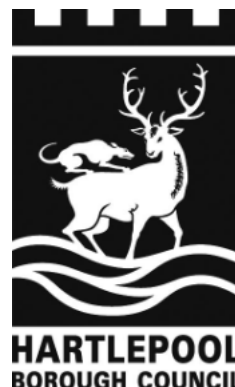


CABINET AGENDA



Monday, 18 April 2011

at 9.15 am

in Committee Room B, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CABINET:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Brash, Hall, Hargreaves, Hill, Jackson, Payne and H Thompson

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 8 April 2011
(previously circulated)

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2011-2012 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

5. KEY DECISIONS

No items.

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

No items

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION

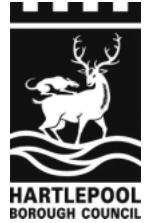
No items

8. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

- 8.1 Final Report - Think Family – Preventative And Early Intervention Services – *Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.2 Action Plan – Think Family – Preventative And Early Intervention Services – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 8.3 Final Report – Youth Involvement / Participation In The Development And Delivery Of Council Services, Including The Safeguarding Of Young People - *Young People's Representatives, Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*
- 8.4 Scrutiny Investigation Into Youth Involvement / Participation In The Development And Delivery Of Council Services, Including The Safeguarding Of Young People – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

CABINET

18 April 2011



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2012

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To set out proposals for Youth Justice Strategic Planning in Hartlepool for 2011-2012.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The Report outlines proposals in respect of the annual Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2011-2012, this will be a refresh of the 2010/11 Strategic Plan prepared last year which remains relevant and in the light of the government's stated intention to lay legislation before Parliament in the forthcoming coming year to abolish the national Youth Justice Board (YJB) which oversees the evaluation and monitoring of the plan.

3. RELEVANCE TO CABINET

Budget and Policy Framework.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Budget and Policy Framework.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Cabinet - 18 April 2011
Regeneration Scrutiny Forum – June 2011
Cabinet - July 2011
Council - August 2011

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To approve the proposal for 2011/2012 Youth Justice Strategic Planning and make a referral to Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny.

Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2012

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out proposals for Youth Justice Strategic Planning in Hartlepool for 2011-2012.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The national Youth Justice Performance Improvement Framework includes a range of elements that work together to improve practice and performance. As part of the framework and as a statutory responsibility under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 all Youth Offending Services are required to prepare a Youth Justice Strategic Plan and submit this to the Youth Justice Board.
- 2.2 In 2010 the coalition government announced that it intended to lay legislation before Parliament in 2011 to amend the 1998 Act and to abolish the national Youth Justice Board (YJB). Advice from the YJB in respect of the requirement to produce a Plan for 2011– 2012 has been contradictory and it is proposed that a refresh of the 2010-2011 Plan be produced. The plan produced last year was comprehensive and the strategic objectives continue forward into 2011/12.
- 2.3 Whilst the Youth Offending Service (YOS) partnership can develop their own structure and content of the Youth Justice Plan, the Plan should address four key areas and it is these areas that will be refreshed to reflect the position for the service going forward.
- **Resourcing and value for money** - The sufficient deployment of resources to deliver effective youth justice services to prevent offending and reoffending.
 - **Structure and Governance** - The Plan will set out the structures and governance necessary to ensure the effective delivery of local youth justice services. The leadership composition and role of the multi agency YOS Management Board are critical to this.

- **Partnership Arrangements** - To demonstrate that effective partnership arrangements are in place between the Youth Offending Service, statutory partners and other local partners that have a stake in delivering youth justice services and that these arrangements generate effective outcomes for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending.
- **Risks to Future Delivery** - To ensure the Youth Offending Service has the capacity and capability to deliver effective youth justice services, identifying risks to future delivery and the Youth Offending Service partnership's plans to address these risks.

2.4 The refreshed Youth Justice Strategic Plan will also detail the service priorities for 2011-2012.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 A refreshed Youth Justice Strategic Plan is developed for 2011 - 2012 in consultation with partners and for consideration by scrutiny.
- 3.2 The final draft will be available for consideration by Cabinet on in July 2011 and Council in August 2011.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Strategic Plan is part of the Budget and Policy Framework. Cabinet is requested to approve the process for the development of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan and for referral to the Regeneration and Planning Services Scrutiny Forum.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 Youth Justice Performance Improvement Framework (England).

6. CONTACT OFFICER

- 6.1 Rita Taylor, Acting Head Youth Offending Service

CABINET REPORT

18 April 2011



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: **FINAL REPORT – THINK FAMILY – PREVENTATIVE AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES**

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 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'.

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 25 March 2011. 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 12.1 of the bound report, which is attached to the back of the papers for this meeting.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

FINAL REPORT

THINK FAMILY – PREVENTATIVE AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

April 2011

CABINET

18 April 2011



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT INTO THINK FAMILY –
PREVENTATIVE AND EARLY INTERVENTION
SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In November 2009, the Government announced the Think Family programme for which Hartlepool is a pathfinder Authority (Young Carers). The programme in its entirety aims to ensure that everyone who works with a family and the people in the family can provide the right support at the right time. A Think Family Strategy in Hartlepool is currently in development.
- 2.2 Hartlepool delivers integrated preventative services to children and young people through the 'Team Around the School' services which bring together key organisations / professionals to plan and implement support packages for children and young people with identified needs.
- 2.3 The Government's Social Exclusion Taskforce in their Families at Risk review estimated that around 140,000 of the 12.8 million families in England experience entrenched problems of the type which are often passed from generation to generation. This is despite the support which is often provided from a large number of different agencies. From this review evidence shows that this support often does not succeed because it is poorly co-ordinated and does not take into account the wider family problems which lie at the root of those experienced by individual children or adult family members.

- 2.4 Think Family means securing better outcomes for children, young people and families with additional needs by co-ordinating the support they receive from children's, young people's, adults' and family services so that they can:-
- (a) Identify families at risk of poor outcomes to provide support at the earliest opportunity;
 - (b) Meet the full range of needs within each family they are supporting or working with;
 - (c) Develop services which can respond effectively to the most challenging families; and
 - (d) Strengthen the ability of family members to provide care and support to each other.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To explore the provision of preventative and early intervention services including the provision of practical support for children including children on the cusp of care; young people and their families.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation were agreed by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 6 September 2010:-
- (a) To gain an understanding of the Think Family approach in Hartlepool along with the role of each of the following services in contributing to this approach:-
 - (i) Universal services;
 - (ii) Targeted services; and
 - (iii) Specialist services
 - (b) To examine how the Council and its partner organisations co-ordinate their Think Family approach in order to deliver services in an integrated way to avoid duplication and gaps in service provision;
 - (c) To identify the impact that Think Family services have on children including children on the cusp of care, children living in poverty, young people and their families;
 - (d) To evaluate Hartlepool's Think Family approach to establish whether it is achieving its overall aim;

- (e) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which Think Family services are provided in Hartlepool;
- (f) To explore how Think Family services could be provided in the future, giving due regard to:-
 - (i) Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the services are currently provided; and
 - (ii) If / how the services could be provided at a reduced financial cost (within the resources available in the current economic climate).

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

5.1 Membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2010 / 11 Municipal Year was as outlined below:-

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, Fleet, Griffin, Ingham, Lauderdale, Maness, Simmons (Chair), P Thompson and Wells (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members: Eira Ballingall and David Relton

Resident Representatives: Joan Steel and Hilda Wales

Young People's Representatives: Ashleigh Bostock, Lauren Carroll, Demi Coull, Shauna Hanley, Aarthi Suresh and 1 Schools' Council Representative

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

6.1 The Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from the 6 September 2010 to 22 March 2011 to discuss and receive evidence directly relating to their investigation into 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'. A detailed record of these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services or via the Hartlepool Borough Council website.

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

- (a) Presentations from the Council's Child and Adult Services Department enhanced with verbal evidence;
- (b) Verbal evidence from Iain Wright, MP
- (c) Group exercises held with:-
 - (i) Partner organisations;

- (ii) Parents;
 - (iii) Young people; and
 - (iv) Children
- (d) Verbal and written evidence from parents
 - (e) A presentation from Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council and Durham County Council
 - (f) A presentation from the Department for Education
 - (g) A presentation from the Deputy Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science

FINDINGS

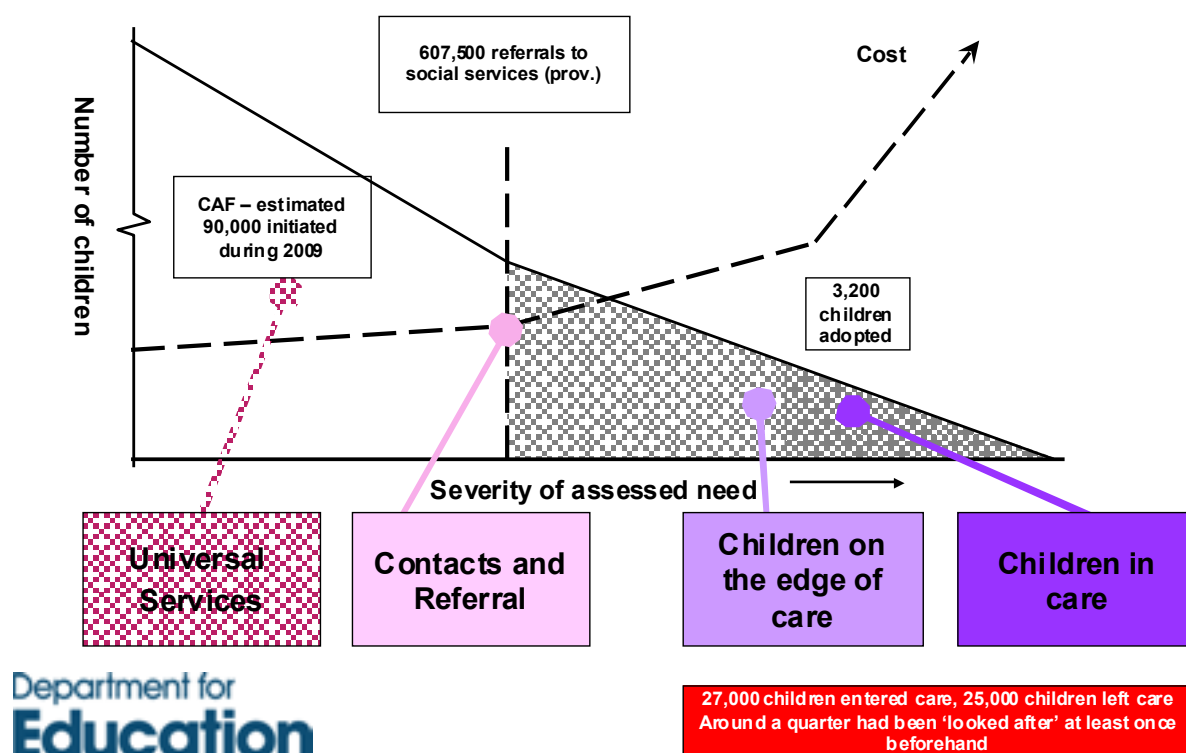
7. THE THINK FAMILY APPROACH AND HOW IT WORKS IN HARTLEPOOL

- 7.1 Members of the Forum were keen to gain an understanding of the Think Family approach nationally and also how it works in Hartlepool. Therefore, the Forum invited evidence from the Department for Education; the Member of Parliament for Hartlepool; the Council's Child and Adult Services Department; and the Deputy Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science.

Evidence from the Department for Education

- 7.2 As part of the evidence gathering process, the Forum hosted a regional Think Family conference (which is referred to in section 10 of this report). As part of the conference Members heard evidence from the Edge of Care Team Leader from the Families at Risk Division, Department for Education.
- 7.3 The Team Leader spoke about children on the 'edge of care' and explained the edge of care as those children who are not at sufficient risk to be 'looked after' by the Local Authority but are likely to be if something is not done to improve things at home. These children can move in and out of the care system, often for short periods of time and are often from families facing multiple problems.
- 7.4 Members were informed that high quality early intervention and prevention can prevent the need for repeated interventions, often at higher cost. The system has been broken down into four key areas of pressure, as shown in the graph overleaf:-

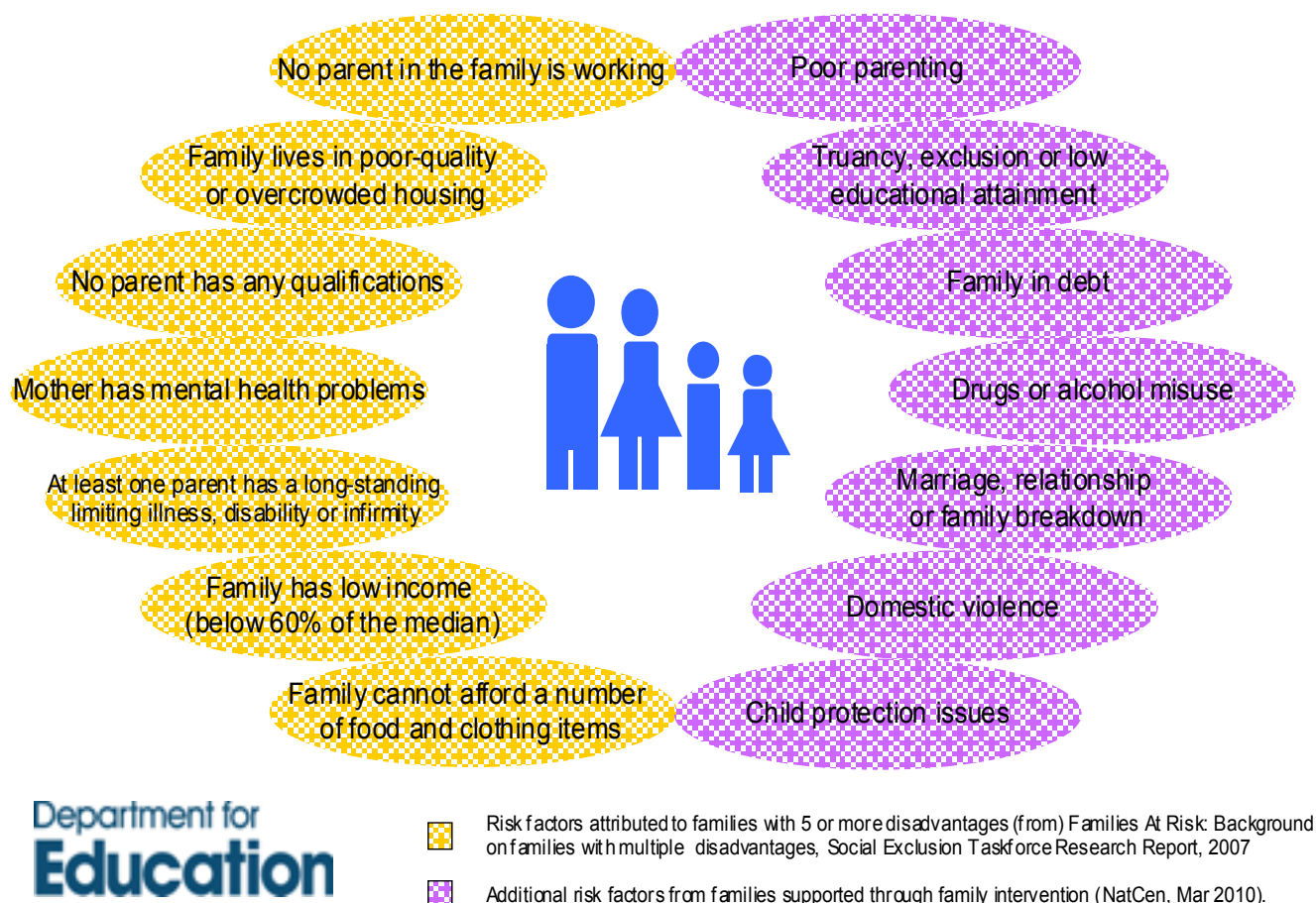
The spectrum of need.....



- 7.5 Section one, universal services: The vast majority of the 12m children and young people in the country fall short of the threshold for an assessment by social services but need support. The families need help to access services if their problems are not to get worse and more expensive to deal with.
- 7.6 Section 2, contracts and referral: Around 600,000 referrals are made annually (roughly a quarter of them repeat referrals) and roughly a third of these result in no further action. The children go back into universal services but this does not mean they do not have needs, as many will be referred again in the future.
- 7.7 Section 3, children on the edge of care: There are a number of children on the edge of care because of their family circumstances, or who move in and out of care. Many children only stay looked after for a short period of time but end up back in the care system again. Work with dysfunctional families, can reduce the flow of children into care and the associated costs and negative outcomes, or enable successful returns from care (27,000 entered the care system last year and 25,000 left it but around a quarter of these children had been in care at least once beforehand).

- 7.8 Section 4, children in care: Relates to helping the 64,000 children who are looked after to find permanency as quickly as possible, whether through remaining in a suitable, stable care placement, through adoption or special guardianship, or through returning home.
- 7.9 Local areas vary considerably and therefore the Department's intention is not to produce a prescriptive 'solution', or an idealised system. Rather, this analysis should give local areas a way of framing their thinking about children's services in their own area, and how best to meet local needs.
- 7.10 Members recognised that growing up in a family with significant, social, health, economic and behavioural problems has a lasting and inter-generational impact on a child's life chances.
- 7.11 The Team Leader informed Members that around 120,000 families in England experience multiple social, health and economic problems and 46,000 experience 'problem' child behaviour. These account for almost two thirds of exclusions; 1 in 5 youth offences; parents are 34 times more likely to need drug treatment; and 8 times more likely to need alcohol treatment and a third are subject to child protection. The diagram overleaf shows the types of problems faced by families:-

Types of problems faced by families...



7.12 The following key issues and statistics were highlighted to Members:-

Parental alcohol and drug misuse

- Alcohol misuse identified as a factor in 50% of child protection cases
- Children at a higher risk of mental ill-health, behavioural problems, involvement with the police, and substance/alcohol misuse

Parental offending

- 63% of boys with convicted fathers go on to be convicted
- Children of prisoners - 3 times the risk of mental health problems
- Can perpetuate a cycle of antisocial behaviour where children are more likely to be both perpetrators and / or victims of crime themselves

Domestic Violence

- 25% children witnessing domestic violence have serious social and behavioural problems

Safeguarding

- Nearly 75% of Serious Case Reviews found that parental mental ill health, substance misuse and/or domestic violence, often in combination were a factor

Education

- Children aged 13-14 who live in families with five or more problems are 36 times more likely to be excluded from school

Evidence from the Member of Parliament for Hartlepool, Iain Wright

- 7.13 The Forum was extremely grateful to receive evidence from the Member of Parliament (MP) for Hartlepool, Iain Wright. The MP highlighted that Hartlepool was regarded as one of the champions in this area and placed real emphasis on the importance of early intervention and its benefits along with the success of Family Intervention Projects (FIPs). The MP referred to the advantages of partnership working with the voluntary sector and the need to ensure that this partnership continued. Reference was made to the potential effects on the early intervention and preventative services as a result of the Government's budget cuts and the need to ensure that the Council retain Think Family services to ensure people have the best start in life. Whilst Members recognised the requirement to reduce services, the need to retain expertise and address the implications of such cuts was emphasised.
- 7.14 Members of the Forum questioned how the Government would reduce child poverty and other issues faced by families such as drug and alcohol abuse. The MP expressed concerns due to the absence of a National Youth Policy and the risks that the current budget constraints may have on the previous good work undertaken in this regard.
- 7.15 The MP spoke about the low take up of working tax credits and benefits generally and advised that whilst assistance was available arrangements should be made to ensure the system was simplified to encourage greater take up. Disappointment was expressed by the Forum regarding the Government's proposals to reduce the number of Sure Start Centres and highlighted the benefits of the service as well as the importance of universal services being available to everyone.
- 7.16 With regard to early intervention, the benefits of partnership working with the Health Service, particularly midwives and health visitors, to identify problems at pregnancy stage was a main priority. However, concern was expressed

by Members in relation to the proposed transfer of services from Primary Care Trusts to General Practitioners (GPs) and the impact on services as a result. Members were of the opinion that there is a need to develop stronger partnerships with the police and housing providers in terms of funding intervention projects.

- 7.17 The MP highlighted the fact that whilst there are a number of routes to identify families in need, there are still a number of families not being identified. It was suggested that the current referral routes be extended and formalised and emphasise be placed on gaining trust and building relationships with families.
- 7.18 Whilst Members noted the success of parenting programmes, it was pointed out by the MP that current intervention programmes focussed mainly on support for mothers and therefore providing a similar level of support to fathers was suggested.
- 7.19 The MP also attended the regional Think Family conference and strongly reiterated his views, as above, and concluded by saying “we should invest in young people and families and stand together so no child is left alone”.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

- 7.20 The Forum welcomed evidence from officers from the Child and Adult Services Department which outlined where the Council is now, how the Council achieved this; and the services available.

Timeline of Development

- 7.21 Members were informed that the Think Family programme in Hartlepool has been in development since 2001. Think Family fundamentally leads all services to think beyond their own client group and think about all family members. Members were pleased to hear that there is a real national interest in the Hartlepool model which is held to be an example of good practice.

2002

- 7.22 In 2002 the Children's Fund was established which worked on how to reduce anti-social behaviour aiming services at 5 to 13 year olds.

2003

- 7.23 In 2003 a pilot project was introduced working with four families who had received numerous complaints about anti-social behaviour. Support was offered through the Children's Fund, the Youth Offending Service, housing, education and Families First, which resulted in an 80 percent reduction in complaints. Also, in 2003, the Children's Fund allocated 25% funding to the

Youth Offending Service for prevention. Youth Inclusion and support panels were set up, the family support panel included the following organisations:-

- (i) Children's Fund;
- (ii) Families First;
- (iii) Youth Offending Service;
- (iv) Social Services;
- (v) Housing;
- (vi) Community safety;
- (vii) Child Adolescent Mental Health Service;
- (viii) Police;
- (ix) Youth Services;
- (x) Connexions;
- (xi) Health;
- (xii) Education; and
- (xiii) Barnardo's

2004

- 7.24 In 2004 funding was provided by New Deal for Communities, the Youth Offending Service and the Children's Fund for a co-ordinator and two workers.

2005

- 7.25 In 2005 a key worker was appointed and the Hartlepool Intervention Panel was established.

2006

- 7.26 In 2006 the Youth Justice Board Prevention funding established the Youth Inclusion Programme. This programme identified 50 young people, 25 from Dyke House school and 25 from Owton Manor school. In 2007 this programme was extended to the North of the Town.

2007

- 7.27 Prevention awareness courses started to be delivered in schools along with Anti-Social Behaviour FIPs.

2008

- 7.28 2008 saw the development of a Prevention Strategy and a town wide youth inclusion programme. A pilot Youth Justice Board Prevention Project was also set up.

2009

- 7.29 In 2009 Teams Around the School were introduced and prevention workers were also based in schools. During 2009, a Youth Crime Prevention

Inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary (HMIC) which concluded that 'Hartlepool's prevention approach was in our collective opinion the best structured we have seen in our fieldwork. This structure is supported by excellent professional relationships between all agencies; a genuine common ethos was detected. All should be congratulated on this achievement'.

- 7.30 Members were very keen to gain an understanding of the Team Around the Schools and the impact that they have on children and their families. It was highlighted to Members that there are three teams, these being Team Around the Children's Centre (TACC); Team Around the Primary School (TAPS); and Team Around the Secondary School (TASS).

Team Around the Children's Centre (TACC)

- 7.31 Members noted that there are eight main Children's Centres based across four localities which replicate the school clusters. Each team is based in a locality and consists of:-

Integration Support Manager
Community Involvement Worker
Family Support Worker
Early Years Consultant
Admin and Caretaker
Midwives
Health Visitors
Speech and Language Therapists
Outreach workers (commissioned through Bamardos)
(Daycare settings are also linked to each centre)

- 7.32 Members queried the referral process and how children / families were identified for support. The Forum was informed that there was a referral pathway in place for early intervention and referrals were received from a range of partners including health professional and also individual families.
- 7.33 One of the parents was concerned that she was not aware of a route to self refer to a service and suggested that this should be examined further. The Forum believed that self – referral was an important element to try and avoid more serious interventions at a later date.
- 7.34 A Multi agency panel meets on a monthly basis to allocate the referrals to workers and the aim is to refer as early as the antenatal period if appropriate. It is essential to ensure that health staff are referring families to the appropriate points of contact. TACC also offer bespoke packages of care so that families are equipped to parent appropriately and feel able to access Children's Centre activities therefore reducing referrals into social care. Members recognised that there were a number of routes to identify families in need through health workers, police or school but queried what was in place to recognise families living in poverty. Members were

informed that this would be identified by the TACC or TAPS with only one referral required from one organisation.

- 7.35 A parent questioned how closely GPs were involved in the provision of the Think Family services. An officer from the Child and Adult Services Department commented that work was underway to liaise more closely with GPs through the Children's Centres but some GPs were more receptive than others.
- 7.36 The Forum was interested to hear about the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The CAF is a form which is completed in conjunction with the family and used across all the services working with the families to provide a holistic assessment for that family. This means that the family would only need to provide information to one organisation / agency as the CAF would be shared with the other organisations / agencies involved.

Team Around the Primary School (TAPS)

- 7.37 The Forum was informed that the TAPS is an early intervention project aimed at children aged between 5-11 years which enables children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The outcomes are detailed in **Appendix A**. The project ensures that families access the relevant support at the earliest opportunity and helps to identify children and their families who may need some additional support. Each team consists of a social worker and a number of interventions workers including:-

Dad's Worker
 Police Officer
 Housing Workers
 Connexions Worker
 Youth Workers
 Anti Social Behaviour FIP Workers
 Mental Health Worker
 Parenting Befriend Worker
 Domestic Abuse Worker
 Youth Offending Worker
 Anti Social Behaviour Officer

- 7.38 The team is split into three localities to link with the primary schools' behaviour, education and social difficulties cluster groups, North, Central and South. Each team member has two to three allocated schools. Social workers and allocated workers meet with schools on a half term basis to discuss and identify referrals. TAPS offers a three tier support process, as outlined below:-

TIER 1 - general advice and support to schools, including guidance around the CAF process

TIER 2 - brief intervention

TIER 3 - holistic family support package / FIPs provide the most 'at risk' families with the high level, intensive support they need to make positive changes.

- 7.39 Funding for a number of FIPs has been awarded to Hartlepool. These are all run by the same team that provides the TAPs service. Currently there is an Anti Social Behaviour FIP; a Child Poverty FIP; a Youth Crime FIP and the Belle Vue FIP. This project offers intensive support to families in order to tackle anti-social behaviour, child poverty and youth crime.
- 7.40 Members were shown examples of case studies where help and support was provided by the TAPs. One of these studies is highlighted below. The case study details the family circumstances and the help the family received:-

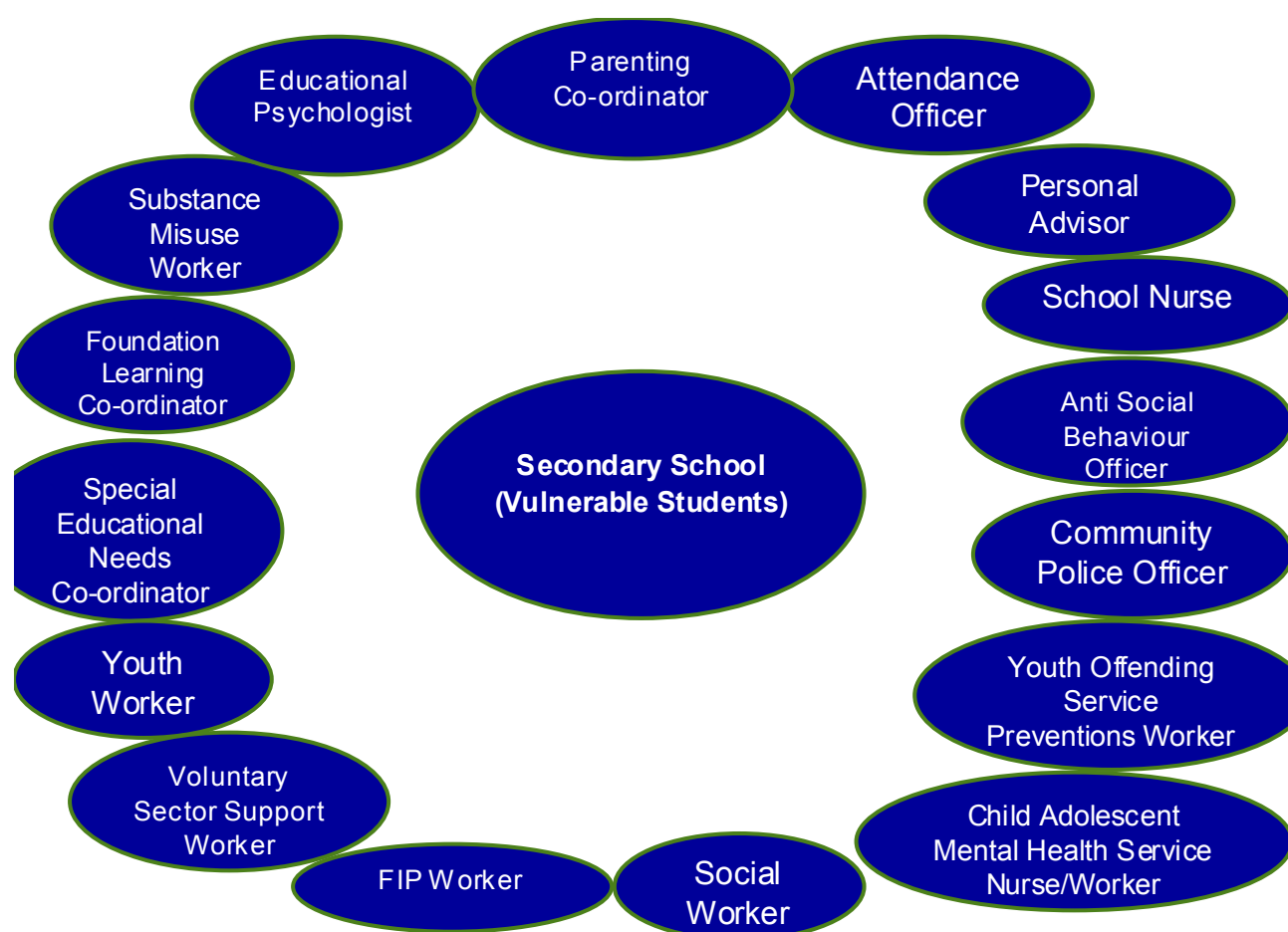
A young boy is showing challenging behaviour at home and school. His sister (15 years old) is pregnant with twins. The mother is struggling financially and has no family in the area. The TAPS worked with the family, benefit advice was sought and emotional support offered to the mother. The team carried out 1:1 work around the boy's emotions and feelings and also prepared him for the arrival of twins. The sister was referred to a Children's Centre and a package of support was provided around her education.

Team Around the Secondary School (TASS)

- 7.41 Members heard that TASS was born out of the National Targeted Youth Support reforms, which highlighted that 'Young people at risk of poor outcomes should receive an integrated package of support which meets their needs.' (Youth Matters / Youth Matters Next Steps). The early identification of at risk young people is the main aim of TASS, and is co-ordinated by a lead professional. Again, the CAF is used to assess young people's needs.
- 7.42 The Council's Youth Support Services and the Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership strongly believe that:-

'the development of integrated, (virtual) multi-agency teams around each of the local secondary schools provide the best model for securing improved outcomes for vulnerable young people (of secondary school age) and supporting them on the path to success'.

7.43 Below is a diagram which illustrates the TASS model:-



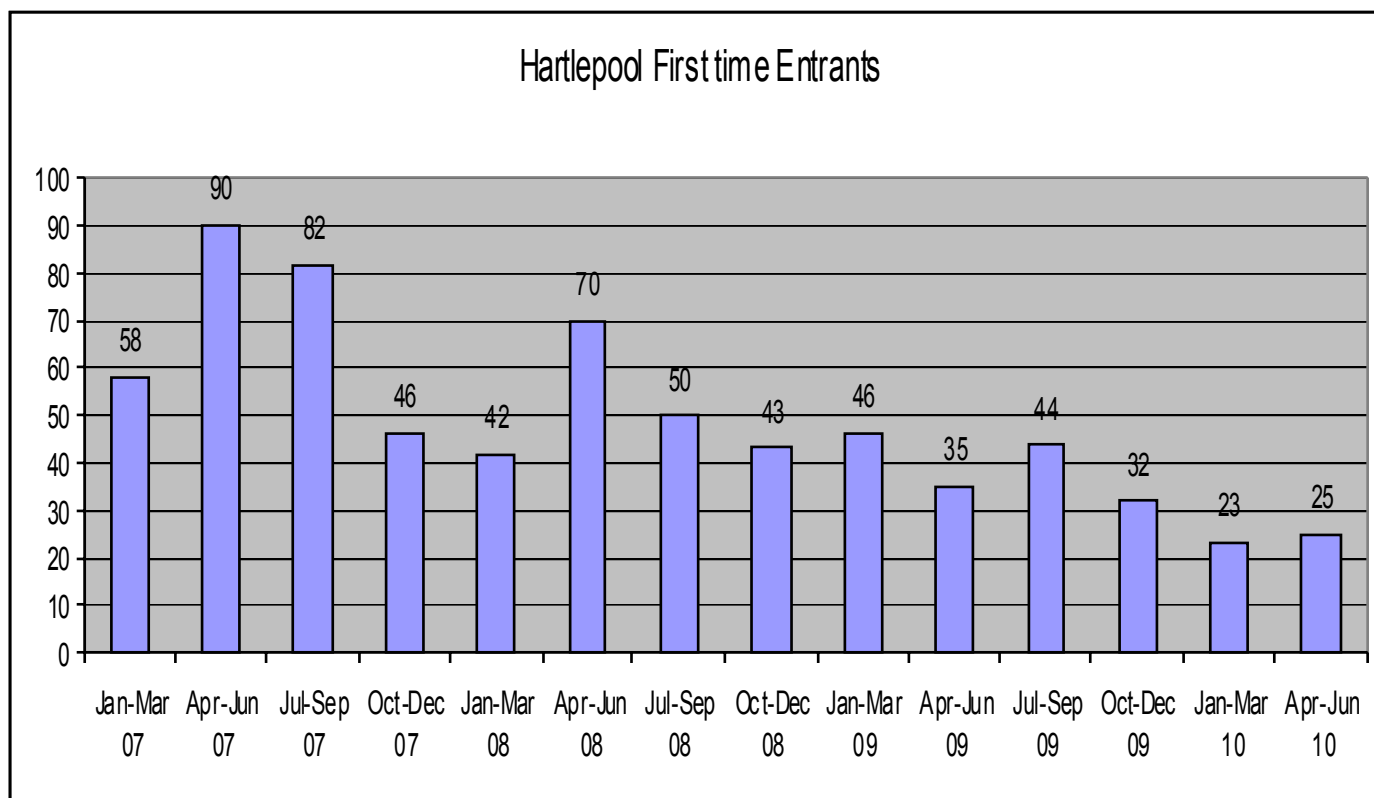
7.44 Members were very pleased to hear about the success of the High Tunstall TASS, as illustrated below:-

'The High Tunstall TASS has been a success in the early identification of the needs of young people. The rolling out of TASS has proved that a coordinated approach between the schools and services can address issues young people face before the problem exacerbates.

In one of the cases it may have prevented a drug related death due to solvent misuse being identified in the early stages of use and interventions being carried out to address the use.'

(Young People's Substance Misuse Co-ordinator)

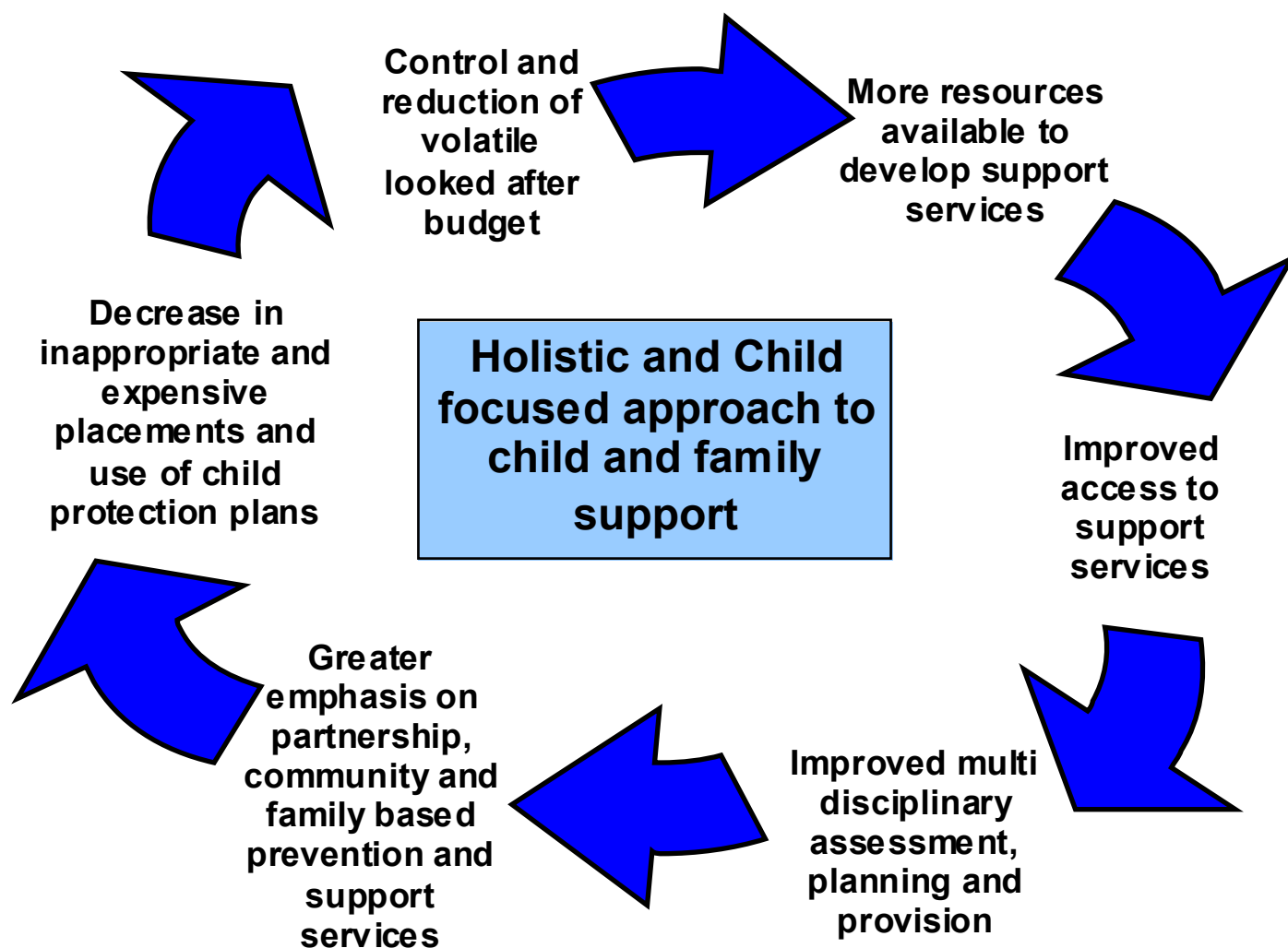
- 7.45 Early intervention services impact positively on many areas, for example, Members were very pleased to hear that first time entrants into the youth justice system are reducing, as shown in the graph below.



Prevention Services in 2010 / 11

- 7.46 The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Specialist Services informed Members that the Think Family and Early Intervention Service provided a holistic and child focussed approach to child and family support. In addition to this, tailored packages of care were being piloted with a view to ensure that the individual needs of families were met to try and keep children out of the care of the local authority.
- 7.47 Members questioned whether the number of children being looked after by the local authority was increasing. The Assistant Director confirmed that it was increasing and this was partly due to intervening earlier with more families. This was also reflective of the national picture. There was some concern raised by the Forum that the additional measures put in place in relation to early intervention were not having the desired affect if the numbers were increasing. The Assistant Director confirmed it was still early days but that the current service was aimed at supporting families down the continuum of need.

7.48 The Assistant Director referred to the Virtuous Cycle, as shown below, which illustrates the holistic and child focused approach to child and family support.



Evidence from High Tunstall College of Science

7.49 The Deputy Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science delivered a presentation at the Think Family conference on how the school developed their TASS.

7.50 The Deputy Headteacher defined their TASS as follows:-

‘This partnership is passionate about the health, happiness, education and inclusion of all our young people. We are committed to sharing good practice and expertise in order to break down barriers to learning and promote personal, emotional and social well-being’.

7.51 The focus of the TASS is the young person and how the TASS engages with the young person. The TASS is made up of a number of representatives from organisations, such as Barnardos, the police and HYPED, the substance

misuse service. The school recognised that it was very important not to hand the problem onto a variety of organisations but for each organisation to work with the school to help and support the young person involved.

7.52 An example was used to illustrate this approach, as shown below:-

The school had concerns about the behaviour of a 14 year old boy. Some of the issues the boy faced included a lack of motivation, risk of persistent absence, disruptive behaviour in lessons, aggressive behaviour and risk of offending. The boy was receiving additional support from the school before the TASS team became involved. However, the majority of these support measures, for example, Year Leader Report and meetings with parents were unsuccessful. The TASS team became involved to help the boy. Some of the services used by the TASS included B76, Headland Futures, and HYPED, the substance misuse service. The impact of the TASS is identifiable as the boy's attendance is now improving; he has avoided permanent exclusion; he is working towards City and Guilds Level 1 in Horticulture and adult literacy and numeracy; his drug dependence has reduced and he is engaging with a key worker.

7.53 The school now plans to continue to build capacity to provide a coherent, responsive and flexible support system. The school plans to ensure seamless support for Year 6 pupils transferring to the school. Other projects include the development of a 1 year pilot employing a Parent Support Worker and development of a 2 year pilot with MIND to provide a counselling service within the school.

8. HOW THE COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNER ORGANISATIONS CO-ORDINATE THEIR THINK FAMILY APPROACH AND THE IMPACT THAT THINK FAMILY SERVICES HAVE ON CHILDREN INCLUDING CHILDREN ON THE CUSP OF CARE, CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

8.1 As part of this investigation, the Forum at its meeting of 19 October 2010 split into small groups to gather views from partner organisations on the delivery of and co-ordination of Think Family services. Several organisations attended including Hartlepool MIND; Barnardos; Housing Hartlepool; Hartlepool Carers; Hartlepool Patch; Cleveland Police; and the Primary Care Trust. Several parents also contributed to the discussions.

8.2 The key points from the views gathered were:-

- (a) That better access to decent quality information should be available to families detailing what services are available through the Think Family programme;
- (b) That links needed to be strengthened in particular with GP's, as some GP's were prescribing medication rather than directing people to the appropriate services;
- (c) That schools are instrumental in the promotion of Think Family services;
- (d) That raising awareness with both public and partner organisations should be examined further through promoting and marketing the services possibly through the use of the Council's quarterly publication, *Hartbeat*;
- (e) That the venues where services are provided are neutral and welcoming to families;
- (f) That raising awareness of the self referral process was an issue highlighted for further development; and
- (g) That the key factor is that the earlier individuals can access the services they need the better it is in the longer term.

8.3 The feedback from this exercise is attached as **Appendix B**. The comments have been grouped into main categories with a column outlining suggestions for improvement which were made.

8.4 The Forum also held a very successful meeting out in the community, at Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre, and invited families with experience of Think Family services to attend. It was very well attended by parents, young people and children. Three activity sessions were organised for the following age ranges to gather their views on Think Family services:-

- (a) 5-11 year olds;
- (b) 12-16 year olds; and
- (c) Adults.

Feedback from Adults

8.5 The adults who were in attendance at the meeting discussed the good points about the service they received; improvements to the service; consequences

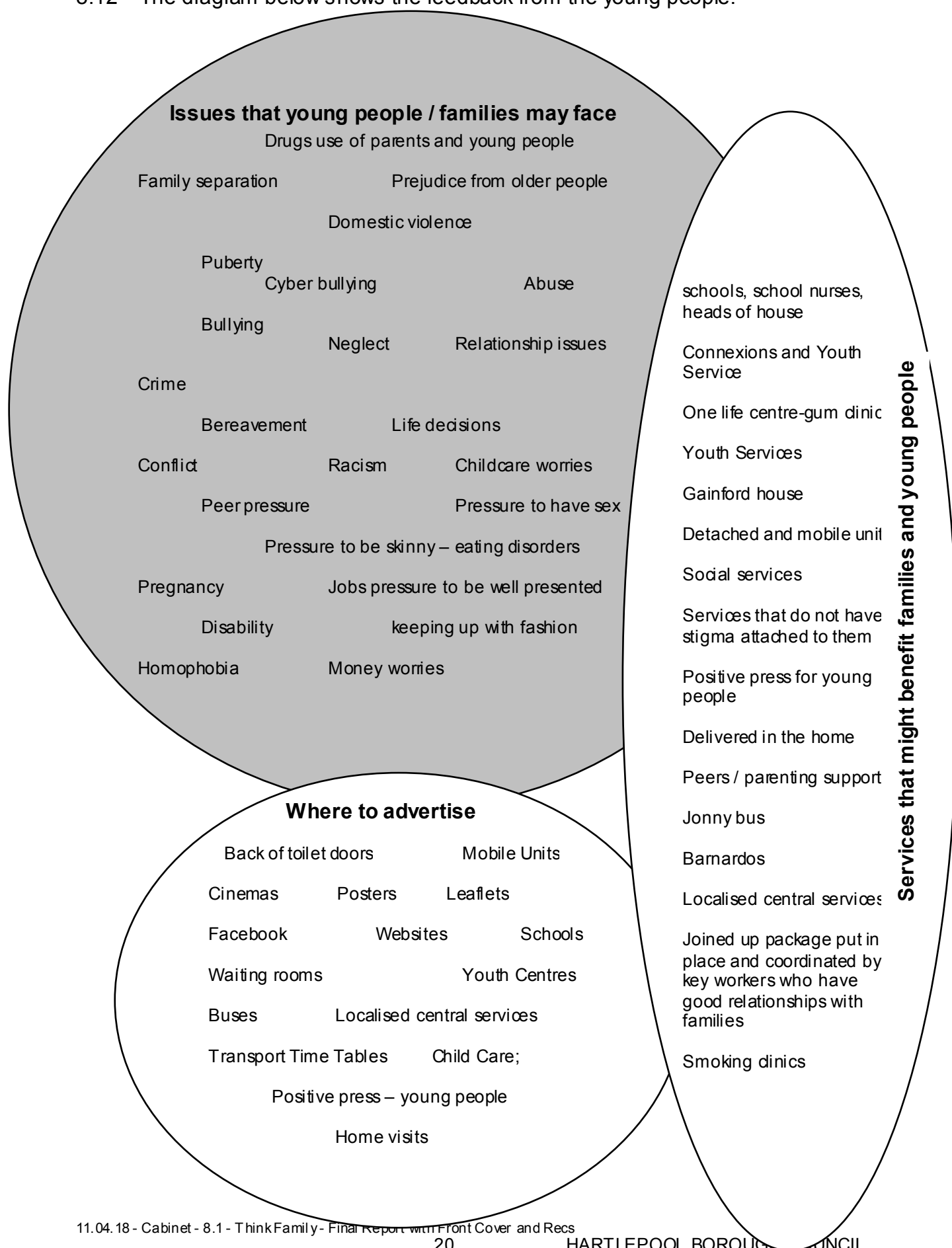
of not receiving the service; and the impact of the service. The feedback from this exercise has been collated with the feedback from the partner organisations and is therefore included in **Appendix B**.

- 8.6 In summary the feedback highlighted the need to improve access to services so that they are open to all families; raise awareness of services; improve co-ordination between services and keep in contact with families.
- 8.7 As a result of the services offered, parents highlighted that their children are better behaved; communication between all family members has improved; the family is still together; there is an increased awareness of how important having family time is; and mums nurture themselves more.
- 8.8 Members noted that if the services were not accessed by these parents then their circumstances would be extremely different, for example parents said they would have been depressed; things would have got worse; would not have started college / work; children's behaviour would have got worse; and children may have ended up in prison.
- 8.9 The adults also took part in an exercise where they were asked to rank key points in order of importance in relation to how Think Family services are delivered. Out of the three groups which undertook the exercise two of the groups ranked 'help as early as possible' as the most important, with the third group ranking 'one contact point for all services' as most important. The feedback from this exercise is attached as **Appendix C**.

Feedback from Young People

- 8.10 The young people split into two groups. They were asked to list all the issues that young people and families may face on one side of a diagram that was in the shape of a person. On the other side of the diagram they were asked to list as many services as they could think of that would benefit young people and their families as a whole and who should deliver these. The young people then discussed where they think these services can be advertised and accessed by young people and families in need of support.
- 8.11 The young people prioritised three key points from their feedback which were:-
 - (a) Services should have no stigma attached to them and should be delivered on a localised basis by people the family / young person has the best relationship with.
 - (b) Packages should be put in place and coordinated by a key worker.
 - (c) Services should also be confidential.

8.12 The diagram below shows the feedback from the young people:-



Feedback from the Children

8.13 The children took part in an exercise involving the following:-

This is me - the children decorated a pre-prepared figure to represent themselves which included things that they do and are proud of.

This is my family – the children then placed their figure in the middle of a sheet and arranged pre-prepared figures around it to represent family relationships. A discussion followed about who makes up their family and what sort of intervention they may receive to help with issues that they have as a family.

This is who helps my family – the children used pre-prepared cards to select agencies that might be involved with them and their family. A discussion followed about how they may be able to identify the Think Family approach as it relates to their own experience.

8.14 11 children attended the workshop representing four families. The youngest was 6 and the oldest was 12. The 12 year old elected to come with his younger brothers and sisters to stay together as a family rather than join the 12 to 16 workshop. The initial part of the discussion involved the children sharing the make up of their families. The family situations were quite complex, two of them with the number of children in the family being over five. The family situations also included children of both parents from previous relationships living together with children from the current relationship. All the children were very frank in sharing some of the issues that resulted from this living arrangement. There was a particular awareness of agencies that helped their family and also the role played by health professionals including the hospital, GP's, nurses and health visitors.

8.15 All the children felt positive about the help and support that they received from agencies. The general feeling from the children was that there was an awareness of how other people helped their parent or parents. The parent or parents were then able to help the children.

“...she helps my mam and I know I can go to my mam and everything is alright...”

8.16 One of the children spoke about difficulties that had occurred in the past when his parent had been in a previous relationship. His parent was now in a new relationship and things had changed for the better. He spoke about how the family received help, although he was not able to identify what help they had specifically received. He knew the first name of the worker but not where they were from.

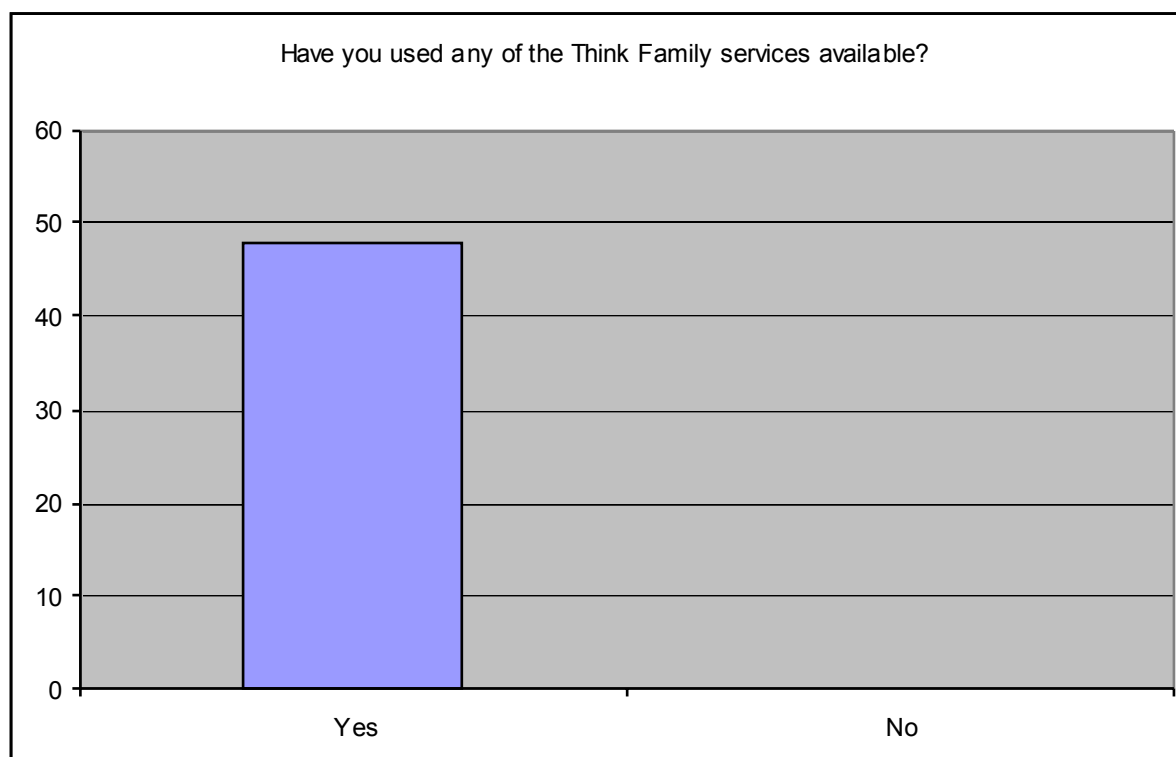
8.17 Two of the children were keen to share what they had been doing with the rest of the groups when they returned to the main room. This was cleared with their mam. When back in the main room only one of the children stood

up in front of everyone finishing with the highly effective statement: 'This is my life'.

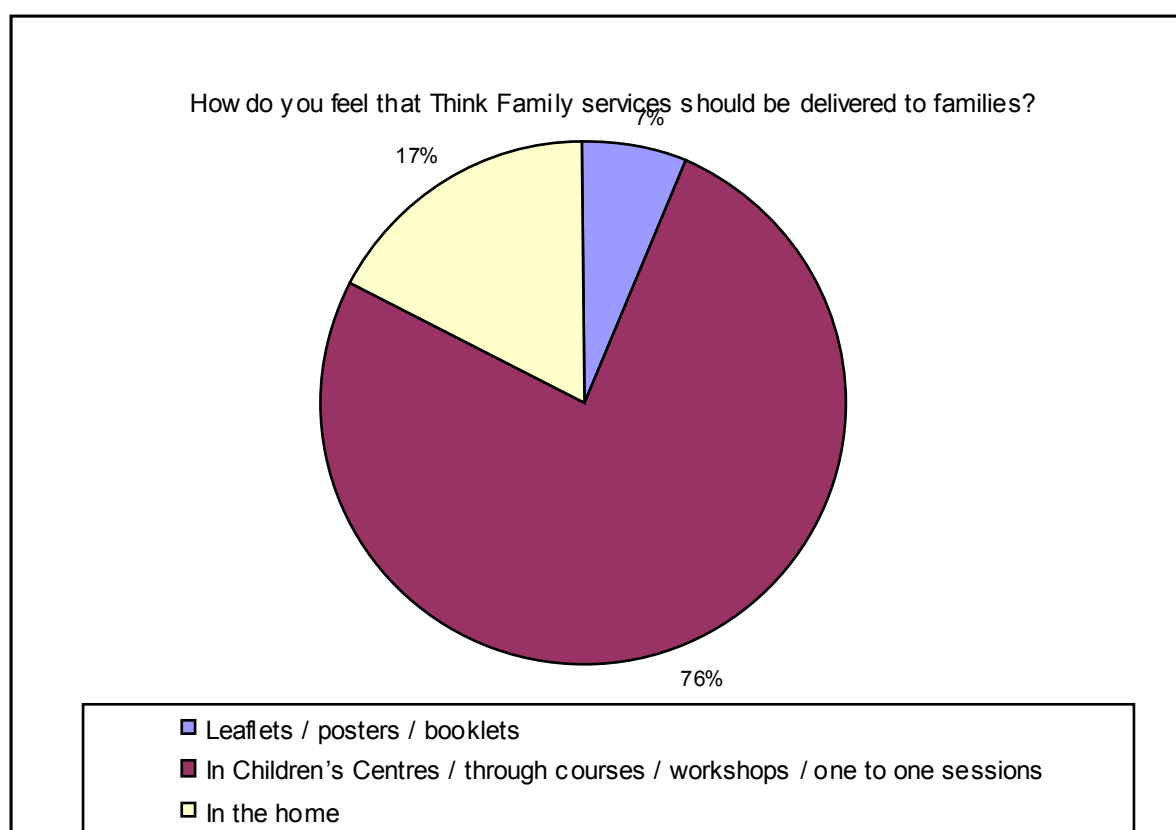
Feedback from Think Family Questionnaires

- 8.18 As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of this investigation, a short questionnaire was distributed to families via family support groups, parenting groups, Children's Centres, Children's Fund, Team Around the School and Barnardos.
- 8.19 48 questionnaires were completed and returned. The graphs show the responses to each question. Some people only answered some of the questions and some people provided more than one answer to a question, therefore not all the graphs show 48 responses.

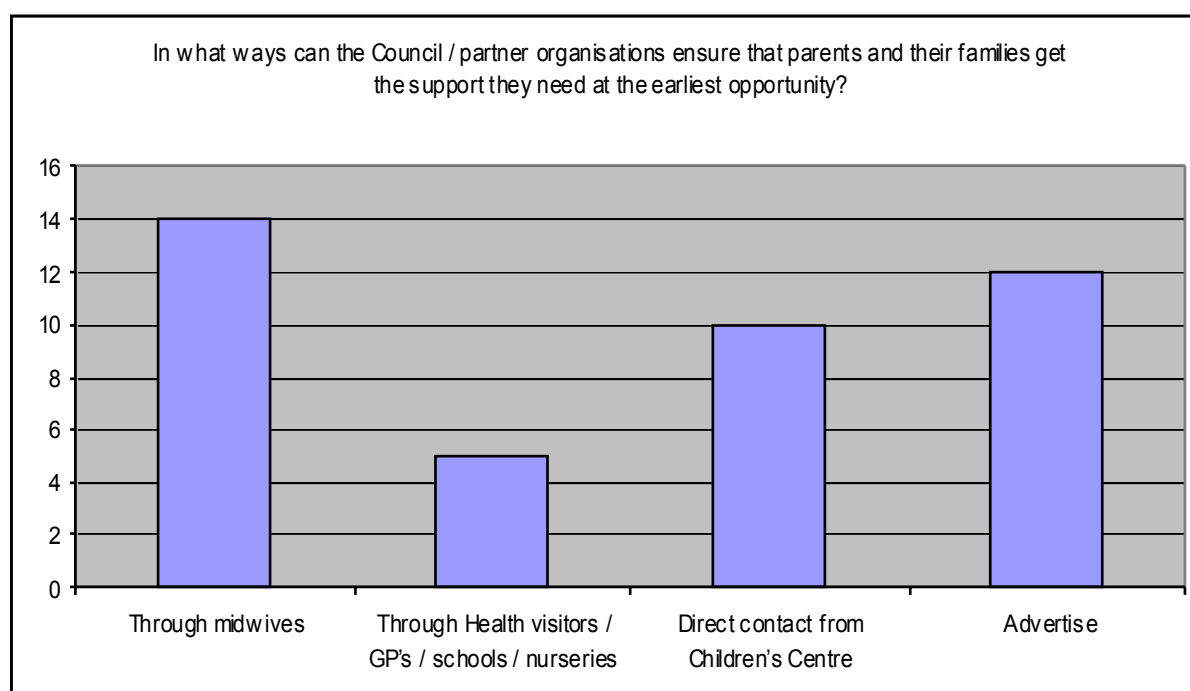
Question 1:



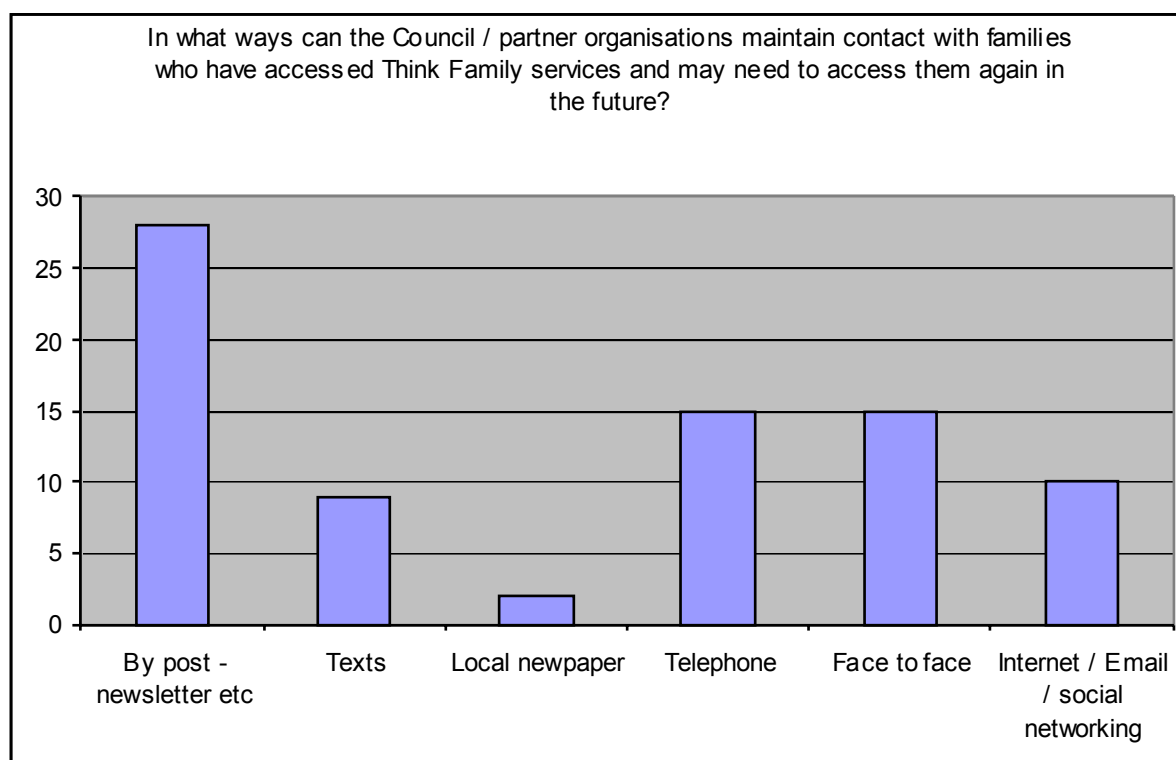
Question 2



Question 3



Question 4



9. THE IMPACT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE BUDGET RESTRICTIONS

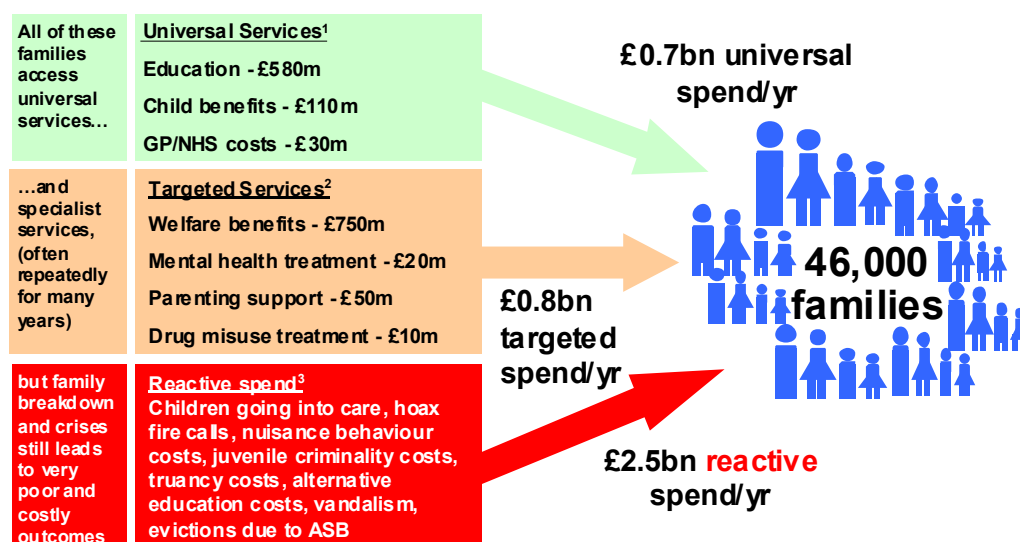
- 9.1 The Forum was keen to gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which Think Family services are provided. Members welcomed evidence from the Department for Education.

Evidence from the Department for Education

- 9.2 The Edge of Care Team Leader from the Families at Risk Division, Department for Education estimated that the cost to provide support to a family with multiple problems can be as much as £250,000 - £330,000 per year, as shown in the diagram overleaf:-

The high cost of families with multiple problems

Can be as much as **£250,000-330,000 per family per year.....**

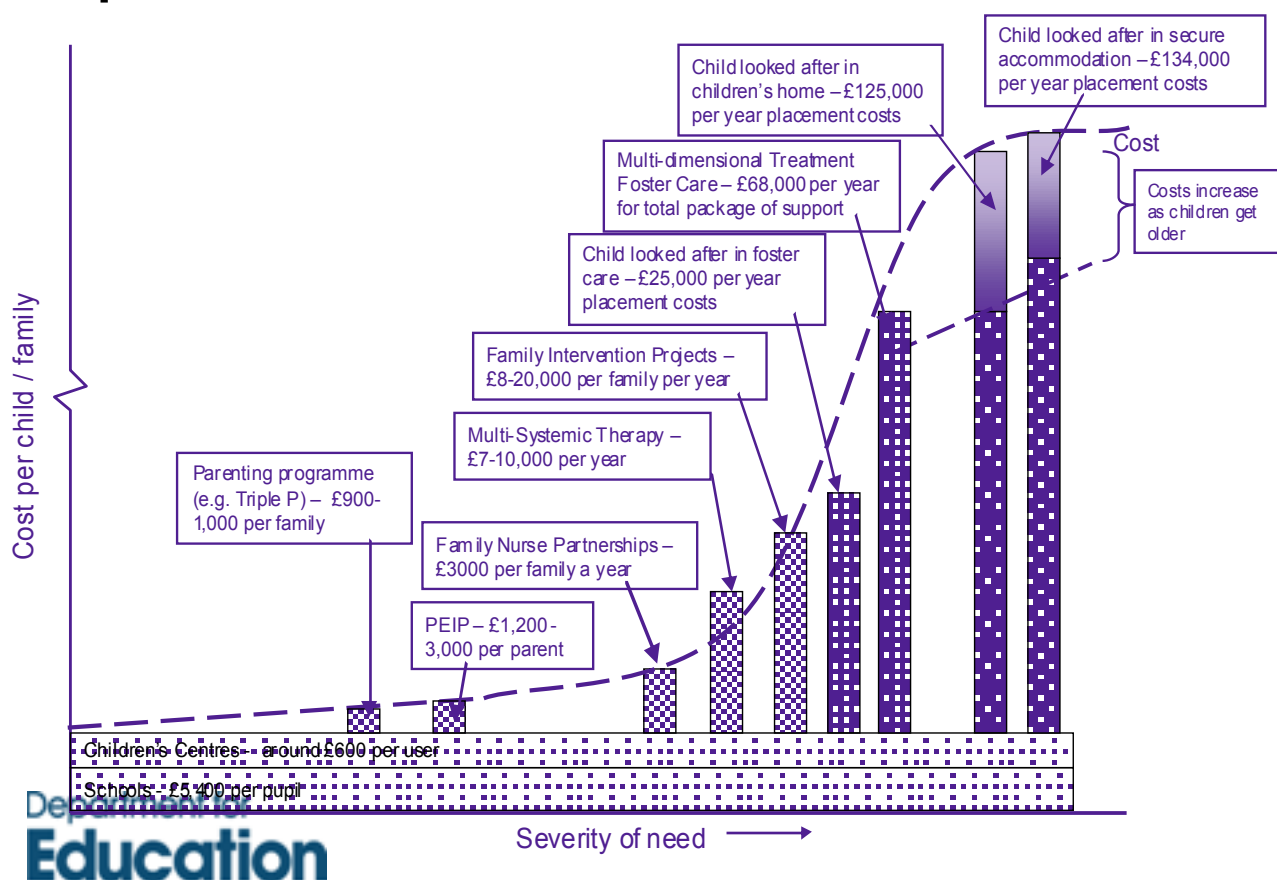


Department for
Education

NOTE: INDICATIVE COSTS ONLY - do not include costs of criminal justice services pending further analysis by MoJ.

- 9.3 The Audit Commission estimated that, if effective early intervention had been provided for one in ten of the young people sentenced to prison each year, public services could have saved over £100 million annually. Members were informed that providing family therapy for young people who had offended cost an average of just over £2,000 per participant but saved tax-payers and victims of crime an estimated £52,000 per participant in the longer term.
- 9.4 The Team Leader highlighted that an Incredible Years parenting programme with children with diagnosed disruptive behaviour costs an average of £1,344 over a six month period to improve a child's behaviour to below clinical levels of disruptiveness. Conversely, it is estimated that by the age of 28, an individual with conduct disorder has cost an additional £60,000 to public services.
- 9.5 Members were astounded by the costs, which are detailed further in the diagram overleaf:-

The longer problems persist the more expensive it becomes....



- 9.6 Members of the Forum questioned what the costs of early intervention services were in Hartlepool. It was noted that in general early intervention costs would be around £8,000 to £14,000 but without this the cost of taking a young person into the care of the local authority could amount to £0.25m.
- 9.7 The Team Leader highlighted that a new national campaign will be launched to support and help turn around the lives of families with multiple problems, improving outcomes and reducing costs to welfare and public services. The National Campaign will bring a focus to help authorities and services identify those families and then join up their services, in the way that helps the family rather than the way that is convenient for the service provider. Further details about how the National Campaign will work are still being finalised.
- 9.8 The campaign will be underpinned by local Community Budgets focused on family intervention enabling a more flexible and integrated approach to delivering the help these families need. 16 areas covering 28 councils will be put in charge of Community Budgets which will provide a single 'local bank account' for tackling social problems around families with complex needs. The Councils are Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bradford,

Essex, Greater Manchester (a group of 10 councils), Hull, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Swindon and the London Boroughs of Barnet, Croydon, Islington, Lewisham, Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Wandsworth

- 9.9 From April 2011 a new Early Intervention Grant will bring together funding for services for the most vulnerable children, young people and families giving local authorities the flexibility to plan how best to use the funding they receive in response to local needs and priorities.
- 9.10 The Forum commented that in view of the difficult financial situation currently faced by the Council, the success and greater reward is to be gained from the provision of preventative and early intervention services.

10. HOW COULD THINK FAMILY SERVICES BE PROVIDED IN THE FUTURE

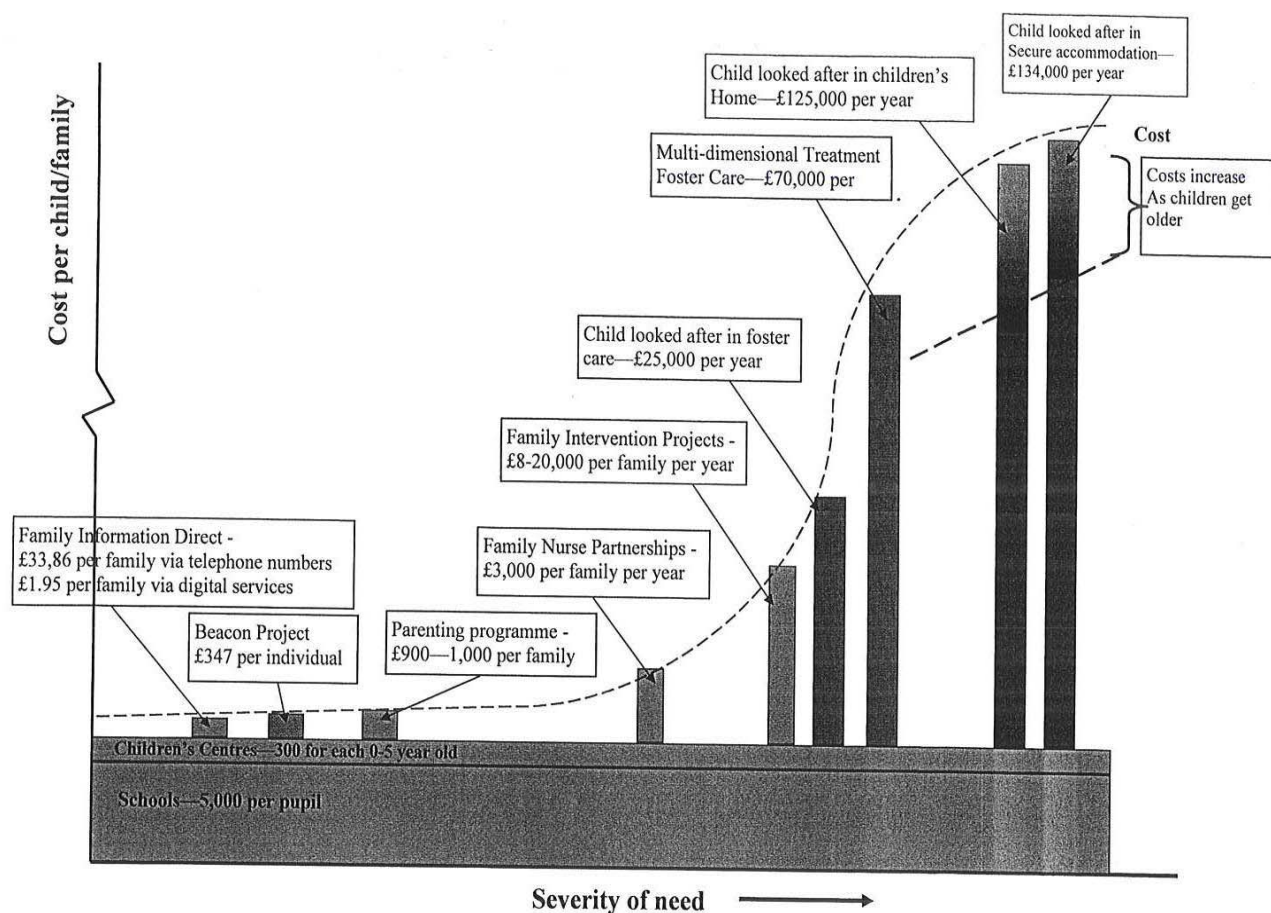
- 10.1 Members of the Forum were keen to explore how Think Family services could be provided in the future, giving due regard to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the way in which the services are currently provided. Therefore, in order to gather this evidence Members hosted a regional Think Family conference and also invited evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department.

Think Family Conference

- 10.2 The aim of the conference was to share and discuss views and experiences of Think Family services with other local authorities. The programme of events for the day included guest speakers Iain Wright, MP; Nicola Doyle from the Department for Education; and Alison Edwards, Deputy Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science. The evidence presented by each speaker is referred to earlier in this report.
- 10.3 Following the guest speakers, attendees attended two workshops. The workshops demonstrated Think Family models being developed in several other local authorities.
- 10.4 Workshop 1: Hartlepool Borough Council outlined the Team Around the Schools model. Hartlepool's workshop outlined Hartlepool's journey, TAPS, TASS and FIPs, all of which are referred to earlier in this report.
- 10.5 Workshop 2: Gateshead Council outlined a model where schools are commissioners of family services. The Gateshead workshop focussed on the Beacon project which is a tailor made Barnardo's service designed initially to meet the needs of Gateshead East Area School Cluster incorporating nine primary schools, two special schools and one secondary school. The project involves schools to help achieve positive outcomes. Schools have positive relationships with the Family Intervention project / Barnardo's Sungate parenting Services. Part of the Beacon's role is to 'hand-hold' families into services and plug identifiable gaps in service provision. The overall aim of the

service is to get families to the point where universal services are sufficient to support their needs. The intervention methods include one to one and group work to suit individual needs, solution focused brief therapy, task centred practice and crisis intervention.

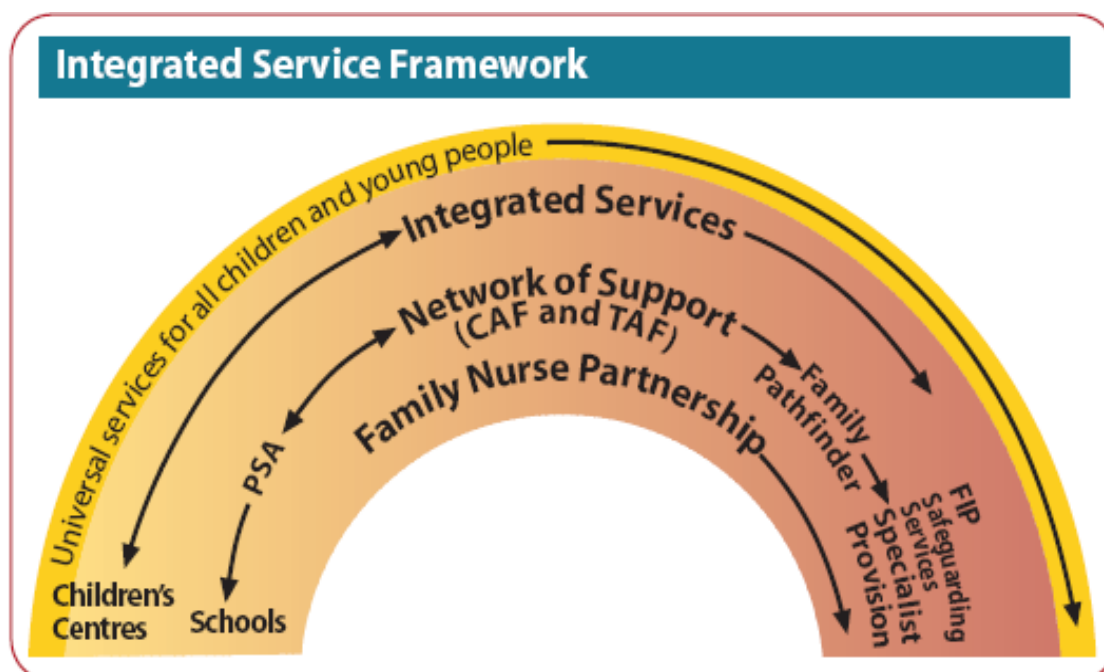
- 10.6 The outcomes of the project include improved community cohesion meaning resources/services can be provided to families within the wider community; improved attendance and school behaviour; improved inter-family relationships and communication; strong multi-agency and partnership working; and increased parental/pupil participation in the school system.
- 10.7 Below is a diagram which illustrates the cost of the service. There are two full time members of staff working with 45 families and three groups with the total number of individuals being 259. The service costs are £347.49 per individual



Taken from information provided by the DFE.

- 10.8 Workshop 3: Durham County Council outlined the Durham Family Pathfinder. The aims of the Pathfinder service are to ensure that Adult and Children's Services work together in an integrated way to meet the needs of all family members; to focus on early intervention building on and helping to embed CAF processes; to focus on 'families at risk' where there are multiple, complex

problems and where there is risk of children becoming subject of safeguarding interventions; and overall to reduce numbers of families in need of Specialist and Safeguarding intervention. The diagram below shows where the service sits on the continuum of need:-



- 10.9 Each family is allocated a Key Worker with a family agreement / contract put in place. A holistic family assessment is carried out with all significant adults and each child. A multi agency whole family care plan is implemented with monthly team around the family meetings and formal three month reviews. Intensive, flexible, tailored support which is solution focussed is delivered.
- 10.10 The Pathfinder project has developed links to wider Council Strategies including the Think Family Strategy. Consistent assessment and performance management frameworks have been developed across all Think Family Projects. There has been a realignment of Preventative Services across Safeguarding Services with closer links with front of house services to prevent families moving into Safeguarding Services and reduce referral rates. The service will develop a more targeted, proactive approach to ensure most efficient use of what is likely to be less resources.
- 10.11 Some of the elements which the project has found to have worked well include the Solution Focused Approach; a consistent relationship with a 'key worker' appears to be an effective intervention in itself and highly valued by families; and a robust co-ordination of services with clarity of roles
- 10.12 Workshop 4: Newcastle City Council outlined their Community FIP. Newcastle highlighted the factors which make up effective family support. These being engagement, assessment, planning and delivery and supervision. Family support in Newcastle is currently being delivered by a wide range of different people, organisations and services. To develop the

Community FIP, conversations with clusters of schools about the nature of the FIP approach were held. Schools were asked to identify the families that they wanted the Community FIP to work with. The schools were also involved in the recruitment of the staff. The Community FIP is delivered by aligning staff to specific clusters of schools and community venues, a picture of the child and family in context is built up, then a range of engagement techniques and approaches are used along with the engagement of other services such as probation, housing and health services.

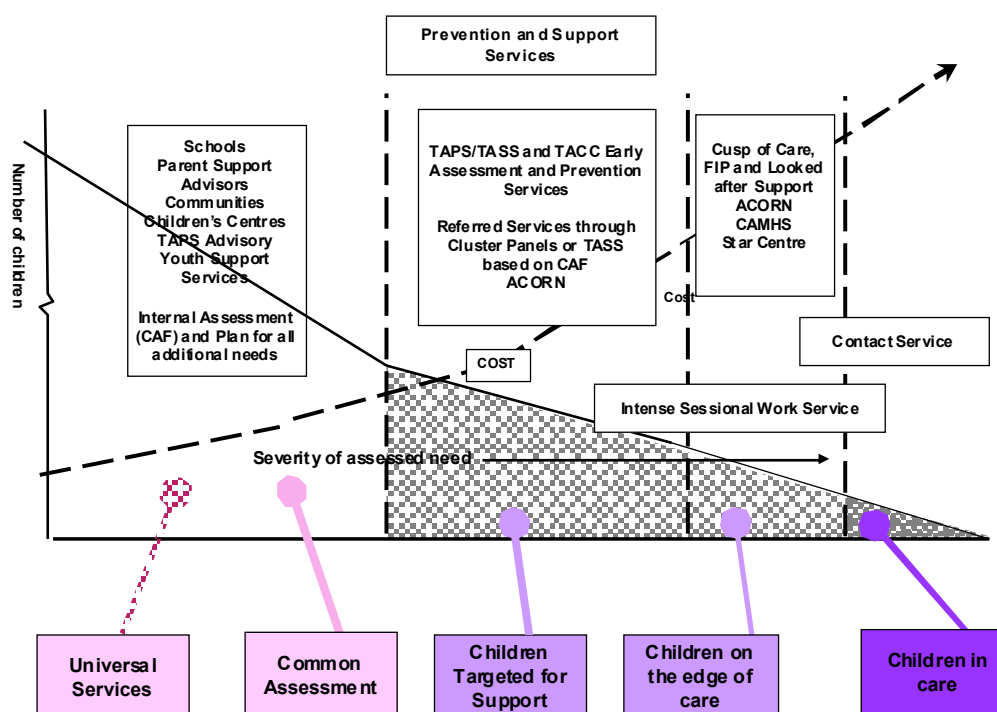
10.13 One person using the Community FIP stated :-

‘I feel really supported because of the way my life is and the way that she has helped me. She has helped me with the boys' behaviour and is always available to help me in a crisis’

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

- 10.14 The Forum received a presentation from the Parent Commissioner on the future of Think Family services beyond 2011. One of the main focuses for the Council is to work with children who are in danger of coming into the care system and to offer support to both them and their families to avoid that young person being placed into care. Members commented that a key issue was to continue to ensure that parents were partners in the whole process and ensure they remained partners so that services were developed to meet their needs.
- 10.15 The Parent Commissioner highlighted the importance of using the learning from the past ten years and to build on good assessments at each level; good communication between services; integrated services; parents as partners; and to intervene early and consistently.
- 10.16 The Council is developing a new Prevention Strategy to provide ‘support for all families and more support for those who need it most’. The Council will aim to limit the number of families who need intensive support by constantly assessing the ability to intervene as early as possible. The diagram overleaf shows how Hartlepool plans to provide prevention and Think Family services through to 2013:-

Prevention and Think Family Services 2011/13



10.17 Members were informed that new complimentary services will be offered to prevent families with multiple problems breaking up, for example support foster care, intensive packages of care; development of a sessional pool; and more Support for TASS. A Member sought clarification on the role of foster carers and how they would be supported. The Parent Commissioner confirmed that a process was currently being examined and it was the intention to recruit three foster carers specifically to look after up to 15-20 young people per year in small blocks in times when intensive care and support was needed for that young person.

10.18 A parent referred to the level of support in place for young people and families who needed intense support but questioned whether the service was as effective as it could be for young people and families who may only need a very small amount of support or help. The Parent Commissioner recognised that whilst there was a certain amount of pressure placed on caring for the young people and families who were in need of more intensive support, there should be a similar commitment to all families and young people in need whatever their circumstances or requirements.

10.19 The key points of the recently published review by Graham Allen were highlighted to Members. In July 2010 the Government commissioned an independent review of early intervention projects for children, led by Graham Allen, MP, who has a long standing personal interest in policies to break the

cycle of deprivation and dysfunction from generation to generation. This report was published on 19 January 2011 and covers the rationale, social and economic benefits, current policy and practice, and the most effective programmes.

10.20 The report makes the following key recommendations:-

- (a) The cross-party co-operation that has characterised this issue should continue and be actively developed. All parties should publicly accept the core message of Early Intervention, acknowledge that the culture of late intervention is both expensive and ineffective, and ensure that early Intervention plays a more central part in UK policy and practice.
- (b) All parties should commit to the central objective of Early Intervention to provide a social and emotional bedrock for the current and future generations of babies, children and young people by helping them and their parents (or other main caregivers) before problems arise.
- (c) With the encouragement of the Government, the best and most rigorously proven Early Intervention programmes should be pulled together using the best methodology and science available, to promote their wider use.
- (d) The Government should encourage 15 local Early Intervention Places to pioneer the programmes.
- (e) The Government should promote an independent Early Intervention Foundation, independently funded, to motivate those in the Early Intervention sector; approve the programmes above; work with pioneering places above; and raise additional long-term finance for Early Intervention from non-governmental sources.
- (f) The Government should take further the existing policies in this field to make sure that all children have the social and emotional capability to be 'school ready' at five, including:
 - (i) a long-term plan to give all vulnerable first-time mothers who meet the criteria and want it, access to Family Nurse Partnerships;
 - (ii) working up a national parenting campaign as part of the wider community;
 - (iii) high-quality, benchmarked pre-school education for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds as part of a 0–5 Foundation Stage;
 - (iv) a group to explore over the long term what is the appropriate level of maternity and paternity support for all parents and babies; and

- (v) a more coherent series of assessments for the 0–5s to detect and resolve social and emotional difficulties before they become intractable.

11. CONCLUSIONS

11.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum concluded that:-

- (a) Early intervention is key to helping families in need and the earlier individuals can access early intervention and prevention services the better it is for both families and society in the longer term;
- (b) Early intervention and prevention services (Think Family services):-
 - (i) should be offered to families as early as possible in order to help families in need at the earliest stage possible to prevent more intensive support being needed subsequently;
 - (ii) need to be open and accessible to all families and to focus on the whole family; and
 - (iii) save money in the long term as shown by the high cost of intensive support if problems are not addressed as early as possible.
- (c) Hartlepool has a range of excellent projects, programmes and initiatives to help support families in need and there is a need for the Council to retain these services. The Forum offered their support for extending and improving early intervention and prevention services;
- (d) Although there is a self referral route for families / individuals people are unaware of how to self refer to services;
- (e) A key issue is to continue to ensure that parents are partners in the whole process so that services can be tailored to meet their needs;
- (f) It is essential that all services are co-ordinated to avoid gaps in service provision and duplication. Therefore, there is a need for closer links to be developed with partner organisations, in particular GP's;
- (g) Awareness of Think Family services needs to be raised to both public and partner organisations through the promotion and marketing of the services;
- (h) One point of contact for all services is essential;
- (i) Better access to high quality information detailing what services are available through the Think Family programme is needed detailing what services are available;

- (j) Schools are key partners in the promotion of Think Family services;
- (k) The experience of parents should be utilised to help other parents / families, for example, parents could be trained to deliver parenting programmes;
- (l) That sometimes it is the services that are hard to reach not the families, due to, for example, families not knowing what services are available; and
- (m) Think Family services should have no stigma attached to them and should be delivered on a localised basis by people with whom the family/ young person have the best relationship.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide variety 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:-

That:-

- (a) The Council works with partner organisations / agencies to:
 - (i) identify families with additional needs as early as possible to ensure that individuals / families receive the help and support that meets their specific needs;
 - (ii) ensure that all services are co-ordinated to avoid gaps in service provision and duplication of services;
 - (iii) develop stronger partnership arrangements to ensure that all organisations / agencies are signposting individuals / families to the appropriate services; and
 - (iv) ensure that all services are open and accessible to all families and family members;
- (b) The Council develops and promotes a simplified self – referral route with one point of contact so that individuals / families can refer themselves to a service if needed;
- (c) The Council raises awareness of all the Think Family services available by promoting and marketing the services through the media; 'Hartbeat'; schools, nurseries and children's centres; GP surgeries; community centres and libraries;

- (d) The Council engages with parents and uses their experience to improve / deliver existing services and help develop new services;
- (e) The Council explores options with partner organisations / agencies to secure funding for the continuation of services and the development of new services;
- (f) The Council integrate the Think Family approach into community based services so that families feel comfortable, safe and secure when accessing the services; and
- (g) The Council, as part of the 2012 / 13 budget process re-examines the allocation of the Early Intervention Grant and the proportion that is allocated to Think Family services

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 13.1 The Forum is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of the scrutiny review. We would like to place on record our appreciation for all those witnesses who attended the Forum. In particular the Forum would like to thank the following for their co-operation during the scrutiny review:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Sally Robinson – Assistant Director - Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services

John Robinson – Parent Commissioner

Mark Smith – Head of Integrated Youth Support Services

Ian Merritt – Head of Commissioning and Children's Trust

Nicola Dunleavy – Interventions Co-ordinator

Danny Dunleavy – Youth Offending Service Manager

Liz Hipwell – Integrated Support Manager

Danielle Swainston – Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager

Zoe McKenna – Participation Worker

Helen White – Senior Youth Worker

Gill Kidson – Family Support Worker

External Representatives

Iain Wright, MP

Nicola Doyle – Department for Education

Julia Moller – Department for Education

John Hardy - St John Vianney Roman Catholic Primary School

Alison Edwards - High Tunstall College of Science

Alan Chapman - Catcote School

Colin Reid – St Hild's Church of England School

Karen Gibson – Hartlepool Carers

Tracy Jefferies – Hartlepool Carers

Andy Powell – Housing Hartlepool

Jill Coser – Barnardo's, Hartlepool

Beth Hawkridge – Barnardo's, Hartlepool

Rebecca Wise - Barnardo's, Hartlepool

Kelly Goulding - Barnardo's, Hartlepool

Leigh Kane – Barnardo's, Hartlepool

Sheila Taylorson – Hartlepool Patch

Inspector David Toor – Cleveland Police

Asim Abbas - HYPED, Substance Misuse Service

Khalid Azam - NHS Hartlepool

June Fawcett - School Nurse Service and the Health Visiting Service

Liz Henderson – Hartlepool MIND

Alex Sedgwick – Belle Vue Centre

Carol McClethie – Governor, Rossmere Primary School

Representatives from Newcastle City Council

Representatives from Durham County Council

Representatives from Barnardo's, North East

Clare Iseley – Golden Flatts Parenting Group

Parents from Golden Flatts Parenting Group

Families / children who attended workshops and group exercises

Young People who attended meetings, workshops and group exercises:-

Lesley Cullen

Ashleigh Bostock

Lauren Carroll

Shauna Hanley

Aarthi Suresh

Chrissy Marshall – Bell

Kira Lund

Robyn Reid

Danielle O'Keefe

Hannah Bew

Jordan Fothergill

Elise Hanna

Millie Allan

Kimberley Henry

Demi Coull

Katie Bartle

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS SIMMONS
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

April 2011

Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
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Email: laura.stones@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 September 2010.
- (b) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services – Setting the Scene Presentation - Covering

- Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 September 2010.
- (c) Presentation of Officers from the Child and Adult Services Department entitled 'Think Family, Prevention and Early Intervention' delivered to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 September 2010.
 - (d) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services – Evidence from the Member of Parliament for Hartlepool' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 30 September 2010.
 - (e) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services – Delivery and Co-ordination of Think Family Services – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 October 2010.
 - (f) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Preventative and Early Intervention Services – Impact of Think Family Services – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 January 2011.
 - (g) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services – Feedback from the Group Exercises held on 19 October 2010 and the conference held on 10 December 2010' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 January 2011.
 - (h) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Current and Future Budgetary Restrictions: Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 January 2011.
 - (i) Presentation of the Parent Commissioner entitled 'Prevention and Think Family Services 2011 / 13' delivered to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 January 2011.
 - (j) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Think Family – Early Intervention and Prevention Services – Feedback from a Variety of Activity Sessions – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 January 2011.
 - (k) Minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 6 September 2010, 28 September 2010, 19 October 2010, 18 January 2011 and 31 January 2011.
 - (l) Presentations from the Department for Education; High Tunstall College of Science; Hartlepool Borough Council; Durham County Council; Gateshead Council; and Newcastle City Council presented to the 'Think Family Conference' held on 10 December 2010.

- (m) Youth Matters: Next Steps – Something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters-_download-id=3287.url
- (n) Hartlepool Borough Council – Health Scrutiny Forum Final Report – Reaching Families in Need –
https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/downloads/file/5176/scrutiny_final_report-reaching_families_in_need
- (o) Durham County Council – Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Think Family Review 2010 –
<http://www.cfps.org.uk/scrutiny-exchange/library/education-and-young-people/?id=2895>
- (p) Department for Children, Schools and Families - Think Family Toolkit
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/strategy/parents/ID91askclient/thinkfamily/tf/>
- (q) Cabinet Office: Social Exclusion Task Force (2008): Think Family: Improving the Life Chances of Families at Risk -
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/think_families/think_family_life_chances_report.pdf
- (r) Early Intervention: The Next Steps: An Independent Report to Her Majesty’s Government: Graham Allen MP:
<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/g/graham%20allens%20review%20of%20early%20intervention.pdf>

Glossary of Terms

Think Family means securing better outcomes for children, young people and families with additional needs by co-ordinating the support they receive from children's, young people's, adults' and family services

Every Child Matters: the Five Outcomes - The Government publication '*Every Child Matters: change for children*' (December 2004) indicates national and local priorities for Children's Services and sets out an Outcomes Framework which includes the 5 Outcomes for Children and Young people, given legal force in the Children Act 2004.

The 5 outcomes are:

(1) Being Healthy so that they are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy, have healthy lifestyles and choose not to take illegal drugs.

(2) Staying Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence, sexual exploitation, accidental injury and death, bullying and discrimination, crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school, have security and stability and are cared for.

(3) Enjoying and Achieving so that they are ready for school, attend and enjoy school, achieve stretching national educational standards at primary and secondary school, achieve personal and social development and enjoy recreation.

(4) Making a Positive Contribution so that they engage in decision-making, support their community and environment, engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school, develop positive relationships, choose not to bully and discriminate, develop self confidence, successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges and develop enterprising behaviour.

(5) Achieving Economic Well-being so that they engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school, are ready for employment, live in decent homes and sustainable communities, have access to transport and material goods, live in households free from low income.

Children in need are children who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health, educational achievement and development, or who face significant impairment of their health or development as a result of their needs not being met.

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

Children in care / looked after are children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority who live in foster or residential care.

Children on the edge / cusp of care are children who are not at sufficient risk to be 'looked after' by the Local Authority but are likely to be if something is not done to improve their situation. These children can move in and out of the care system, often for short periods of time and are often from families facing multiple problems.

Children's Centres / Sure Start Centres provide children under 5 and their families with a range of services including good quality integrated early education and care, health and family support services, help in finding employment, and advice and information for parents.

Universal Services include for example, GP's; health visitors; schools; Job centre Plus; and housing services

Targeted Services include preventative programmes for those identified as at increased risk and services to address a specific need. These might include, targeted youth support, parenting programmes, adult literacy classes.

Specialist Services have the highest entry threshold, often requiring a referral from another service. They deal with a specific issue or section of the population. For example, higher tier mental health and drugs treatment services.

Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) offer intensive support to families in order to tackle anti-social behaviour, child poverty and youth crime.

Team Around the Children's Centre (TACC) is an early intervention project offering services to families with children below the age of 5. The project ensures that families access the relevant support at the earliest opportunity and helps to identify children and their families who may need some additional support.

Team Around the Primary School (TAPS) is an early intervention project aimed at children aged between 5-11 years which enables children to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The project ensures that families access the relevant support at the earliest opportunity and helps to identify children and their families who may need some additional support.

Team Around the Secondary School (TASS) is an early intervention project aimed at young people at risk of poor outcomes. It ensures that an integrated package of support is provided to meet their needs. The project ensures that families access the relevant support at the earliest opportunity and helps to identify young people and their families who may need some additional support.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a standardised approach to assessing all of a child's additional needs and for securing an appropriate range of support for the child. It has been developed for use by all those working with children and young people so that they can communicate better, access needs at an early stage and work more effectively together.

Prevention Services are those that have been developed to divert children and families from entering the children in need, looked after children or youth justice system by providing a range of pre-emptive interventions.

Parenting Support Services provide parents with active help to bring up their children through a range of interventions such as mentoring, budgeting, and housekeeping skills.

Parenting Classes provide the opportunity for parents to attend group or individual classes to develop the skills required to bring up children well.

Appendix B - Analysis of Think Family Feedback

CATEGORY	COMMENT	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM FAMILIES / ORGANISATIONS
IMPROVE ACCESS / OPEN TO ALL FAMILIES	<p>Services to be open to all families</p> <p>Everything helped situation / lots of support received</p> <p>Always having worker on hand – is there when parents need support</p> <p>Locality a priority, easily accessible venues – non stigmatised</p> <p>Still some services appear hard to reach</p> <p>Services provided should be responsive and in cases where the particular threshold or criteria is not met, people should be signposted to another service for the provision of support</p> <p>Not just 9 to 5 services</p> <p>Don't label families</p> <p>Take account of the views of children</p> <p>Need to change culture – start doing with parents</p> <p>Some services you don't know are out there</p>	<p>Services should be held in a safe, neutral, accessible welcoming environment and not just offered 9 to 5</p> <p>Detailed information should be provided on all the services provided through the Think Family programme</p> <p>Look to set up regular meetings with families / parents / children to ensure they are listened to and make sure they are aware of what support they can access</p> <p>Local services are needed in the community as a lot of parents have to search and travel to access services</p> <p>Deliver services earlier</p> <p>Involve teenagers in courses to help with anger management, choices and consequences</p> <p>Parenting programmes to be longer due to learning new skills.</p>

Appendix B - Analysis of Think Family Feedback

	<p>A lot of parents struggle to get the right support</p> <p>Parents have to search and be moved on to other services i.e not listened too</p> <p>Service open to all families , very important</p> <p>One worker not always works due to availability</p> <p>travel cost to access facilities and support</p> <p>If done early helps with other children</p> <p>Funding for crèche - reduced attendance</p> <p>Word of mouth improves attendance</p> <p>Stigma – must be a bad parent if attend parenting course – needs name changing</p> <p>Family support works for parents and children</p> <p>Early intervention is key, support should be for whole family</p> <p>Everyone should have opportunity to do parenting course</p>	
RAISE AWARENESS	Raise awareness to public and professionals through promoting and marketing the services	Need for more publicity / marketing / support including the self referral process - one document that is easy to

Appendix B - Analysis of Think Family Feedback

	<p>Should be opt in services</p> <p>Understanding and knowledge of services is limited</p> <p>Information for parents / professionals that makes it easier to understand what services are available</p> <p>Clearer information on how to refer into Think Family services</p> <p>Schools are instrumental in the promotion of the Think Family services</p> <p>Letting people know – available to everyone</p> <p>Use different ways to communicate</p> <p>Raising awareness of the self-referral process is an issue and needs further development / advertising;</p> <p>Better communication;</p> <p>Children with older children struggle to get support, due to not having information, e.g where to go – schools to have the information on what support is needed and where to get it</p> <p>Early intervention should be introduced as early as during pregnancy and nursery provision</p> <p>Enjoyed parenting courses / confidence boosted /</p>	<p>understand that goes to all homes / professionals – for example, Hartbeat magazine which is circulated Townwide. Leaflets / posters etc as an accompaniment / advertise in GP surgeries / nurseries / community centres / churches</p> <p>Contact details for the different services</p> <p>Communicate to hard to reach families</p> <p>Better advertising of multi-agency services is an area that needs to be developed</p> <p><u>Schools:-</u></p> <p>Drop in sessions in school for young people / use of leaflets in schools</p> <p>Information should be sent to families earlier</p> <p>Information on the services and how they can be accessed should be included in school induction packs</p> <p>School assemblies for information on services to explain to young people</p> <p>School website / parent groups – texts for information</p> <p><u>Midwives:-</u></p>
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Appendix B - Analysis of Think Family Feedback

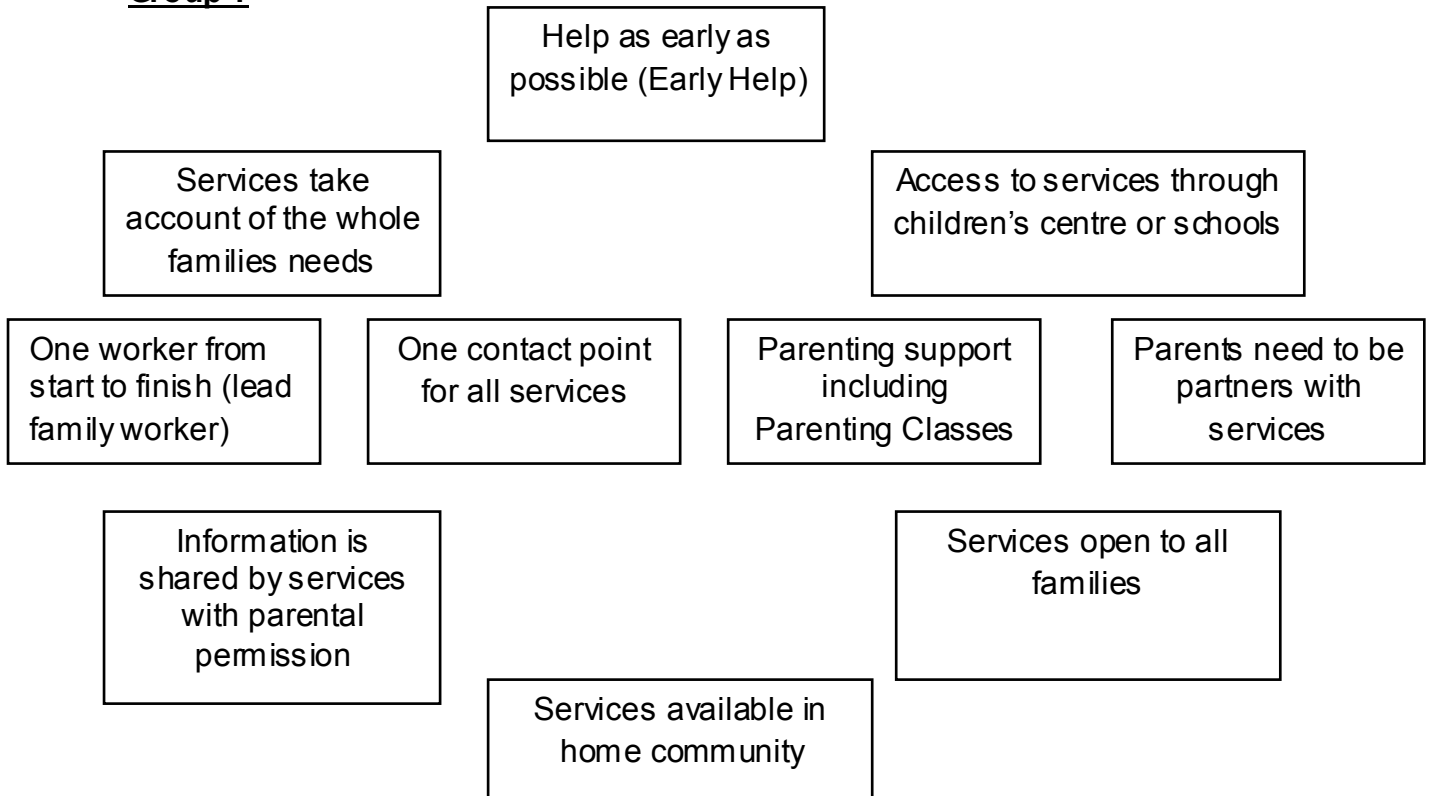
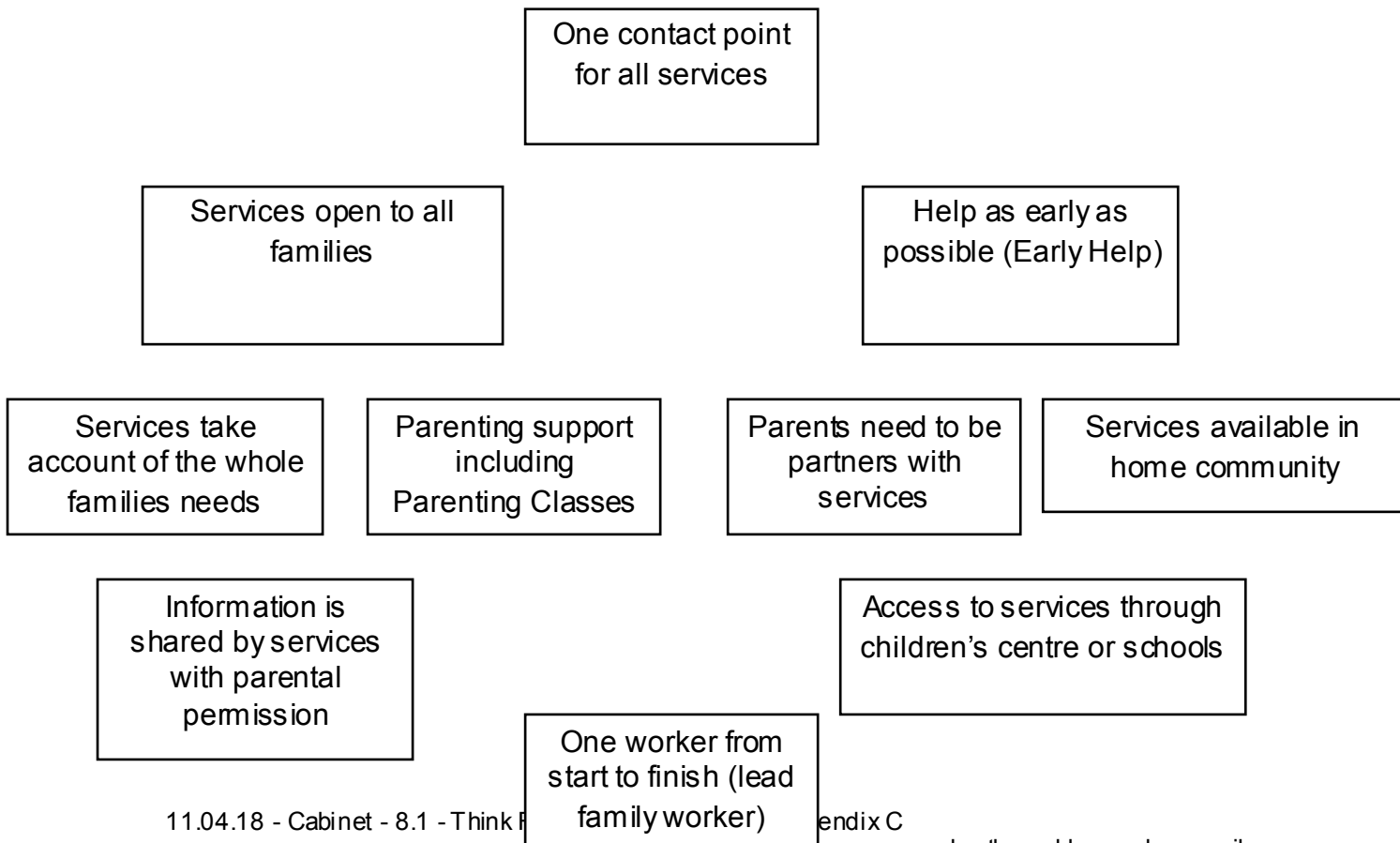
	helped deal with problems / was well explained / improves communication skills / helps other relationships	Information should be handed out by midwives
CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES	<p>Services need to communicate with each other and be co-ordinated</p> <p>Early identification / intervention is essential</p> <p>Use of the Common Assessment Framework</p> <p>School could hold a parent meeting with Team around the Primary School, so the schools can promote</p> <p>Care co-ordination</p> <p>Key worker system</p> <p>Not hard to reach families but hard to reach services</p> <p>What are Think Family services? Is it an ethos or services?</p> <p>Services tailored around family</p> <p>Access to knowledge from key worker to other services, knowledge you may not have</p> <p>Team around the school was good offered training</p>	<p>Individuals should be acknowledged as the expert in their own situation as opposed to the service provider</p> <p>Build on the experiences of parents who had undertaken different programmes, ie parenting programmes, be utilised by training the parents to deliver future programmes and share their experiences with other parents. Should be rewarded with an accreditation</p> <p>Linkages to health (GP's in particular) needs to be strengthened to ensure effective signposting is in place to make sure all the family's needs are met.</p> <p>Link to the Families Information Service Hartlepool (FISH) / marketing of FISH</p> <p>Better co-ordination of multi-agency services is an area that needs to be developed</p> <p>More volunteers needed</p> <p>Team around the Primary School should have greater responsibility</p> <p>More awareness of the Common Assessment Framework</p> <p>Useful having services all in one place</p>

Appendix B - Analysis of Think Family Feedback

	courses, after school activities, housing, parenting programmes	
MAINTAIN CONTACT	<p>Need to know someone is there should you need support in the future</p> <p>Parents who have received support through Team around the Schools – contact, speak to parents that may require this service;</p> <p>Better use of resources i.e staffing / multi-agency – one person to co-ordinate</p>	<p>Introduce a help-line number, drop in sessions, catch up meetings and/ or text messages to keep in touch with families who access Think Family services</p> <p>emails / telephone calls / texts / social networks / person to check</p> <p>Three month review post closure</p> <p>News letters for families that have had previous contact;</p> <p>Feed back forms to gather views to inform future work;</p> <p>Survey to include the views of the children</p> <p>Use Team around the school to maintain contact</p> <p>Covering letters could help with follow on support</p>

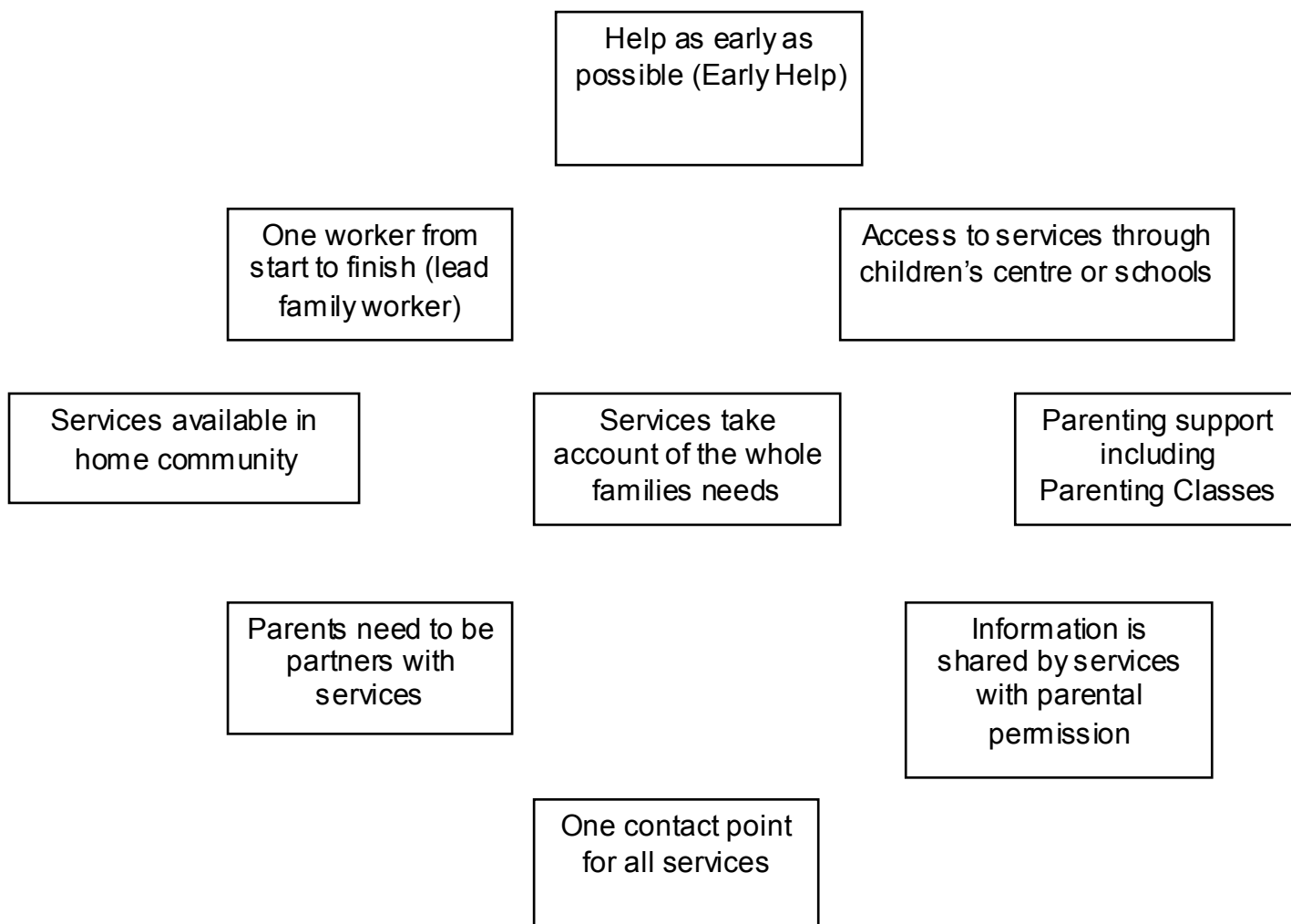
Appendix C – Group Exercise

Each group ranked the following points in order of importance in relation to Think Family services:-

Group 1**Group 2**

Appendix C – Group Exercise

Group 3



CABINET REPORT

18 April 2011



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: ACTION PLAN – THINK FAMILY – PREVENTATIVE
AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

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 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The report provides brief background information into the 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services' 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 in the new Municipal Year (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 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'.

Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: ACTION PLAN – THINK FAMILY – PREVENTATIVE
AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

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 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services'.

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 "Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services", 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 aim of the investigation was to explore the provision of preventative and early intervention services including the provision of practical support for children including children on the cusp of care; young people and their families.

3. ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 As a result of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's investigation into 'Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services', the following recommendations have been made:-

(a) The Council works with partner organisations / agencies to:

- (i) identify families with additional needs as early as possible to ensure that individuals / families receive the help and support that meets their specific needs;
- (ii) ensure that all services are co-ordinated to avoid gaps in service provision and duplication of services;
- (iii) develop stronger partnership arrangements to ensure that all organisations / agencies are signposting individuals / families to the appropriate services; and

- (iv) ensure that all services are open and accessible to all families and family members;
 - (b) The Council develops and promotes a simplified self – referral route with one point of contact so that individuals / families can refer themselves to a service if needed;
 - (c) The Council raises awareness of all the Think Family services available by promoting and marketing the services through the media; ‘Hartbeat’; schools, nurseries and children’s centres; GP surgeries; community centres and libraries;
 - (d) The Council engages with parents and uses their experience to improve / deliver existing services and help develop new services;
 - (e) The Council explores options with partner organisations / agencies to secure funding for the continuation of services and the development of new services;
 - (f) The Council integrate the Think Family approach into community based services so that families feel comfortable, safe and secure when accessing the services; and
 - (g) The Council, as part of the 2012 / 13 budget process re-examines the allocation of the Early Intervention Grant and the proportion that is allocated to Think Family services
- 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 in the new Municipal Year (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 ‘Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services’.
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**8.2 – Appendix A****NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services****DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011**

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(a)	<p>The Council works with partner organisations / agencies to:</p> <p>(i) identify families with additional needs as early as possible to ensure that individuals / families receive the help and support that meets their specific needs;</p> <p>(ii) ensure that all services are co-ordinated to avoid gaps in service provision and duplication of services;</p>	<p>Continue the development of a think family process based on a sound assessment process and clear service pathways.</p> <p>Continue to develop the "Team Around" model that engages partners in an integrated intervention process targeted directly at meeting identified need.</p> <p>Ensure that all partners use effective assessment processes based on the Common Assessment Framework.</p>	<p>Unknown at present due to scoping of Early Intervention Grant</p>	<p>John Robinson</p> <p>John Robinson / Danielle Swainston / Mark Smith</p> <p>John Robinson / Paul Kelly</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>March 2012</p> <p>September 2011</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**8.2 – Appendix A****NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services****DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011**

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	<p>(iii) develop stronger partnership arrangements to ensure that all organisations / agencies are signposting individuals / families to the appropriate services; and</p> <p>(iv) ensure that all services are open and accessible to all families and family members.</p>	<p>Build prevention services based on the development of clear inter related pathways that link services and are easy for families and other stakeholders to navigate.</p> <p>All commissioned service specifications will have a clause that clearly specifies appropriate access routes that are clear and interconnected.</p>	<p>John Robinson / Danielle Swainston / Mark Smith</p> <p>Ian Merritt</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>September 2011</p>
(b)	<p>The Council develops and promotes a simplified self – referral route with one point of contact so that individuals / families can refer themselves to a service if needed;</p>	<p>Provide an early intervention access point to all families through a number of community based hubs such as Children's Centre's, Schools and third sector buildings.</p> <p>Unknown at present due to scoping of Early Intervention Grant</p>	<p>John Robinson / Danielle Swainston / Mark Smith</p>	<p>September 2011</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**8.2 – Appendix A****NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services****DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011**

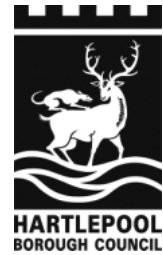
RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(c)	The Council raises awareness of all the Think Family services available by promoting and marketing the services through the media; 'Hartbeat'; schools, nurseries and children's centres; GP surgeries; community centres and libraries;	A range of branded publicity produced by each service that is part of the early intervention network will be made available to advertise services across the full range of appropriate outlets.	John Robinson	March 2012
(d)	The Council engages with parents and uses their experience to improve / deliver existing services and help develop new services;	All services linked to the Think Family initiative will be expected to provide evidence of parental involvement through the service specification. The Children's Fund will provide a one year project to engage with parents and set up a participation process that takes on the learning from the Aiming High programme.	Unknown at present due to scoping of Early Intervention Grant John Robinson / Ian Merritt John Robinson	September 2011 March 2012
(e)	The Council explores options with partner organisations /	Council Officers will work with partners to identify appropriate	Unknown at present due to	John Robinson / March 2012

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**8.2 – Appendix A****NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Think Family – Preventative and Early Intervention Services****DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011**

	RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	agencies to secure funding for the continuation of services and the development of new services;	grants and funding streams made available by government and other funders. Although this is in the context of a significantly reduced resource base.	scoping of Early Intervention Grant	Danielle Swainston / Mark Smith /Regeneration and Planning Team	
(f)	The Council integrate the Think Family approach into community based services so that families feel comfortable, safe and secure when accessing the services; and	An early intervention partnership will bring together interested parties to look at the development of a fully integrated early intervention service that is underpinned by the think family philosophy and sound assessment processes.	Unknown at present due to scoping of Early Intervention Grant	John Robinson	March 2012
(g)	The Council, as part of the 2012 / 13 budget process re-examines the allocation of the Early Intervention Grant and the proportion that is allocated to Think Family services.	Stakeholders will be given the chance to participate in the rebuilding of Think Family Services and the Early Intervention Grant during 2011/12 that will reflect current learning, current resources and current policy.	Unknown at present due to scoping of Early Intervention Grant	Nicola Bailey	March 2012

CABINET REPORT

18 April 2011



Report of: Young People's Representatives, Children's Services
Scrutiny Forum

Subject: FINAL REPORT – YOUTH INVOLVEMENT /
PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND
DELIVERY OF COUNCIL SERVICES, INCLUDING
THE SAFEGUARDING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The Final Report outlines the purpose of the scrutiny investigation, findings 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 25 March 2011. Cabinet is requested to consider and approve the report; attached as **Appendix A**; at today's meeting.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

- 6.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendations outlined at the end of the report attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

Purpose of the Report

To present the findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following the investigation in to 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

Setting the Scene

As part of the Children's Service Scrutiny Forum we were given the opportunity to pick a topic that we were interested in and lead on our own investigation. After some discussion we picked the topic of Social Networking. This was because we felt it was very relevant to a large majority of young people. We decided to focus our investigation on 'how the council could use social networking as a way to promote and advertise what's on offer'.

Background

Social networking sites like facebook, and twitter a have grown massively over the Years and are heavily accessed by young people. Research by the National Youth Agency found that 'Over 60% of 13 – 17 year olds have profiles on social networking sites and that many Young People are spending upwards of two hours a night on online social networking activities', and only 18% of young people have not tried using a social networking site' (NYA 2008 - appendix 1).

Social networking sites are merely a communication tool for young people and they use the sites similar to how they use their mobile phones. They allow young people to have a voice in Society and can allow young people to express their thoughts and opinions.

Sites like facebook and twitter are therefore an ideal way to promote services to young people. They are simply used too frequently for them simply to be dismissed as a method of communicating to both young people as well as adults. However throughout our investigation we have placed a huge emphasis on safeguarding and tried to cover as much as we could on how Social Networking can be used safely within council departments.

What are young people doing in Hartlepool?

Although we had statistics on how popular Social Networking is, we still wanted to ask the question on a local basis. We put together some questions and used existing groups of young people to find out just how popular social networking was amongst young people in Hartlepool. We ran a number of

8.3 Appendix A

sessions that were facilitated by our Youth Workers and asked some key questions around Social Networking.

What we found was that almost every young person who took part in the focus groups used Facebook as the main way to communicate with their friends. The second most popular way of communicating was via their mobile phones. When young people were asked how they would like to be consulted with, Social Networking sites was their first answer.

When we asked what they thought about using Facebook young people gave comments like:

‘I could not live without being able to go on Facebook’

‘I use Facebook every night’

This confirmed the fact that Social Networking is the most popular and preferred method of communicating to young people in Hartlepool and that there is definitely scope for Council Services to increase young people's participation.

What is already happening within Council departments?

When we first began the investigation we were unsure if the Local Authority could use it as a means of communicating events and activities to young people in a safe and appropriate way. However once we begun our investigation it became apparent that some departments within the Council have used, and still do use, sites like Facebook, as a way of communicating what's going on to both adults and young people.

The Tall Ships Facebook page was set up within the Council in order to get feedback on issues around access to and on the site. It was also used as a platform in which people could post comments on and upload their photographs of the event. Whilst there were no safeguarding issues or concerns that arose as a result from the page being set up it did raise some concerns for us which we will later explore.

Another example of a council department using Social Networking as a means to communicate is Sports development. The site is set up by an individual within the department and is used to attract a specific target audience to events and activities that sports development are holding. This again raised some concerns for us as there seems to be no real policy or guidance put in place that identifies some clear procedures when using facebook as a means of communication.

This led us to ask the question below, at the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum;

8.3 Appendix A

“Where the responsibility would be if a young person was to be put at risk using Facebook or Twitter to access Council information.”

The response we received was from Jim Murdoch, Business Manager for Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board,

‘Accessing Council information via the Council web site should present no risk to anyone as there is no contribution from the person making the enquiry. The Council web site is “read only” rather than being interactive.

During the Tall ships there was a Facebook account where information about that event was available. However, every precaution was taken to remove any risk to users. The Council has a small group currently considering standards to be followed for any social networking site set up by staff as part of the Council approach to communicating with the public.

There is no way in which one person accessing the Council web site can access any details of another person who is, or has been, connected to the site.

There are risks to using any of the social networking sites if the relevant safety measures are not implemented and the responsibility rests with the user.’ 18th February 2011.

Safeguarding Young People

Whilst we appreciate the response we do still feel that as a council we owe a duty of care to any young person, to keep them safe while accessing any of our services. And we are concerned that whilst the tall ships page was safely monitored that this is not always the case in other areas.

As part of our investigation we became familiar with the much publicised case of Ashleigh Hall (see appendix 2). This raised concerns for us over how paedophiles can access sites like facebook to groom young people.

In addition there are other concerns such as bullying and the role Social networking plays in this.

Whilst we understand the risks will always be there when using Social Networking as a method of communicating Council services to young people, we feel that it is therefore vital that the Council has some clear policy and guidance put in place that departments can follow.

Recommendations

We think that using Social Networking to promote council activities and/or

8.3 Appendix A

engage young people is an excellent tool we would make the following recommendations that will support doing this safely:

- Some Clear policy and guidance put in place for all departments within the council to follow
- Have a standard procedure – departments should not go ahead and do this on their own
- Closed sites that can not be commented on or someone to be responsible for the site 24 hours a day. This would include fast and effective takedown procedures!
- Employers should have basic legal training. If not don't do it!
- Education is a good way of ensuring young people are safe when they are online. Ashleigh's rules go some way in to supporting this. This could be advertised when each department sets up a site
- Take in to consideration examples of good practice. Some Councils may be ahead of others so link with them where possible
- Social networking is not for everyone so other methods of communicating such as posters and leaflets will still need to be in place.

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Youth Work and Social Networking

Final Research Report

How can Youth Work best support young people to navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking?

September 2008



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and
Pete Cranston**

Funded by



With thanks to:

All the many people who have contributed to the survey, focus groups, action research and general conversations around this project, and in particular to Tricia Jessiman, Sarah Bellamy, Gillian Elliot, Jeremy Denis, Katie Bacon, Carl Haggerty & Rachel Smith.

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This report builds upon the Interim Report available from: <http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/>

Executive Summary



Introduction

This one page document summarises a 2007/8 research study into the role youth work in supporting young people in their online social networking.

Findings

Social Networking Sites (SNS) plays an increasingly important role in the lives of many young people and presents them with both opportunities and risks. Many of the reasons young people may encounter risks through SNS have roots outside of the technology, in issues of young people's personal and social development. Young people need support to develop the appropriate skills and resilience to navigate online social networking risks and opportunities. Peer groups need chances to negotiate and develop shared understandings of safe and reasonable online behaviour patterns.

Youth Work can play a key role in supporting young people to navigate the risks and exploit the opportunities of online social networking. Youth work can provide space for young people to reflect upon their online activity, and to develop their 'media literacy'. Proactive youth work engagement with SNS offers an alternative to information campaigns (which have limited demonstrable behaviour change impact); and to blanket blocking of SNS sites (which can risk burying potential problems).

Both as professionals and as approachable adults who young people can talk to, youth workers can offer:

- Individual interventions to address risk behaviours, or to encourage the take up of opportunities, based upon existing youth work relationships;
- Group work to support the development of a shared understandings and practices in groups and to support young people in supporting their peers.
- Reflective learning opportunities for young people to develop media literacy;

Online social networking tools can be used to complement existing youth work activities, as core tools for youth workers, to explore new models of youth work and to promote youth services to young people;

However, the access to technology, and the skills and knowledge base that will allow youth work to perform this important informal education role is not yet widespread.

Recommendations

Most youth services are not yet playing the key role that they could in supporting young people's safe and effective use of online social networking nor are they realising the many opportunities that online social networking provides for youth work. However, the foundations of effective engagement do exist in most services and could be developed through four lines of activity:

1. **Survey** –identify current access to SNS, engagement with online social networking and skills and resources to draw upon within the service.
2. **Safety** –consider the safety implications of online social networking for young people and for staff, and examine options for policy and action in supporting young people in navigating risk, both individually and as groups.
3. **Skills** –take active steps to develop the online social networking knowledge and skills of staff.
4. **Strategy** –explore opportunities to use online social networking as a youth work tool, and to support and encourage young people to take up the positive opportunities it provides.

The full research report provides more information and guidance on each of these lines of activity.

Section 1: Research Summary

In this section you will find:

- Details of the research carried out as part of the Youth Work and Social Networking project;
- Headline findings from the research;

Methodology

The Youth Work and Social Networking project has sought to answer the question: “How can youth work best support young people to navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking.”

The project has taken place in two phases, and four parts. A detailed methodology is found in Annexe 1.

Phase 1:

1. **A literature review** – exploring how young people, and youth work, are currently engaged with online social networking and evaluation the evidence base concerning opportunities and risks for young people online.
2. **A national online survey** – of youth workers, administrators and managers to assess current levels of uses of online social networking and to identify youth work attitudes towards social network sites and young people's online social networking behaviours.
3. **Focus groups** – exploring in depth with three youth services the attitudes of youth workers towards online social networking, and seeking to identify training and development needs.

Phase 1 of the project is written up in the Interim Report, which includes the full literature review and a detailed presentation of evidence from the survey and focus groups.

Phase 2

4. **Action research projects** – working with three youth services to explore: ways of training youth workers about online social networking; uses of online social networking in youth participation; and using online social networks to promote youth work activities.

This final report brings together the evidence from Phase 1, with the insights and learning from Phase 2 to offer both a theoretical, and a practical, account of how youth work can, and should, engage with online social networking.

This report seeks to balance the needs of academic, management and practitioner audiences. For more details on the evidence base from the survey, literature review and focus groups, please refer to the Interim Report. For more details on the practical learning from Phase 2, please refer to the project blog, and in particular the posts mentioned in Appendix 1.

Findings

Online social networking plays an increasingly important role in the lives of many young people.

Over 60% of 13 – 17 year olds have profiles on social networking sites (SNS)ⁱ. Many young people are spending upwards of two hours a night on online social networking activitiesⁱⁱ.

Social Network Sites (SNS) like Bebo, Facebook and MySpace have driven a massive growth in young people's online social networking since the emergence of MySpace in 2003, and Facebook and Bebo in 2005 (alongside a range of other niche Social Network Sites that have developed over the period)ⁱⁱⁱ. However, these sites, which can be accessed both by computer and mobile phone, are in all likelihood only the beginning of online social networking trends which will continue to reshape much of young people's local and global communication with significant real-world consequences both positive and negative.

Whilst not *all* young people are actively using SNS (and those from disadvantaged background are less likely to have frequent or regular access to them) their impact is widespread. Lack of access to online social networking opportunities may impact upon young people's social exclusion – as many of the social conversations and co-ordination between young people moves into SNS spaces.

Online social networking presents both opportunities and risks to young people.

Online social networking presents many opportunities to young people by making it easier for them to, amongst other things: publish creative works to local and global audiences; stay in touch and communicate with peers; find and interact with people with shared interests; organise and co-ordinate political engagement and action; for virtual volunteering; and to engage in self expression.

However, online social networking can also expose young people to new risks. Risks from: inappropriate content; commercialism and unsuitable advertising; inappropriate or offensive conduct on SNS; criminal activities such as identity theft; and inappropriate contact (online and offline) from strangers – which may include grooming and in the most serious cases, sexual abuse.

For many young people, online social networking is not a distinct activity, but is part of day-to-day life, communication and interaction with peers. This can lead to some 'risks' crossing over into, and potentially being amplified by, SNS. Both young people and youth workers identify bullying on SNS as one of the most significant negative issues linked to online social networking^{iv}.

Only 18% of young people have not yet tried using a social network site

(MSN/MTV, 2007)

40% of young people with social network profiles have the information on them set as public – visible to anyone.

(Ofcom, 2008)

Youth Work has a key role to play in supporting young people to navigate the risks of online social networking.

Education and information campaigns promoting internet safety messages have had limited success in changing young people's online behaviours¹. Providing space for young people to reflect upon their online activity, and to develop their 'media literacy' in this space is one of the most promising strategies for promoting safety and the up take of opportunities. Youth work skills are well suited to offering:

- Individual interventions to address risk behaviours, or to encourage the take up of opportunities, based upon existing youth work relationships;
- Group work to support the development and spread of positive on line social networking behaviours ;
- Group work to support young people to become peer-mentors and peer-trainers – supporting each other in their learning about, and safe use of, SNS;
- Reflective learning opportunities to develop media literacy;

Youth workers can also make themselves available as approachable adults who young people can talk to about any concerns they may have about their online experiences.

The online social networking skills base and knowledge base to allow youth work to perform this important informal education role is not yet widespread – but this report suggests a number of approaches to build capacity in the youth workforce to provide effective interventions related to online social networking.

Online social networking tools can be used to complement existing youth work activities, as core tools for youth workers, and to explore new models of youth work;

The group and communication tools on social networking sites can provide ways to keep young people in touch with services and with each other, to build bridges between different groups, and to promote ongoing collaboration on projects between face-to-face sessions. Social network sites can provide a platform for sharing young people's creative efforts, or for enabling young people to have a public voice on issues that affect them. Online social networking also offers the potential for new forms of online outreach work or for working with groups with shared interests from across a wide geographical area (e.g. online work with socially excluded young people, young people from rural areas, or LGBT young people).

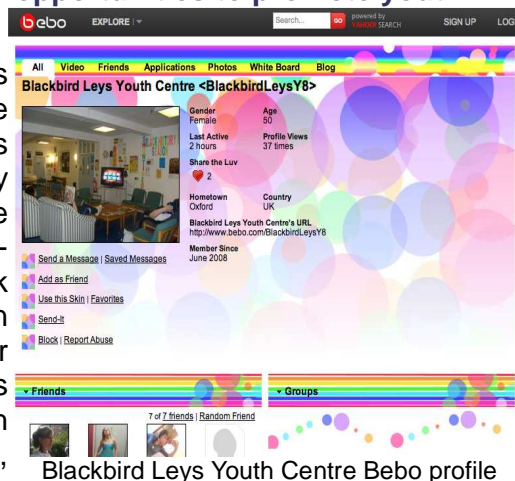
I use Facebook to talk to young people about youth groups, and re-arrange dates or organise trips. I use it to see if they are ok if I've not seen them in a while, and also to share photos of previous events we have run.

Survey respondent, January 2008

¹ Livingstone et al. in Ofcom (2008) find that even though young people are widely aware of the risks of certain online activities and 'risk behaviours' the link between this awareness and action to avoid risks is weak.

Online social networking tools present a range of opportunities to promote youth services to young people;

Positive activities based on long term relationships with trusted adults and intentional age-appropriate inputs designed to support young people's development such as those provided by good quality youth work have a stronger impact on positive outcomes for young people than short-term or one-off activities^v. It is important that youth work providers can effectively promote their services in an increasingly diverse environment of provision for young people – and online social networking tools provide a wide range of ways to promote youth services, to inform young people of opportunities, and for services to keep in touch with young people.



Blackbird Leys Youth Centre Bebo profile

There are a range of capacity building needs for youth services wanting to engage effectively with online social networking.

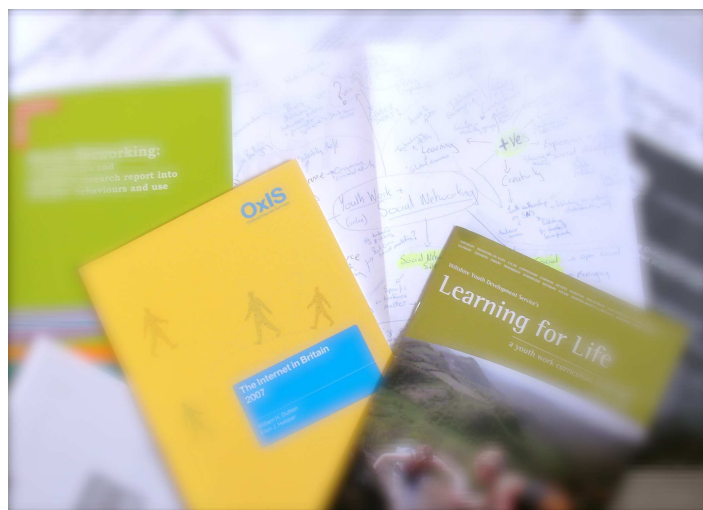
At the time of writing this report in Summer 2008, most youth services are not yet (a) playing the key role that they could in supporting young people's safe and effective use of online social networking, and (b) realising the many opportunities that online social networking provides for improving and developing youth work activities^{vi}. However, the foundations of effective engagement with online social networking are available in most services. Section 3 (Practice) of this report is structured to step through the key stages of moving from where services are right now, to where they could (and we suggest, should) be in the near future.

We suggest that services should work through a checklist covering the following.

1. **Survey** –identify current access to SNS, engagement with online social networking and skills and resources to draw upon within the service.
2. **Safety** –consider the safety implications of online social networking for young people and for staff, and examine options for policy and action in supporting young people in navigating risk, both individually and as groups.
3. **Skills** –take active steps to develop the online social networking knowledge and skills of staff.
4. **Strategy** –explore opportunities to use online social networking as a youth work tool, and to support and encourage young people to take up the positive opportunities it provides.

Section 2: Theory

Exploring the literature on online social networking and laying foundations for practical responses to online social networking set out in Section 3.



A range of literature about youth work, the internet and young people's online social networking

2.1: The context of young people's online social networking

In this section you will find:

- An overview of what online social networking is and why it matters;
- Details of how young people are using online social networking;
- Different perspectives for making sense of online social networking;

Understanding online social networking;

We can talk of online social networking in at least two senses: (a) as an activity or set of activities people engage in; and (b) as the use of a series of specific online tools and platforms.

Online social networking activities

An individual's social network consists of all those people with whom they have a connection (e.g. family members, friends, teachers, school colleagues, youth workers etc.). Social *networking* involves creating new connections (for example, through finding people with shared interests, attending events, meeting the friends of friends and chance meetings) and keeping in touch with the people who one already has a connection with. When these activities of creating and maintaining connections with other people take place through the internet then we can talk of it as online social networking.

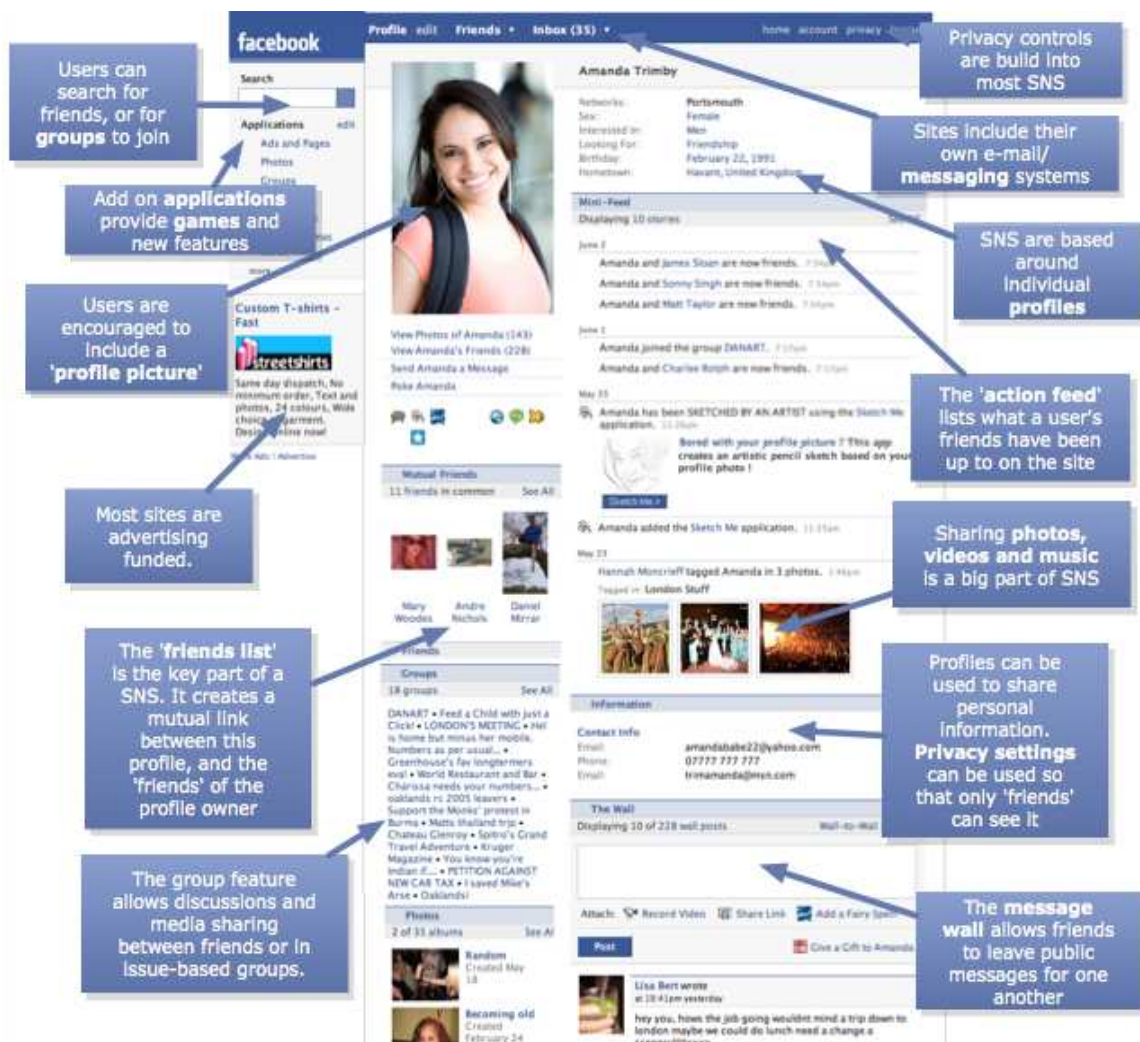
However, whilst it has long been possible to use tools like e-mail and instant messaging to keep in touch with friends, family and other contacts, 'online social networking' refers in particular to using internet tools with specific features for creating and communicating with a network of contacts (friends). It is these specific features and the ways in which they work which leads to some of the most interesting implications of the online social networking boom that has taken place since 2005².

Online social networking tools and platforms

Two of the most important features of modern social networking platforms, often referred to as Social Network Sites (SNS), are (1) public (or semi-public) profiles, and (2) the friends list.

The diagram below shows an annotated mock-up of a Facebook profile – pointing a number of the different features, alongside the profile and friends list, which exist on many social network sites.

2 Whilst knowing exactly how the different features of particular SNS work is not critical to understanding how it may impact on young people – awareness of the key features, and attention paid to their continued development, change and evolution is important for constructing a responsive account of youth work and social networking which has a chance of adapting in light of continual new developments.



A public profile:

- allows users of a SNS allows individuals to publish and share details about themselves and their interests
- displays a summary of that users 'activity' elsewhere on the particular SNS (and, increasingly, on other services and websites that interact with the SNS).
- Can usually be set to allow anyone on the internet to access to view them can be restricted in various ways by the profile owner.

The friends list:

- allows users of a SNS to link to other profiles on the site which belong to their friends or to people (and sometimes organisations or brands) with whom they wish to display a connection.
- makes it possible (privacy settings permitting) to browse a social network site from person

to person exploring the connections between them.

- Is used **by the site** to allow a user to see a list of recent updates just from their friends. (E.g., when a user of Facebook uploads new photos to the site then Facebook will notify all the people on the photo owners friends about the new photo – including a link to it.)
- can be used to control privacy settings – so a user can restrict areas of their profile, or media that they upload to only be visible to their friends.

Social Network Sites are continually developing sophisticated new features, including: photo and video sharing tools; messaging and instant messaging tools; discussion groups; event organising tools and third-parties 'applications' which draw upon the profile and friends list data of SNS users to provide add-on functions, games and tools.

Whilst the findings of the Youth Work and Social Networking report should have applications for dealing with any forms of online social networking – our primary focus has been on that which takes place through social network sites.

What are young people doing on online social networks?

Over 60% of young people have SNS profiles^{vii}, and research by MSN/MTV suggests that only 18% of young people have yet to explore SNS^{viii}. The Institute of Public Policy Research have found many young people spending upwards of two hours a night on SNS^{ix}. So what are young people spending all their time doing on sites like Facebook, Bebo and MySpace?

Young people are:

- **Keeping in touch.** Young people today are part of a 'constantly connected' generation^x – where conversations can start at school or in a youth club, move to mobile phones, and then move onto social networking sites^{xi}. Whilst tools like Instant Messenger and TXT are used to organise activities, MSN/MTV^{xii} found that “[social network] sites are forums to share and relive experiences.” Young people leave messages for each other on their profiles and comment on shared media such as photos and videos. Often the content of these messages is very repetitive – and in many cases the fact of 'being in contact' is what matters – rather than the content of the communication^{xiii}. The public (message wall) and private messaging features on social network sites are also increasingly replacing e-mail as a communication tool for many young people.
- **Developing new contacts.** Young people can find new contacts on SNS through exploring the friends lists of their existing contacts, searching for people and groups with particular shared interests, or by browsing the site. Young people may also search for someone who they have met once or twice (for example, at a youth club or a friends party) and add them as a friend on a SNS in order to keep in contact and as part of developing friendships. The box below^{xiv} shows how adding someone as a friend on an SNS may take place for multiple reasons.
- **Sharing content and engaging in self-expression.** “53% of social network users have shared some kind of artistic work online, compared to 22% of those who do not use a social network”^{xv}. SNS provide a space for young people to create and share media – ranging from written blog posts, photos and videos, through to edited works

and collaborative creations. Much of this creative content is what might be seen as traditional teenage self-expression moved online. As Green and Hannon^{xvi} put it *“There is nothing new about young people being creative and expressive – you certainly do not need a computer to decorate your bedroom, form a band or decide what clothes to wear. The difference is that by digitising their creative efforts this generation of young people can share the fruits of their labour with a worldwide audience”*.

- **Exploring identity.** SNS provide a space for young people to explore and develop their identity – both through reflecting on how they should represent themselves on their own profiles and pages on the site³ and through inviting and receiving feedback from peers through comments and other contributions to the sites^{xvii}. It is important to note that whilst 'identity play' may take place – young people's main profiles are rarely intentionally deceptive and there is a strong norm of authenticity on most sites^{xviii}.
- **Hanging out and consuming content.** Most SNS are commercial, media-rich spaces and some of the time young people spend on these sites may be seen as time spent just 'hanging out' and being consumers of the information, music, videos, photos and games hosted within them^{xix}.
- **Accessing information and informal learning.** Through browsing social network profiles young people can access a wide range of information. A number of local and national information providers and support services are creating a presence on social network sites or are targeting advertising and information campaigns at online social networking spaces. There is also significant interest in the potential of online social networks as spaces for young people's informal learning outside school.

Friends?

In an extended blog essay boyd (2006) offers nine reasons why an individual may add someone to their friends list.

1. Because they are actual friends
2. To be nice to people that you barely know (like the folks in your class)
3. To keep face with people that they know but don't care for
4. As a way of acknowledging someone you think is interesting
5. To look cool because that link has status
6. (MySpace) To keep up with someone's blog posts, bulletins or other such bits
7. (MySpace) To circumnavigate the "private" problem that you were forced to use cuz [sic] of your parents
8. As a substitute for bookmarking or favoriting
9. Cuz [sic] it's easier to say yes than no if you're not sure.

Vibrant, cultural, dynamic and democratic or commercialised, toxic and time-wasting?

There are many differing perspectives on online social networking – ranging from those that take online social networking to be a key part of, and a reflection of, “youth culture” (the youth perspective) through to those that view online social networking as spaces of surveillance (the surveillance perspective), sexual playgrounds for shallow self-expression (the body and sex perspective) and places of significant danger to young people (the paedophile and predator perspective).⁴ Green and Hannon^{xx} characterise the debate about technology in

3 Stern, 2008, talks of how whilst the construction of self-identity that profiles and homepages allow “is not unique to *online* self-presentation, the deliberate nature of the construction magnifies the experience”

4 Larsen, 2007. Larsen's article provides a very useful quick survey of different ways practitioners and policy makers may be

general as polarised, into ‘*moral panic*’ and ‘*digital faith*’, noting that the introduction of every new media technology is usually accompanied by a similar range of moral panic responses.

Below you will find a 12 of the 35 perspectives on social networking put forward by Dutch researcher Malene Larsen. During our research we presented these perspectives to youth workers and invited them to choose the perspectives which best represented their own understanding of online social networking. Each perspective was chosen at least once – illustrating the breadth of ways in which youth workers may initially approach SNS.

It is important to recognise that each of these perspectives provides some insight into the impact of online social networking, but no single one provides a complete story. In the next section we will suggest a particular youth work perspective on online social networking, and will start to sketch relevant youth work responses to safety and opportunity on SNS.

12 perspectives on online social networking (Taken from 35 perspectives on online social networking by Malene Larsen, 2007 ⁵)		
The consumer perspective Social networking sites are money-making machines creating a need for added value among young people causing them to spend all their pocket money on extra features such as VIP profiles, widgets, gifts for friends and so on.	The friendship perspective Social networking sites are places where young people can maintain and nurse their existing (offline) friendships and create new (online) friendships.	The body and sex perspective Social networking sites are sexual playgrounds for young people where they portray themselves in a provocative or soft porn-style manner. It is all about appearance and body making the youngsters superficial and shallow.
The space and place perspective Social networking sites are spaces that allow young people to create their own place(s). And those places are as real and important as the offline places where they meet.	The network perspective Social networking sites are places where young people learn the crucial importance of being able to network which they can benefit from in their future professional life.	The democratic perspective Social networking sites are places that allow young people to have a voice in society. Here, they can be heard and express their opinions.
The public perspective Social networking sites are “open diaries” of young people, but they do not think about the fact that the whole world can read their text and see their pictures online.	The surveillance perspective Social networking sites are surveillance. Everything young people write online are saved and can be used (against them) by marketing people, future employers and so on.	The group work perspective Social networking sites reinforce group work mechanism and young people often work together on profiles and are often willing to help each other.
The anti-social perspective Social networking sites make young people anti-social and incapable of communication with others face to face. They lose important social competences.	The social perspective Social networking sites make young people more social and help them communicate with others. Especially, the sites help youngsters cope with shyness or loneliness.	The communication tool perspective Social networking sites are merely a communication tool for young people and they use the sites similar to how they use their mobile phones.
Consider: <i>Which perspective(s) do you associate most with?</i>		

talking about online social networking – and can be a useful map for navigating the many different viewpoints that may be brought into a discussion. Larsen’s article is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/6e6n8f>

5 The full article is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/6e6n8f>

2.2: A youth work response to online social networking

In this section you will find:

- An summary of the risks and opportunities young people face through online social networks;
- An exploration of the unique youth work contribution to supporting young people in navigating risks and making the most of opportunities of online social networking;
- A suggested 'youth work perspective' on online social networking – which informs the practical guidance in Part 3.

A space of risk and opportunity

Much as going to a music festival would expose a young person to both opportunities⁶ and to possible risks⁷ – so too are social network sites (SNS) places of opportunity and risk. In looking out for both young people's safety, and their positive development, a youth work response to online social networking needs to be aware of the particular opportunities and risks young people may encounter.

Opportunities

SNS present significant opportunities for developing and maintaining friendships: for young people to extend their social networks by meeting and 'friending' new people or by joining interest based networks. It can be useful to look at the positive impacts of online social networking on young people's developing social capital resources, in particular, on bridging social capital^{xxi}. Using online social networks can have a real-world impact on young people's horizons and successful integration and participation in different communities. For example, social network sites can be used for an individual leaving home to go to university both to network with other first-years before even arriving at the University, and can enable them to keep in touch with friends 'back home' – or they can be used by young people who have been on an international exchange to keep in touch or get back in touch many years after the exchange took place.

SNS can also play a role in young people's identity formation. There are risks associated with the use of SNS in exploring identity (e.g. the long-term record of identity 'experiments' and exposure to peer pressures and negative norms). However, the use of SNS can have significant positive impacts^{xxii}, as a canvas for reflecting upon identity development and progress for young people, and as a way for young people “to engage with their culture and to practice ways of being within it”^{xxiii}.

SNS not only offer young people a platform for communicating with friends, but they offer a world-wide publishing platform for text and multimedia. This

The top 5 opportunities of online social networking

As identified by respondents to our survey

1. Helping young people keep in contact with peers
2. Allowing young people to develop new contacts and friendships with peers
3. Sharing information and media with peers
4. Finding an audience for creative works
5. Providing access to information

6 E.g. for entertainment, meeting new friends, gaining new experiences and ideas etc.

7 E.g. losing money, getting involved in unsuitable activities, contact with abusive adults etc.

creates new opportunities for young people to have a 'public voice', to engage in self expression and share their creative works, an opportunity particularly taken up by young bands sharing their music and building their 'fan bases' on MySpace. Learning how to use SNS, and accessing the content available through them, can encourage young people's informal learning – both in terms of technical skills⁸, and informal learning about the people and ideas that they encounter whilst browsing and engaging with content online.

Within the online social networking space there are opportunities for young people to access information, advice and guidance either from trusted sources who have 'set up shop' within particular SNSs, or informal advice and guidance from peers. Being networked with advisors and professionals can open up new forms of communication and support for young people. SNS also provide tools and spaces which can encourage and enable young people's civic and political participation⁹ – by providing ways for young people to show their political preferences¹⁰ (e.g. by joining 'petition' groups) and offering tools to help young people organise. By way of illustration, a school walk out of over 50,000 US teenagers in 2006 in protest at immigration policies was predominantly co-ordinated through social network sites. Last but not least in terms of opportunities, SNS are places where young people can spend leisure time and have fun.

Risks

Many of the features of online social networking can expose young people to risks.

The way in which SNS allow for young people to be in 'constant contact' with peers, the possibility of setting up and using anonymous profiles, and the nature of text-based communication all mean that SNS can be used for forms of bullying which Tanya Byron^{xxiv} argues are “potentially more damaging” than 'offline' bullying. Online bullying features as both youth workers¹¹ and young people's¹² biggest concern about SNS.

SNS encourage their users to share personal details and information. In a study of SNS profiles belonging to US teenagers, the Pew Internet Study^{xxv} found that 49% included details of the school that profile owner attended. There are risks that the personal information young people publish on SNS may be abused, lead to identity theft, or makes it easier for predatory adults to contact, groom or abuse young people. The sharing of media and

The top 5 risks of online social networking	
As identified by respondents to our survey	
1.	Bullying
2.	Young people disclosing personally identifying information
3.	Abuse and exploitation of young people
4.	Too much time spend on the computer / internet addiction
5.	Risks from sexual predators

8 See Green and Hannon, 2007 for a list of digital skills acquired through informal learning with technology. They also argue that “[i]t is this type of [informal] learning which often provides children with the confidence of success in formal contexts.”.

9 Rheingold, 2008; Levine, 2008; Loader et. al, 2007; Byron, 2008 §3.92; Howland and Bethel, 2002, amongst others, have explored the internet, or SNS, and young people's political participation. It is an area which gains considerable interest in the literature.

10 Both 'small p' political in terms of causes and campaigns, and, to a lesser extent, Party Political.

11 53% of respondents to our survey of Youth Workers, Managers and Administrators identified bullying as a risk of online social networking (the top response)

12 87% of the young people consulted at Kongomana festival in Devon in July 2008 selected 'No bullying' as one of the rules they wanted for any youth work supported online social networking (again, the top response of all the options).

photos may also impact upon young people's futures – with potential employers, educational institutions or peers able to access photos, videos and information about young people in the future which they may not wish those people to see. Whilst SNS usually incorporate privacy controls to allow users to restrict who can see their information, these are often confusing or ignored by profile owners.

The majority of SNS are commercially owned – and so in using them young people are exposed to a large quantity of targeted advertising and, on occasions, age-inappropriate advertising¹³. Often this advertising is hard to distinguish from non-advertising content on the SNS. As with general access to the internet, it is possible for those using SNS to discover and access offensive, inappropriate, violent or harmful content. However, unlike other online spaces, SNS also makes it easier for this content to be shared within peer networks, and provides a way in which young people could create and share harmful and offensive content (for example, video clips of violent acts).

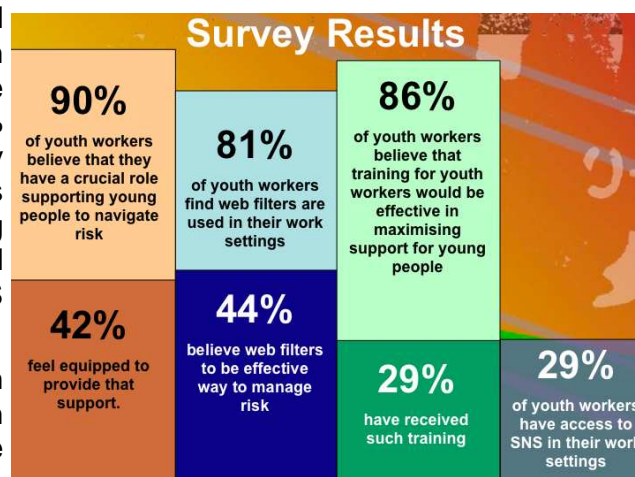
Youth work responses to online social networking

Professional youth work has a specific and unique contribution to make to ensuring young people can navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking. This builds upon the core skill set and values of youth work.

The importance of the youth work contribution is underlined by the effectiveness of youth work approaches in engaging and working with socially excluded young people and young people with complex needs. These young people are more likely to lack access to technology and online social networking opportunities^{xxvi}, and are more likely to encounter serious risks when they are engaged with online social networking¹⁴.

90% of respondents to our survey agreed that 'Youth Work has a crucial role in supporting young people to navigate the risks of online social networking', with 85% believing youth work to have a similarly crucial role supporting young people's uptake of online social networking opportunities. 53% of respondents said supporting young people to navigate SNS risks was a priority for them^{xxvii}.

Many respondents to our survey, along with participants in our focus groups and action research projects were also keen to explore how online social networking can be used as a positive tool in youth work – both to promote existing activities, and to develop new online and offline youth work opportunities and forms of youth work.



¹³ In particular, MySpace.com does not take adequate action to ensure young users do not see sexualised or other inappropriate advertising.

¹⁴ Social exclusion and wider complex needs were found to be key risk indicators in the Second Youth Internet Safety Survey of American teenagers (Wolak et. al 2008). Young people without positive role models, without trusted adults to turn to, or with little experience of the online environment may also be more at risk.

The following tables outlines the implications of the core youth work skill and values for a unique youth work response to young people's online social networking.

A youth work perspective on online social networking	
Youth work principles ¹⁵	Implications for a youth work perspective
Young people's engagement with youth work is on a voluntary basis	Some perspectives suggest SNS are 'young people only' spaces where the presence of adults is an illegitimate interference in young people's private lives. However, drawing on the voluntary principle, youth workers can interact with young people within SNS spaces and can legitimately address issues of online social networking with young people – providing participation is negotiated and not imposed .
Youth work 'starts from where young people are at...'	Pure information campaigns to inform young people about the risks of SNS are limited in their success at changing behaviour ¹⁶ . Instead, youth work interventions need to work with young people to explore their current use of SNS, to identify risks and to identify ways to support young people in navigating those risks. This involves being responsive to young people, and addressing the risks of SNS at the point in time at which they are an issue – rather than solely on the basis of a set curriculum that prescribes a set time and method for exploration of online social networking risk and opportunity. It also involves supporting young people to address the risks of SNS that concern them, such as bullying, alongside the risks that get the most national attention, such as grooming and abuse of young people.
'..and seeks to encourage young people to go beyond where they started'	<p>Whilst young people are making widespread use of SNS, they rarely understand the full potential and wide range of positive uses. Youth workers can build upon young people's existing use of SNS to (amongst other things): encourage engagement with creative arts; develop political participation; support learning around digital media literacy (particularly skills in identifying advertising and being able to critically assess information found online); help young people develop their technical skills; encourage young people to develop their social networks and communicate with young people from different backgrounds; and encourage young people to participate in particular pro-social social networks.</p> <p>If young people are engaging with online social networking in negative ways then there is a role for youth workers to provide the challenge and support that builds on this engagement, and helps young people to discover, and refocus their energies onto, positive uses of SNS.</p>

¹⁵ The majority of these characteristics of youth work are drawn from Bernard Davies' Youth Work: a manifesto for our times, 2005

¹⁶ Livingstone et al. in the Ofcom (2008) research summary and submission to Byron's review found that "young people may be aware of the risks, especially regarding social networking sites, but this awareness of these issues and problems is not always translated into action."

Youth work is holistic and seeks to build young people's resourcefulness, resiliency and resolve.	Use of SNS does not, by itself, put young people at significant risk of harm ^{xxviii} . However, certain behaviours on SNS can amplify the risks to young people – for example, engaging in conversations of a sexual nature through the sites with strangers ^{xxix} . Youth work should be able to identify when a concern or issue is linked to technology (e.g. ignorance of privacy settings / lack of understanding of appropriate norms for public communication online) or when the concern is better addressed through other non-technology linked interventions such as, for example, group work sessions on sex and sexuality, or supporting an individual young person to deal with specific issues around self-esteem, peer pressure or social isolation.
Youth work is associational – working with young people within their peer networks	SNS support young people in keeping in touch with peers. Responses to our survey highlighted in particular the value of SNS in maintaining networks between young people from different backgrounds, countries and cultures after youth residential and exchanges ¹⁷ . Online social networking has an impact on the formation, evolution and connection between young people's peer networks. However, SNS can also encourage negative peer norms (such as posting provocative profile photos) or 'branding' profiles with commercial content. Youth work supported group discussions/group work can encourage young people to agree and adopt positive shared standards behaviour for participation and interaction on SNS within their peer networks ¹⁸ and can support young people to understand and make positive choices in their online social networking.
Youth work addresses young people as young people, not through adult imposed categories and labels.	Notions of privacy and appropriate conduct are not fixed from generation to generation, but are constantly developing (compare any Sunday newspaper's interviews with a politician from 1970 and 2008 to see this in practice). Youth workers can look to understand young people's participation in online social networking as both belonging to a particular generation (and in this case, a generation for whom the technology has nearly always been present), and as belonging to a particular developmental stage of life with it's own particular concerns of friendship, relationships and identity formation amongst others.
Youth work draws upon a relationship of mutual trust between young person and adult.	There are some risks on online social networking sites which cannot be prevented by prior work with young people. The presence of trusted adults with an established professional relationship with young people – able to identify and address particular risks to specific young people in the online social networking space - can contribute to making online social networking safer.
Youth work is open to new approaches and ways of engaging with young people	Online social networking provides a range of new opportunities to complement existing youth work practices (e.g. adding an online element such as publishing creative works online, or holding an area-wide discussion) and to build new models of work with young people (such as area wide online youth work for specific groups such as LGBT young people, or young people in rural areas).

¹⁷ Responses to our survey highlighted the role of SNS in keeping groups from a foreign exchange in touch in particular.

¹⁸ Kosse (2007) considers the social norms (shared standards of behaviour) that have emerged on social network sites, such as posting provocative pictures on one's profile – and notes that “social norms play a role in a person's decision making process”. Group work can help a small community of young people to examine their norms and explore whether the norms that have emerged are appropriate and true representations of individual's preferences, or whether those norms need to be challenged.

A youth work perspective on online social networking

Drawing on features of the youth work response listed above, and upon an understanding of the opportunities and risks of online social networking – we can attempt to sketch out a coherent summary of a youth work perspective on online social networking.

A youth work perspective on online social networking

Social Network Sites (SNS) present young people with a wide range of opportunities and risks. Opportunities and risks go hand in hand. The opportunities and risks of most concern to young people (keeping in touch with friends and bullying respectively) are different from those most frequently highlighted in the mainstream media.

Young people need support to develop the appropriate resources and resilience to navigate risk and to make the most of opportunities on SNS, and peer groups need opportunities to negotiate and develop positive norms for their interaction on SNS.

Many of the reasons young people may encounter risks through SNS have roots outside of the technology, in issues of young people's personal and social development. The appropriate response to SNS risk may not involve technology.

Social networking sites can be made safer when youth workers, as professional and trusted adults, actively engage with them.

Youth work can engage with SNS as one or more of:

- an environment in which young people need support and guidance;
- a marketing tool for promoting youth work opportunities and activities;
- a communications tool for interacting with young people and groups of young people;
- a youth work tool for promoting young peoples creative expression, political engagement and wider personal and social development;
- a starting point to work from in helping young people develop their skills, interests and capacities across a range of issues and areas;
- a platform for new forms of online youth work;

Youth work methods have a particular contribution to make in encouraging and supporting young people to adopt safe and positive online behaviours.

In the following section we will explore how this youth work perspective can inform a practical process of building youth work capacity to engage with online social networking.

However, we also believe this youth work perspective should be promoted to those making wider policy decisions about supporting young people in navigating risks and making the most of opportunities online – to highlight the unique and important role that youth work, and informal education professionals, can play.

Section 3: Practice

In this section we present data and shared learning about current youth work engagement with online social networking and set out practical steps that services can take to build their capacity for engaging with online social networking. This is built from our experience of exploring online social networking with a variety of youth services.



Talking about SNS with young people
at Devon's Kongomana youth festival

3.1: Steps towards youth work engagement with online social networking

In this section you will find:

- A checklist of stages for any service developing their engagement with online social networking to work through;
- Practical resources outlining: key questions to ask when surveying your youth service to identify current online social networking skills and practice; a list of considerations for promoting online safety messages to young people; a table of issues to consider when developing an online social networking policy; a series of capacity building and training models; and suggestions for practical approaches for youth work engagement with online social networking at a range of levels;
- Links to further resources on the web from Phase 2 of the youth work and social networking research project

Components of a youth work response: a four stage checklist

For a full youth work response to online social networking to be effective there is a need for action at both the local and national level.

As part of the second phase of our research we worked with three different youth services and projects to explore how they can engage with online social networking. In this section you can find an overview of key issues for youth services along with issues that need to be considered in a national context. We have divided this into four sub-sections:

- **Survey** –identify current access to SNS, engagement with online social networking and skills and resources to draw upon within the service.
- **Safety** –consider the safety implications of online social networking for young people and for staff, and examine options for policy and action in supporting young people in navigating risk, both individually and as groups.
- **Skills** –take active steps to develop the online social networking knowledge and skills of staff.
- **Strategy** –explore opportunities to use online social networking as a youth work tool, and to support and encourage young people to take up the positive opportunities it provides.

Survey

In working with three different youth services during this research, and hearing from many more we have seen that there are many different issues to be addressed in building youth work capacity to engage with online social networking. Each service has its own starting point – and it is important for capacity building to identify where a service is starting from.

This will involve carrying out a survey or evaluation of:

Access to technology and access to online social networking sites

Key Questions: access

Do staff have access to computers and to online social networking sites from their office base?

Do young people have access to online social networking sites through youth service IT provision?

In our survey of over 100 youth workers, managers and administrators, we found that only 29% of respondents have access to social network sites (SNS) in the spaces where they work with young people, and access to SNS is blocked in over 45% of office settings. Access to SNS is crucial for staff to develop their understanding of these environments.

If internet access to your service is filtered, then you should also identify where control of the filtering set-up rests, and what flexibility exists for the filtering set-up for local provision¹⁹. You may also want to think about the physical set up of any IT provision. Supervising internet access sessions is the most trusted strategy for promoting safety (blocking and filtering least trusted²⁰) but is most effective when a supervising worker can see all the screens in an ICT room.

Skills and experience

Key Questions: skills

Are there staff members with an existing understanding of online social networking?

How many staff have encountered or actively using SNS?

Are any staff trained to deliver online safety sessions?

Are there any staff with specific technology skills? Are there young people with specific skills and experience who could advise and support the service?

Do staff and manager share a sense of the importance of engaging with online social networking?

64% of the respondents to our survey had used SNS in the past, with 49% of respondents having set up their own social network site profiles. The focus groups and action research workshops we held (where the number of people who had used SNS ranged from 50% to

19 For details of our learning about updating filters to provide access to social network sites take a look at:
<http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/2008/06/facebook-filters-and-taking-th.html>

20 See §3 of the Interim Report.

just 1 in 10) suggest these figures may overstate general levels of use across the youth service as a whole.

In the skills section we will outline a model for building upon existing skills in your service to develop capacity for responding to online social networking.

Alongside mapping skills and experience, it will also be helpful to map out support from staff and management in your service for engagement with online social networking.

Existing use

Key Questions: use

Is your service already making use of online social networking?

What different uses are being made of SNS?

Are there demands to make use of online social networking which have not yet been met?

Which SNS are used by the young people the service works with?

In our survey only 34% of the 64% who identified they were using social network sites said that they were using them in a work context. Where SNS were being used in a work context, the main uses were:

- **Promotion and recruitment** – letting young people know about activities and events;
- **Engagement** – seeking views from young people;
- **Keeping in contact** – sending messages to young people;
- **Sharing media** – including photos from events or music from young people's bands.

Whilst some areas are developing official bespoke social networking features for their own local youth websites, most engagement with the main SNS where young people are already active (MySpace, Facebook, Bebo etc.) was taking place 'under the radar' and a number of survey responses specifically highlighted that their uses of SNS were not officially sanctioned.

Policies and guidance

Key Questions: policy

Do you have a policy or guidance for staff on online social networking?

Does your internet use policy mention online social networking?

Do you have other policies that apply to use of the internet or which can be easily adapted to apply to use of the internet and online social networking by both young people and staff?

The safety section below includes guidance on key elements that need to be covered in policies on online social networking.

Safety

Any engagement with online social networking does need to be built on a safe and sound foundation which involves:

- Providing relevant and timely safety guidance and support to young people;
- Rigorous child protection procedures that apply online as well as offline;
- Policies and guidance in place to protect both young people and staff;

Approaches to safety guidance and support²¹

We can divide ways of providing safety guidance and support to young people into reactive and proactive. Services will need a mix of reactive and proactive measures in place.

Reactive

At present the most widely used social networking safety measure in youth services is to block access to SNS from youth service computers. The majority of youth workers do not believe this is an effective measure. Supervising young people's internet access sessions is seen as far more likely to be effective in promoting safety²².

It is also important that youth workers are equipped to identify and address issues relating to online social networking. This can require workers to be familiar with the basic terminology and operation of online social networking sites, and to be able to respond appropriately to potential risks.

For example, a youth worker hearing that a young person is planning to go to London to meet a friend from Bebo should be able to identify that, in this context, the 'friend' could be a stranger, and they should be equipped (where there is an established youth work relationship) to have a conversation with the young person about whether or not to go to the meeting, and what safety precautions to take if going, such as going with parents or friends and staying in public spaces only.

Proactive

A number of pre-prepared training programmes addressing online safety issues already exist, such as the Think U Know programme from the Centre for Child Exploitation and Online Protection^{xxx}. These address specific dimensions of online safety (such as the risk of grooming or sexual abuse), but do not cover all the issues relating

Follow up online...
Want to know more about knife crime and street crime? Check out these websites and social network profiles...

On the web
<http://disarmingbritain.wordpress.com/>
The Disarming Britain project is run by Channel 4 across the web, social network sites and TV.

MySpace
<http://www.myspace.com/disarmingbritain>
http://www.myspace.com/stop_street_crime

Bebo
<http://www.bebo.com/disarmingbritain>
<http://www.bebo.com/idoesnthavetohappen>

Facebook
<http://is.gd/Zaw> - Disarming Britain

Remember - when you join a group or add a profile as a friend on a social network site other people are able to find your profile.

Is your profile set to private so that only your friends can see it?

Is there anything on your profile that you wouldn't want your parents/ carer, your teachers or a stranger to be looking at?

Check your privacy settings by trying to look at your profile from someone else's account, or when you are not logged in.

If you find anything on the internet which worries you - or you are uncomfortable about any messages or friend requests you receive online you can talk to a youth worker or other adult about it, or you can report possible abuse at <http://www.ceop.gov.uk>

Example of a handout that links online social networking with other youth work activities (a group discussion on street crime in this case) showing how proactive engagement with online social networking can promote safety messages and encourage young people to make positive use of SNS.

²¹ The Interim Report includes a full evaluation of the evidence for different approaches to safety.

²² See §3 of the Interim Report.

to safe use of online social networking sites.

Youth services may design their own sessions or curriculum specifically to address safety on online social networks, or messages about safety may be included in other activities.

The factors that put young people at risk of harm through online social networks are often extrinsic to the SNS themselves – and so services may also think proactively about how their wider curriculum and activities contribute intentionally to developing young people's resilience, cognitive and emotional competencies, critical skills and self-esteem for online interactions. Young people generally do not perceive the internet and online social networking as something special or distinct from other areas of life, so including aspects of online safety into other themes in a youth work curriculum offers wider opportunities to promote safe social networking.

Getting the safety messages right

It is not within the scope of this research to recommend the definitive safety messages that should be promoted to young people²³, however, we can briefly discuss a number of issues that arise when considering safety messages. The messages given to young people need to be:

- **Relevant** – it is important to start any inputs around safety from young people's own experience. This may mean talking about sharing photos or information on SNS in terms of its potential impact on bullying in the first instance, before discussing other risks such as those of grooming or abuse and exploitation. Starting from the relatively 'low impact, high incidence' risks may prove more productive, than starting from 'high impact, low incidence' risks.
- **Realistic** – asking young people aged 15 or 16 not to use their names or to put any photos at all on a social network site is unlikely to be a realistic request. Instead, safety messages should focus on thinking critically about which photos to share and which not to. And what information to share and what not to.
- **Positive** – messages based on fear can have unintended consequences and negative impacts upon young people's positive use of SNS²⁴. It is important that safety messages and interventions are delivered in a balanced way which supports young people to think also about the positive aspects of online social networking. Often a focus on the positive aspects of SNS will provide an opportunity to talk about safety and sensible conduct.

23 And it should be noted that this research argues that the messages are only part of the story – building young people's general resiliency and capacities is equally as important as messaging.

24 We have heard anecdotal evidence during our research about young people who have stopped using SNS, or have been banned from using SNS, because of 'scare stories'. This does not support young people to develop their resiliency in an increasingly important environment.

Policy checklist

As part of our action research in Devon we explored the key issues that a policy on youth work engagement in online social networking would need to address. We consulted with over 60 young people at the 2008 Kongomana festival to identify their views on such a policy – particularly a policy for youth workers creating participation opportunities on sites like Bebo, Facebook and MySpace. The views shared by these young people²⁵, along with evidence from the literature review, and discussions in the UK Youth Online Community²⁶ are expored in the table below. The left-hand column indicates a key issue that a policy for youth work engagement with SNS should consider, and the right-hand includes guidance and notes for considering that requirement of a policy.

Key issue	Draft guidance/notes/issues
(a) What guidance is provided for staff to manage their personal SNS profiles ?	Staff should be free to have their own personal SNS profiles. However: (a) They should not accept friend requests from young people against these profiles; (b) They should not post any content on their profiles which it would be professionally inappropriate for young people to know or see <u>or</u> they should use the privacy settings of a site to ensure this content is not accessible to young people; (c) They should lead by example, and abide by all the relevant safety messages and guidance provided to young people. (d) The youth service should provide clear guidance to staff on what they should and shouldn't post on their personal online spaces. This should not prevent staff from using their online spaces for reflective learning and knowledge sharing.
(b) Who is allowed to use SNS as part of their work? And in what ways are they allowed to use SNS.	There are different youth work uses of SNS and any guidance or policy should specify who can use SNS <i>and how</i> they can use SNS. For example, a policy may build upon these three distinctions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual youth workers may use a work SNS profile to contact the young people with whom they have a direct professional relationship – and only with the permission of that young person; ● A centre or project manager may use a public SNS profile or group to market a project. They may accept friends list requests from young people who have attended or would be interested in attending the project subject to the notes in (e). ● A specially trained youth worker (e.g. a 'detached youth worker for the web') may use SNS to interact with young people who may not already be known to the service and to carry out online outreach and issue based work. A workers use of SNS should always be agreed with the relevant line manager.
(c) How should youth workers manage their work SNS profiles?	Workers should maintain separate personal and work profiles wherever possible ²⁷ . Where possible, the ability to browse the friends list on the profile should be switched off. Where a work profile is being used to contact young people known to the worker

25 See the consultation report at <http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/2008/08/using-social-network-sites-for.html>

26 See the discussion here: <http://tinyurl.com/5wpgqe> (Accessed 18/08/2008)

27 As of 18/08/2008 having two profiles is officially against the Facebook Terms of Use, as is having an organisational profile. It is, however, possible to 'segment' a Facebook profile, and to have different privacy settings for different groups of people. Managing this properly takes care – and staff and services should be confident in dealing with the Facebook settings before going down this route.

	<p>it is important that the message box on the profile is checked regularly. Where a profile or group may receive friend/membership requests from individuals not already known to the worker – the profiles of the individuals making the request should be checked before they are accepted.</p> <p>Groups or profiles should include a clear message stating who the profile owner is, their affiliation, how to confirm their identity, and who to contact in the case of any concerns about their conduct.</p>
(d) What recording of contact should take place?	<p>Contact with young people through SNS should be recorded alongside any other communication and work with young people. A process for recording contact and communication may be based on a detached youth work policy.</p> <p>Services should decide how to record and report 'contact time' with young people that occurs through SNS.</p>
(e) What guidelines should exist for workers and young people about conduct in online SNS spaces?	<p>Our consultation with young people suggested the following (non exhaustive) list of guidelines should be explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth workers should make sure young people are aware that adding them as a friend will make hidden information from the young person's profile visible to the worker. ● If a youth worker is concerned about the content of a young persons profile (e.g. unsuitable profile picture) they should send them a polite private message. ● Workers should actively check any discussions they host, and should make sure these online spaces are kept free of bullying. <p>Services should consider consulting young people on a local code of conduct for particular uses of SNS and posting this on their official websites.</p>
(f) How should workers deal with concerns about young people's safety or conduct?	<p>Youth workers should know how to record and report any concerns about young people's safety to their line managers, or, where relevant, how to escalate any child protection concerns to the relevant authorities.</p> <p>Relevant codes of conduct, negotiated with young people should be used to set the youth worker response to concerns about young peoples conduct in online SNS and community spaces.</p>

The national picture

In depth research is needed into the most effective safety messages, and delivery mechanisms for safety messages, in terms of their impact on young people's behaviour. This should test the hypothesis that safety messages delivered in a youth work context, and delivered through group work are more likely to have a positive impact on behaviour than those delivered in the classroom context.

Skills

It is important for all youth workers to be aware of online social networking and to have the understanding and skills to respond appropriately to any issues linked to online social networking that young people may raise. Services should also develop their capacity to make wider use of online social networking as a youth work tool.

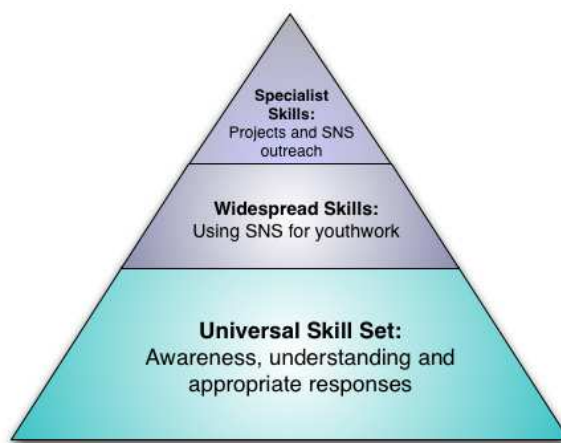
Our research

As part of our survey and focus groups we sought to identify the existing skills base for engagement with SNS within the youth work workforce. Through this we identified a clear need for a basic training programme introducing online social networking in theory and practice. We then worked with Rotherham Youth Service to develop and pilot a series of training sessions. This section will draw upon the training needs model developed for the Interim Report, and our experiences in Rotherham to explore options for developing workforce skills.

Skill development models

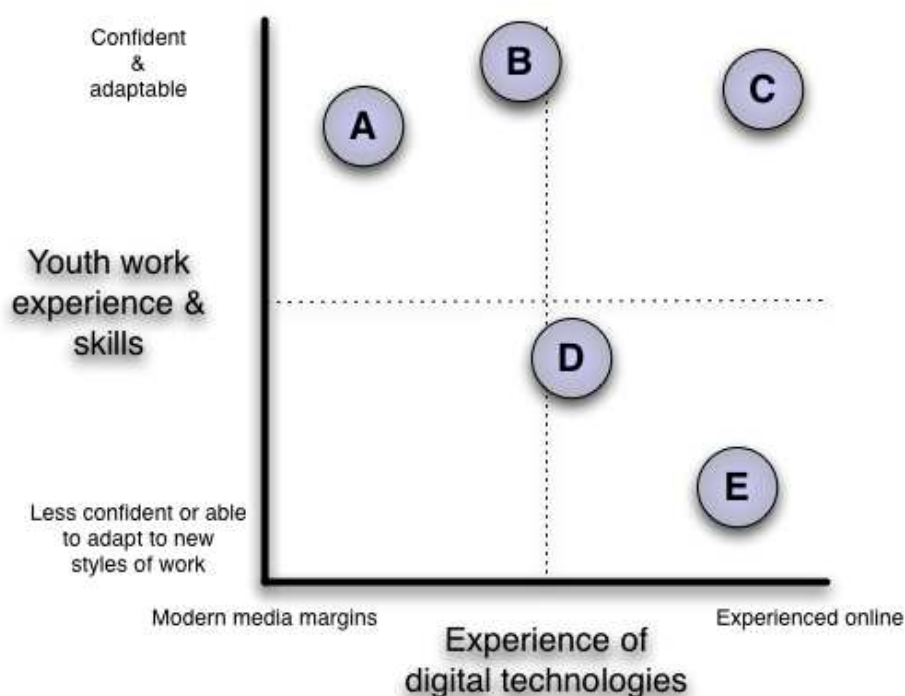
There are different levels at which individual staff can engage with online social networking, and consequently there are different skill development needs. These can be broadly divided into three – from a universal skills base, through to a widespread skill set, and a specialist skill set.

- **Universal: Youth workers are equipped to respond to young people's online social networking** - All workers have experience of what SNS are & understand the basic safety and opportunity issues associated with them. They are able to apply good youth work practices and responses to online social networking related issues.
- **Widespread: Youth workers are equipped to use online social networking as a youth work tool** - Some workers are confident in using SNS as a tool in their work with young people for individual communication, closed group work or promoting youth work activities and opportunities.
- **Specialist: Youth workers are equipped as an online social networking (and social media) specialists** - A small number of workers are equipped to run dedicated projects using SNS and to support other staff members making use of SNS. They may also be equipped to operate as online outreach workers.



In the interim report we identified two dimensions that would help determine an individual workers training needs. Firstly (and on the horizontal axis in the diagram below) there is the level of experience of digital technology a worker has. Our action research confirmed that a significant number of youth workers have very low levels of experience or literacy with digital

technologies and the internet. Secondly (and on the vertical axis) there is the level of youth work skills and experience that a worker has.



In any service, there are likely to be workers at each of the points on the diagram above (and the points in between). The table below explores in more depth these different profiles and the learning needs of staff.

Profile (In order of approximate size of group – largest first)	Strategic Implications	Development needs
<p>A: Experienced youth workers, on the new media margins recognise the importance of engaging with SNS and new technologies but lack the experience, knowledge and confidence to understand how their youth work skills could relate to SNS, or how to address SNS issues.</p> <p><i>“I think it’s quite scary – but I find computers scary anyway. But, I also think we need to be moving with the times. I would need a 24 hour hotline – but we could make this work – as long as we had the support there.”</i></p>	<p>Probably the largest group.</p> <p>While this group may learn how to engage and discuss SNS issues with young people, few are likely to become active users or champions because of the time needed to learn new tricks concerning SNS, especially as the general IT skills of this group are often very limited</p>	<p>May have had limited opportunities or encouragement to engage with technology before. These are needed.</p> <p>This group is mostly willing to engage with SNS, but needs awareness raising training, and a guarantee that technical support and back-up is available. The need to know the service supports workers engaging with SNS. They may benefit from contact with more media-active staff.</p>

<p>B: Experienced youth workers - cautious converts are secure about their own skills, have experience of adapting to new situations and made an effort to keep in touch with new technology – often through a relationship with a child or family member.</p> <p><i>(Commenting on young people sharing embarrassing photos of friend on Facebook) “It’s unfortunate and bad behaviour on behalf of her friends – but she shouldn’t have got herself in that situation – she should learn her lesson.”</i></p>	<p>Knowledge gaps amongst this group can lead to over- or under-cautious responses to SNS issues.</p> <p>Members of this group have the potential to champion online work within a service, but are likely to need a partnership with media-active youth workers</p>	<p>This group are aware of the need to learn how to adapt to the way young people operate online and able to state their own training needs.</p> <p>They will benefit from hands-on training and connections with others in similar situations, as well as those who are experimenting with new online ideas.</p>
<p>D: Emerging youth workers, active experimenters and progressive converts are among the most open, maybe active users of online social networking sites themselves and already experimenting with SNS as important spaces in which to support and engage with young people.</p> <p><i>“The ability to use social networking is great for consultation and promotion”</i></p> <p><i>“A campaign ..by young people to save [a] skatepark utilised social networking [and] events and official petitions to great success.”</i></p>	<p>This group represent the most important training group since they are moving into a position where they are likely to assume increased responsibility and are interested in trying out new ways of working.</p> <p>They are potentially a key training resource – able to share their practical skills with others, whilst benefiting from the youth work skills and insights of their more experienced youth work peers.</p>	<p>This group would benefit from training the trainers programmes, to enable them to play a lead, specialist, or champion role in local projects and services – sharing their SNS knowledge and skills.</p> <p>This group will benefit from making connections into youth work and other networks of interested professionals for peer support and knowledge sharing.</p>
<p>E: Emerging youth workers, uncritical networkers are experienced users of online tools, including SNS, and enthusiastic about using them in youth work</p> <p><i>“Some people have unsuitable photos on their profiles — their profile pictures can look ‘slightly dodgy’. I’m not really sure what to do about it.”</i></p>	<p>The enthusiasm and experience of this group in using online social networks is a key asset for youth services.</p> <p>However, this group also need support to ensure they don't miss identifying both risks and opportunities.</p>	<p>This group may need training and support (possibly through mentoring or supervision) in identifying youth work concerns, applying youth work practice and working within the boundaries of professional youth work in online social networking spaces.</p>

C: Experienced youth workers, ready responders are often used to operating relatively independently, are early adopters of new technology and ahead of mainstream trends. Their understanding of technology can help them identify both technological and social solutions to challenges and to identify/enable new opportunities created by online social networking.

"I think much more needs to be done towards the use of social media to create change ...particularly beyond the very personal way they are used by the majority of people".

Our sample suggests there is a relatively small number of youth workers, from all levels, who are both secure in their own practice as professionals and experienced users of online tools, including SNS

This group are a valuable resource for learning and training – helping to map out possible youth work responses to SNS scenarios and strategic planning

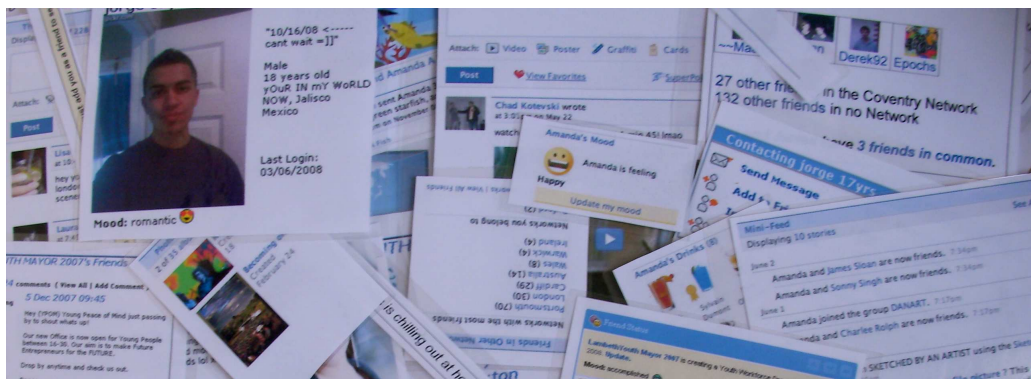
This group would benefit from a training trainers programmes to enable them to play a lead, specialist and/or champion role

They would benefit from connections into youth work and other networks of interested professionals for peer support

Facilitating the right opportunities for conversations and shared learning inside a service is as important as accessing external training and support to start a capacity building process.

However, it is important to recognise that even those workers with significant online experience and who are active users of online social networks may not be equipped to identify appropriate youth work responses to online social networking, or to use SNS in a youth work context.

The skill development needs for workers towards the left of the diagram above (low technology experience) are often very basic, and a fear of technology can limit the extent to which these staff members are able to independently manage their own learning about online social networking. A key goal of any training and capacity building must be to build confidence as well as skills and knowledge.



Social Network Site Jigsaw Puzzles. Used as a training resource during Phase 2 of the project.

Approaches to training and capacity building

We delivered two styles of training during our action research projects.

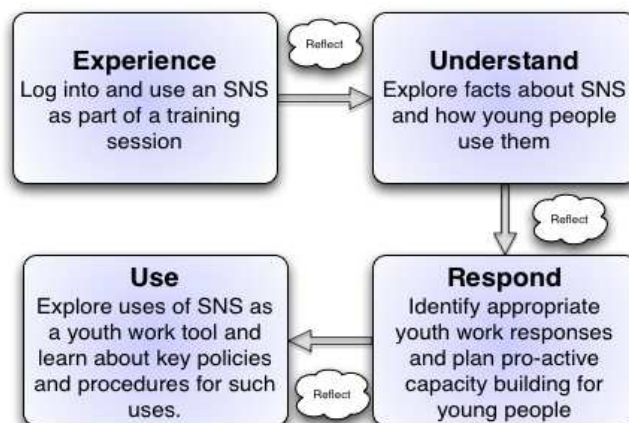
In the first we focussed on **the theory of online social networking**, using a paper-based model of an SNS to look at the features which make it up – and using group discussions to identify the different ways in which SNS are used by young people. We used a quiz exercise to explore the facts about online social networking and the risks and opportunities available to young people and youth services, and we used discussions of a range of scenarios to identify possible youth work responses to young people's safe or unsafe use of SNS. At the end of this first training session there was an opportunity to look at Bebo.com and Myspace.com – but we did not encourage training participants to log-in or do anything more than simply browse the sites²⁸.

In the second training session we started with a **practical exercise** – working in a computer room with unfiltered internet access. We asked training participants to sign up to Bebo.com and to explore what happened when they added each other as 'friends'. We then held a group discussion on what the group had discovered, and looked at issues that SNS may raise for young people or youth work. This training session ended with an activity exploring proactive youth work responses of SNS, and invited training participants to draft short project plans.

The second method, focussing on direct experience of SNS was far more effective in building the confidence and understanding of SNS amongst the workers present – and at giving a strong grounding to discussions of possible youth work responses to SNS. We also found there was a significant benefit in splitting training over at least two sessions, and in creating extensive space for reflective learning within the training group.

We would suggest that any approach to capacity building, aiming to establish a service wide basis of understanding of SNS, needs to go through the four stages of:

- **Experiencing online social networking** by accessing, registering with and using (even if for just ½ hour) a particular social networking site.
- **Understanding how young people use SNS** and the implications, risks and opportunities that gives rise to.
- **Identifying appropriate reactive and proactive youth work responses to online social networking.** This may involve learning about youth service policy and programmes, as well as providing an opportunity for workers to reflect on how they would respond to particular scenarios.
- **Youth work uses of online social networking.** It is important for those staff members already engaging with and using SNS that any training identifies appropriate and inappropriate uses of SNS and points staff to any relevant policies and



28 Partly this was due to issues with the filtering system in the computer room we were using.

procedures. An exploration of potential youth work uses of SNS should provide a foundation for further training on specific uses of SNS in youth work.

These four stages are presented in the diagram above as a cumulative/linear process to show how each stage builds upon the previous. However, the process of gaining concrete experience of SNS, observing and understanding young people's use of SNS, identifying through theory and practical scenarios the appropriate youth work responses to SNS, and experimenting with new approaches to youth work through SNS should also be seen as part of an ongoing experiential learning cycle²⁹.

Key training topics

In our focus groups and survey we invited staff to share their training priorities. Their suggestions illustrate the range of issues that hands-on and reflective learning opportunities need to address. Respondents asked for:

- Knowledge and learning activities that “remove the fear” of online social networking (which is often due more to the fact that it involves IT than the nature of the social networking platform itself)
- Practical ways of working, including how to offer professional advice in the online context and, “how social networking can be used in a safe manner to aid creativity in informing, supporting, and working with young people.”. These should include, “good practise guidelines to encourage those in the different sectors to feel safe when interacting in this new culture.”
- Information and examples about the opportunities and risks for youth work to enable people to “feel more balanced about the risks and opportunities”, including information on site security (from hacking and identity theft); whether personal information is retained after a site is closed; how to identify spoof identities; and emerging trends.
- Support to identify “Where Youth Workers draw the line in social networking interaction with young people professionally? Where is the line drawn between interaction and advice and meddling in private lives? What are the protocols that young people would like Youth Workers to follow? For example, how would they like us to interact with them on social networking projects?”
- Ideas and guidance on “How can online social networking be constructive in working with young people who lack confidence as opposed to face to face advice and support?”

Respondents also wanted to be equipped to offer young people input, interventions and capacity building that covers:

- How to “Assess risks in online behaviour”, and recognise dangers, such as grooming patterns;
- What to do about dangers (who to contact, how to record activity);
- How to operate safely (such as using privacy settings and adopting appropriate

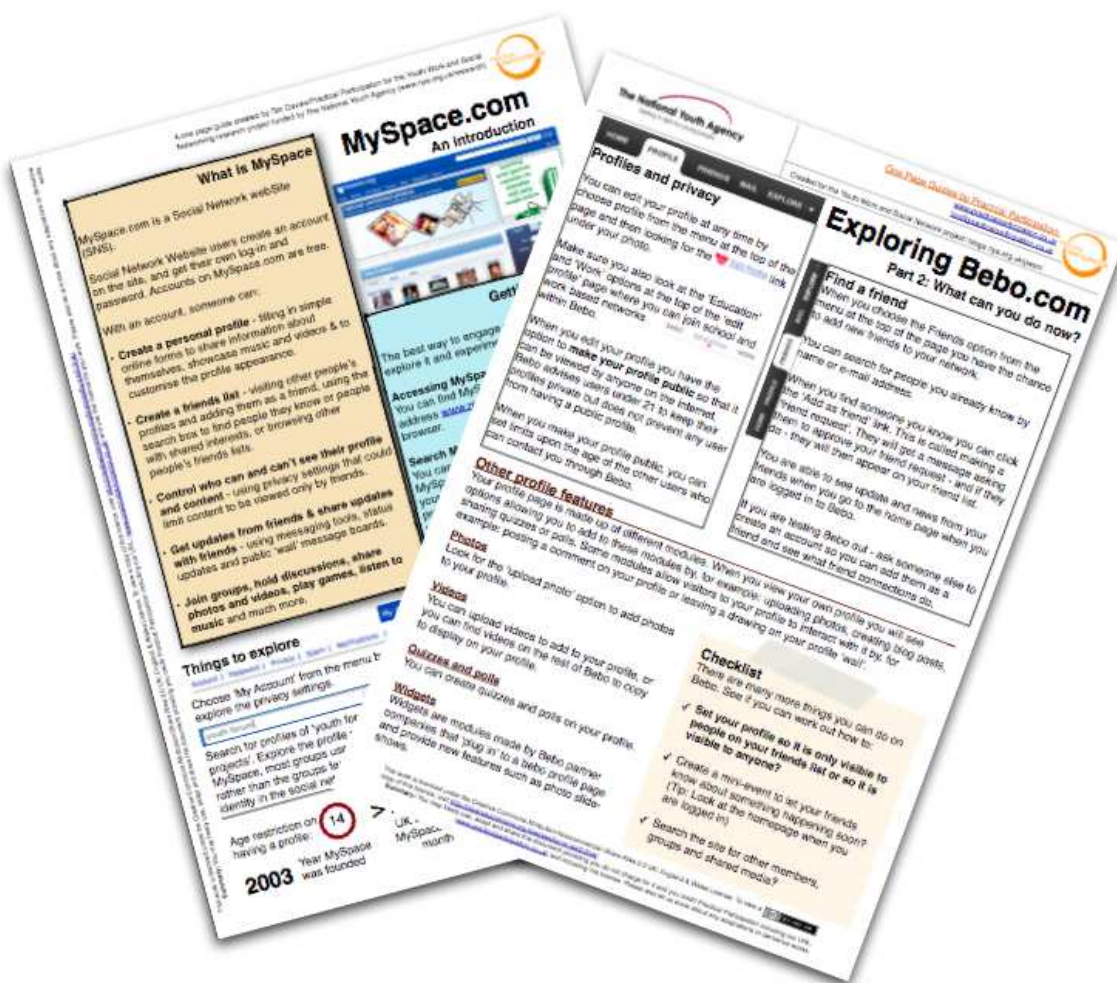
²⁹ Drawing on the theory of Kolb's learning cycle. Kolb, 'Experiential Learning: Experience As The Source Of Learning And Development', 1984.

behaviour),

- How to “compare and choose which (network) is a safer online service for them to use?”
- How to exploit opportunities of online social networking for extending networks, creative expression, accessing information and becoming more politically engaged.

Next steps

The National Youth Agency will be developing a programme of training and awareness raising to help support the emergence of champions for online social networking engagement in local authorities, whilst local youth services are encouraged to create opportunities for learning about online social networking within their teams.



Training guides used during Phase 2 of the project.

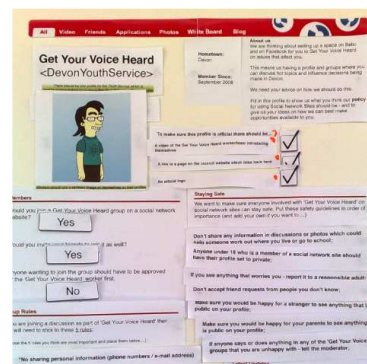
Strategy: a menu of youth work applications for SNS

Key issues

It is important that any approach to build a youth service capacity to engage with online social networking respects existing practice and innovation, and respects the emergent and constantly developing nature of online social networks themselves.

Whilst each service will need to develop its own strategic approach to online social networking there are some key elements we have identified during our research:

- **Support social networking champions** – Empower an individual or group to champion youth service engagement with online social networking, and to act as a knowledge-sharing hub to keep track of projects and practice in the service.
- **Support experimentation, pilot projects and new ideas** – Online social networking is still in its infancy. It is important to encourage staff to try out new approaches and to attempt pilot projects in order to learn about effective ways to engage with online social networking, and to updated existing methods as online social networking evolves (for example, the next generation of online social networking may well take place predominantly through mobile phones and be based on location-aware social networking, which will raise a new set of issues for a service to engage with).



Devon County Council are piloting an online participation project using SNS. The project is supported both within the youth service and the local authority communications team.

By providing clear guidance to staff, and a framework for safe engagement with online social networking – without being prescriptive about the exact ways to engage you can encourage innovative and effective practice.

- **Network nationally** – Networks like <http://www.ukyouthonline.org> provide a space to share ideas, resources and questions from your service with others and to draw upon shared learning from across the country.

Levels of strategic engagement

Youth work can engage with online social networking in three key ways:

- **Using Youth Work to support young people to navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking** – youth workers need the skills and experience to understand social networking, but access to technology is not essential for this level of engagement. Discussions, group work and individual interventions are possible approaches.
- **Promoting conventional Youth Work activities by using online social networking** - online social networking is a key space to promote and advertise the work of youth services and youth activities. Services can develop their online presence and communication channels with young people through online social networking sites.
- **Using online social networking and social network sites as Youth Work tools** – youth workers need regular access to SNS to use online social networking for

communication with young people, to complement existing youth work, and to develop new models of youth work.

The table below outlines different youth work approaches and activities that may fit within these various levels of engagement.

A matrix of youth work engagement with online social networking.						
Using Youth Work to support young people to navigate the risks and make the most of the opportunities of online social networking		Promoting conventional Youth Work activities by using online social networking	Using online social networking and social network sites as Youth Work tools.			
(1) Promote safe social networking messages and skills.	(2) Promote the uptake of positive social networking opportunities.	(3) Use social network sites to advertise and promote Youth Work activities available to young people³⁰.	(4) One-to-one communication between workers and young people³¹.	(5) Complementing existing sessions through online social networking.	(6) Creating participation opportunities through online social networking³².	(7) Online-only youth work & 'detached youth work 2.0'.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Run group-work sessions and training on safer social networking; -Build safer online social networking messages and skill-building into other youth work activities³³; -Identify and address concerns about risky behaviour; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Signpost young people to positive online social networking spaces and sites and uses of SNS. -Run group-work sessions and training on positive uses of social networking sites; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Creating profiles; -Using micro-blogging and social networking tools; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communicating with known young people by SNS message services; -Using status updates and friends list information with known young people; -One-to-one contact from unknown young people (e.g. IAG work online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Running an online component for a group or for group-work sessions; -Sharing photos and media from youth work activities through online social networking; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hosting discussion spaces in online social networks; -Providing a platform for young people's voice and influence; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Running online only activities; -Detached youth work online; -Running a project across a wide geographic area (possibly rural), or with a specific group (e.g. LGBT young people).

A strategic approach

A strategic approach to youth work and youth service engagement with online social networking will look to explore all these areas and opportunities – applying learning from small scale experiments and pilot projects to the right-hand side of the table (#3, 4, 5, 6 & 7) to both develop stronger youth work uses of online social networking and to provide a stronger knowledge and experience base for delivering sessions and inputs for young people on safe and effective uses of online social networking (#1 & 2)

30 See <http://tinyurl.com/5rrbgo> for an account of how Blackbird Leys Youth Centre have started to use Bebo and Facebook to promote their activities.

31 See the case study from the Gateshead Young Women's Outreach Project at <http://tinyurl.com/5bom4c> for details of how social network sites can act as a one-to-one communication tool in a youth work setting.

32 See the consultation report at <http://tinyurl.com/5mvsm2> for ideas around using social networking in participation.

33 See the suggestions at <http://tinyurl.com/552xbn> for ideas on how to build safer social networking ideas into other youth work sessions.

Postscript: **exciting opportunities and manageable challenges**

Online social networking is a disruptive technology. It has grown from nowhere to widespread use in under five years, and will continue to have a significant impact on the way in which young people interact with each other, and with their wider world – both now as young people, and as adults in the future.

Online social networking (as part of the wider web) has the potential to bridge divides, open up new horizons for young people, encourage creativity and create massive opportunities for learning, collaboration and innovation. It also creates new spaces where young people may be at risk and need both to be protected, and need to be equipped to respond to and navigate risk.

The impact of new technologies is not simply due to the way they are designed. The ways in which they are adopted and used are far more important in determining whether their overall impact is positive or negative . . . We have argued in this report that youth work has a unique role. It can offer support and guidance to young people as they learn to navigate the risks of online social networking. Equally importantly, it can support them to find positive patterns of use and exploit the opportunities opened up by online social networking – and in doing so, to remake SNS spaces as the sorts of environments we, and they, want them to be.

We have also suggested that online social networking opens up new opportunities for youth work – and we would encourage others to explore these more deeply. There are clear benefits in understanding more about how to use social network sites as youth work tools. More profoundly, SNS as a disruptive technology creates an opportunity space for a new exploration of historic youth work values concerning voluntary participation, altering the balance of power between young people and adults, and focussing on the importance of working with young people understood as part of peer groups, networks and communities when supporting their personal, social and moral development.

Youth work is, however, not there yet. Many youth workers (may) still see online media like SNS as about computers, and computers, they feel, are boring grey boxes that get in the way of human contact. At the same time there are big gaps in access to technology in many youth work settings. Building youth work understanding of, enthusiasm for, access to and skills for engaging in online social networking, is an enormous challenge. We believe it is a manageable one – and we hope this report is of practical help for those taking on that challenge.

Youth work can engage with online social networking, and we believe that in this age of social technology – where technology is about connections between people, not between grey boxes – it has a lot to gain from doing so.

In closing

This report contains a summary of our learning from this project. To have included all the material we have uncovered would have turned the report into a book and, as we suggest above, there is scope for a great deal more research.. We are also well aware that there is a wealth of experimentation, good practice and learning taking place in local areas across the country which we were not able to draw upon. For these reasons, amongst others, we are keen to foster continued opportunities for all those interested in youth work and social networking through the online network at <http://www.ukyouthonline.org> and by offering this paper as a discussion starter and a foundation for future action and learning.

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August 2008, Oxford.

Annex 1: Methodology

“How can youth work best support young people to navigate the risks and make the most of online social networking?”

The Youth Work and Social Networking project consisted of four key elements:

- **A literature review**
- **An online survey of youth workers and youth work managers**
- **A series of focus groups**
- **Three action research projects**

The focus of the research was on uncovering key messages from and for youth work practitioners. The literature review, online survey and focus groups formed Phase 1 of the research from December 2007 to April 2008. From April 2008 to August 2008 we applied to learning from Phase 1 into the Phase 2 action research projects.

Ongoing details of the project were reported and resources shared via a blog at <http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/> and issues relating to the project were discussed in an open online forum at <http://www.ukyouthonline.org>.

Details of each of the components of the project are given below.

Literature Review

We carried out an in depth literature review to identify existing research concerning:

- young people's engagement with online social networking;
- the opportunities and risks of online social networking;
- appropriate responses to concerns about the risks of online social networking;
- existing youth work engagement with online social networking;

The result of this literature review form §2 and §5 of the Interim Report from the project, with a more detailed outline of the evidence concerning the opportunities and risks of online social networking provided in Annex 1 of the Interim Report.

Survey

We carried out an online survey between December 2007 and January 2008 to explore awareness levels around social networking amongst youth workers, and to ascertain youth work attitudes towards online social networking.

We invited responses to questions covering respondents:

- Demographics and working contexts;
- Access to and use of online technology in home and work settings;
- Perceptions of young people's access to and use of online technologies;
- Use of different media for information and entertainment;
- Current use of online social networking tools in personal and work contexts;
- Current online safety mechanisms in use, and belief in their efficacy;
- Responses to the risk levels in a series of online social networking scenarios;
- Attitudes towards online social networking and perceived opportunities and risks it presents to young people;
- Attitudes towards a youth work role linked to online social networking;

The survey used a mixture of closed questions and open responses. Some free text responses were coded to allow for trends to be identified.

Demographics:

We received survey responses from over 120 youth workers, youth support workers, youth work managers and youth work administrators.

54% of responses were from women, with 46% of responses from men.

77% of responses came from the statutory sector, 17% from the voluntary sector, 3% from the faith sector and 1% from the private sector.

33% of respondents identified as 'youth work managers', with 29% 'professional youth workers', 7% 'youth support workers', 6% 'volunteer youth workers', 5% 'administrators' or 'other qualified youth workers' and 15% providing some other definition of their role.

Asked about the different tasks their jobs involved, 63% of respondents identified they 'organised and managed provision' for young people, with 56% involved in 'participation and youth empowerment', 46% 'delivering specific courses and programmes' and providing 'one-to-one support with young people', 32% 'running general youth club evenings', 30% 'running drop-in sessions', and 21% involved in 'detached work'.

Given the survey was conducted online, and was clearly labelled as concerning 'Youth Work and Social Networking', there is likely to be some selection bias in terms of those who completed the survey - although we believe the survey as a whole does represent a wide range of youth work views.

Focus Groups

Through a series of focus groups we sought to explore in more depth questions around:

- Current levels of access to, awareness of, and experience with online social networking in youth work;
- Attitudes within youth work towards online social networking; and
- What recommendations and proposals for action were coming from youth work with respect to online social networking;

We held three focus groups with youth workers in:

- Rotherham
- Oxfordshire
- Wiltshire

Across these three locations, 27 people took part in our focus groups, including a range of youth work managers, professional youth workers, youth support workers, trainee youth workers, administrators and young people on work experience placement. Centre based, project based, school based and detached youth work were all represented with the focus group sample. Focus group participants' ages ranged from 15 to 52, with an average age of 36. 7 of the participants were male, 20 participants were female. Of those who provided an answer, 4 participants work part time, and 20 participants work full time.

In each focus group we held a general discussion around the questions 'What is online social networking?' and 'How are young people using online social networking?'. This was followed by a short presentation on the key features of a Social Network Site, designed to make sure everyone was working from a similar understanding of online social networking in the following sections of the focus group.

We then described a number of scenarios to the group, and asked individuals to position themselves along a spectrum to indicate whether they thought the scenario was risky or safe (for the young people involved). This led to further whole group discussion.

The same scenarios then formed the basis of small group discussions about possible youth work responses to such a scenario. Small group discussions were also used to explore possible ways in which online social networking presented an opportunity for youth work.

Finally, we held a whole group discussion to look at where participants thought youth work should be moving with respect to online social networking, and the key resources and changes they felt would be needed to support progress in those directions.

A detailed report of results from the Focus group is included in the Interim Report §4.

Action Research

We worked with three youth services to develop short pilot projects in response to learning from the first phase of our research. These projects took place in:

- **Rotherham** – where we worked to develop a programme of **training** for youth workers.
- **Oxford** – where we worked to explore the use of social network sites in a youth center setting, and the use of social network sites in the **promotion** of youth service provision.
- **Devon** – where we worked to explore the use of social network sites to support young people's **participation** in decision making.

In each case the youth service had access to a set number of consultancy days from our researchers to enable them to develop these projects. Throughout the process we sought to capture insights and learning from the project participants.

The learning generated from these projects is captured in the 'applications and implications' sheets and case studies in this report.

Resources generated during these projects can be found on the project blog at <http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/>. In particular you can find blog posts on:

- **Weaving safe social networking messages into other sessions** – ideas from a meeting in Rotherham about how to talk about safe social networking without just talking about social networking. <http://is.gd/1K4R>
- **Using SNS for participation: consultation report from Devon** – a four page summary of young people's views on how Devon county council should use sites like Bebo and MySpace to invite young people's views on issues that affect them. <http://is.gd/1K4Y>
- **Sign-posting young people to positive social networking spaces** – a potential activity to promote opportunities on social network sites to young people, whilst also sharing safety messages. <http://is.gd/1K52>
- **Introductions to MySpace and Bebo** – responding to requests from workers for very basic details of these sites, and how to explore them. <http://is.gd/1K5k> and <http://is.gd/1K5h>
- **Dealing with blocking and filtering** – notes on our experiences of trying to gain access to MySpace, Bebo and Facebook to run a training session with youth workers. <http://is.gd/1K5t>

Discussions that have contributed to the action research phase of the Youth Work and Social Networking project have also taken place on the UK Youth Online network at <http://www.ukyouthonline.org> and we have drawn upon a case study of the Gateshead Young Women's Outreach Project which you can find here: <http://is.gd/1K5c>

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The National Youth Agency

works in partnership with young people and with organisations and services to ensure better outcomes for young people. It is an independent, development organisation located between government and funding bodies on the one hand and service providers and their users on the other.

We strive to ensure that the work of services and organisations is:

- relevant to the lives of young people;
 - responsive to policy;
 - effective and of a high standard;
- efficient and provides good value; and
- successful in securing the best outcomes for young people.

Our five strategic aims are:

- Participation: promoting young people's influence, voice and place in society.
- Professional practice: improving youth work practice, programmes and other services for young people.
- Policy development: influencing and shaping the youth policy of central and local government and the policies of those who plan, commission and provide services for young people.
- Partnership: creating, supporting and developing partnerships between organisations to improve services and outcomes for young people.
- Performance: striving for excellence in The Agency's internal workings.

Published by



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Ashleigh's Rules

Ashleigh Hall was a student at Darlington College who died in tragic circumstances. Ashleigh's death came about through her social networking.

Lots of people love using Facebook, Twitter and chat rooms. There is nothing wrong with chatting to your friends in this way. However, it's really important that you keep yourself safe, so we asked our students to give us their safeguarding tips:

- 1 If ever meeting up with somebody who is alien to you or your friends make sure that you meet them in a group of at least 2-3 and in a public, well lit and populated area.
- 2 Inform somebody of where you are going and what time you should be back, also the name of who you are meeting.

- 3 Don't accept anyone on social networking sites that you don't know.
- 4 Remember never to trust anyone who you have met online, you don't know what they are capable of doing.
- 5 Never tell a stranger on network sites or chat rooms anything personal about yourself, eg. Where you live, date of birth etc.
- 6 Never meet anyone you don't know, simple as!



CABINET REPORT

18 April 2011



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO YOUTH INVOLVEMENT / PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COUNCIL SERVICES, INCLUDING THE SAFEGUARDING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

- 2.1 The report provides brief background information into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People' 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's Young People's Representatives, 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.

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 at the start of the 2011/12 Municipal Year (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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO YOUTH INVOLVEMENT / PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF COUNCIL SERVICES, INCLUDING THE SAFEGUARDING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'. 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.
- 2.2 The overall aim of the scrutiny investigation was to explore how the Council could use social networking as a way to promote and advertise what's on offer.

3. ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 As a result of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People', the following recommendations have been made:-
- (a) Some Clear policy and guidance put in place for all departments within the council to follow;

- (b) Have a standard procedure – departments should not go ahead and do this on their own;
 - (c) Closed sites that can not be commented on or someone to be responsible for the site 24 hours a day. This would include fast and effective takedown procedures!;
 - (d) Employers should have basic legal training. If not don't do it!;
 - (e) Education is a good way of ensuring young people are safe when they are online. Ashleigh's rules go some way in to supporting this. This could be advertised when each department sets up a site;
 - (f) Take in to consideration examples of good practice. Some Councils may be ahead of others so link with them where possible; and
 - (g) Social networking is not for everyone so other methods of communicating such as posters and leaflets will still need to be in place.
- 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 at the start of the 2011/12 Municipal Year (subject to the availability of appropriate Portfolio Holder).

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 Young People's Representatives' investigation into the 'Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services, Including the Safeguarding of Young People'.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

8.4 Appendix A

NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services Including the Safeguarding of Young People (Use of Social Networking)

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(a)	Some Clear policy and guidance put in place for all departments within the council to follow; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report written by C&AS for suggested approach to managing social media use – going to DMT in April 2011.• Same report to be taken to R&N DMT and CEMT.• Recommendation of report is that a council wide policy is created and implemented.• E-safety group in place, with remit that includes use and management of social media tools.• Social networking policy for staff in schools is being completed.• Current Internet & Email policy outlines social media use on a personal level.	Resources to oversee the use and development of social media are expected to be from existing staff.	Leigh Keeble / Trevor Smith	31-May-2011
(b)	Have a standard procedure – departments should not go ahead and do this on their own; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Above report gives a suggested framework for overseeing the development and use of social media tools for all age ranges.	Resources to oversee the use and development of social media are expected to be	Leigh Keeble / Trevor Smith	31-May-2011

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

8.4 Appendix A

NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services Including the Safeguarding of Young People (Use of Social Networking)

DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
		from existing staff.		
(c)	Closed sites that can not be commented on or someone to be responsible for the site 24 hours a day. This would include fast and effective takedown procedures!;	• Approach to be agreed (with policy), but site will not monitored 24 hours a day.	Leigh Keeble / Trevor Smith	31-May-2011
(d)	Employers should have basic legal training. If not don't do it!;	• Training course for a range of council staff completed in Jan 2011, which included explanation of legal issues that influence use & development of social media tools. • This information to be shared among wider group of staff as use is extended to other areas.	Leigh Keeble / Trevor Smith	31-May-2011 (and ongoing)
(e)	Education is a good way of ensuring young people are safe when they are online. Ashleigh's rules go some way in to supporting this. This could be advertised when the	• E-safety group in place to ensure children and young people are supported to enjoy the benefits of new technology, and provide guidance and skills to avoid risk and harm.	Jim Murdoch	31-Mar-2012

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN**8.4 Appendix A****NAME OF FORUM: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY: Youth Involvement / Participation in the Development and Delivery of Council Services Including the Safeguarding of Young People (Use of Social Networking)****DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT: 18 April 2011**

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	each department sets up a site;				
(f)	Take in to consideration examples of good practice. Some Councils may be ahead of others so link with them where possible;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social media group in C&AS has examined good practice and use in other councils and will continue to ensure HBC can learn from more advanced practice elsewhere.		Leigh Keeble / Trevor Smith	30-Sep-2011
(g)	Social networking is not for everyone so other methods of communicating such as posters and leaflets will still need to be in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Existing methods of communicating with the public will continue in C&AS as managed through the Development Team	Dependent on specific methods employed.	Leigh Keeble	31-Mar-2012