proportion of the information gathered identifies how well services are being delivered and what needs to change. A brief summary of the Annual Performance Assessment for 2008 is provided below.

In relation to the health of children and young people:

- Overall, information and support is available to children and young people and targeted appropriately.
- Children and young people in Hartlepool receive good services which address mental health and emotional needs. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service are providing a comprehensive service to children and young people in Hartlepool and they are actively working on improving waiting times and specific services in respect of learning disability e.g. Primary Mental Health Worker. There is a comprehensive range of services to assist young people in addressing their substance misuse including HYPED, which is a drugs service specifically for young people, and Straightline, which is a locally developed alcohol awareness programme for young people who have been identified as drinking whilst underage;
- 38 of the 39 schools in Hartlepool are registered with the National Healthy Schools Programme and 27 have achieved National Healthy School Status, which at 69% is above the national target. The local target is for 36 schools to have achieved National Healthy School Status by August 2009. 100% of primary schools take part in the national fruit and vegetable scheme;
- The quality of provision for physical education and sport in schools is good overall. (OfSTED inspection outcomes).

In relation to being safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation:

- The results of a survey carried out in November 2007 have been used to inform the Anti-bullying Strategy and develop a "Pledge for Hartlepool" with 42 sections, agencies and teams having made a commitment to the zero tolerance ethos towards bullying behaviour;
- Work to minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect is good;
- All children subject to a Protection Plan have an allocated social worker and all reviews were completed within the required timescales;
- The rate of looked after children per 10,000 population is broadly in line with statistical neighbours;
- All schools, leisure clubs and residential children's homes have health and safety assessments of facilities and activities. Every premise that provides for children, has a Health & Safety Officer;

- The effects of domestic abuse on children and young people are regularly considered within the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference process;
- An E-Safety group for Children's Services has been established to support schools and this will be consolidated with the LSCB E-Safety subgroup, which is developing an E-Safety Strategy.

In relation to the opportunities for children and young people to do well within education and enjoy life

- All three and four year olds have access to a free early education place;
- Primary school performance is outstanding overall when compared to similar authorities, with performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in line with national averages and Key Stage 2 performance compared with statistical neighbours is excellent;
- Performance of vulnerable children and young people in relation to behaviour and attendance is excellent;
- Secondary school performance is improving consistently and when compared with statistical neighbours is strong;
- Inspection outcomes show that attendance and behaviour are judged good or outstanding in all schools;
- The number of exclusions from school has fallen significantly over the last two academic years.
- Re-integration rates for excluded pupils are now good, attendance at the Pupil Referral Unit has improved significantly and all pupils have the opportunity to access education suitable to their needs;
- Home Hospital Provision has a strong impact on improving outcomes for potential vulnerable children and young people.

In relation to children and young people having an opportunity to make a positive contribution:

- Children and Young People are routinely engaged in consultation and systems are in place to ensure that children and young people are listened to when key decisions are made about their future, resulting in very good outcomes for them;
- A Participation Strategy has been implemented and is providing a framework for continued progress to be made;
- Young People are also represented at Children's Services Scrutiny and have made a clear impact on the democratic process of the council;
- The secondary school councils are now linked by a central forum that meets half termly and is providing a range of opportunities for young people to debate current issues despite the fact that this is a new concept for schools the new system is starting to have an impact;
- Volunteering in the Borough is well supported and the local millennium volunteer's scheme is central to this programme as is the department's partnership with Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency;
- The work of the young people's forum to support Building Schools for the Future has included 40 young people from across the town going to London to meet with Design Consultants on two separate occasions;
- A youth resource in Café 177 has been identified as a focal point for young people's voices and is developing services that encourage all young people to engage in a democratic process.

In relation to economic well-being:

- The strengths include the wide ranging curriculum, high quality careers education, improving impartial advice and guidance, improved post-16 training and the improvements in the number of young people's participating in post-16 education or training supporting Not in Education, Employment or Training reduction;
- Diploma plans are well developed and there are continued improvements in outcomes in all key judgement areas for young people who are looked after, leaving care or are identified as have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- All secondary schools offer vocational programmes;
- Re-engagement programmes targeting the most disaffected and disadvantaged groups of young people are well developed examples include Wake up to Work, NDC Raising Aspirations, Aim Higher Vulnerable Pupil Programme but need to be expanded and are a priority in 2008 which will be financially supported by the NDC Raising Aspirations and ESF Going Forward Project;
- The Hartlepool Connexions Service provides universal access to high quality Careers information, advice and guidance to young people aged 12-19 (and up to 25 where there is additional need).
- Action is taken to ensure that 14-19 education and training is planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way, and to ensure that education and training for 16-19 year olds is of good quality:
- Inspection grades for all post-16 Hartlepool Colleges are good or outstanding with good or very good leadership and management, good levels of achievement and good teaching;
- The Local Authority works closely with schools to ensure School Improvement Plans are implemented;
- Key planning documents are in place which includes Partner Plans and the Tees Valley & Hartlepool Aim Higher Plan.

In relation to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and Special Education Needs:

- The Care Co-ordination process has been extended to cover all ages up to 18 including those going through the transition process to adult services. Children and young people with disabilities as well as their parents/carers' needs are identified early and services delivered to meet assessed need;
- Special Education Needs provision is kept under regular review and resources are redirected as necessary;
- Schools are able to meet the needs of a broad range of pupils and access funding has been targeted to support individual pupils through their neighbourhood schools;
- Self-evaluation for inclusion, including use of the Manchester Inclusion Standard, has been promoted both in schools and in other settings, e.g. activity centres funded by Children's Fund;
- Support for children and young people with a learning difficulty and/ or disability to make a positive contribution is very good and is reflected in the Strategy and Action Plan for Special Education Needs 2006/07;
- A variety of ways have been used to try and ensure meaningful participation of children and young people with disabilities both in decision-making about their own lives and about wider issues.

In relation to looked after children:

- The small cohorts in Hartlepool make statistical comparisons difficult. Numbers in any one year are usually less than 10;

- Nearly all children are making progress on previous levels of attainment;
- Educational achievement of looked after children is a high priority in Children's Services and across partner agencies and shows an improving picture;
- A strategy is in place to identify out of school opportunities for looked after children and young people.
- Very good support is provided to ensure that children and young people looked after are helped to make a positive contribution. Systems are in place to support the participation of looked after children and their carers in the decision making process through the Corporate Parent Forum and as part of the broader Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2009 – 2020

Why key priorities?

The format of Hartlepool's first Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009 followed the Every Child Matters outcomes of: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being; which was appropriate at the time as it followed the government's thinking about how services needed to respond to children and young people to improve their outcomes in the wake of the Victoria Climbié enquiry. However, as time progressed it was evident that whilst some local issues follow national trends Hartlepool has its own very specific challenges that need to be addressed.

Feedback from wide ranging consultation undertaken as part of the review and development of this plan highlighted issues that did not naturally fall under the 5 outcomes and therefore a decision was taken to refocus the framework of the plan.

The new plan is structured around 5 key priorities:

- Tackling Inequalities
- Narrowing the Gap
- Eradicating Child Poverty
- Living Safely
- Promoting Emotional Well-being

Each of the key priorities will have a number of actions highlighted against them, which will target local need and also any national priorities that the government expect to be met within the timeframe.

Why 2009 – 2020?

There are a number of reasons why this plan will have a timescale of 2009 to 2020. During the consultation process it was clearly identified that there were a number of issues from the first plan that were still being highlighted as concerns and priorities for children, young people and their parents/carers. Whilst most of these priorities were being addressed, the positive impact on outcomes will take longer to materialise.

TACKLING INEQUALITIES

“Personally, I hate needles but see that it is a good thing to be vaccinated.”

Young Person

What do we mean by inequalities?

“Inequality is a difference in status, characterised by unequal opportunity or treatment between people or groups on grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief.”

Experiencing inequality can have a significant effect on outcomes for children and young people not least in terms of the effect it can have on their immediate and long-term health. There are a number of indicators that the government use to determine how each Local Authority and Primary Care Trust area is performing against these targets.

What does the data tell us about need in Hartlepool?

- The infant mortality rate in Hartlepool was 5.3 per 1,000 live births in 2004-06, which is similar to the England average;
- In 2006, boys born in Hartlepool could expect to live for an average of 74.5 years, and girls for an average of 78.3 years. Both of these are significantly worse than the England averages which are almost 3 years longer for both boys and girls. Life expectancy between different wards within Hartlepool is more striking still, with a gap of over 13 years between boys born in Stranton and boys born in Hart ward;
- Only 38% of new mothers initiate breast-feeding as opposed to the national average of 69%;
- The childhood obesity rate within Hartlepool for 11 year olds is 24.4% which is significantly higher than the national average of 17.5%;
- Smoking in Hartlepool is higher than the national average and 27.8% of pregnant women smoke during pregnancy;
- In 2006 the under 18 conception rate for Hartlepool was 64.5 per 1000 female population 15 - 17 years;
- The immunisation rates in Hartlepool are good with over 91% being completed at all recorded stages i.e. 1st, 2nd and 5th birthdays. However there is an issue in relation to uptake of boosters particularly uptake of 2nd MMR (measles, mumps & rubella) where uptake is only 79%;
- 94% of looked after children benefited from regular health assessments in 2007/08 which is very high compared to similar authorities and national comparisons;
- 100% of looked after children are registered with a GP;
- National Healthy School Status - 72% of schools and one nursery have achieved national healthy school status award;
- Although the proportion of expectant mothers smoking remains high there has been a 12% reduction in smoking at the point of delivery since 2003/04;
- Teenage conception rates in Hartlepool continue to fluctuate, however, there is an overall downward trend since 1998. Hartlepool achieved the national 2004 interim target to reduce teenage conceptions by 15%. The conception rate for 2006 reduced from 78 to 64.5 (per 1,000) and resulted in a percentage decrease in the rate of 14.7% since 1998, which is similar to similar authorities and national rates;
- Care Co-ordination needs to be further developed to meet the needs of young people with disabilities and complex needs.

What children, young people and their parents/carers told us

- They think more needs to be done to tackle teenage conception rates and that young people need to understand the impact of sexual health issues;
- Parents whose children are awaiting a health diagnosis for particular conditions can find it difficult to access support services;
- They want more understanding from professionals, information and support where drugs and alcohol impact on the lives of children and young people not just in relation to young people with drug and alcohol problems but also substance misuse by adults.
- Extend the awareness raising programme relating to living healthier lifestyles to ensure that parents have access to the same information as their children;
- They want a more innovative approach to keeping fit for example access to Nintendo Wii fits and young people only gym sessions;
- More advertising of services through schools;
- One to one support for those children and young people who want to lose weight;
- Healthier options on menus in schools, cafes, restaurants and take-aways.

What are our priorities?

- Encourage more women to instigate and maintain breastfeeding for as long as possible;
- Obesity among children and young people locally is a cause for concern as it has a significant impact on their long term health;
- Teenage pregnancy and sexual health remains a key issue across Hartlepool, that needs to be tackled in partnership with children, young people and parents and carers;
- Engagement with health partners to address issues relating to length of time parents wait for a diagnosis for certain medical conditions to be able to access support services;
- Addressing the issues of substance misuse by young people and adults;
- The improvement in raising awareness about living healthier lifestyles is seen as a positive but parents need to have access to the same information as their children;
- Care Co-ordination needs to be extended to meet the needs of young people with disabilities;
- Better organisation and co-ordination of services, so that when a service closes a case, parents are not left without support.

How do we intend to address the gaps in service?

- Continue to promote the positive benefits of breast feeding and the negative impact of smoking and ensure that women during pregnancy and after their baby's birth receive appropriate information and support to help them address these issues;
- Work with all stakeholders to address obesity of children and young people within the town;
- Improve the uptake of childhood vaccinations, and implement the new national Human Papilloma Virus vaccination programme to protect against cervical cancer;
- Continue to work with the Primary Care Trust to support the implementation of the Bercow report recommendations to transform speech and language therapy for children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Ensure that integrated working tools (the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Practitioner role and Team around the Child) and practices are embedded within the children and young people's workforce to support a smoother transition for those children, young people and families accessing services;
- Ensure that the 11 standards of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services continue to be rolled out;
- Implement the recommendations of the national review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services;

- Ensure that all services work effectively together to support pregnant women to stop smoking;
- Ensure access and continued effectiveness of local stop smoking services so that everyone who smokes can easily find the support they need to stop, close to where they live or work;
- Ensure that the relevant services are in place to support children and young people with alcohol or drug problems by implementing the Young Person Specialist Substance Misuse Treatment Plan;
- Implement the `Hidden Harm` Strategy particularly in respect of the development of dedicated services for children affected by parental drug and alcohol misuse;
- Develop focussed work with parents who have problem drug and alcohol issues through parenting programmes and/or intensive intervention for families where there are children with a high risk of being taken into care;
- Implement the recommendations of the Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team ensuring the delivery of the 10 priority areas for action;
- Implement the recommendations of the Teeswide Sexual Health National Support Team in particular the integration of contraception and sexual health services for young people;
- Support those schools yet to achieve the National Healthy School Status award and ensure that those who already have the award continue to maintain the relevant standards required;
- Protect children against disease through high uptake of immunisation and screening programmes;
- Ensure that all parents have the information that they require to support their children to make healthy choices;
- Reduce the number of children who have untreated tooth decay.

In addition we need to ensure that we recognise the additional needs of some young people:

In relation to children and young people with disabilities:

- All partners will work with health care colleagues to ensure that parents receive relevant and timely information relating to medical diagnosis for their children;
- Ensure that those children and young people with disabilities who are not known to the appropriate services and require support, receive information and the support they need;
- Promote direct payments or independent budgets to families of children with disabilities, by providing better access to information about the support available;
- Ensure that all young people with learning difficulties or disabilities are involved in their Section 140 assessments.

In relation to looked after children:

- We will develop a database which collates information and identifies key health care issues for looked after children, this will support the development of services based on the identified health care needs of looked after children in order to further improve targeting of resources.

In relation to children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities:

- Ensure that advice and information about healthy diets and lifestyles is accessible to children, young people and parents/carers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and is sensitive to cultural dietary requirements.

National indicators

In relation to tackling inequalities the local authority and its partner organisations must work to improve services for children and young people and there are a number of National Indicators that are aimed at improving outcomes in this priority area:

- NI 51 Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services;

- NI 52 Percentage of pupils who have school lunches;
- NI 53 Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 - 8 weeks from birth;
- NI 54 Parents' experience of services for disabled children and the 'core offer';
- NI 55 Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year;
- NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6;
- NI 57 Percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in at least 2 hours per week of high-quality PE and sport at school and the percentage of 5-19 year olds participating in at least 3 further hours per week of sporting opportunities;
- NI 112 Under 18 conception rate;
- NI 115 Reduce the proportion of young people frequently using illicit drugs, alcohol or volatile substances;
- NI 120– All-age all cause mortality.

ERADICATING CHILD POVERTY

“Social housing is a must for parents in Hartlepool. A more compassionate approach to parents who are facing difficulty or eviction is necessary.”
Parent

What do we mean by child poverty?

“Despite significant increases in support for families with children in recent years, income inequality remains high, driven by high levels of wage and wealth inequality. The benefits of our rich society – in the distribution of income and employment opportunities – are not evenly shared” Harker (2006)¹

In its Children’s Plan, the Department for Children, Schools and Families have pledged to halve child poverty by 2010 and eradicate it by 2020.

What does the data tell us about need in Hartlepool?

- 28.6% of Hartlepool’s children are living in poverty;
- The unemployment rate is 4.6%, twice the national average;
- Working age people on out of work benefits is 21.1%;
- 51.6% of all 16-24 year olds are in employment;
- 30% of adults in Hartlepool have low numeracy skills and a similar number have problems reading and writing;
- 68.53% of social housing property achieve the minimum decent home standard;
- There is an imbalance in housing stock with: Higher than average levels of terraced housing stock (41.1% compared to 19.2% nationally in 2001) and the proportion of detached dwellings is relatively small (14.2% in 2001 compared to 22.8% nationally);
- 40% of households within Hartlepool do not have a car, 13% below the national average.

What Children, Young People and their Parents/Carers told us:

- There are a range of housing issues that need to be investigated further including the availability of single tenancies for young adults and a reduction in the levels of housing stock;
- Some families struggle to make ends meet on a weekly basis;
- There needs to be better access to benefits advice and information for all;
- Improve services to meet the needs of the growing number of single fathers and grandparents who are looking after grandchildren;
- Issues relating to the routing and timing of the public transport network within Hartlepool need to be reconsidered for some young people to access activities, particularly in the evening;
- Better information about education and training options for parents and young people;
- People want clean and healthy environments in which to live;
- A better approach to dealing with issues about anti-social behaviour;
- In order to raise the aspirations of young people in Hartlepool there needs to be an improvement in employment prospects and a range of occupations;
- More information should be available on current and future job opportunities;
- It would be helpful to have employers visit Schools to advise young people on ‘the world of work’;

¹Harker L, (2006), Delivering on Child Poverty – What would it take? – A report for the Department of Work and Pensions

- Young people would like to visit different employers (and sectors) to get a feel for what it is like to be employed;
- Young people would like to understand and be consulted on what work placements are available to them; and;
- It would be beneficial if there were training sessions for young people on subjects relating to the skills and behaviours required to be a 'good employee'.

What are our priorities?

- Working with partners to increase the availability of supported housing for vulnerable young people;
- Families with low incomes have particular issues in relation to transport and access to activities for children and young people which need to be more affordable;
- Issues relating to the transport network within Hartlepool need to be looked at in more detail;
- Some families struggle to make ends meet on a weekly basis;
- There needs to be better access to benefits advice and information for all;
- Improve services to meet the needs of the growing number of lone parents and grandparents who are looking after grandchildren;
- Better information about courses for parents and young people;
- People want clean and healthy environments in which to live.

How do we intend to address the gaps in service?

- Improve job opportunities within Hartlepool;
- Support parents to maximise their income and increase the number of people who are economically active.
- Further develop the work of the Hartlepool Financial Partnership to ensure that there are better routes to financial advice and support;
- Ensure that information about the range of benefits available to vulnerable young people and families is consistent and of high quality;
- We want all children and young people in Hartlepool to grow up in an environment free from the effects of poverty and go on to achieve economic well being;
- Ensure that every young person has a goal to continue their education, enrol on a training course or gain employment;
- Increase the number of people who are 'work ready' with the right skills to get local employment;
- Help people understand that they could have their own business, and help them to develop their entrepreneurial ideas;
- Keep people healthy so that they are able to remain in employment;
- Continue the expansion of re-engagement programmes for the most disaffected and disadvantaged young people;
- Continue to build on the work already undertaken to increase the number of young people who participate in education and training post-16 and reduce the number who are Not in Education, Employment or Training including those from vulnerable groups e.g. leaving care;
- Support families to break the cyclic patterns of unemployment;
- Eradicate the inappropriate use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people who are homeless;
- Raise the awareness of the business community of the positive benefits of employing young people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and mental health problems.

In addition we need to ensure that we recognise the additional needs of some young people:

In relation to children and young people with disabilities:

- Ensure that the review of the current transitions arrangements results in the agreement of a robust transitions policy that is agreed and owned by all the relevant partners;
- Ensure that young people with disabilities have the opportunity to access education, employment and training with the relevant support.

In relation to children and young people looked after:

- Continue to work with the Leaving Care team to ensure that all young people leaving care are given the relevant advice, information and support to help them access adequate housing, the relevant benefits and further education, employment or training.

In relation to children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities:

- Support children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities to access information about further education, employment or training, paying particular attention to those whose first language is not English.

National indicators

National indicator targets that local authorities and their partners must work towards to improve services for children and young people in relation to eradicating child poverty are set out below:

- NI 91 Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training;
- NI 116 - Proportion of Children in Poverty;
- NI 117 - 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET);
- NI 118 Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families;
- NI 151 - Overall employment rate;
- NI 152 - Working age people on out of work benefits;
- NI 153 - Working age population claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods;
- NI 155 – Number of affordable homes constructed;
- NI 161 - Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy;
- NI 162 - Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy;
- NI 163 - Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher;
- NI 164 - Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher.
- NI 166 - Average Earnings of employees in the area.

NARROWING THE GAP

“More individual learning is required, each child has a specific way of learning, no one size fits all.”
Parent

What do we mean by narrowing the gap?

“Raising the aspirations of children, young people and their parents is vital if we are to narrow the attainment gap. We want all children to expand their horizons and consider opportunities beyond their immediate locality, so that their future is not constrained by the choices of previous generations”²

By ‘narrowing the gap’ there will be an improvement in outcomes for vulnerable children and young people who are most at risk. The intention is to concentrate on reducing the differences in outcomes between these groups and children and young people as a whole – whilst continuing to improve outcomes for all.

What does the data tell us about need in Hartlepool?

- The gap between the lowest achieving 20% in Foundation Stage Profile has narrowed from 45.7 (2007) to 43.6 (2008) compared to a national gap of 35.6;
- The number of pupils achieving a grade A* to C at GCSE was 55% for English and 56% for Maths. However, there is a need to narrow the gap between boys and girls achievement;
- 9% of 16 -18yr olds were recorded as not in Education, Employment or Training at the end of December 2007. 91% of 16 – 18 year olds are in Education, Employment and Training;
- 74 young people dropped out from education, employment or training opportunities after leaving full-time education in 2007;
- There are 165 children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities in Hartlepool known to and in receipt of support from Children’s Services;
- 42% of children with Special Educational Needs statements are placed in a special school.
- The proportion of young people with a learning difficulty or disability aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training is 9.4%;
- The number of families accessing direct payments on behalf of their children is 25;
- 80.5 % of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities were involved in their section 140 assessments;
- The 14-19 Partnership is working to implement the national curriculum entitlement by 2013 to all 17 Diploma lines;
- Opportunities for Young Apprenticeship Programmes and vocational studies are available for all KS4 pupils. The range of courses available to pre-16 has expanded from 183 in 2003/04 to 251. (Hartlepool Curriculum audits 2004/08);
- 98% of Y10 pupils accessed work placement programmes in 2006/07;
- Level 3 attainment by 19 has risen from 34.6% in 2005 to 39.6% in 2007 with an increase in the same period for level 2 from 62.2% to 67.4%. Both figures are above statistical neighbours. (OfSTED Toolkit and LSC data set);
- The number of young people completing an Apprenticeship has shown an overall success rate increase from 50.3% in 2003/04 to 66.3% in 2006/07;
- 100% of looked after children have an up-to-date Personal Education Plan. All looked after children are encouraged to attend their Personal Education Plan meetings;

² Narrowing the Gap, DCSF

- Whilst in 2004/05 65% of permanent excluded pupils received 20 hours or more tuition a week, all pupils excluded for six days or more now receive a full time alternative;
- 83% of Hartlepool schools have activities that meet the extended schools 'core offer';
- Inspection outcomes for day care settings are improving and 66% of full day care settings have received a good or outstanding inspection rating;
- In 2007 national averages were achieved for mathematics at KS3 and English is also now in line with the national average;
- Boys' performance is improving and the gender gap is better than national rates;
- National averages were achieved for 5A*-G, 5A*-G including English and Maths and 1A*-G at age 16 in 2007;
- GCSE performance in 2007 was very good with record performances achieved;
- 63% of 16 year olds achieved 5A*-Cs which is in line with national averages;
- 90% of schools in Hartlepool currently have a travel plan, which relates to alternative ways of travelling to school other than by car. There are 2 schools outstanding, the remaining schools are engaged in the development process and it is expected that 100% of schools will have travel plans in place by March 2009;
- The percentage of young people accessing the September Guarantee is high; well above statistical neighbours – 78% access full time education, 9.1% work-based training, 4.2% employment with training and 0.8% employment classified as 'other' including part-time and voluntary (Government Office: Not in Education, Employment or Training statistics).

What Children, Young People and their parents/carers told us:

- Access to a range of affordable activities for all age ranges and abilities proved to be very important to children, young people and parents/carers;
- Parents want the council to stop selling off land for houses and keep some land for children's play areas;
- Training needs to be improved for teaching and non teaching staff to help them manage challenging behaviours;
- There should be more support for those children and young people who struggle with their schooling;
- Young people want adults and Police Officers to be able to differentiate between anti-social behaviour and groups of young people congregating for their own safety.

What are our priorities?

- There needs to be better access to a range of affordable activities for all ages and abilities;
- Ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to achieve better outcomes through their education;
- Provide more support for those children and young people who struggle with their schooling;
- Address the issue of access to more open spaces that are children and young person friendly;
- Identify the training needs of teaching and non teaching staff around challenging behaviours;
- Involve more parents in long term planning of all services;
- A better approach to dealing with issues about anti-social behaviour;
- Support to ensure that parents/carers can fulfil their responsibilities to their children.

How do we intend to address the gaps in service?

- Work to raise attainment within the Foundation Stage Profile particularly in relation to Communication, Language and Literacy and Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Raise the quality of early years provision; including provision within Children's Centres and Extended Schools to ensure all children and families have access to the support they require;
- Sustain the levels of achievement in relation to GCSE's and tackle the issue of boys under achievement in certain subjects;
- Continue to increase the number of children attaining GCSE's and going into further and higher education;
- Improve the quality of services for children and young people that enable them to enjoy their education, improve their well being, enrich their lives and raise aspirations;
- Improve the educational achievement of vulnerable children and young people to further narrow attainment gaps including boy's performance;
- Improve performance in GCSE in English and Mathematics;
- Contribute to other Local Authority departmental strategies, for example the Open Space Strategy to ensure that play areas and open spaces are more accessible to children, young people and their families;
- We will continue to review childcare sufficiency and intervene where necessary;
- Ensure that children and young people with disabilities who are not known to the appropriate services and require support, receive information and the support they need;
- Promote direct payments or independent budgets to families of children with disabilities, by providing better access to information about the support available;
- Provide more support for those children and young people who struggle with their schooling;
- Access to a range of affordable activities for all age ranges and abilities proved to be very important to children, young people and parents/carers;
- Parents want the council to stop selling off too much land for houses, keep some land for children's play areas;
- Continue to improve the training programmes available for teaching and non teaching staff around challenging behaviours;
- Ensure that effective collaboration is in place between schools and the Children's Trust to improve educational outcomes for children and young people;
- There has been a significant rise in the number of grandparents who are looking after their grandchildren, support from services should address their needs as carers which can be very different from parents;
- Continue to implement the core offer within the Children's Centres and Extended Services Strategy to address issues such as access to affordable childcare and activities;
- Implement Targeted Youth Support to ensure that vulnerable young people who require additional support have access to the help that they need;
- Ensure all training issues are addressed under the Workforce Development Strategy;
- Develop a programme of education to bring together adults, children, young people and the relevant professionals (including Police Officers and Police Community Support Officer's) to develop an understanding of what anti-social behaviour is and improve tolerance towards children and young people;
- Continue to promote partnership working between all relevant organisations in conjunction with children and young people to address issues of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- The Youth Offending Service will continue to work with partner agencies to ensure early identification and support to those young people and their families who are at risk of entering the youth justice system. They will also work to reduce offending and continue to develop programmes of intervention to address the needs of those young people who offend.

In addition we need to ensure that we recognise the additional needs of some young people:

In relation to children and young people with disabilities:

- We will work towards the implementation of Aiming High through the delivery of a local core offer;
- Implement the Inclusion Development Programme;
- Ensure that all young people with learning disabilities or difficulties are involved in their transitional planning arrangements.

In relation to children and young people looked after:

- Continue to work with schools to ensure that children and young people looked after receive the relevant support to help them achieve their potential;
- Ensure that the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes areas improve outcomes for children looked after.

In relation to children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities:

- Ensure that all children and young people from minority ethnic groups receive appropriate support to help their learning.

National indicators

There are the number of national indicator targets that local authorities and their partners must work towards to improve services for children and young people in relation to narrowing the gap:

- NI 17 – Perceptions of anti-social behaviour;
- NI 22 Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area;
- NI 72 Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy;
- NI 73-74*Proportions of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and Maths at each of Key Stages 2 and 3;
- NI 75 Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and Maths;
- NI 76 Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 65% of pupils achieve level 4 or above in both English and Maths at KS2 (Floor);
- NI 78 Number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths (Floor);
- NI 79 Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19;
- NI 80 Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19;
- NI 81 Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19;
- NI 82 Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19;
- NI 83 Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3;
- NI 84 Achievement of 2 or more A*- C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent;
- NI 86 Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour;
- NI 85 Post-16 participation in physical sciences (A Level Physics, Chemistry and Maths);
- NI 87 Secondary school persistent absence rate;
- NI 88 Percentage of schools providing access to extended services;
- NI 89 Reduction in number of schools judged as requiring special measures and improvement in time taken to come out of the category;

- NI 90 Take up of 14–19 learning diplomas;
- NI 92 Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest;
- NI 93-98* Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in English and Maths at each of Key Stages 2, 3 and 4;
- NI 99-100* Looked after children reaching level 4 in each of English and Maths at Key Stage 2;
- NI 101 Looked after children reaching 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths);
- NI 102 Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2 and 4;
- NI 103 Special Education Needs - statements issued within 26 weeks;
- NI 104 The Special Education Needs / non-Special Education Needs gap - achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold;
- NI 105 The Special Education Needs / non-Special Education Needs gap - achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths;
- NI 107 Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups;
- NI 108 Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups;
- NI 109 Delivery of Sure Start Children Centres;
- NI 114 Rate of permanent exclusions from school.

LIVING SAFELY

**“We want to feel safe on the streets we need better lighting, the streets are too dark.”
Children**

What do we mean by living safely?

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-operation amongst all those who work with or who are involved with children in Hartlepool”, partner organisations statement of commitment to the Local Safeguarding Children Board 2008.³

“Together we will reduce crime and drugs misuse to build a safer, healthier Hartlepool”, Safer Hartlepool Partnership Vision, 2004.⁴

What does the data tell us about need in Hartlepool?

In relation to being safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation:

- A high proportion (74.7% at March 2008) of initial assessments are completed within seven working days;
- 100% of children subject to a Protection Plan have an allocated social worker and all reviews were completed within the required timescales;
- We achieved 87% placement stability for looked after children and 64% long term stability of looked after children. The latter figure is within the context of 8% of children and young people with the most stable placements becoming the subject of special guardianship orders giving a figure of 72% overall which exceeds the national average;
- 38% of young people said that they had been bullied, 73% had witnessed bullying (bystander) and 13% said that they had bullied (perpetrator).

What children, young people, parents and carers told us:

- Although it is acknowledged that work has been done to address the issue of bullying, particularly in schools, the problem still exists and there is concern about the increase in the instances of ‘cyber bullying’ via the internet and mobile phones;
- Earlier intervention and more availability of preventative services are needed to prevent families reaching crisis point;
- More effective information sharing needs to be embedded into practice;
- Continuously improve services and structures that are there to protect;
- The availability of help and support when services are closed at night and weekends;
- A significant number of young people live in fear of crime in their neighbourhoods;
- Community policing needs to be strengthened in some areas of the town;
- The promotion of better and safer driving within the town.

What are our priorities?

- Reduce the number of placements being made beyond 20 miles from home and further improve value for money and placement choice using a Preferred Provider Partnership with

³ Hartlepool Local Safeguarding Children Board, Annual Review 2007 - 2008

⁴ Safer Hartlepool Partnership, Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategy 2008 – 2011,

the independent sector (a partner has now been chosen following a formal tendering process);

- Reduce the numbers of children looked after by strengthening integrated preventative work and targeting services to those most vulnerable;
- Embed the Integrated Children's System and ensure this is an effective tool to improve performance;
- Ensure that there are sufficient links in place to support the smooth transition into specialist services from universal and targeted services by promoting the use of integrated working tools (i.e. Common Assessment Framework, Lead Practitioner, Team around the Child and effective Information Sharing);
- Ensure that the issue of 'cyber' bullying is addressed;
- Ensure that parents/carers are supported in their responsibility to keep their children safe;
- Improve road safety within the town.

How do we intend to address the gaps in service?

- Continue to roll out and embed the bullying strategy and address the emerging issue of 'cyber bullying' via the internet and mobile phones which children and young people are increasingly concerned about;
- Address the issue of e-safety by ensuring that the relevant policies and procedures are in place across organisations and promoted to children and young people;
- Continue to promote models of good practice in early intervention and increase the availability of preventative services to stop families reaching crisis point and aid a smoother transition between services;
- Continuously improve services and structures within child protection;
- Ensure that there are good governance arrangements in place and robust linkages between the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Children's Trust;
- Strengthen the leadership and management of child protection services in Hartlepool;
- Seek to determine what can be done to help and support children, young people and their families when services are closed at night and weekends;
- Influence the work to develop and strengthen community policing;
- Promote better and safer driving within the town and improve traffic calming measures;
- Ensure that CRB checks are in place for all school governors and other adults who come into contact with children and young people;
- All organisations in Hartlepool will continue to ensure that safer recruitment is embedded within organisational policy and practice;
- Ensure that children and young people who are the victims of crime are supported and feel confident to report the crime;
- Ensure that children and young people who are the victims of crime receive relevant and timely support.

In addition we need to ensure that we recognise the additional needs of some young people:

In relation to children and young people with disabilities:

- Effective planning and support is in place to safeguard children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In relation to looked after children:

- We will continue to ensure that looked after children are well supported to live in safe environments and be protected from abuse and exploitation;
- Review the arrangements for children and young people's participation in looked after reviews to achieve better involvement and participation.

In relation to children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities:

- Ensure that all children and young people coming into Hartlepool from another country, particularly unaccompanied asylum seekers are safeguarded against exploitation, by working closely with the relevant organisations to put preventative measures in place to secure their welfare.

National indicators

The following is a list of national indicator targets that local authorities and their partner agencies must work towards to improve services for children and young people in relation to living safely:

- NI 59 Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral;
- NI 60 Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement;
- NI 61 Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption;
- NI 62 Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements;
- NI 63 Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement;
- NI 64 Child protection plans lasting 2 years or more;
- NI 65 Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time;
- NI 66 Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales;
- NI 67 Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales;
- NI 68 Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment;
- NI 69 Percentage of children who have experienced bullying;
- NI 70 Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people;
- NI 71 Children who have run away from home/care overnight;
- NI 111 Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System aged 10–17;
- NI 175 - Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.

PROMOTING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

**“We need someone to talk to who we can trust.”
Young Person**

What do we mean by emotional well-being?

*“When background factors or the characteristics of the family build a child’s resilience they are ‘protective’: they help to mitigate any negative influences to which the child is exposed”.*⁵

*“Resilience doesn’t prevent shock, suffering or disappointment, but it does enable a rapid bounce back. It’s good for kids to get knocked but only if they learn that they can survive them”.*⁶

The preceding chapters highlighted issues faced by children, young people and their parents/carers, what the priorities are and how they are to be addressed. This chapter considers what needs to be done to build resilience in children and young people so that they have the opportunity to deal with factors that affect their health, education and safety.

Children and young people need to be ready to cope with the stresses that modern day life can place upon them. Parents/carers and professionals who come into contact with them need to be able to provide the right skills and emotional support to help them through difficult periods that they may face in their lives. The more prepared children and young people are to cope with a wide range of pressures the more likely their outcomes will improve.

The pressures are many and varied and some examples are provided below:

- Exam pressures;
- The pressure to fit in with peer groups;
- Coping with parents separation and divorce;
- Bereavement of a significant adult role model in their lives;
- Any form of abuse or harassment including bullying;
- Poverty particularly when it is a consequence of parental substance misuse, domestic violence, poor parental mental health or long term worklessness.

Mental health and emotional well-being is affected positively and negatively by a child’s own make-up; the influence of their parents, carers, families and wider communities; and by their everyday experiences in places such as nurseries, schools and youth services. Unless a person is feeling mentally healthy, it is difficult for them to have the best physical health and well-being.

The exposure to risk begins very early in a child’s life even before their birth and most of these factors will be linked to maternal behaviour i.e. smoking, diet, substance misuse, accessing ante-natal care and support available from friends and family. In the intervening years prior to primary school, parental influences/pressures remain significant such as: household income, living environment and parent’s ability to engage their children in learning.

⁵ Aiming High for Children: Supporting Families, DfES (2007)

⁶ Livingstone T, (2008), Child of Our Time - Early Learning: How to achieve your child’s full potential

Once at schools factors can change significantly in relation to the influence of other adults and peers on a child where positive experiences can have a significant impact on their coping mechanisms and counter to that negative experience can be detrimental to a child's ability to cope. It is also at this point that any child with specific needs would require effective management in relation to their transition into the school environment.

Parents, carers and everyone in day-to-day contact with children and young people need a better understanding of child development, the causes of mental health problems and things they can do themselves to build resilience and deal with issues as they emerge, whatever age their child is.

What does the data tell us about need in Hartlepool?

- A recent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services survey in 4 secondary schools in Hartlepool showed that of the 1400 surveys returned 14% of respondents self harmed as a method of coping with stress;

The national picture:

The most comprehensive statistical survey of the prevalence of mental disorders in Great Britain⁷ found that:

- In 2004, 10% of children and young people aged between five and 15 had a clinically diagnosable mental disorder that is associated with "considerable distress and substantial interference with personal functions" such as family and social relationships, their capacity to cope with day-to-day stresses and life challenges, and their learning;
- Mental health problems are more common in boys than girls;
- Problems are more common among 11 to 15 year olds;
- Children who face three or more stressful life events, such as family bereavement, divorce or serious illness, are three times more likely than other children to develop emotional and behavioural disorders;
- The factors most commonly associated with emotional disorders were serious physical illness, stressful family situations and mother's mental health;
- Nearly one third of children diagnosed as having emotional disorders in 2004 still had them in 2007, with family, household and social characteristics again strongly linked to persistence;
- Children in special schools for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or Pupil Referral Units are significantly more likely to experience mental health difficulties than the general population;
- Over a third of children and young people with an identified learning disability also have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder;
- Approximately 40% of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system have a mental health problem. This rises to more than 90% for those in custody;
- Children and young people with physical disabilities are twice as likely to develop emotional problems as those without, as are those who experience serious or chronic illness;
- Teenage mothers are three times more likely than older mothers to suffer postnatal depression and mental health problems in the first three years of their baby's life. This is of importance as pregnancy and the first years of life are a critical stage, when the foundations of future health and well-being are laid down.

What Children, Young People and their parents/carers told us:

- More needs to be done to tackle emotional health problems at a lower level and more quickly;
- Develop better approaches to partnership working with parents;

- Strengthen participation of children and young people in the planning and decision making processes, both in relation to their individual support needs and service development;
- Promote the positive contribution that the majority of children and young people make to their communities and the town;
- Children and young people who contributed to the recent National Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review were asked what things they thought were important for children and young people's well-being:
 - having good support networks – across family, friends and school
 - being able to do things they enjoy – ranging from sports and community based activities, to having time with family and friends, and time to relax
 - building self-esteem – in particular by having their achievements recognised and by having goals to work towards.
- Children and young people say that services are not as well known, accessible, responsive or child-centred as they should be.
- Those who access specialist services do not always have the opportunity to develop trusting relationships with staff for the length of time they need.

What are our priorities?

- Understand the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people in Hartlepool and engage effectively with children, young people and their families in developing approaches to meet those needs;
- Promote access to better mental and emotional support at all levels for children and young people;
- Support all parents to achieve better outcomes for them and their children and help them to fulfil their responsibilities in this area;
- Explore the opportunities to extend the good practice achieved by pilot projects across Hartlepool so that more can be done to address emotional health problems at a lower level;
- Ensure that no child or young person experiences isolation or social exclusion;
- Ensure that any child or young person who has been the victim of bullying, physical or emotional abuse or neglect is adequately supported to prevent a decline in their emotional well-being;
- Involve children, young people, parents and carers in the planning and development of services.

How do we intend to address the gaps in service?

- Promote good mental and emotional health and prevent deterioration in low level mental health problems;
- When problems arise, parents, carers, children and young people and the practitioners working with them on a daily basis need swifter, more effective input from practitioners who are able to address the full range of needs;
- Promote a holistic approach to meeting need in a flexible and responsive way;
- Up-skill the children's workforce in promoting mental health and well-being including improved knowledge of risk and resilience factors and improved skills in early identification and early intervention as part of a common core of basic knowledge and skills;
- Raise parents' awareness of the importance of emotional well being and how to promote it and to support them in doing so;
- Coordinate support to families with children identified as needing help with emotional well being delivered through a model that has consistent approaches and equity across the Borough;

- Provide swift easy access to specialist services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Education Psychology Services and Acorn for assessment and intervention and enable joint work where appropriate;
- Identify and promote what works best if things go wrong;
- Continue to work with schools to support the delivery of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning in school for all children and young people;
- Continue to promote and develop the SMILE awards as a method of improving and increasing the participation of children and young people in the decision making processes;
- Continue to roll out and embed the Parenting Strategy;
- Ensure that the participation of children and young people is promoted across all organisations;
- Ensure that all children and young people are adequately supported in the major transitional points within their lives;
- Ensure those who have more complex mental health issues can access the care and treatment that is right for them, especially when making the transition into Adult Mental Health Services;
- Promote the use of the Vulnerability Assessment Screening Tool within Hartlepool's schools, to identify children at risk of self harming;
- Develop a more robust framework for the involvement of parents, grandparents and carers in strategic planning;
- Continue to progress plans to develop integrated working teams;
- Provide support for children and their families to better access services through Children's Centres;
- Consider commissioning additional low-level emotional support for children and young people.

In addition we need to ensure that we recognise the additional needs of some young people:

- Nine looked after children, two children with disabilities and the child of a foster carer have completed accredited training in recruitment and are actively involved in supporting interviewing panels.

In relation to looked after children:

- Deliver safeguarding services based on a thorough assessment of the needs of children and young people and maintain the focus on the child throughout;
- Deliver continuous improvements in services for looked after children providing high quality placements to deliver continuity of care, education, health and social and emotional development:

National indicators

These are the list of national indicator targets that local authorities and their partner agencies must work towards to improve services for children and young people in relation to emotional well-being:

- N6 - Participation in regular volunteering;
- NI 23 Perceptions that people in their area treat one another with respect and dignity;
- NI 50 - Emotional health and well-being - children and young people user perception;
- NI 58 - Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children;
- NI110 – Young People's participation in positive activities.

OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS OF WORK

Hartlepool's Children's Trust

The Children's Trust was established in 2005 and its primary purpose is to provide a forum within which consideration will be given to the way in which children and young people's services could be developed and improved.

In April 2007 the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership became the Children's Trust. Its primary roles and responsibilities currently are as follows:

- To provide leadership in relation to the overall vision and strategic direction for children and young people's services through the Children and Young People's Plan;
- To promote positive outcomes for all children and young people;
- To prevent children and young people experiencing negative outcomes and social exclusion;
- To develop integrated and joint commissioning arrangements within Hartlepool in line with statutory guidance. This will include identifying the services currently commissioned, prioritising those services for review, identifying appropriate resources and establishing the basis for collaborative, integrated and joint commissioning, including recommendations for the introduction of pooled budgets where appropriate;
- To establish an appropriate range of multi agency planning and commissioning sub-groups who will report regularly to the Board in terms of needs analysis, performance against outcomes and potential new developments;
- To commission specific pieces of work from individuals or time limited task groups;
- To lead and promote effective consultation with service providers (statutory and non-statutory) users of services and carers in relation to the development of children's services (including consultation with children and young people).

The Children's Trust is a 'Theme Partnership' of the Hartlepool Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership). It also has direct link to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Continuous Development of the Children's Trust

There is a statutory duty on agencies and bodies delivering children's services to cooperate in arrangements to improve the well-being of children and young people in their area. This duty is expected to manifest itself in the establishment of Children's Trusts designed to improve outcomes for all children and young people through integration at all levels: frontline delivery; processes; strategies; and all supported by inter-agency governance arrangements.

A critical element of service integration will be the alignment or pooling of budgets and resources under the powers of either Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 or Section 10 of the Children Act 2004. Through the use of these powers partners will have the ability to be more flexible in targeting services and funding to where children and young people's needs can best be met.

The continuous development of the Children's Trust in Hartlepool is a crucial element of the Children and Young People's Plan for Hartlepool. A three day workshop in February 2008 led by the Office for Public Management, produced a draft Integrated Commissioning Framework, which was formally approved by the Children's Trust in June 2008. At the same meeting the Partnership also agreed to a full review of the governance and functions of the Trust including the potential pooling of budgets. The Review will also take into account the DCSF Statutory Guidance on Children's Trusts issued in November 2008.

Children's Workforce Strategy

In implementing the Children and Young People's Plan, careful consideration needs to be given to the workforce implications arising from needs analysis and service delivery plans.

The impact of services for children and young people is largely dependent on the hard work, commitment, competence, quality and skills of the workforce who provide these services.

Critical to the success of reforms to improve outcomes for all children and young people is increasing the skill, confidence, competence and stability of the workforce so that it makes as much difference to children's life chances as possible.

The Government's vision for the children's workforce, as expressed in "2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy" is that everyone who works with children and young people should be:

- **Ambitious** for every child and young person;
- **Excellent** in their practice;
- **Committed** to partnership and integrated working;
- **Respected** and valued as professionals.

Workforce variability and instability would pose a significant risk to successful delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and in supporting the integration of services and workforce reform. The workforce strategy will, in conjunction with national strategies and initiatives, seek to:

- Ensure consistency of approach in workforce development across the wider children's workforce and that the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for all who work with children and young people is integral to the development of staff;
- Analyse workforce numbers and skills and progress towards integrated working to ensure workforce planning takes into account strategic development opportunities and commissioning of services;
- Introduce drives to strengthen standards of leadership, management and supervision;
- Bring coherence and renewed focus to training and development activities to eliminate any unnecessary duplication and wastage;
- Support people in the workforce to develop the skills and behaviours they need to work effectively in partnership with children, young people and parents, and with each other, in ways that help to secure better outcomes;
- Improve recruitment and retention measures;
- Address locally identified priorities arising from the Hartlepool Children and Young People's Plan.

Schools Transformation

Hartlepool Borough Council expects to undertake significant capital investment in schools, through its Schools Transformation Programme, supported by government funding through the Primary Capital Programme and Buildings Schools for the Future. It is expected that Primary Capital Programme developments will begin during the financial year 2009/10, followed by Building Schools for the Future works in 2010/11, 2011/12 and concluding in 2012/13.

It is difficult to estimate the total investment under the Primary Capital Programme, as government has indicated its intention to provide 14 annual capital allocations and Authorities have to date been informed of their first two only. In Hartlepool the first two allocations amount

to £8.4 million and are likely to be spent on a mixture of new build, remodelling and refurbishment, initially benefiting a small number of Hartlepool's 30 primary schools, with priority being given to transformation, deprivation, standards of school performance, condition of buildings and surplus capacity.

The Building Schools for the Future programme will see the replacement or remodelling of buildings at all the town's secondary schools, including Catcote Special School. The Council also expects to create a Community Campus on the site currently occupied by Brierton Community School, which will close in the summer of 2009. Building Schools for the Future funding for capital construction and Information and Communications Technology, provided through Partnerships for Schools, will exceed £90 million and be supplemented by other resources, particularly in relation to the Community Campus.

It is the Council's intention to ensure that all schools are helped to deliver world class teaching and learning and to meet the needs of children and young people, their families and their communities through extended school provision and partnership working, potentially leading to co-location of services on school sites.

Children and young people have already played a significant part in Building Schools for the Future development, supported by the Sorrell Foundation and it is intended that this involvement will continue and develop. It is also intended to involve children of primary school age significantly in the Primary Capital Programme.

Joint Commissioning Arrangements

Commissioning and Joint Planning are key to the effective delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. A Joint Commissioning Framework is in place for the Children's Trust (Children's Trust). Integrated commissioning is being developed and will continue to grow over the next three years (2009 -12), we will also develop a joint funding framework over the same period of time.

Resources

In all public services demand exceeds the resources available and all organisations must continuously ensure that funding is targeted to meet priorities and objectives. During their financial planning cycles all stakeholders will therefore need to focus capital and revenue resources on those activities in the plan which seek to "address gaps in service" and things that "can be done better".

Efficiency savings will need to be identified which ensure that back office and support costs are minimised so that more funding can be allocated to front line services. The Children's Services 2009/10 budget submission includes requests for additional funding relating the following key CYPP priorities:

- Increased cost of care packages for Looked After Children
- Hartlepool Intervention Project
- Consultant Social Worker post to support staff in children's centres, youth services, schools etc.

(Precise amounts for these items cannot be determined until February 2009 when the Council's overall budget is formally approved.)

In addition extra funding has been allocated from the Area Based Grant for extended schools start up costs. The LA has also secured additional grant funding for a Child Poverty Family Intervention Project. .

Appropriate procedures will need to be put in place by all stakeholders so that procurement activities are co-ordinated and services are jointly commissioned wherever possible.

The funding allocated to schools via the local fair funding formula will need to be kept under review and amended where necessary to target resources to narrow the attainment gap between pupils from deprived and affluent backgrounds. Furthermore Local Authority staff will need to effectively challenge all schools to ensure that all the funds they receive are used effectively.

Maximum advantage will need to be derived from the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital Programmes so that educational outcomes are improved over the life of the CYPP.

HOW THIS PLAN LINKS WITH OTHER PLANS

Hartlepool's Ambition 2008 - 2020

The Community Strategy Review was launched in May 2006, a year that also marked the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Ralph Ward Jackson. The founder of West Hartlepool lived in Greatham Village and was responsible for establishing the layout of the town and erecting the first public buildings. He improved education and welfare facilities for local residents and developed the town's railways and docks. In the mid 1800s his vision and aspiration brought key individuals together to work in partnership to expand the town.

The Hartlepool Partnership

The Hartlepool Partnership has worked to prepare a new Community Strategy. The Partnership brings together all of the borough's partnerships delivering local services and is a network of partnerships. It provides opportunities for involvement for a wide range of organisations and individuals in the development and implementation of policy.

Community Strategy 2008 – 2020

The updated Community Strategy builds on the 2002 Strategy and provides a revised policy framework for Hartlepool. It describes a long-term vision – Hartlepool's ambition and aspirations for the future:

Hartlepool will be an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential.

The Vision is further articulated through a set of Aims, Outcomes and associated Objectives grouped into eight priorities:

1. Jobs and the Economy
2. Lifelong Learning & Skills
3. Health & Well-being
4. Community Safety
5. Environment
6. Housing
7. Culture & Leisure
8. Strengthening Communities

Housing and Environment are established as priorities in their own right acknowledging the increased drive to bring about Housing Market Renewal and the importance residents place on the quality of their local environment.

Further details about these plans will be included in the final document

The Bookcase

The table below shows the different plans at work in Hartlepool that contribute to improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Planning Level 3	Hartlepool's Ambition (The Community Strategy)	Local Area Agreement	Corporate Performance Plan	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	
Planning Level 2	<i>The Children and Young People's Plan 2009 - 2020</i>				
Planning Level 1	Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse Strategy	Children with a disability/ Special Education Needs Strategy	Children's Centres/Extended Schools Strategy	Annual Operating Plan	Participation Strategy
	Local Policing Plan	Transitions Policy	Play Strategy	Public Health Strategy	Lifelong Learning Partnership 14-19 Strategy
	Youth Justice Plan	Corporate Parent Forum Action Plan	Parenting Strategy	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy	Youth Service Plan
	Young People's Specialist Substance Misuse Plan	MALAP Action Plan	Hartlepool Housing Strategy	Healthy Schools Programme Plan	Schools Transformation
	Probation Area Annual Plan	Carers Strategy	Local Transport Plan	Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Annual Plan	ICT Strategy
	E-safety Strategy	Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Review	Domestic Violence Strategy	Hidden Harm Strategy	Alcohol Strategy
	Service Specific – Implementation and Action Plans (Business Plans)				

CHAPTER 13

HOW THE PLAN WILL BE MONITORED

“Writing the ‘Big Plan’ is one thing. What we need to know is how you will deliver it?”
Parent

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

Each of the priorities within the Children and Young People’s Plan will have an Assistant Director, either within the Local Authority Children’s Services or the Primary Care Trust, who will act as the lead officer and be responsible for ensuring that appropriate action plans are developed to deliver the priorities. Each priority will be assigned to a responsible officer who will ensure the relevant actions are delivered to address the priorities. The actions are part of the service planning cycle and delivery is monitored via the individual organisation’s performance management processes, where the actions and priorities are key deliverables for individual officers.

The progress of the Plan will be monitored four times a year by the lead officers and a progress report will be presented to the Children’s Trust. These three monthly reports will also be used to form the basis of an annual review of the plan and any self- assessment or inspection process that partner organisations, with a duty to co-operate in respect of the Children’s Trust, are subject to.

How will improvements in outcomes be measured?

It is important that improvements in outcomes can be measured as part of the monitoring and reporting process. By measuring improvements it can be demonstrated clearly and transparently what progress has been made and where there needs to be further developments.

There are no shortage of documents detailing what needs to be done but there is currently a lack of clarity as to how this will be achieved and how the outcomes will be demonstrated. To address this, it is proposed that a Report Card system is introduced (please see the example below). These are short one-page documents that summarise performance against a given outcome or target (e.g. Children and Young People’s Plan or Local Area Agreement). The benefits of the Report Card format are that they can:

- Reduce duplication of effort;
- Support joint decision making;
- Provide performance information in a simple and accessible format;
- Promote consistency in terms of language and therefore reduces ambiguity;
- Holds partners to account for poor performance or “coasting”
- Provide a consistent approach to capturing improved outcomes for children and young people in Hartlepool.

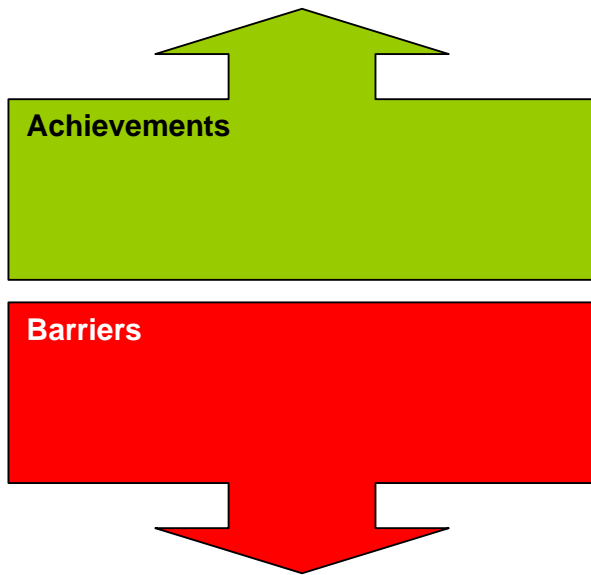
The Annual Review

A formal annual review of the plan is important for a number of reasons:

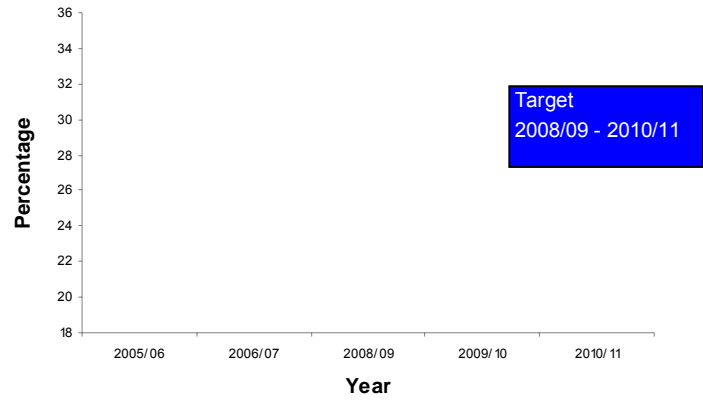
- It checks the progress of the plan;
- It is an opportunity to revise the status of the priorities;
- It can identify relevant new priorities;
- It is a chance to reflect any new requirements laid down by legislation or government guidance;
- It will provide an opportunity to build a robust consultation mechanism with children, young people and parents/carers as part of the ongoing commitment to their participation in the strategic planning processes.

Reduce Child Poverty

Indicators: NI 116 – Proportion of Children in Poverty



Proportion of Children in Poverty in Hartlepool



Story behind the trend

Key Actions and Progress

Funding

Innovative Practice

SIGNATURE PAGE

The following partner organisations have been involved in the development of the Children and Young People’s Plan for 2009 – 2020. Their contribution has been valuable and comments have been reflected within the content of the Plan.

<p>Adrienne Simcock Director of Children’s Services Hartlepool Borough Council</p>	<p>Sam Cramond Child and Maternal Health Services Advisor North East Strategic Health Authority</p>
<p>Lucia Saiger Teesside Probation Service</p>	<p>Alison Mawson Head of Community Safety and Prevention Hartlepool Borough Council</p>
<p>Chris Willis Chief Executive North Tees and Hartlepool Primary Care Trust</p>	<p>Andy Summerbell District Commander (Hartlepool) Cleveland Police</p>
<p>Nicola Bailey Director of Adult & Community Services Hartlepool Borough Council</p>	<p>Keith Bayley Manager Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency</p>
<p>Carole Carroll Headteacher, Rift House Primary School Primary School Headteacher Representative</p>	<p>Alan White Headteacher, Manor College of Technology Secondary School Headteacher Representative</p>
<p>General Manager (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust</p>	<p>Deputy Director of Operations, Enforcement and Appeals Border and Immigration Service</p>
<p>Sue Smith Director of Nursing and Patient Safety North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust</p>	<p>Karl Telfer Headteacher, Springwell School Special school rep</p>
<p>David Waddington Principal and Chief Executive Hartlepool College of Further Education College Representative</p>	

CABINET REPORT
12th January 2009



Report of: Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: Falcon Road Update

SUMMARY

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To give an update on the traffic management options for Falcon Road.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The report outlines the progress made since the meeting of 23rd June 2008, and other potential options for implementation.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

The proposed changes may affect the primary road network and also a large number of residents in Hartlepool.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Cabinet – 12th January 2009.

6. DECISION REQUIRED

That Cabinet considers the options proposed with a view to implementing one or more of them, then monitors their effect on traffic levels to inform a review of the previous decision to close Falcon Road.

Report of: Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: FALCON ROAD UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To give an update on the traffic management options for Falcon Road.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 For some time now Falcon Road has been the subject of much discussion and consultation as to the most appropriate way to reduce the level of traffic on the road, without having a major detrimental effect on local residents.

2.2 In June 2008, Cabinet took the decision to close the road at Throston Grange Lane. Since that time, meetings have taken place with residents of both viewpoints to consider potential alternatives and to seek to find an acceptable compromise. As part of this process, a 7.5 ton weight restriction order is currently being advertised, and is due to be implemented around the end of January, should the advertising process run smoothly.

2.3 An updated traffic survey was carried out in October 2008, which gave the following results, as against the previous survey.

	11/1/07 (7.30am-9.30am)	14/10/08 (7.30am-9.30am)
Total Vehicles	308	347
Internal Vehicles	54	67

2.3.1 This shows that the total number of vehicles using the road has increased slightly, with the percentage of those vehicles remaining within the estate, and consequently those cutting through, staying around the same.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

3.1 Various options have been considered to improve the situation, some of

which were detailed in the previous Cabinet report:-

3.2 One way system on Falcon Road and Lapwing Road, (See Appendices 1 & 2) – There are two possible variations to this:-

- i) Southbound on Falcon Road and west/ northbound on Lapwing Road.
- ii) Northbound on Falcon Road and south/ eastbound on Lapwing Road.

3.2.1 This would only bring about a reduction in traffic on the northern section of Falcon Road as the section from Lapwing Road to Throston Grange Lane, which has the highest number of properties on it, would remain open to two way traffic. It would also divert a significant amount of traffic onto Lapwing Road, which would be likely to attract a large number of additional objections from residents.

3.3 Merlin Way (See Appendix 3) – Traffic calming could be considered on Merlin Way, to discourage traffic from cutting through the estate, and also to address speeding complaints that have come in independently of the Falcon Road issue. Traffic calming features on the section from Hart Lane to Falcon Road would make its use less attractive to some drivers.

3.3.1 At the northern end of Merlin Way, it is hoped that the temporary rubber speed humps will be removed shortly by the developer, to make this access to the estate more attractive to motorists.

3.4 Convert footpath/ cycleway to carriageway (See Appendix 4) – There is a footpath/ cycleway link from Moorhen Road through to Throston Grange Lane. This could potentially be converted into a road and form a one way system, with traffic travelling along it in one direction and along Falcon Road in the other direction. It is not wide enough to allow two way traffic. Drawbacks are the likely objections from residents whose homes are adjacent to this area, plus the significant cost implications of such a scheme. Falcon Road would also still have the same volume of traffic in one direction. Estimated cost is around £130,000.

3.5 New estate access from Easington Road (See Appendix 5) – From the existing Merlin Way/ Bluebell Way roundabout, an estate road is to be constructed all the way across to within 30 – 40 metres of Easington Road as part of the agreed development. The possibility of opening this up as a new junction with Easington Road could be explored. This would mean that people accessing the northern part of the estate would find it much easier to use this new link than Falcon Road, taking a large amount of traffic away from the existing problem area.

3.5.1 The estate developers have indicated that they are willing to enter into initial discussions regarding the possibility of this option, with the estimated cost

being in the region of £250,000.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The one way system detailed in 3.2 would be minimal cost and could be met from existing budgets, however funding would need to be identified for any of the remaining options to be implemented.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 This is an extremely difficult issue to resolve, with strong opinions on both sides. Lengthy discussions have taken place to attempt to find an amicable solution which all sides would find acceptable. Following those discussions it is hoped that one or more of the options detailed would reduce the level of traffic on Falcon Road, thus enabling it to remain open.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That Cabinet considers the options proposed with a view to implementing one or more of them, then monitors their effect on traffic levels to inform a review of the previous decision to close Falcon Road.

APPENDIX 1



TITLE Falcon Road – Appendix 1		DRAWN M.R.	CHECKED .
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES HEAD OF TECHNICAL SERVICES: A. SMITH		SCALE 1:1500	DATE Oct '08
		DRG. NO.	REV.

APPENDIX 2



TITLE		DRAWN		CHECKED	
Falcon Road – Appendix 2		M.R.		.	
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES HEAD OF TECHNICAL SERVICES: A. SMITH		SCALE		DATE	
		1:1500		Oct '08	
		DRG. NO.		REV.	

APPENDIX 4



TITLE	
Appendix 4 – Proposed new road between Moorhen Road and Throston Grange Lane	
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES HEAD OF TECHNICAL SERVICES: A. SMITH	
DRAWN M.R.	CHECKED
SCALE 1:2000	DATE April '08
DRG. NO.	REV.

APPENDIX 5



CABINET REPORT

12 January 2009



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

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

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the findings and conclusions of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

2.1 The Final Report outlines the overall aim of the scrutiny investigation, terms of reference, methods of investigation, findings, conclusions, and subsequent recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

3.1 It is Cabinet's decision to approve the recommendations in this report.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 This is a Non-key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

5.1 The final report was approved by Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 28 November 2008. Cabinet is requested to consider, and approve, the report at today's meeting.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

6.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendations outlined in section 16.1 of the bound report, which is attached to the back of the papers for this meeting.

CABINET

12 January 2009



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

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

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"¹. 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"¹. The Local Authority is responsible for the placement of looked after children into foster care placements provided

¹ 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"¹, where 'good' is defined as meaning that "the provision is strong"².

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,

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

² 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;

- (vi) 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 aimed to ensure that:-

- (a) the child has 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) there is liaison with other agencies to identify suitable placements where none are available within Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service; and
- (d) 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 During the 26 August 2008 meeting, 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 at the cenotaph on 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 and at a fraction of the cost. By way of illustration, Members were informed of the large promotion in 2005 involving Hartlepool United Football Club that 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 entering 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 **Table 1** (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's Foster Care Service's books:-

Table 1: Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service's Recruitment and Retention Rates

Month and Year	Expressions of Interest	New Approved Foster Carers	Total of Foster Carers
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 were 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 was likely to be around the eight four mark.
- 10.3 The Forum recognised 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 Authorities 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 Borough Council's Foster Care Service had moved from the Authority 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 the reduction of costs for 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 by the emphasis from the National Foster Agency that it was not in the market to 'poach' foster carers from the Council and would encourage the direction of potential new foster carers towards 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 for 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 completed 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 in Hartlepool 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 **Table 2** (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.

Table 2: Foster Care Fee Payment Schemes 2007/08

Local Authority	Scheme	Fee
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 nd 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 existed 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 was no chance 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 **Table 3** (below) relating to the number of Special Guardianship Orders authorised by Hartlepool Borough Council over previous years:-

Table 3: 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 for 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 FORM 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 with very few changes in staff. Currently Darlington Borough Council's Foster Care Team comprises 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 staffing levels within Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service is not yet at full capacity, but would eventually be resolved once recruitment issues had been addressed;
- (d) That support worker to foster carer ratio was particularly high due to the issues raised in conclusion (c);
- (e) 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;
- (f) 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;
- (g) That the marketing strategy for the recruitment of new foster carers lacks permanence and focus;
- (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:-

- (a) That the current review of 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 redesigned to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information; and
- (e) That where a child is placed within his / her family, support services be made immediately accessible, including the provision of financial support, prior to the formalisation of a Kinship Care Arrangement.

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 – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Hannah Shaw – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

David Whittingham – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Kelly Goulding – Participation Adviser, Barnardos;

Leigh Bradley – Participation Adviser, Barnardos;

Beth Hawkridge – DCSM (Participation), Barnardos;

Nikki Pearson – Barnardos B76 / Hartlepool Young Voices;

Jill Bousfield – Bamardos 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 (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**



CABINET REPORT

12 January 2009



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO 'HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARE SERVICE' – ACTION PLAN

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

2.1 The report provides brief background information into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service' scrutiny Investigation and provides a proposed Action Plan (**Appendix A**) in response to the Scrutiny Forum's recommendations.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

3.1 To assist the Cabinet in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, attached as **Appendix A** is the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

4. TYPE OF DECISION

4.1 Non-Key.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

- 5.1 The Action Plan and the progress of its implementation will be reported to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 March 2009 (subject to availability of the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)).

6. DECISION REQUIRED

- 6.1 That Members of the Cabinet approve the Action Plan (**Appendix A refers**) in response to the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service'.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO 'HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARE SERVICE' – ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree an Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 To assist the Cabinet in its determination of either approving or rejecting the proposed recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service', attached as **Appendix A** is the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).
- 2.2 The overall aim of the 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.

3. ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 As a result of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service', the following recommendations have been made:-
- (a) That the current review of 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; and
- (e) That where a child is placed within his / her family, support services be made immediately accessible, including the provision of financial support, prior to the formalisation of a Kinship Care Arrangement.
- 3.2 An Action-Plan in response to these recommendations has now been produced in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s) and is attached at **Appendix A** which is to be submitted to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 3 March 2009 (subject to the availability of appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)).

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the Action Plan attached as **Appendix A** in response to the recommendations of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service'.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

9.2 APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Hartlepool Borough Council’s Foster Care Service

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: November 2008

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(a)	That the current review of Hartlepool Borough Council’s Foster Care Service be completed as a matter of urgency in order to stabilise recruitment and retention difficulties;	Team Manager has been appointed, new manager will take up post January 09. One social work post has been filled, further advert will be posted January 09. Upon taking up post, team manager will produce a detailed service development plan.	None	Jim Murdoch	31 January 09
(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	Matching Needs and Services exercise to be completed profiling children becoming looked after to identify gaps in existing provision. Updated recruitment strategy to be produced benchmarking best practice nationally and exploring new ideas and mediums for advertising.	Costs to be met from within existing budget	Keith Munro Jacky Yeaman Vaas	31 March 09 31 March 09

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

9.2 APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Hartlepool Borough Council’s Foster Care Service

DECISIONMAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: November 2008

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	(iii) Through carers; and untapped mediums, such as Radio Hartlepool and leaflets in doctor’s surgeries, libraries and shopping centres.	Targeted recruitment campaign to be undertaken		Jacky Yeaman Vaas	30 April 09
(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	Review of foster carer training programme to be completed and new training programme and schedule produced. Meeting to be held with preferred provider partner to explore joint foster carer training arrangements Tees Valley fostering managers group to revisit opportunities for new foster carers to access training courses across the authorities.	None	Jacky Yeaman Vaas	1 May 09

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

9.2 APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Hartlepool Borough Council’s Foster Care Service

DECISIONMAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: November 2008

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	independent foster care agencies.				
(d)	That the Foster Care Service Section on the Council’s website be redesigned to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information; and	<p>Consultation undertaken with foster carers about what would be required from a web page.</p> <p>Benchmark national best practice examples.</p> <p>Web pages to be updated and redesigned taking above into consideration and seeking advice and guidance on ‘what works’ from web designers.</p> <p>Work to be undertaken with departmental website representatives in conjunction with additional corporate advice to explore ways to promote a short cut link to fostering pages, and upload information packs</p>	None	Jack Yeaman Vaas	1 June 09

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

9.2 APPENDIX A

NAME OF FORUM: Children’s Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Hartlepool Borough Council’s Foster Care Service

DECISIONMAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: November 2008

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	and application forms.			
(e)	That where a child is placed within his /her family, support services be made immediately accessible, including the provision of financial support, prior to the formalisation of a Kinship Care Arrangement.	None	Sally Robinson	31 January 09