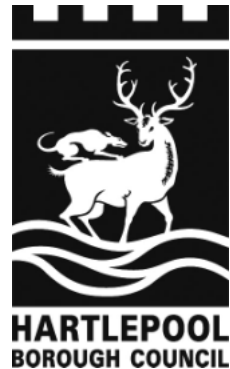


# CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO

## DECISION SCHEDULE



**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010**

**at 10.00 am**

**in Committee Room C**

Councillor C Hill, Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Services will consider the following items.

**1. KEY DECISIONS**

No items

**2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 2.1 Change of Use and Refurbishment of Ex moor Grove – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 2.2 OSCARs Out of School Childcare Service – Change in Charges – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

**3. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Hindpool Close Children's Centre OFSTED Inspection – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 3.2 Update on the Provision of Parenting Support – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010



**Report of:** Director of Child & Adult Services

**Subject:** CHANGE OF USE AND REFURBISHMENT OF EXMOOR GROVE

---

### SUMMARY

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek approval from the Portfolio Holder for a change of use for Exmoor Grove short break centre, including a reduction in the number of beds available.

The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the establishment of a Capital Works Programme to refurbish Exmoor Grove short break care centre subject to funding being available.

#### **2.0 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The changing needs of children and young people requiring residential short break care has necessitated a review of the service provided by Exmoor Grove. The demand for residential short break care has reduced as a result of parents and carers opting to purchase short break care utilising Direct Payments and also due to other alternative short break care provision for disabled children and young people being available in the community.

There are a small number of disabled children and young people for whom, alternative service provision would not be appropriate. Therefore, it is proposed that the service at Exmoor Grove be reconfigured to match current demand.

There have been concerns expressed for some time about the fabric of the accommodation within Exmoor Grove which has had no substantial refurbishment since the property was built. This has been highlighted in Regulation 33 reports which were subsequently presented to the Portfolio Holder in the usual manner; recent Ofsted inspections have also raised concerns over the interior fabric of the building.

Some of the children who access the short break care at Exmoor Grove have challenging behaviours to varying degrees. As a consequence damage is caused from time to time.

The Building Consultancy Team of Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services have provided an estimate of the costs involved in undertaking this work which come to a grand total of £99,486. The work includes changes to floor finishes, total redecoration throughout, alterations to bedrooms and bathrooms, lighting upgrades and a significant refurbishment of the central heating system. Work will be undertaken by one of the suppliers on the partnership agreement.

In addition to this work the fence around Exmoor Grove is to be replaced at a cost of £6,755.

### **3.0 RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues.

### **4.0 TYPE OF DECISION**

Non Key

### **5.0 DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.

### **6.0 DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

To agree to a change of use for Exmoor Grove reducing the number of beds from eight to six and making provision for children and young people with mild to moderate challenging behaviour.

The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the establishment of a Capital Works Programme to refurbish Exmoor Grove short break care centre subject to funding being available.

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** CHANGE OF USE AND REFURBISHMENT OF EXMOOR GROVE

---

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Portfolio Holder for a change of use for Exmoor Grove short break centre, including reduction in the number of beds available.
- 1.2 The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the establishment of a Capital Works Programme to refurbish Exmoor Grove short break care centre subject to funding being available.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Exmoor Grove is an eight bed, purpose built residential unit for children and young people with disabilities. It is currently registered with Ofsted to provide short break care provision for children and young people from the age of 5 to 18 years.
- 2.2 There has been a reduction in demand from parents and carers for placements at Exmoor Grove over the last ten years. This is largely due to the development of a range of services in Hartlepool to support disabled children and young people and their families and parental choice regarding the support they wish to receive.
- 2.3 There have been concerns expressed for some time about the fabric of accommodation within Exmoor Grove which has had no substantive refurbishment since the property was built. This has been highlighted in Regulation 33 reports which were subsequently presented to the Portfolio Holder. Recent Ofsted inspections have also raised concerns over the interior fabric of the building.

**3. RECONFIGURATION OF USAGE OF EXMOOR GROVE**

- 3.1 The demand for placements at Exmoor Grove has decreased considerably as a result of other services being developed. The biggest impact has been the introduction of Direct Payments. These are cash payments in lieu of social care provision to individuals who have been assessed as needing services. Direct payments provide more flexibility and choice and have allowed parents/carers to make their own decisions about how care is delivered. The majority of these families are using the direct payment to employ personal assistants to provide short break care for their disabled children and young people. Many of whom would have received a service from Exmoor Grove in the past.

- 3.2 There are a small group of children and young people who will not necessarily be able to access non-residential care provision either because of their complex health needs or because of their challenging behaviour. The service Exmoor Grove provides for this group of children and young people supports parents and carers to maintain them in their own family and community.
- 3.3 Consultation has been carried out with parents/carers regarding these proposals. The findings indicated that parents/carers had concerns about the capability of Exmoor Grove to meet the respite needs of a wide range of children and young people in the reduced number of days that the services was open. In addition, they felt that alternatives to respite care outside of Exmoor Grove did not exist in Hartlepool to meet the needs of their children and young people. A strong message emerged from the interviews that parents/carers would need convincing about the quality and availability of services before they would consider it as an alternative to Exmoor Grove if they could no longer access the facility.
- 3.4 Therefore, it is proposed that Exmoor Grove continue to provide a service to children and young people with mild to moderate challenging behaviours. However, based on current usage, the bed capacity should be reduced from eight to six and that the service should be available for four nights and four days per week during term time and seven days a week during school holidays. The numbers of children and young people with profound physical disabilities/complex health needs are fewer; therefore, it will be possible to provide them with an alternative overnight service either through Direct Payments or an external provider of residential care.

#### **4. REFURBISHMENT OF EXMOOR GROVE**

- 4.1 There have been concerns expressed for some time about the fabric of the accommodation within Exmoor Grove which has had no substantive refurbishment since the property was built. This has been highlighted in a Regulation 33 report which was subsequently presented to the Portfolio Holder in the usual manner; recent Ofsted inspections have also raised concerns over the interior fabric of the building.
- 4.2 Some of the children who access the short break care at Exmoor Grove have challenging behaviours to varying degrees, as a consequence damage is caused from time to time. This is now taking its toll on the internal fabric of the building.
- 4.3 The Building Consultancy Team of Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services have provided an estimate of the costs involved in undertaking this work which comes to a total of £99,486. The work includes changes to floor finishes, total redecoration throughout, alterations to bedrooms and bathrooms, lighting upgrades and a

significant refurbishment of the central heating system. Work would be undertaken by one of the suppliers on the Council's partnership agreement.

- 4.4 In addition to this work the fence around Exmoor Grove is to be replaced at a cost of £6,755.
- 4.5 It is planned to close Exmoor Grove during the Autumn to allow the refurbishment to take place; it is anticipated that the building work will take around 12 weeks to complete. Arrangements will be put in place to support the commissioning of placements from the independent sector and will be jointly funded by the local authority and PCT. It is anticipated that the costs associated with commissioning these services can be met from within existing budgets'

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Reshaping Exmoor Grove both in respect of the service delivered and the staff team results in an overall reduction in costs of £66,006 per annum.
- 5.3 The estimated costs involved in undertaking refurbishment work at Exmoor Grove come to a grand total of £99,486. In addition to this work the fence around Exmoor Grove is to be replaced at a cost of £6,755.
- 5.4 If the Portfolio Holder approves these proposals arrangements will be put in place to seek the necessary capital funding for the works to proceed.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder agree to a change of use for Exmoor Grove reducing the number of beds from eight to six and making provision for children and young people with mild to moderate challenging behaviour.
- 6.2 The Portfolio Holder is requested to approve the establishment of a Capital Works Programme to refurbish Exmoor Grove short break care centre subject to funding being available.

## **7. CONTACT OFFICER**

Ian Merritt, Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services  
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E-mail: [ian.merritt@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ian.merritt@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** OSCARS OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDCARE  
SERVICE – CHANGE IN CHARGES

---

### **SUMMARY**

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

To seek approval for a change in charges for OSCARS out of school service.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

OSCARS is an all year round childcare service operated by Hartlepool Borough Council. It offers both after school club provision and holiday club provision. The service is townwide and open to children from 4 – 16 years of age. It operates from two locations within the town.

Unfortunately the service is not sustainable with the current fee structure. The following report sets out how OSCARS developed, the current fee structure and two proposed fee structures to increase income therefore enabling the service to become sustainable.

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues.

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non-key

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

The Portfolio Holder is asked to approve a change in charges for OSCARS out of school childcare service.



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** OSCARS OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDCARE SERVICE – CHANGES TO CHARGES

---

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval for a change in charges for OSCARS out of school service.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 OSCARS is an all year round childcare service operated by Hartlepool Borough Council. It offers both after school club provision and holiday club provision. The service is townwide and open to children from 4 – 16 years of age. It operates from 3 key locations within the town.
- 2.2 The after school club service operates from 3.15 - 6pm for 39 weeks a year. The holiday club service operates from 8.30 - 5.45pm for 11 weeks of the year. The service is closed for 2 weeks over the Christmas period.
- 2.3 Across the two sites the service can take a maximum of 100 children in both the after school and holiday clubs.
- 2.4 The Council currently has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for parents in training and employment. This duty does not cover parents not in work or training.

**3. HISTORY**

- 3.1 OSCARS After School Club service was established in 1993 operating from The Avondale Centre. It was set up through Hartlepool City Challenge funding (5 year funding) and the Teesside TEC Childcare Fund (single payment). In 1997 a second club opened at Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road with funding via Single Regeneration Budget (5 year funding). In 1998 the service opened its third club in Miers Avenue via SRB funding (4 year funding). Following a review of accommodation OSCARS is now based in Owton Manor Community Centre and Miers Avenue Sure Start.

- 3.2 Initially each club was set up to support various government initiatives to assist parents into employment, education and training via affordable childcare. As funding tapered and eventually ceased it was expected that the service would be sustainable, this would be achieved through a sustainable pricing structure.

#### 4. LOCATIONS

- 4.1 OSCARS operates from two sites in the town. OSCAR 1 is based at, Miers Avenue Sure Start. OSCAR 2 is based at Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road.
- 4.2 When required Oscar 1 + 2 has access to additional buildings nearby to carry out 'physical' activities. Both the after school clubs and holiday clubs operate from these sites.
- 4.3 Since the initial set up in 1993 the service has operated from a number of sites. Various factors have contributed to this including refurbishment of premises, expiration of rental agreements and preferential terms on premises.
- 4.4 The two sites are reflective of a geographic 'split' of the town and serve specific schools in designated areas. OSCARS currently picks up from 32 of the 38 schools across the town in respect of its after school club service. No other provider in the town offers this service. Depending on the social circumstances of the family the service can also take children home.

#### 5. FEE STRUCTURE

- 5.1 OSCARS currently operates a flexible fee policy at both the after school and holiday clubs. Fees are determined by the number of siblings accessing the service, the employment circumstances of the family and, in the case of holiday care a combination of both. The following fee structure was approved by Children's Services Portfolio Holder in September 2008. The prices are lower than comparisons with other providers.

##### After school club

	After school	Description
A	£6.15	1 child w aged
B	£5.15	2+ children w aged
C	£4.10	1 child unw aged
D	£4.10	2+ children unw aged

Holiday Club

	Holiday club	Description
A	£11.30	1 child w aged
B	£7.70	2+ children w aged
C	£7.20	1 child unw aged
D	£5.15	2+ children unw aged

**6. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION**

- 6.1 OSCARS out of school service financial position for 2009/2010 financial year is:

Total inc 09-10	£120,355.07
Inc from fees 09-10	£115,764.67
Expenditure 09-10	£200,969.13
Deficit 09-10	£80,614.06

- 6.2 The deficit financial position in 2009/10 needs to be addressed with the introduction of a pricing structure that is based on a break even analysis.

**7. PROPOSED FEE STRUCTURES****7.1 Option 1 – break even**

A proposed fee structure based on a break even analysis needs to remove the sibling discount and the unwaged subsidy.

After school club

An after school session would cost £7.20 this would be a 17% increase.

Holiday Club

A holiday club session (full day) would cost £16.75. This would be a 48% increase.

**7.2 Option 2 – a staged approach to reaching break even**

A staged approach to reaching a break even point is proposed below.

After school club

An after school session would cost £6.60 this would be a 10% increase.

Holiday Club

A holiday club session (full day) would cost £13.00. This would be a 15% increase.

This would not allow OSCARs to be sustainable and therefore the council would need to continue to subsidise the childcare.

- 7.3 Comparisons with other out of school childcare shows that OSCARs current pricing structure is below the average.

<b>Average pricing costs of out of school childcare</b>	<b>after care on school site</b>	<b>after care PVI</b>	<b>holiday care school</b>	<b>holiday care PVI</b>
Oscars	£0.00	£6.00	£0.00	£11.00
Hartlepool	£4.00	£6.00	£12.00	£22.00
Hartlepool range of fees	50p to £6.00	£6 to £12	£12.00	£11 - £28
Middlesbrough	£5.45	£7.00	£15.00	£26.00
Stockton	£6.00	£7.50	£22.00	£25.00
Darlington	£5.50	£9.00	£22.00	£30.00

## 8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 OSCARs budget continues to overspend even when costs have been reduced to the bare minimum. If more income is not generated the service cannot be sustained. This means that OSCARs will either have to close or other services for children and families will have to close to subsidise this service.
- 8.2 There is a risk that if fees are increased that parents will choose to remove their children from the childcare due to affordability. This will initially reduce income. Research carried out to ascertain where parents live who access OSCARs show that the majority come from more affluent areas therefore implying that a rise in fees will not have substantial impact. Parents on low incomes can claim working tax credits for childcare and therefore will not feel the impact of the increases.

## 9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 OSCARs offers childcare to all children and also offers a number of dedicated places to disabled children. OSCARs also employs skilled playworkers to specifically work with these children.

**10. SECTION 17**

- 10.1 OSCARs childcare service offers children a space and time to play with their peers. This provides a play opportunity which could contribute to prevention of anti social behaviour.

**11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder is asked to approve either OPTION 1 or OPTION 2 change in charges for OSCARS out of school childcare service as set out in paragraph 7.

**12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 To ensure that the OSCARs out of school childcare service is sustainable.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

Danielle Swainston  
Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager  
01429 523671

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** HINDPOOL CLOSE CHILDREN'S CENTRE  
OFSTED INSPECTION

---

### **SUMMARY**

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

For the Portfolio Holder to note the inspection report and outcome for Hindpool Close Children's Centre Ofsted inspection.

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

Children's centres provide families who have children under five with, or make arrangements for them to have access to:

- early learning and childcare
- family support
- health services
- support into employment
- other specialist services

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 gave Ofsted the legal duty to inspect and report on the effectiveness of children's centres. The first inspections began in May 2010.

The following report provides information on the Ofsted inspection process and the outcome of Hindpool Close Children's Centre inspection.

**3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues.

**4. TYPE OF DECISION**

Non- key

**5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010

**6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

For the Portfolio Holder to note the inspection report and outcome for Hindpool Close Children's Centre Ofsted inspection

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** HINDPOOL CLOSE CHILDREN'S CENTRE  
OFSTED INSPECTION

---

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 For the Portfolio Holder to note the inspection report and outcome for Hindpool Close Children's Centre Ofsted inspection.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 places a duty on local authorities to provide children's centres to all families with children under five years old. Children's centres provide families with, or make arrangements for them to have access to:
- early learning and childcare
  - family support
  - health services
  - support into employment
  - other specialist services
- 2.2 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 also gave Ofsted the legal duty to inspect and report on the effectiveness of children's centres. The first inspections began in May 2010.
- 2.3 Hartlepool has eight children's centre main sites as follows:
- Hindpool Close
  - St John Vanney
  - Chatham House
  - Lynnfield
  - Stranton
  - Rift House/Kingsley
  - Rossmere
  - Throston (this is a Phase 3 centre and is not expected to cover the full core offer)



### 3. OFSTED PROCESS

- 3.1 Two Ofsted inspectors spent time in Hindpool Close Children's Centre of the week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010. The inspectors spent one day reviewing paperwork and two days interviewing parents, stakeholders and attending sessions. Feedback on the outcome was given at the end of the third day.

### 4. OUTCOMES AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The overall outcome for the inspection was satisfactory although safeguarding and enjoy and achieve were good. The full report is attached in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 The recommendations for further improvement were as follows:
- Improve outreach working to make sure all unmet need is identified and where relevant tackled through multi agency partnership working;
  - Ensure the Children's Trust works with the centre to enable them to better support the Children and Young People's Plan's priorities of increasing breast feeding rates and supporting teen mums;
  - Work with partners to widen opportunities available for pre-school children;
  - Improve the advisory board's ability to evaluate the impact of the centre's multi agency work by developing more systematic and accurate management information that records the full impact of their work and helps them to set consistently challenging targets for improvement;
  - Ensure the views of parents consistently contribute to the governance of the centre and in determining and shaping services.
- 4.3 The main issue that was highlighted in the inspection was the lack of local children's centre data. The lead inspector expected the centre to have targets for all relevant national indicators linked to the centres reach area. These targets would then be monitored by the Children's Trust to evaluate the effectiveness of the centre. The inspector said that without these targets it is impossible to show whether progress is good. This is addressed in the action plan.

## **5. ACTION PLAN**

- 5.1 An action plan addressing the areas for further improvement has been developed and is attached as **Appendix 2**.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Children's Centres must be accessible to all children and families. Locality staff ensure that all vulnerable groups are included in the planning and delivery of service.

## **7. SECTION 17**

- 7.1 The development of children's centres supports early intervention to those families who are disadvantaged and in need in order to support them in parenting and supporting successful outcomes for their children.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 For the Portfolio Holder to note the inspection report and outcome for Hindpool Close Children's Centre Ofsted inspection.

## **9. CONTACT OFFICER**

Danielle Swainston  
Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager  
01429 523671

# Inspection report for Hindpool Close Children's Centre

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Local authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	21516
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

Centre governance	Advisory Board
Centre leader	Sarah Foster-Elsdon
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Centre address	Hindpool Close, Hartlepool TS24 0TB
Telephone number	01429 2925555
Fax number	
Email address	Sarah.foster.elsdon@hartleppol.gov.uk

Linked school if applicable	St Bega's Roman Catholic Primary School; St Helen's Primary School
Linked early years and childcare, if applicable	Kiddikins; Leap Frogs

The inspection of this Sure Start Children's Centre was carried out under Part 3A of the Childcare Act 2006 as inserted by section 199 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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## Introduction

The inspection addresses the centre's contribution to:

- facilitating access to early childhood services by parents, prospective parents and young children
- maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children
- improving the well-being of young children.

The report is made to the local authority and a copy is sent to the children's centre. The local authority may send the report to such persons it considers appropriate and must arrange for an action plan to be produced in relation to the findings in this report.

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspectors visited a range of provision across the centre. They also held meetings with senior managers from the centre, parents, members of the advisory board and a number of partners including Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare partners; health, education and children's social care professionals and representatives from Job Centre Plus, the Credit Union and the West View Advice and Resource Centre.

They observed the centre's work, and looked at a range of relevant documentation.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

## Information about the centre

Hindpool Close children's centre is situated towards the north-east of the town of Hartlepool. It serves a community that is ranked within the top 2% of the most deprived areas in the country. Nearly all local families are of White British heritage. The proportion of children attending schools in the area who are known to be entitled to free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of children aged under-four who are living in households where no one is working.

The centre opened in 2006 and was developed from a Sure Start Local Programme. It is a purpose-built centre and operates as a 'hub and spoke' model, with Hindpool Close as the hub and St Bega's and St Helen's primary schools providing the two spokes. A multi-agency team which includes health visitors, midwives and speech and language therapists is co-located on the centre's site. The team and centre manager work across the wider, north locality of Hartlepool. This comprises two designated centres and a total of six different sites. The children's centre provides the full 'core

offer' of services. Governance arrangements are currently transferring from a strategic partnership group to an advisory board with a range of members.

Childcare is provided by the private provider Kiddikins, and this setting has recently been subject to its own inspection. Childcare is also available at Leap Frogs. Their inspection reports can be found at [www.Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk). Early Years Foundation Stage education for children aged three years and over is provided at St Helen's and St Bega's primary schools. Their inspection reports are also available on the Ofsted website. Most children enter childcare and early education with a much narrower range of experiences and skills than that expected for their age. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average.

### Overall effectiveness

The effectiveness of the children's centre in meeting the needs of and improving outcomes for users and the wider community

3

### Capacity for sustained improvement

The centre's capacity for sustained improvement, including the quality of its leadership and management

3

## Main findings

Hindpool Close children's centre provides satisfactory and improving support to children and families and outcomes for them are least satisfactory and sometimes good. Strengths include the impact of actions taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children and their families and the quality of the care, guidance and support offered by all who work with them. The centre's good approach to safeguarding, safe recruitment and child protection is robust and meets statutory requirements. Early Years Foundation Stage and childcare provision is good across the area and children make good progress given their well below average starting points. Although outcomes are still below the national average, there has been significant improvement in the proportion of children achieving expected levels in their combined personal social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. The rate of improvement is much faster than that found nationally.

A range of services successfully work together to support the health, emotional health and well-being of children and families and there is a good focus on reducing health inequalities. For example the centre has exceeded their locality target of helping parents to cease smoking. However, although the under-18 conception rate has slightly reduced across Hartlepool over the past year, it remains high at 65.9%. Support for teenage parents is currently delivered through a town-wide dedicated service. Partnerships between this service and the children's centre are less well developed and thus early opportunities for teenage parents to engage in the good range of activities available in the centre are missed. The centre is aware that more

needs to be done to increase the proportion of mothers breast-feeding their babies. These are both key priorities for Hartlepool's Children's Trust. The recent appointment of a breastfeeding coordinator and the proposed development of peer-support worker networks are aimed at improving matters.

Provision is satisfactory overall. Parents describe the centre as warm and welcoming and say they know that they can trust the staff; who willingly listen and respond to their needs. Effective actions are taken to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination. Particularly strong actions are taken to support vulnerable families and children and those who need support in times of acute need or crisis. Families who are referred to the centre are assessed promptly and a good package of multi-agency support secured, when necessary, for both parents and children. The developing outreach services are increasingly supporting more hard to reach families and children. However, managers are aware that more needs to be done to make sure outreach is fully identifying the needs of the whole community, so that the centre can add to the good support already provided to families known to others.

Services are increasingly integrated to good effect, particularly the shared actions taken to support, involve and improve outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for parents of babies and very young children. These, include training on weaning that also successfully promotes healthy lifestyles, Tweeny tots, Leap Frogs, Baby Yoga and Music, and a range of ante-natal and baby clinics. However, some parents spoken to say that there are fewer opportunities for children between the age of three and school-age, to access interesting activities once they have completed their good childcare sessions in Kiddikins or Leap Frogs.

Since her appointment in September, the children's centre manager, together with the early years and childcare manager, has developed a clear and focused vision to make a real difference to this community, based on their needs and wants. She has successfully embraced the whole team, and partners on this journey to improvement. The whole family is at the heart of what everyone is doing and this is evidenced in the increased range of activities that families, particularly the most vulnerable, can access. Managers are aware that there is still some way to go to ensure all needs are met. For example, through knowing the community well, and having a good understanding of the strengths and gaps in service provision, the centre manager is aware that support for substance-misusing families and those suffering from domestic violence needs to improve. Consequently, following consultation with staff and partners she has developed an action plan that provides a clear agenda for future. The plan has accompanying broad targets for improvement but many of these lack quantitative information to enable the centre and the Children's Trust to fully evaluate the impact of their actions.

Governance arrangements are currently moving from a strategic multi-agency partnership board, Extended Services in North Hartlepool (ESINH), to an advisory board. Members of the board are fully supportive of the work of the centre and meet regularly to monitor what the centre is providing. However, their ability to fully evaluate the impact of the centre's work is limited. This is because the centre does not

yet have systematic and accurate management information that records the full impact of its work; or enables them to set consistently challenging targets for improvement. Actions are in place to remedy this. Nevertheless, the centre evaluates the impact of each activity and individual service provided. This information, combined with a range of evaluations from parents affords the board an effective understanding of the progress the centre is making towards achieving their priorities. In order to increase the involvement and influence of parents in the centre's work, a Parent Forum has been re-established but it has not yet had time to contribute to ongoing developments.

Taking into account the satisfactory outcomes overall, the centre's overall effectiveness is also satisfactory. This together with the leadership's determined focus on improvement, identifying and meeting needs indicates the centre has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the centre need to do to improve further?

### Recommendations for further improvement

- Improve outreach working to make sure all unmet need is identified and where relevant tackled, through multi-agency partnership working.
- Ensure the Children's Trust works with the centre to enable them to better-support the Children and Young People Plan's priorities of increasing breast feeding rates and supporting teen mums.
- Work with partners to widen opportunities available for pre-school children.
- Improve the advisory board's ability to evaluate the impact of the centre's multi-agency work by developing more systematic and accurate management information that records the full impact of their work and helps them to set consistently challenging targets for improvement.
- Ensure the views of parents consistently contribute to the governance of the centre and in determining and shaping services.

## How good are outcomes for users?

3
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Evidence through case studies, discussion with partners and parents indicate the positive impact of partnership working to promote children's and families' emotional well-being and their physical health. This includes the work of health visitors, family support workers and services commissioned by the centre such as Reach Out. For example, effective actions have helped to reduce re-referral rates into Harbour, the commissioned domestic violence unit, and one parent spoke with conviction about how much better a parent she is as a result of her counselling with MIND because of the way it has helped her to deal with her anger. Parents attending a weaning session talked of how these have given them a better understanding of how to be healthy. One parent spoke enthusiastically about how she now buys lots more fruit and vegetables for her children and realises how much cheaper weaning is when you make your own rather than buying jars. Parents and children enjoy trying new tastes such as courgettes, mushrooms, peppers as they make healthy pizzas during Tweeny Tots activity.

Good procedures ensure children are well-safeguarded. Parents say they feel safe in



the centre and have confidence that if there were concerns they would come to the centre as they are trusted. Partnership working with Harbour, health visitors, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), and local community police officers is helping to successfully raise children's and families' awareness of safety in the home and in their communities. Good multi-agency support to families referred to the centre in times of acute crisis is helping to minimise the number of children entering care or moving onto the child-protection register.

The extent to which children and young people enjoy and achieve is good. Virtually all settings in the area have been judged good in these aspects following Ofsted inspections. The gap between the lowest 20% of children achieving expected levels in key early learning goals, and that for all children in Hartlepool has narrowed at a much faster rate than that found nationally. Headteachers' spoken to during the inspection testify the positive impact close working with the local parent and toddler and kiddikins as well as the support from the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has had in raising aspirations and improving outcomes for young children.

A satisfactory range of activities help parents to support and improve their children's personal, social and emotional development and to build good relationships with them. Parents talk positively about the impact of services on their own parenting skills and their children's progress. A visit to a Baby Yoga and Music session provided compelling evidence of babies and mums bonding well and children developing their play, exploration and communication skills alongside having fun. A group of mums at Tweeny tots all celebrated one child taking his first steps and mums report how much better they feel on days when they have an activity to participate in. They regret that there are few activities for their children aged from three to five.

Behaviour across all settings is good. Children in Kiddikins are well-behaved and relate well to each other. Children's learning journals show the good progress they are making, including in their personal and social development. This is because of the good provision and positive role models of adults. Across the centre's local area, there are examples of some parents being encouraged to develop their own sessions such as the Tweeny Tots group and the recently developed Twins Group. Parents explained just what a great lifeline this had become. While twins play together and enjoy a range of interesting and fun activities, parents talk, laugh and share concerns and tips about coping, and enjoying life with twins. However, the centre manager is aware that opportunities for parents to influence service developments are limited. An action plan in place to improve this.

Through generally good childcare and early year's provision, children are successfully developing skills for the future. However action to help parents into learning, training and employment are no more than satisfactory. Effective partnership working with Jobcentre Plus has resulted in regular individual advice sessions to lone parents within the centre, but this is only one group of parents that could benefit from such good advice. Good partnership with the West View Advice and Resource Centre is enabling parents to successfully access benefits and tax credits to which they are entitled. The local Credit Union also works with families in the centre, although recently their

contribution has been of limited value. However, actions are in place to re-establish a stronger presence in the centre. In order to better-meet the training needs of families, the centre manager is currently in discussions with adult education services to close this already identified gap.

The extent to which children, including those from vulnerable groups, are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and families have healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children are safe and protected, their welfare concerns are identified and appropriate steps taken to address them	2
The extent to which all users enjoy and achieve educationally and in their personal and social development	2
The extent to which children engage in positive behaviour and develop positive relationships and users contribute to decision-making and governance of the centre	3
The extent to which children are developing skills for the future and parents are developing economic stability and independence including access to training	3

How good is the provision?

3

The centre meets its core offer satisfactorily. Participation rates in activities provided have been variable but are improving because the centre is making sure that activities are better-meeting the range of needs and interests of the community.

Focused multi-agency children centre panel meetings successfully identify and assess those children and families referred to the centre who need immediate support. Those that do not quite meet children's social care thresholds but who would benefit from additional support are provided with a package of support from appropriate partners. Parents including young dads, testify to the timeliness and quality of individual support, for as long as needed.

Assessment of individual cases is robust and the common assessment framework is successfully ensuring teams can be gathered quickly to support children and families identified as in need. Careful exit strategies are in place to ensure parents can build their confidence, parenting skills, and support them to independence, at a pace that is appropriate to them. Effective partnerships between the health visiting team, police and the local accident and emergency unit ensure any at families known to be at risk are quickly identified and then supported.

Good provision from childcare providers and schools is ensuring achievements and aspirations of children are raised. Learning and development in these settings have been judged at least satisfactory and often good. Detailed evaluations from individual parents about the quality of support pay tribute to the difference services' support has made to their own and their children's development, enjoyment and well-being.

Care, guidance and support are good. Sensitive individualised and tailored support is provided to all families and children who access the centre. There is evidence of good multi-agency working which ensures that families can access the right kind of support; be it from MIND, social workers, speech and language therapists, or support and advice on benefits. Outreach work is improving and recent case studies show some positive impact from the work of partners. However, a significant minority of families are still not known to the centre, who consequently do not benefit from all the good work the centre offers. Additionally some town-wide services are yet to fully recognise the good opportunities and support the centre can provide.

The effectiveness of the assessment of the needs of children, parents and other users	3
The extent to which the centre promotes purposeful learning, development and enjoyment for all users	3
The extent to which the range of services, activities and opportunities meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The quality of care, guidance and support offered to users within the centre and the wider community	2

How effective are the leadership and management?

3

Governance arrangements are developing satisfactorily. The centre manager, advisory board and partners have a clear focus on improvement. Priorities within the centre's action plan link effectively to the activities and priorities of the wider locality area. There is a coherent link between the Children's Trust's, Children and Young People's Plan, and the centres action plan. However, accountability arrangements are less clear.

As part of the planning cycle, the centre manager works with staff and partners to identify future priorities. These are based on an accurate evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement. The centre manager is aware that as yet, the plan does not take enough account of views of parents. She does make sure the views of parents and users are canvassed through detailed evaluations of individual activities and interventions in order to check quality, usefulness and to support improvement. Impact of the work with individual families takes place within panel meetings, case studies and through regular supervision of staff. However, this information is not yet collated into manageable data to measure impact at a more strategic centre level. Whilst the centre's action plan has success criteria, qualitative targets, and reasonable timescales, it has few measurable targets and limited resource information. Consequently this makes evaluation of the impact of the plan difficult. Nevertheless, resources are used effectively to provide a rich, warm and welcoming environment. Robust financial management systems are in place to monitor day-to-day expenditure and delegation of responsibility for resources is at an appropriate level to ensure timely and effective packages of support to families. This ensures satisfactory value for money.

The performance management of staff is robust and although not yet fully integrated

across all services, processes provide for equality of opportunity. For example, there is a strong focus on developing skills of all staff, through high quality training, to deliver inclusive provision and to be sensitive to the needs and views of users. Equality impact assessments are always used when developing new provision and a flexible approach to service delivery means that workers can be sensitive to individual needs. For example the provision of one-to-one support in families' homes, when requested.

Effective partnership working, including that with Headland Futures, is supporting the successful involvement of harder to reach groups such as young fathers, in their children's learning, care and support. It is also helping them to develop fruitful relationships with their children and build their parenting skills, confidence and self-esteem. Partnerships are developing effectively and not least because of the strong commitment of the centre manager to harness the energies of everyone in her quest to reach out and support all families in the area. Whilst partners can often show the qualitative difference their contributions have made to individual interventions with children and families, they are not always able to show their impact quantitatively.

The extent to which governance, accountability, professional supervision and day to day management arrangements are clear and understood	3
The extent to which ambitious targets drive improvement, provision is integrated and there are high expectations for users and the wider community	3
3The extent to which resources are used and managed efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of users and the wider community	3
The extent to which equality is promoted and diversity celebrated, illegal or unlawful discrimination is tackled and the centre fulfils its statutory duties	3
The effectiveness of the centre's policy, procedures and work with key agencies in safeguarding children and, where applicable, vulnerable adults	2
The extent to which evaluation is used to shape and improve services and activities	3
The extent to which partnerships with other agencies ensure the integrated delivery of the range of services the centre has been commissioned to provide	3
The extent to which the centre supports and encourages the wider community to engage with services and uses their views to develop the range of provision	3

## Any other information used to inform the judgements made during this inspection

There are two private sector childcare settings within the Hindpool Close Children's Centre remit. These are Kiddikins and the Leap Frog playgroup. Two local primary

schools, St Bega's and St Helen's with Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children aged over three years, are also part of the centre's remit. Information from their most recent Ofsted inspections has been taken into account when writing about early years provision and outcomes for children in the report.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from our website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like us to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Summary for centre users

We inspected the Hindpool Close Children's Centre on 26 and 27 May 2010. We visited a number of activities, looked at the centre's plans and documents and had discussions with some of you and professionals.. Following this work we have judged that the centre provides satisfactory, but improving support to you and your families. Some of the things that the centre is doing well include the activities and actions taken to support yours' and your children's safety and well-being and the good quality of care, guidance and support offered by those staff who work with you. In particular, activities and provision for children in childcare settings and schools are generally good across the area and your children are doing well as a result; especially in regard to making friends and developing speaking, listening and reading skills.

The children's centre offers an increasing number of programmes and activities aimed at improving the health of people in your local community. In particular it has been very successful in helping lots of people to quit smoking. However, the manager knows there is still more work to do to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies as well as increase the number of new mums who choose to breastfeed their babies. The centre is already taking action to improve this in order to benefit you and your family. We found that some partnerships with the children's centre were not working as well as they could and as a result some people living in your community were missing out on opportunities to take part in the good range of activities available. This is also something that the children's centre manager knows and is going to tackle.

Parents who spoke to us all said that your children's centre is a warm and welcoming place, full of staff who they feel they can trust to help and support them. They told us that staff listen to them and then make sure that they get the right advice. We found that the centre was really good at helping people at times in their lives when they most need it. Action is taken quickly and different people and organisations work well as a team, to support both you and your children. However, whilst support is effective when families come to the centre, more needs to be done to ensure all families in the community who do not know about the centre can receive this support, so that they too can benefit from the good support and activities available.

We found services work well together to provide help and support to families where a child has a special educational needs and/or disabilities; and for parents of babies and very young children. In particular activities around weaning, Tweeny tots, Leap Frogs, Baby Yoga and Music and the baby clinics were especially good. Parents we spoke to

said they had enjoyed the weaning courses and were amazed at how much they had learnt about healthy food and how much cheaper it was to make their own baby food, rather than buy jars. A lot of parents, especially those who are bringing up children on their own, told us that they felt really happy on the days when they have an activity to go to. The recently developed Twins Group has quickly become a great success and highly valued. However, some parents we spoke to said that there were few opportunities for their older children who attend nursery, and that they would appreciate some more activities to go to in the afternoons.

People in charge of the children's centre are doing a satisfactory and improving job. The children's centre manager is working hard to make sure that everything the centre provides will make a difference to the area in which you live. She has made sure everyone who works with the centre share this commitment and we heard lots of examples from you about how they are making a real difference to your lives. The whole family is at the heart of the centre's work and this is seen in the increasing range of activities on offer and the greater number of you who attend them. Managers know there is still more to do if they are to really get to know the needs of your community, and we have asked them to make this a priority. They have already developed plans to show how they will do this.

The centre has recently changed the way in which decisions are made about its future work and the different services it provides. However, the ability of this group to properly understand how well the centre is doing in improving the lives of you and your family is limited. This is because the centre does not yet have effective systems in place to monitor this. We have asked the centre to make sure actions are in place to improve this. We know the centre is good at asking you to tell them how you have found all the activities and services which you go to, through questionnaires and evaluations. However, the centre knows it needs to increase both your involvement and your ability to influence what is offered. A Parent Forum has been re-established to tackle this but numbers attending are currently quite low. We hope that this is something you might be interested in becoming a part of.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come and speak to us, we are very grateful and we wish you every success for the future.

The full report is available from your centre or on our website [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

**HINDPOOL CLOSE CHILDREN'S CENTRE PLAN**

Objective	Action	Milestones	Person responsible	Progress
Improve outreach working to make sure all unmet need is identified and where relevant tackled through multi agency partnership working;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate monitoring of Reach Out contract</li> <li>Refocus Reach out service to ensure non users are reached</li> <li>Review responsibilities of all CC staff in relation to outreach</li> <li>Consultation with non users – formal and informal</li> </ul>	<p>Meeting with commissioning team July 2010</p> <p>Monitoring meeting with Reach Out Aug 2010</p> <p>Review responsibilities Sept 10</p> <p>October 2010</p>	<p>DS</p> <p>DS</p> <p>SFE</p> <p>SFE</p>	Meeting taken place. Monitoring info shared with Barnardos.
Ensure the Children's Trust works with the centre to enable them to better support the Children and Young People's Plan's priorities of increasing breast feeding rates and supporting teen mums;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set out areas of improvement at 0-11 partnership (data collection, multi agency working)</li> <li>Continue to implement breastfeeding strategy and work towards UNICEF accreditation</li> </ul>	<p>20<sup>th</sup> July 2010</p> <p>Ongoing – plan in place</p>	<p>DS</p> <p>DS/AW</p>	Draft policy in progress with Foundation Trust



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the relationship between the Teenage Pregnancy Support Service and Children's centres</li> </ul>	0-11 partnership 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	DS	
Work with partners to widen opportunities available for pre-school children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Involvement Worker to consult with parents about services for children 3 to 5</li> <li>Use consultation info to develop services for children aged 3-5</li> </ul>	Dec 2010	SFE/CM  SFE/CM	
Improve the advisory board's ability to evaluate the impact of the centre's multi agency work by developing more systematic and accurate management information that records the full impact of their work and helps them to set consistently challenging targets for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory board terms of reference reviewed with clear links made to ESINH</li> <li>Review data processes – collection and setting of centre based targets based on townwide targets</li> <li>Set centre based targets linked to townwide targets</li> </ul>	Sept 2010  0-11 partnership 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	SFE  DS/SFE  DS	
Ensure the views of parents consistently contribute to the governance of the centre and in determining and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review terms of reference for advisory board to ensure parental representation</li> <li>Review individual</li> </ul>	Sept 2010	SFE  SFE	



shaping services	consultations/ interventions with parents to include views of parents are feed into service design			
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## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Report to Portfolio Holder

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010



**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** UPDATE ON THE PROVISION OF  
PARENTING SUPPORT

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### **SUMMARY**

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

For the Portfolio Holder to note report and current progress

#### **2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

The report will update the Portfolio Holder on the progress of the Parenting Support Service

#### **3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBER**

The Portfolio Holder has responsibility for Children's Services issues

#### **4. TYPE OF DECISION**

. Non- key

#### **5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE**

Children's Services Portfolio Holder meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010

#### **6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED**

For the Portfolio Holder to note the report and current practice

**Report of:** Director of Child and Adult Services

**Subject:** UPDATE ON THE PROVISION OF  
PARENTING SUPPORT

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 For the Portfolio Holder to note the report and current progress.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Parenting Programmes have been developing in Hartlepool since April 2008. In December 2007 the Government's Children's Plan announced funding for Parenting Experts as part of the action to reduce anti-social behaviour. Hartlepool now receives funding to employ two Parenting Experts and has just been successful in gaining PEIP (Parenting Early Intervention Programme) funding which aims to increase the availability of evidenced based parenting programmes for parents experiencing problems with their children's behaviour. We have used this additional funding to increase the long term sustainability of the service by ensuring there is an abundance of parent-trainers ready to deliver future programmes. The service is also investing in Train the Trainer programmes to enable the delivery of training locally using existing staff.

**3. Current Progress**

- 3.1 The Targeted Parenting Service is delivered by Barnardo's Parenting Team in partnership with the Local Authority. The Team consists of a Parenting Expert, a Parenting Co-ordinator/ Senior Practitioner and a Parenting Buddy whose job is to provide supported access for the most vulnerable and hard to reach families.
- 3.2 The vision for parenting in Hartlepool is being achieved through the implementation of strategic goals and actions including:
- The centralization of parenting referrals.
  - The co-ordination and accountability of programmes delivered across the town.
  - The significant increase in staff now trained as parent-trainers.
  - The increased range of programmes and interventions on offer to parents.

- The expansion of the team to include a Parenting Buddy.
- Training/development of new programmes to meet local needs.
- A continuum of support from early intervention through to opportunities for parents to gain employability skills.
- Encouraging and supporting parents to set up their own support groups.
- Listening to their ideas on marketing and how we engage parents to improve our reach.
- Recognising that the parental support provided should be ongoing as different stages of childhood bring different problems that will need an early intervention.
- Intensive one to one support and intervention with parents whose children are particularly vulnerable or at risk, due to substance misuse, neglect, domestic violence or other difficulties.

3.3 Using these strategies the service has engaged many more parents than originally anticipated. These effective strategies can clearly be seen in the increase in parents accessing our service:

<u>Parents Accessing Programmes</u>	<u>Year</u>
48	2007/2008
169	2008/2009
342	2009/2010
<u>Parenting Receiving 1:1 Support</u>	<u>Year</u>
66	2009/2010

3.4 The **342** parents that accessed programmes in 2009/10 were targeted parents, for example identified as needing additional support, had child protection issues, parents requiring intensive support whose children have been removed from their care, parental skills/knowledge was poor, behaviour problems at home and in school (from mild to conduct disorders) and children considered vulnerable or at risk. Referrals came from a wide variety of agencies, but in particular: Social Care, Schools, Family Intervention Projects, YOS and Children's Centres. The **66** parents receiving 1:1 support from the Parenting Expert or Senior Practitioner/ Co-ordinator were parents

with complex, multiple issues that have seriously impacted on their children's well-being.

- 3.5 The strategies used have been particularly responsive to parental needs. As much emphasis has been placed on the recruitment and nurturing of parents **before** they access a programme as there is when they attend a programme and as a direct result of this we have managed to increase targeted parenting support by 700%. This strategy helps the most vulnerable parents access a service and allows staff to build a relationship with parents to ensure they are ready to commence a programme, prior to it starting. This also has the benefit of targeting resources at parents who will have a much greater capacity to fully complete a programme and so gain maximum benefit from the intervention.
- 3.6 After completion of a 10 week programme we are finding that parents are then motivated to continue other programmes and further training, such as gaining employability skills, literacy/numeracy classes through Adult Education and family learning through Children's Centres. We also provide crèche places, and although this has proved to be a significant cost it is ensuring that the targeted vulnerable parents (who often have more than five children) are able to access support. Without crèche provision it is very difficult for a single parent with no family back up to access any kind of intervention that needs a commitment of half a day per week for 10 weeks. Each Parent who attends a course completes a questionnaire before and after the programme. We are currently collating the information provided through these questionnaires as part of our service evaluation.
- 3.7 As a result of the linkage with Children's Centres (every parent who attends a programme and who has children under five is immediately registered with their local Children's Centre), parents are accessing further activities in their local communities and are able to access other services more readily. Parents are also offered opportunities to become involved in their community by staff consulting with them about what services they would like to see happening locally.
- 3.8 In the autumn we are going to deliver the Mellow Parenting programme, an intensive 16 week programme that supports parents with severe attachment difficulties, poor parenting skills and parents considered to be unable to provide adequate care for their children. The senior parenting team will lead on this delivery and we envisage in future a rolling programme that could provide intensive and evidenced based support to the neediest parents in Hartlepool. The programme is aimed at parents with children under five with severe/complex needs, parents whose children are in foster care, child protection involvement and parents with very poor parenting skills and knowledge. The programme is delivered one day per week

for 16 weeks and parents partake in intensive therapeutic group work, which includes video observations. It is hoped that this programme will provide the foundations for parents to gain the necessary understanding of their role as parents to enable the return of their children easing the pressure on statutory services.

- 3.9 The Parenting Team also provides parenting support to parents of children in Secondary Schools throughout Hartlepool. This service provides access to programmes and 1:1 support. Parents are allocated to the team through TASS (Team Around the Secondary School) and the number of parents of adolescents the team is presently working with is increasing. It is becoming apparent that many parents of adolescent children are isolated from parenting interventions and support.
- 3.10 We are also planning to train a number of parents in the autumn to become parent-trainers themselves. These are parents who would have been considered “hard to reach” or “challenging” parents and who are now not only blossoming but are seeing improved relationships with their children, a range of improvements in their children’s lives, and the parents have become involved in supporting other parents through their difficulties. We already have parents who help us transport parents to programmes who have become involved in volunteering for charities and who are an inspiration to everyone.
- 3.11 **How do we make parenting programmes work in Hartlepool?**
- By making the programmes available, acceptable, accessible and affordable.
  - By using programmes that are independently shown to work.
  - By supervising and supporting parent-trainers.
  - By having strong management to coordinate all the elements involved and by defining the population and pursuing non-attenders
- 3.12 Parenting can be a delight, but also a struggle. The vast majority of parents want to do what is best for their child. Even parents from advantaged households feel the strain of parenthood, so imagine how much more difficult it is to bring up children in poverty, disruption, with little or no qualifications, feeling depressed or confused, having experienced makeshift parenting in their own childhood. Providing preventative parenting programmes and support is vital if we are to support these parents to help them make the necessary changes that will improve outcomes for children in Hartlepool, and break the generation to generation of disadvantage that exists locally.

**4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 Parenting Programmes are designed to suit all parents regardless of their culture, gender, ability, race or sexual orientation. Where a programme is not appropriate the team have the ability to create tailor made solutions.

**5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 For the Portfolio Holder to note the report and current progress

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 None

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