

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Tuesday 6 March 2012

at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, Fleet, Griffin, Ingham, Lauderdale, Maness, P Thompson, Wells and Wilcox.

Co-opted Members: Eira Ballingall, Sacha Paul Bedding and Michael Lee

Resident Representatives: Joan Steel, and 2 vacancies.

Young People's Representatives: Hanna Bew, Ashleigh Bostock, Bianca Gascoigne and Kim Henry

School Council Representatives: Two vacancies

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2012 (*to follow*).

4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items

5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items

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

No items

7. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

INVESTIGATION INTO YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO TRANSPORT

- 7.1 Draft Final Report into 'Young People's Access to Transport' – *Young People's Representatives*

INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE

- 7.2 Draft Final Report into 'The Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People' – *Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*

8. **ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

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

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of Next Meeting to be confirmed

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

31 January 2012

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Christopher Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Mary Fleet, Peter Ingham, John Lauderdale, Paul Thompson,
Ray Wells and Angie Wilcox

Also in attendance:

Young Representatives from Looked After Children and Children
Leaving Care along with Foster Carers and Support Workers

Officers: Caroline O'Neill, Assistant Director, Performance and
Achievement
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Specialist
Services
Graham Frankland, Assistant Director, Resources
Peter McIntosh, Head of Planning and Development
Jane Young, Business Unit Manager
Ian Merritt, Strategic Commissioner, Children's Services
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer
Laura Stones, Scrutiny Support Officer
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

84. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sheila Griffin and Co-opted Member Sacha Paul Bedding.

85. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Mary Fleet declared a personal interest in minutes 89, 91, 92, 93 and Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in minute 94 later in the meeting.

86. Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2012

Confirmed.

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

None.

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

None.

89. Investigation into the Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children/Young People
(Looked After Children/Young People)

Members were informed that a number of looked after children and young people had been invited to share their views about being looked after. The looked after children and young people were asked to inform Members about a week in their life and the following questions were suggested to focus the presentation:

- (a) What do you like about being looked after in care?
- (b) What don't you like about being looked after in care?
- (c) Is there anything which would have made coming into care easier for you? What would have made your time in care easier?
- (d) If you were able to change the care system, what things would you change?

The looked after children and young people gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation which was very informative and covered a number of issues both positive and negative in answer to the above questions.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) One of the main areas of concern highlighted by Members was the separation of siblings and issues around siblings staying in contact with each other when families are subject to care proceedings. Whilst the Business Unit Manager confirmed that where possible siblings were looked after together, there were some instances where this was not the appropriate solution or where the space within the foster carer's home would not facilitate this. However, in instances where siblings were separated, every effort was made to enable regular contact between the siblings through their social workers and foster carers. The importance of ensuring that siblings remained in touch whilst in foster care was emphasised by Members.
- (ii) The presentation referred to young people being collected from school

and taken into care without any warning and a Member questioned this. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that children were only collected from school in exceptional circumstances where the protection of that child was an issue and their welfare needed to be secured immediately. Under normal circumstances, taking a child into care was planned in a way that was in the best interests of that child.

- (iii) A Member sought clarification on how often the looked after children had contact with their social worker. A number of young people responded differently with some indicating that they see their social worker on a daily basis and some with weekly or monthly arrangements. In general it seemed that the young people could personalise their contact arrangements. However, they all confirmed that they felt they were able to contact their social worker outside of these arrangements at any time. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that the statutory requirement for contact with social workers was, where a child was in the same placement for over a year, contact once every 3 months. However, the local authority had adopted a minimum requirement of contact with all children in the care of the local authority every month although this was not set in stone and the young people could contact their social worker at any time.
- (iv) In relation to matching a child with an appropriate foster care family, a Member questioned whether the child was given an opportunity to say whether they were happy with the placement being offered. The Assistance Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that once a match was made, the children and foster care families go through a process of introductions and visits. Every effort was made to ensure the stability of the first placement as moving children from one placement to another was very disruptive for everyone. However, if a child indicated they were unhappy within a placement, alternative placements would be explored.
- (v) A Member sought clarification on the contact arrangements between the children and young people and their social workers outside of normal office hours. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that all looked after children had contact details for their individual social workers provided on calling cards. Should any child or young person wish to contact a social worker out of normal office hours, the Emergency Duty Team was available. A separate arrangement of support out of normal office hours was provided for young people leaving care if they did not wish to contact the Emergency Duty Team. A Member suggested that all children and young people who were looked after should be personally introduced to members of the Emergency Duty Team to ensure they did not feel like they were contacting strangers with their problems. In addition, it was suggested that the contact details of an appropriate alternative contact should be included on the contact cards should their individual social worker be unavailable. The young people in attendance indicated that they had not had any problems contacting their social workers but commented that it would be useful to have an alternative contact number as a fall back in case their social worker was not available.

- (vi) A Member noted that the presentation referred to the requirement for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks to be undertaken by the looked after children's friends' families if they wished to go to a sleepover. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that this used to be common practice but was stopped in 2001. Foster carers used their own judgement and applied the same rule they would apply to their own children in such circumstances.
- (vii) Clarification was sought by a Member on the arrangements for contact where siblings were separated through adoption. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that whilst the local authority would aim for an agreement for contact between siblings who lived separately, the adoptive parents had the authority to veto contact should they choose to do so until the adopted child was aged 18 unless an appropriate court order was in place. However, the fact that the local authority provided support and encouragement for the adopted child or young person to have direct contact with family members was included as part of the training and preparation for prospective adoptive parents. Members suggested that a greater safeguard should be given to siblings when one of them is adopted so contact should continue unhindered.
- (viii) A Member questioned the numbers of children and young people that were in placements outside of Hartlepool. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that approximately 75% of looked after children lived within the Hartlepool local authority boundary, with around 10-15% on the edge of the boundary, such as Billingham and Stockton with a similar percentage at greater distance. The importance of ensuring the correct balance was in place in relation to locality of placement and an appropriate family match for the child was emphasised.

The looked after children and young people were thanked for their extremely informative presentation and for answering Members' questions which would be used to inform the final report of the investigation. The looked after children, young people, foster carers and support workers left the meeting at this point.

- (ix) Members discussed at length the issues around separating siblings who were placed in care and the issues that arose from this. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reiterated that siblings would only be separated where absolutely necessary. However, further work was being undertaken to explore more ways of enabling siblings to be placed together. The Business Unit Manager commented that the payment system for foster carers took into account situations where three or more siblings were placed together as it was often a more difficult situation to manage.
- (x) At the last meeting of the Forum, Members had been informed that career carers were employed in other local authorities to undertake some of the more challenging and complex placements. The Business Unit Manager responded that this system had previously been used in Hartlepool using Band 5 carers who received a higher rate of pay but

this had experienced a number of challenges linked to ensuring placement stability alongside maximising use of specialist carers.

Recommended

The presentation and discussion that followed would be used to inform the Forum's final report.

90. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Proposals for Inclusion in Child and Adult Services Departmental Plan 2012/13 *(Child and Adult Services Departmental Management Team)*

The Strategy and Performance Officer introduced the report which provided the opportunity for the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to consider the proposals for inclusion in the 2012/13 Child and Adult Services Departmental Plan. The Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement gave a detailed and comprehensive presentation which provided the proposed outcomes and actions contained within the plan. The presentation highlighted the challenges faced by the Department and proposals for dealing with those challenges.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) A Member questioned whether the local authority was still working to the previous Government's vision of eradicating child poverty by 2020. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that the local authority was continuing to work towards previously set targets to eradicate child poverty.
- (ii) Clarification was sought on the possible reasons for the increase in the number of looked after children. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that a recent analysis had highlighted that in July 2011, there had been a spike in the figures as three families all with large numbers of siblings had been referred to safeguarding. In addition, an increase in referrals could be due to the impact of the early intervention and prevention service as more families were receiving services.
- (iii) A Member sought clarification on the exact definition of child poverty and the Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguard and Specialist Services confirmed that the definition was a very clear formula measurement and would ensure that this information was provided to Members.
- (iv) In relation to the Jobs and Economy theme, a Member suggested that the action 'Provide support for vulnerable young people to enable them to be economically active' should be expanded and include examples to ensure it was meaningful.
- (v) It was suggested that the action within the Jobs and Economy theme that referred to the increase in the take up of apprenticeships needed a level of accountability of local colleges and employers and follow up

actions should be developed and included within the action.

- (vi) A Member requested that the due date of March 2013 be changed to the review date, as the implementation of the plan needed to be before March 2013.
- (vii) Clarification was sought on the action to 'Develop training packages for family workforce to identify poverty issues and support parents in poverty'. The Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement confirmed that this was training for front line workers to support families who were managing on a limited budget to ensure their money goes as far as possible.
- (viii) The action 'Develop pathways within Early Intervention Strategy to improve parents access to support re: financial inclusion' should be broader as it should include more than financial inclusion, the term financial inclusion should be removed from the action.
- (ix) The reference to 'Develop a robust action plan' within the Health and Wellbeing Theme should read 'Develop a robust Health and Well Being Strategy' and should be linked with the work currently being undertaken by the Assistant Director, Public Health.

Recommended

Members comments noted above would be included within the response to be reported to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 17 February 2012 on the Child and Adult Services Departmental Plan 2012/13.

91. Verbal feedback from the site visits to The Start Centre held on 12 December 2011, the Children's Home in Hartlepool and the Children's Home in Stockton held on 24 January 2012 *(Members of the Forum who attended the visit)*

The Chair of the Forum, Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher along with Councillors Peter Ingham and Ray Wells had attended the site visits to the Start Centre on 12 December 2011 and the Children's Homes in Hartlepool and Stockton on 24 January 2012. Feedback from each visit was summarised as below:

The Star Centre

All Members who attended the visit considered the reception given on arrival at the Star Centre as not welcoming and that the Centre felt cold, inhospitable and did not feel homely. Whilst Members accepted the territorial and protective nature that can be displayed especially in view of the current economic climate and the requirement to cut budgets, Members did not accept the welcome they received. Members considered the building to be run down.

Children's Home, Hartlepool

Similarly, Members considered the Hartlepool Children's Home to be a largely inhospitable and run down building. There were a number maintenance issues in and around the building and Members were informed that maintenance was undertaken separately and was not the role of the staff within the home.

Children's Home, Stockton

The Children's Home in Stockton was a large 4-bedroom terraced property, was very homely and all Members were made to feel welcome on arrival. The impression Members were given was that the children living in the home were being looked after by a 'house mother' who took charge whilst working under the ethos of a family ethos. In addition to this, the home was spotlessly clean. Members acknowledged that the success of such an operation was linked to having the right staff in place who considered this type of employment to be a vocation as opposed to a job.

Members felt very strongly that the Council would be in a better position with control of their own facilities within local authority ownership. Members were mindful that privately run residential homes were operated by external companies whose main aim was to make a profit. It was suggested that the option of 'selling' a bed contained within a local authority children's home to another local authority may subsidise the operational costs of running the home. One of the key aims to be considered when exploring the feasibility of a local authority owned children's home was to enable Hartlepool children to remain within Hartlepool.

Members wished their disappointment with both Hartlepool facilities to be fed back to the appropriate Manager as they felt completely disheartened as corporate parents. In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed that inspections of the Exmoor Grove were undertaken on a monthly basis, however any visits/inspections carried out in the privately owned children's home were organised by the owners of that home.

Whilst Members acknowledged that everyone had different expectations of what they consider to be an appropriate standard of care, the Members who attended the visits unanimously concurred with the above comments. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services informed Members that the concerns raised regarding the Star Centre had been taken back to the relevant Managers. It was highlighted that Hartlepool could and should learn a lot from the way the children's home provision was run in Stockton as they had been rated as outstanding providers of residential care.

Recommended

- (i) Members comments were noted and would be fed back to the appropriate Managers and owners of the children's homes.
- (ii) The feedback from the site visits would be used to inform the final report of the investigation.

92. Progress report on the recommendations from the investigations into the foster care service (2008/09) and appropriate accommodation for homeless young people for whatever reason (2008/09) *(Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services)*

Members were presented with a progress report on the recommendations from the investigations into the Foster Care Service (2008/09) and Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason (2008/09) to assist the Forum with their current investigation into the Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children and Young People.

The Chair noted that one of the issues highlighted was the need to avoid duplication. Members noted that the issue that had been raised under minute 89 earlier in the meeting of keeping looked after siblings together was highlighted as a priority.

Recommended

The update report was noted.

93. Formulation of Recommendations *(Members of the Forum)*

The Chair presented draft recommendations which had been formulated from the discussions and presentations during the investigation into the provision of support and services to looked after children/young people. It was suggested that the recommendations could be finalised for submission to the next meeting of the Forum.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) *Recommendation 11 – That foster carers, where appropriate, be encouraged to take their fostered child/young person on holiday with them as part of the family and reduce respite placements.* Members were concerned that children/young people placed with a foster family who were not included in family holidays would not fully integrated into the family. The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding, Specialist and Preventative Services informed Members that independent foster carers received paid holidays. However, it was noted that instances of

foster families not including the children/young people placed with them in their holidays was a rare occurrence. It was suggested that in order not to discourage people from considering becoming foster carers, that where a foster carer indicated that they may not wish to take any child/young person placed with them on holiday, they may be more suitable for shorter term placements. However, there would be an expectation that any child/young person placed in a long term placement would become an integral part of that family and be included in all family activities. Members considered that this ethos should be promoted throughout the training and development process for all foster carers.

- (ii) *Recommendation 12 – Developing a 'bring a gift' initiative* – A Member sought clarification on this recommendation. The Chair of the Forum indicated that bringing a gift could include donating an activity such as gifting tickets to attend Council events to families with looked after children.
- (iii) The suggestion to explore the viability of Council owned children's homes was referred to as Members aspired to the model used in Stockton. It was suggested that low cost borrowing could be utilised to facilitate this as well as exploring alternative uses for assets already owned by the Council.
- (iv) In relation to the future recruitment of foster carers, Members considered that the option to become foster carers should be built into the redeployment process to highlight this option to staff at risk of redundancy, with a view to retaining staff who have the relevant skills and competencies.

The Chair indicated that the draft recommendations would be amended to reflect the discussions noted above and would be submitted to an informal meeting of the Scrutiny Forum to be finalised prior to submission to Cabinet.

Recommended

That the above discussions be noted to inform and amend the draft recommendations prior to submission to an informal meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

94. Executive's Forward Plan (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Assistant Director, Resources was in attendance to provide clarification on a number of items included within the Forward Plan as requested by Members.

Decision Reference : RN89/11 Former Brierton School Site

The Assistant Director, Resources confirmed that occupancy of the site by Dyke House Secondary School had ceased as they had relocated back to the refurbished site at Mapleton Road. A number of options were being considered with the aspiration to continue using the buildings and sports centre, the potential to develop a 25m swimming pool and the possible

disposal of part of the site for development. Discussions were ongoing with Catcote and Springwell schools about the potential for relocation to the Brierton Site. In addition to this, the Pupil Referral Unit who were decanted to the Education Development Centre (EDC) in Seaton Lane may relocate back to the Brierton site, freeing up the EDC site for disposal. Consideration was also being given to the pitch strategy and how this may affect the use of the pitches at the Brierton site. The Assistant Director, Resources confirmed that a number of consultees were to be included in the discussions including Ward Councillors.

A Member sought clarification on the timescales involved with the above proposals. The Assistant Director, Resources confirmed that a full cost/benefit analysis and a series of decisions would be needed throughout the process and it was hoped that a blueprint for the whole site could be in place within approximately six months. Members understood the vision for the site was for the development of a learning village with the exploration of the potential for funding from Sport England. The Chair requested that the blueprint for the site be reported to a future meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for further comment.

Decision Reference CAS105/11: Hartlepool School Admission Arrangements for 2013/14

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Ray Wells declared a personal interest.

Concern was expressed at the suggested change to the admissions criteria used within the school admission arrangements. It was proposed that siblings of children already attending a school but living out of the admission zone for a school would take priority over children who were living within the admission zone. Whilst the importance of keeping siblings together was noted, Members did not want to see the children who lived within the current school boundaries disadvantaged. This concern would be raised at the next meeting of the School Admission Forum and would be forwarded to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

Decision Reference: CAS 116/11 Development of Children's Residential Care Provision in Hartlepool

There was some concern expressed that Cabinet may not have due time to fully consider the recommendations from this Scrutiny Forum's investigation into the provision of support and services for looked after children/young people as they were scheduled to make a decision on this item in March/April.

Decision Reference: CAS 118/12 Development of Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers and Homeless Young People

Whilst it was acknowledged that this decision specifically referred to properties within the Burn Valley Ward, it was suggested that town-wide provision should be examined with much wider consultation involving all voluntary and community sector with the results reported to the Children's Services Scrutiny

Forum.

Recommended

- (i) That a draft of the blueprint for the development of the Brierton site be reported to a future meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum prior to implementation.
- (ii) That Members concerns at the proposed amendments to the admissions criteria contained within the School Admission Policy be forwarded to the School Admission Policy and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.
- (iii) That the development of supported accommodation for care leavers and homeless young people be town-wide and include consultees from the community and voluntary sector.

95. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 6.41 pm

CHAIR

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

6 March 2012



Report of: Young People's Representatives

Subject: DRAFT FINAL REPORT – 'YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO TRANSPORT'

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum that the Young People's Representatives will be presenting their Draft Final Report into 'Young People's Access to Transport' at this meeting.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the time of writing this report, the Young People's Representatives of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum are finalising their report, therefore, in accordance with the Authority's Access to Information Rules, it has not been possible to include the Draft Final Report within the statutory requirements for the despatch of the agenda and papers for this meeting. Although, arrangements have been made for the Draft Final Report to be circulated under separate cover and in advance of this meeting.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the content of this report and consider the Draft Final Report into 'Young People's Access to Transport' at this meeting.

Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523087
Email: laura.stones@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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



CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People

6 March 2012

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

6 March 2012



Report of: Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Subject: DRAFT FINAL REPORT INTO THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE

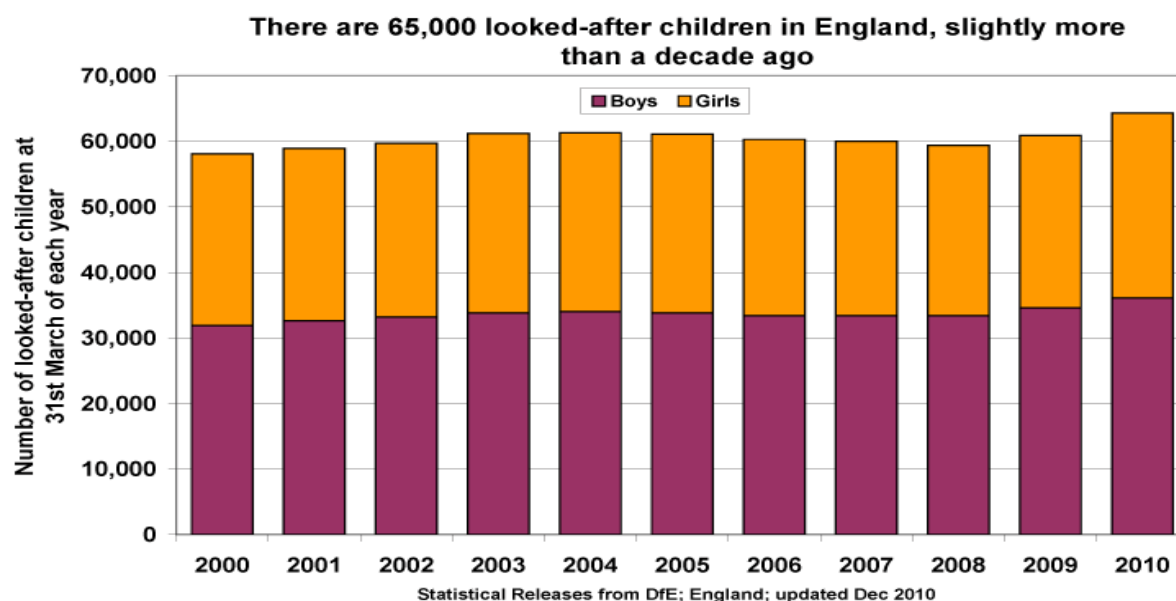
1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft findings of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into 'The Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Children in the care of a local authority are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. At any one time around 65,000 children are looked after in England, as shown in graph 1 below.

Graph 1 – Number of Looked After Children in England



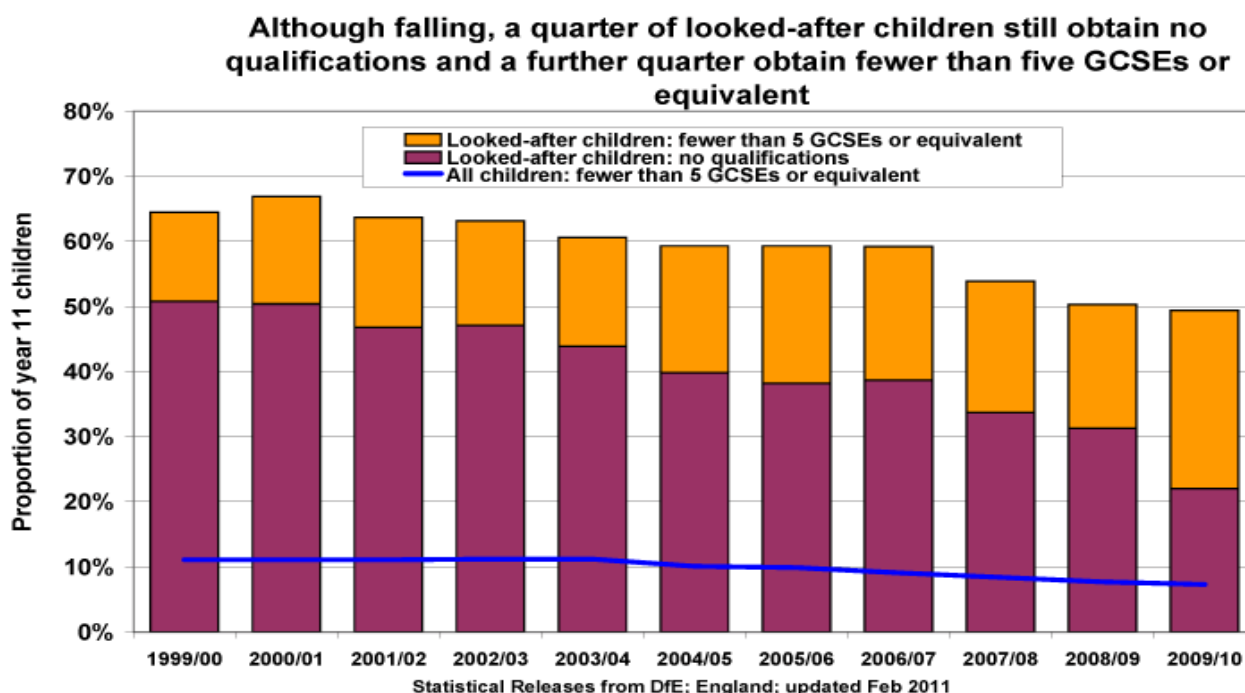
2.2 All Elected Members take on the role of 'corporate parents' to children looked after by their local authority. They have a duty to take an interest in the well-being and development of those children, as if they were their own children.

2.3 The term 'looked after children' includes:

- (a) Those children who are in care through a Care Order under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989;
- (b) Those accommodated on a voluntary basis through an agreement with their parents under Section 20 of that Act, or agreement with of the child if they are over 16;
- (c) Children placed away from home under an Emergency Protection Order (Section 44 of the Children Act); and
- (d) Children on police protection/remand/detention (Section 21 of the Children Act).

2.4 Most looked after children / young people are in foster care (73 per cent), some 10 per cent are in children's homes, the remaining are cared for in a number of different settings including residential schools and placement with parents. Although falling, a quarter of looked after children / young people still obtain no qualifications and a further quarter obtain fewer than five GCSEs or equivalent. A third of previously looked after children / young people are not in education, employment or training at age 19, as shown in graph 2 below.

Graph 2 – Educational Achievement of Looked After Children / Young People



2.5 As at 30 June 2011, 173 children and young people were looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council. Of the children looked after, 87% were placed in foster care, 8% were placed in residential care and 5% were placed with

parents (under a legal order). 58% of the children looked after were subject to a legal order, for example interim or full Care Order or Placement Order. The remainder were accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 at the request of/with the agreement of their parents. 19 children received family support via short break care where they received care as part of a plan; this support is usually provided to disabled children who receive short break care at Exmoor Grove. 70% of the children resided within the local authority boundary.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To explore the range and provision of services and support for children and young people looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council

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 18 October 2011:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of:-

- i) The profile of children and young people looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council (including age range covered);
- ii) Departmental responsibilities and services provided for looked after children / young people; and
- iii) The role of each Elected Member as a Corporate Parent.

- (b) To explore how the Council can reduce the numbers of looked after children / young people.

- (c) To explore how the Council and partner organisations support looked after children / young people across all aspects of their lives (clearly defining what is a statutory requirement and what the Council does over and above these requirements in terms of the provision of services and support) and in doing so evaluates:-

- (1) *How well the Council does in commissioning or providing services for looked after children / young people, including in comparison with other similar authorities?*
- (2) *How well do looked after children / young people do at school, both academically and in terms of other kind of achievements:*
- (3) *How good is the health and wellbeing of children in care?*
- (4) *How stable and secure are the lives of looked after children / young people while they are in care?*

- (5) *How well does the Council do at finding appropriate adoptive families for children for whom it is decided this is the right option?*
- (6) *How well do foster care arrangements work?*
- (7) *How good is the standard of any residential care provided or used by the Council?*
- (8) *What support does the Council provide to children / young people leaving care and how effective is it?*
- (9) *How effective is the professional workforce of social workers and others responsible for running services for and working with looked after children / young people?*
- (10) *What more could be done to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as a 'corporate parent'?*

(Questions from the Centre for Public Scrutiny Guidance on 10 Questions to ask if you're Scrutinising Services for Looked After Children)

- (d) To explore the views of looked after children / young people in relation to the services and support they receive.
- (e) To gain an understanding of the impact of current and future budget pressures on the way in which services for looked after children / young people are provided in Hartlepool.
- (f) To suggest ways of how support and services could be provided in the future to most effectively / efficiently meet the needs of looked after children / young people and promote improved outcomes.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

5.1 Membership of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2011 / 12 Municipal Year was as outlined below:-

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

(Councillor B Loynes, substitute for Councillor R Wells on occasions during the investigation)

Co-opted Members: Eira Ballingall and Sacha Paul Bedding.

Resident Representatives: Joan Steel

Young People's Representatives: Hanna Bew, Ashleigh Bostock, Bianca Gascoigne and Kim Henry

6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

- 6.1 The Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from the 18 October 2011 to 6 March 2012 to discuss and receive evidence directly relating to their investigation into 'The Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People'. 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) Group exercises held with:-
 - (i) Partner organisations;
 - (ii) Foster carers;
 - (iii) Looked after young children and young people;
 - (iv) Social Workers; and
 - (v) Officers from the Child and Adult Services Department
 - (c) Verbal and written evidence from foster carers
 - (d) A presentation from looked after children and young people
 - (e) A presentation from South Tyneside Council

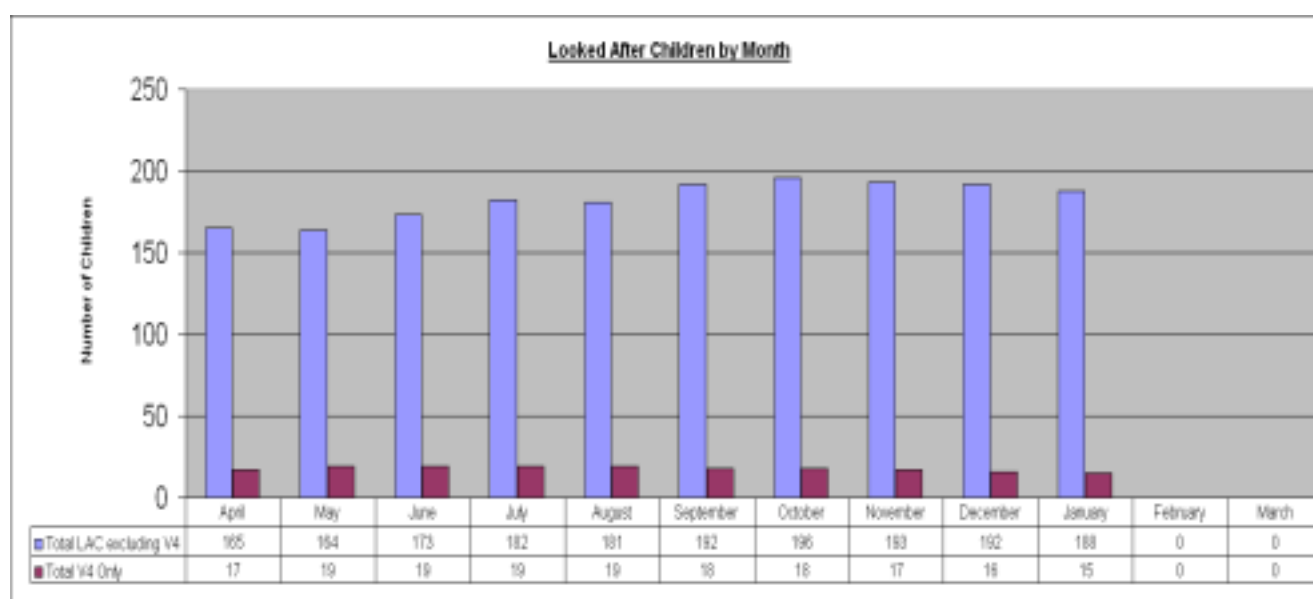
7. FINDINGS

THE PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKED AFTER BY HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL (INCLUDING AGE RANGE COVERED)

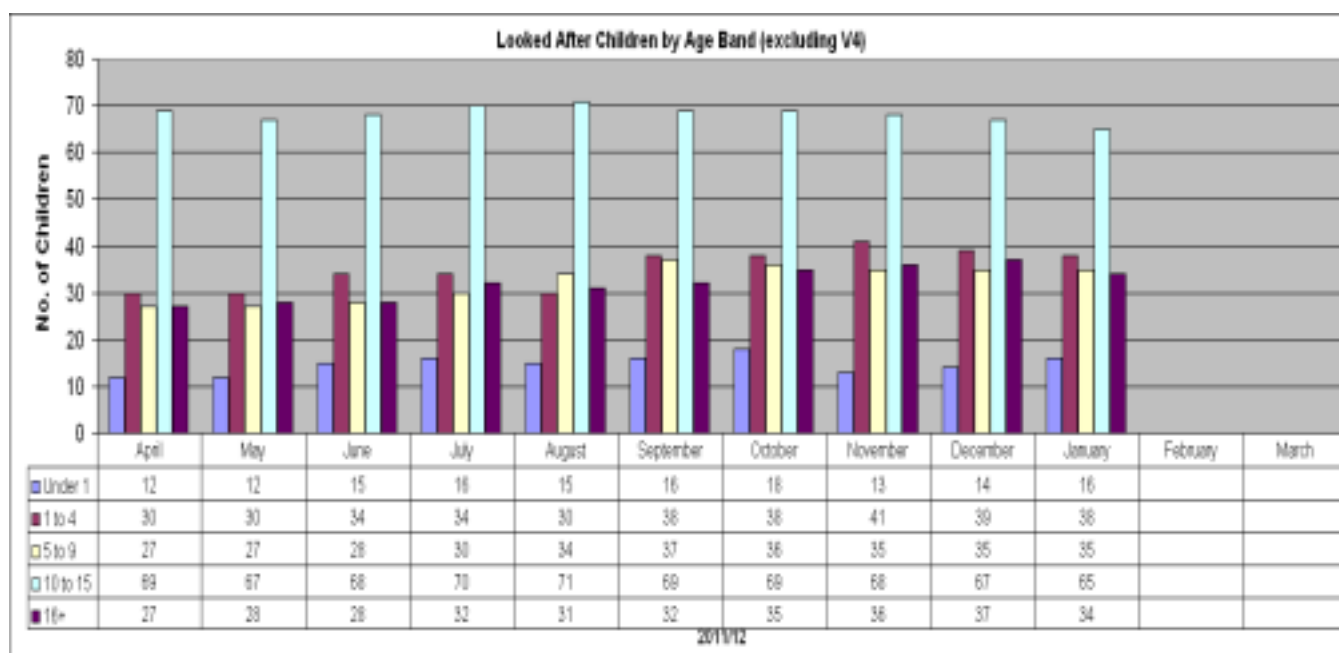
- 7.1 Members of the Forum were very interested to hear about the profile of children and young people looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council for the current year, 2011 / 12. The profiles were illustrated to Members using a variety of graphs and tables.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

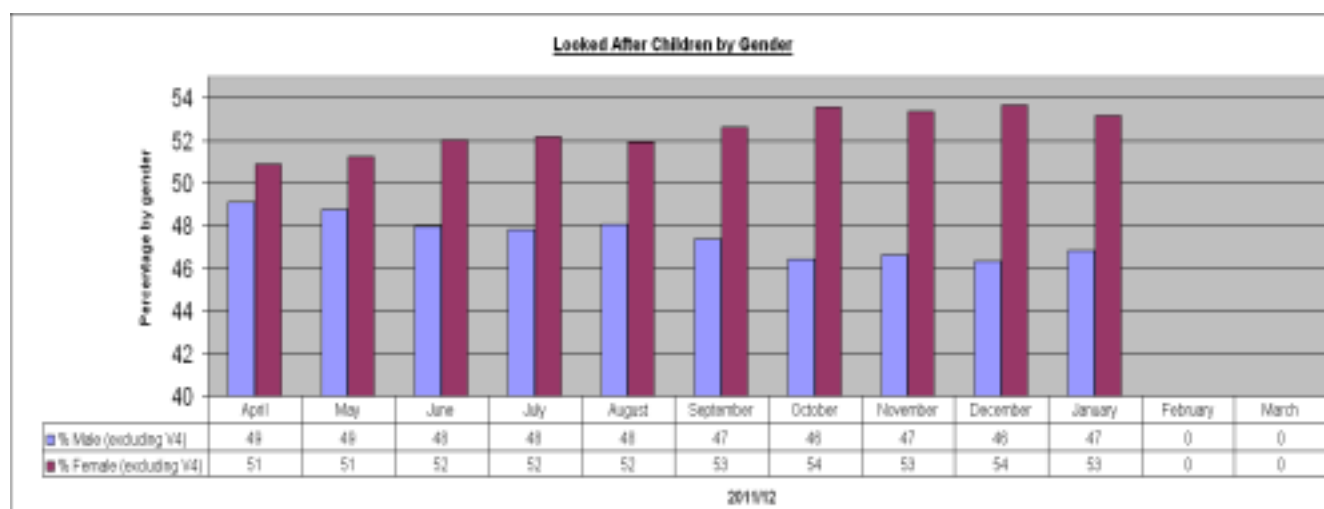
- 7.2 Table 1 details the numbers of children looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council from April 2011. The graph shows a rise in children looked after in June to August 2011. Members were informed that upon closer investigation, this was primarily due to large sibling groups becoming looked after.

Table 1 Numbers of looked after children and young people

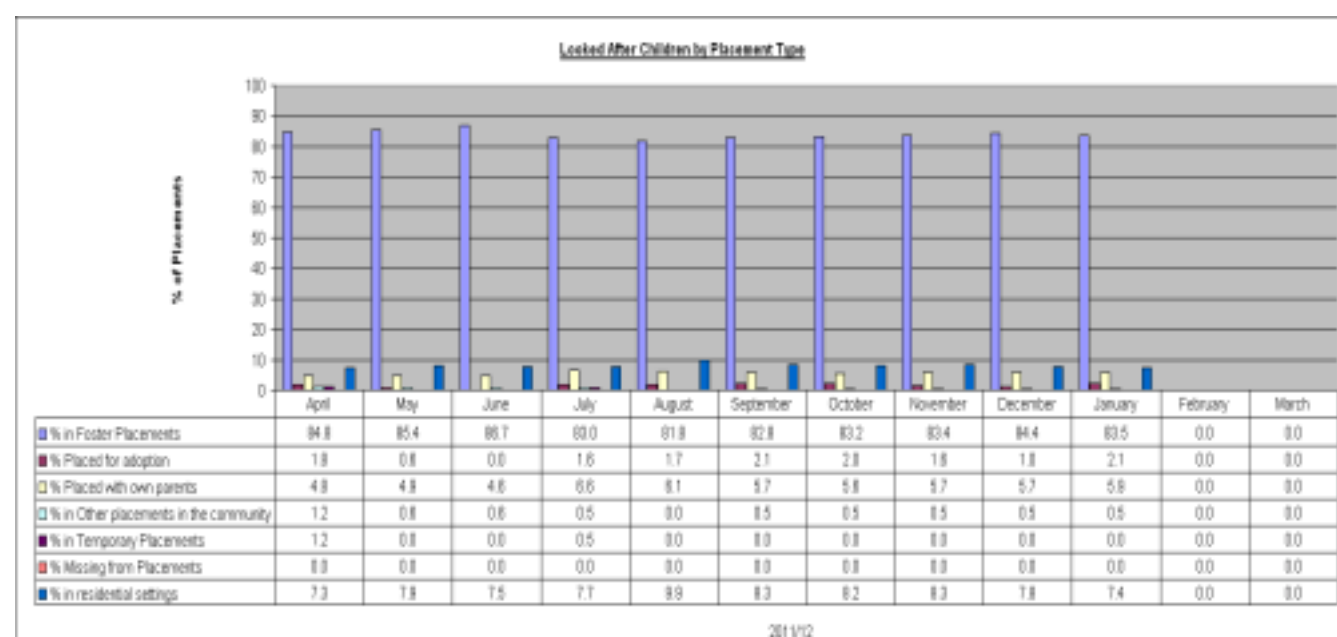
7.3 Table 2 details the age profile of children and young people looked after. The largest age grouping is the 10 to 15 age range which reflects those children and young people who are looked after in long term foster placements. Children in younger age bands often come into care, are subject to legal proceedings under the Children Act 1989, and leave care through either being placed for adoption or return to the care of their family.

Table 2 Age of looked after children and young people

7.4 Table 3 details the gender profile of children and young people looked after.

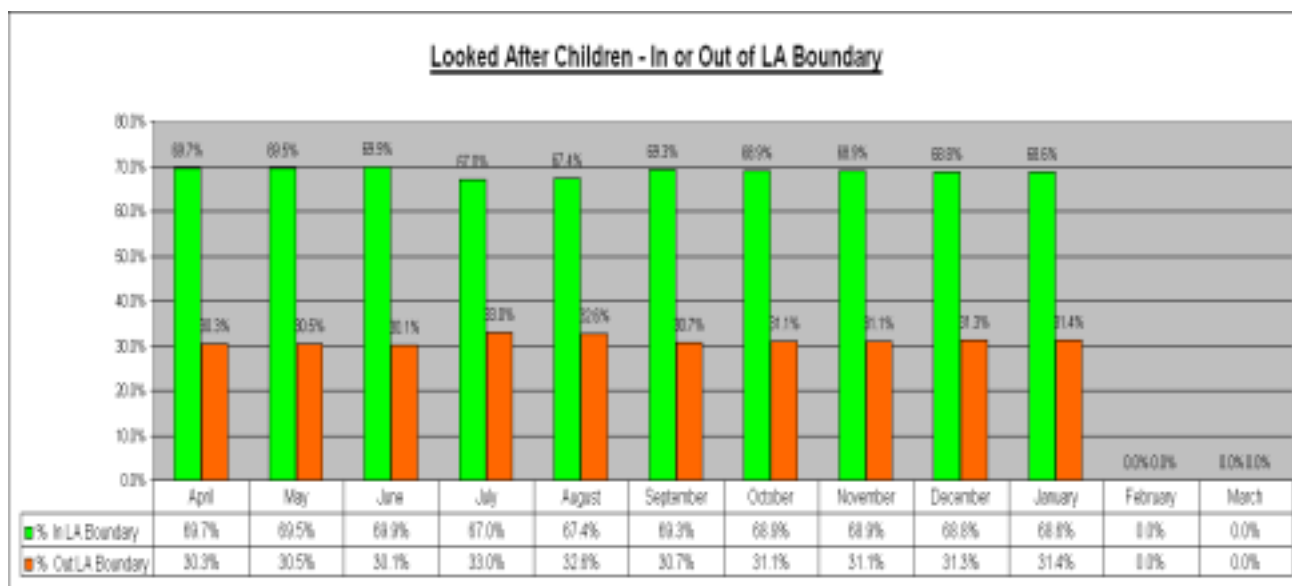
Table 3 Gender of looked after children and young people

7.5 Table 4 provides details of the range and types of placements provided to children and young people looked after. The vast majority of children are placed in foster care delivered through the Council's foster care service. The Forum was informed that foster care provides children with a positive family living opportunity which in most instances is preferable to residential or group living situations. Hartlepool has been successful in recruiting foster carers which has enabled children and young people to remain resident within the authority. The Council's future recruitment strategy is aimed at recruiting more carers for older young people and sibling groups, ensuring that children can remain together. There are a small number of children and young people who are placed at home with their parents under a legal order. There are statutory regulations that govern these arrangements and usually are as a result of an order from the court or for some older young people as part of a planned reunification back to their family.

Table 4 Types of Placements

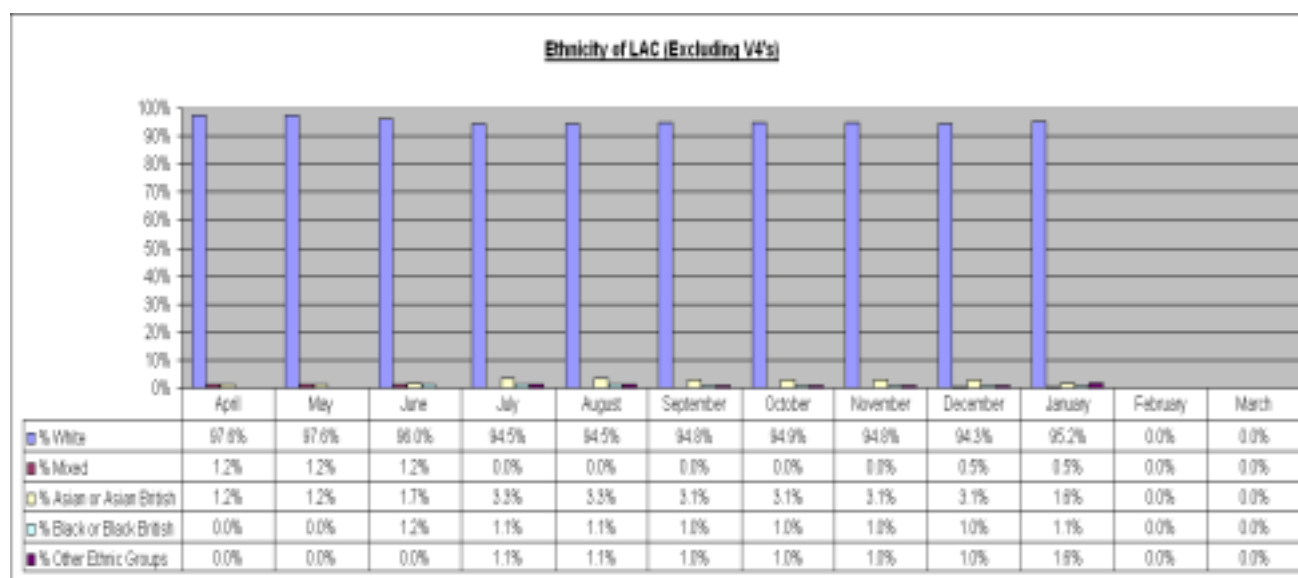
- 7.6 Table 5 shows the placements of children and young people within and outside of the Council boundary. The Council performs well in relation to maintaining children and young people within the boundary which supports continuity of education, family relationships, health care and social networks. Children and young people have a strong identity with the town. Members were pleased to hear that it is for all of these reasons that, where the Council are able to meet children and young people's needs, the Council prioritise children and young people being placed locally.

Table 5 Placements within and outside Council Boundary



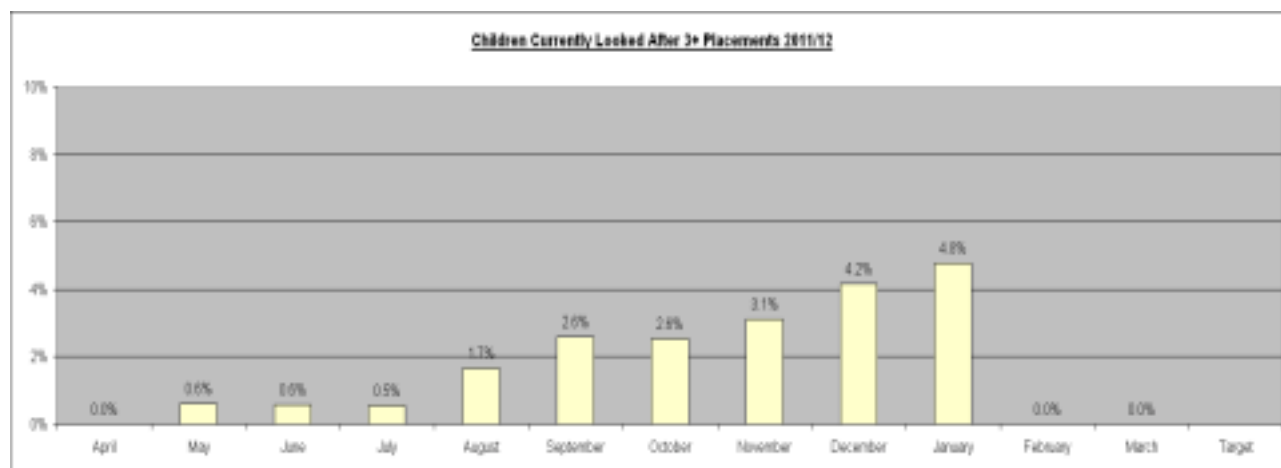
- 7.7 Table 6 details the ethnicity of children and young people. The Forum was informed that this profile is broadly in line with the ethnic population of Hartlepool, where 1.2% of the town population are of black or ethnic minority origin (2001 Census).

Table 6 Ethnicity of looked after children and young people



- 7.8 Table 7 outlines the performance of the Council in relation to stability of placements for looked after children and young people. Placement stability is a critical measurement of the quality of looked after services, as stability in placement supports education, health and well being and improved long term outcomes for children. The performance for the year to date is exceeding the target demonstrating good performance in this area.

Table 7 Stability of Placements



8. DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 8.1 The Forum was keen to examine and explore the services currently provided to looked after children and young people in Hartlepool. Members were pleased to receive evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Officers from the Child and Adult Services Department.

Evidence from the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

- 8.2 The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services was of the view that whilst there was always room for improvement, current services were delivered well with a high level of commitment from officers. The Portfolio Holder emphasised that services for looked after children and young people were needs led with the main priority being the child or young person.
- 8.3 The Forum expressed concern about the current academic achievement levels of looked after children and that looked after children and young people did not achieve as well academically compared to other children and young people. The Forum emphasised the need for the same level of support as their peer groups.
- 8.4 The Portfolio Holder referred to the recent Public Services White Paper which focuses on alternative methods of service delivery and he was pleased to report that Hartlepool was at the forefront of service delivery and was a comparator site for the social work practice pilot scheme to look at alternative ways of working.

- 8.5 To conclude, the Portfolio Holder emphasised the messages contained within the Munro report (2011). The importance of effectively communicating and taking on board the views and experiences of children and young people in the care system in order to successfully fulfil the role as a corporate parent was reiterated.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

- 8.6 In order to meet statutory requirements Hartlepool Borough Council provides services for looked after children through its dedicated 'Through Care Team'. Within the team, social work services are available to children and young people and these services promote positive parenting and provide consistency and stability.
- 8.7 The Safeguarding, Assessment and Support Teams provide town wide services for children and young people in need, including those in need of protection. Children and young people supported by this team are likely to be in care for a short period of time, for example, being placed for adoption or for older young people, a move into independent living.
- 8.8 Members queried the low levels of adoptions nationally and whether this was comparable in Hartlepool. Members were informed that in 2011, 11% of looked after children were adopted nationally. The percentage for Hartlepool for the same period was 19% which was also above the North East average of 15% (note the small cohort sizes). 75% of the children adopted in Hartlepool were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision date. The average for the North East region was 74.7% and nationally 74.0%. The figures are attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 8.9 The dedicated looked after nurse role is an integrated part of the 'Through Care Team'. The nurse promotes health and well being, advice, support and intervention. The nurse is a qualified nurse practitioner and is able to prescribe medication, smoking cessation and about to embark on a sexual health course.
- 8.10 The Council commissions a service from Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust to provide a dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for children and young people looked after. Services range from mental health assessments and diagnosis, delivering therapeutic interventions and supporting the emotional health and well being of children and young people. In addition to this, a service is also offered to staff and carers through consultation, training and support.
- 8.11 It is the ethos of Hartlepool Borough Council that looked after children and young people should have the same opportunities to develop and learn as other children and young people. Services are committed to promoting success for children both in learning and in life. The Council has a nominated Virtual School Head who has a duty and responsibility to monitor the educational attainment and progress of all looked after children and young people, attending any school or educational provision. Also, a dedicated

looked after children's School Inclusion Co-ordinator provides advice and support to teachers within schools, children and carers and tracks attainment to ensure services and support are targeted to those who need it. All schools have designated teachers for looked after children in line with statutory requirements.

- 8.12 All looked after children and young people have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is a statutory requirement within a child's care plan. The social worker has the legal responsibility for initiating the plan but it is essential that the class teacher or designated teacher is an integral part of the process to ensure the assessment and targets are correct and that the school have sufficient resources to develop and implement the plan.
- 8.13 A named Personal Advisor from the Integrated Youth Support Service is attached to the Through Care Team to ensure that all young people preparing to leave school have access to good careers advice to engage young people in further education, training or employment. This support is available to the young person up until 21 years of age.
- 8.14 Within the review process, Independent Reviewing Officers ensure that children and young people are given every opportunity to pursue existing or new activities and hobbies, just as parents would do for their own children. Examples of opportunities include residential activities aimed at developing self confidence, self esteem and team building. Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to encouraging children and young people to pursue their interests and talents and receive support and guidance to pursue their goals and aspirations.
- 8.15 It is essential that young people are kept safe and Hartlepool Borough Council adheres to a strict regulatory framework which ensures strict vetting of all staff and service providers working with looked after children.
- 8.16 With the support of a Participation Worker and in line with statutory requirements, the Council developed a Pledge to looked after children in 2009 and also a Children in Care Council. The Pledge is attached as **Appendix 2**. The Children in Care Council now operates a Junior Council and another for older looked after children. The children and young people are very committed and enthusiastic about their work. They have represented the authority at local, regional and national events and are a credit to the Council. Two members of the group attend the Corporate Parent Forum and a joint meeting between the Children in Care Council and the Corporate Parenting Forum is being arranged. The focus of this meeting will be to monitor the implementation of the Pledge ensuring the Council is held to account on it's commitments in the Pledge and service development for looked after children as a whole. It is important that the Council are able to learn from the experiences from young people to ensure that the Council constantly strive to improve services for them.

- 8.17 Members were informed that Hartlepool Borough Council has one children's residential unit providing short break care for children and young people with disabilities.
- 8.18 The Council commissions independent residential placements for children and young people when this care provision is needed. Placements are identified on the capacity of the organisation to meet the child or young person needs and all appropriate safeguarding enquiries are in place prior to a placement commencing.
- 8.19 The service aim is to provide quality placements that meet individual needs of a child or young person, where carers are able to develop trusting, caring relationships which will support children and young people and keep them safe.
- 8.20 In response to the evidence received from the Child and Adult Services Department, Members questioned whether data had been collected in relation to post care outcomes of looked after children and young people once they had left the care system. Data of this type was not retained in relation to post adoption children but the data collected to date is attached as **Appendix 3**.
- 8.21 Members agreed that placement stability is arguably the single most important factor influencing positive outcomes for children looked after and as such it is a priority for the Council. The placement choice for a child or young person is vital to promoting stability and achieving positive outcomes. Hartlepool has a robust permanency planning model which will include, prior to making a permanent placement, facilitating a 'Child Appreciation Day' to ensure carers fully understand the needs of the child, are prepared for the placement and appropriate support is in place prior to a child moving to live with a new family. The recent development of the Placement Support Team provides additional support and training to foster carers to promote placement stability. This work includes, working with foster carers own children and looked after children through group work and individual one to one support. The support team provides intensive wrap around support to placements in crisis.

9. THE ROLE OF EACH ELECTED MEMBER AS A CORPORATE PARENT

- 9.1 Members of the Forum took their role as corporate parents very seriously and welcomed evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department on corporate parenting.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

- 9.2 Members were informed that Corporate Parenting is the challenge laid down to local authorities by the Government. "Corporate parenting" is the term used to describe the local authority's duties and responsibilities to children and young people who are in care or are care leavers. The central principle of corporate parenting is that the local authority should parent and seek the same outcomes for children and young people in their care in the same way they would parent their own children.

- 9.3 The vision is to ensure that every looked after child in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships and is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging. Children in care should feel their needs are given the highest priority and that they are valued and cared about not only by those who look after them on a daily basis but also by those who make decisions politically and operationally in the town.
- 9.4 Like most other authorities, Hartlepool has created a Corporate Parent Forum. It is a properly constituted Council meeting, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services with a range of Councillors as members. In addition, there are two foster carer representatives, two young people representatives from the Young Person's Council and relevant officers in attendance. The forum has an annual plan of reporting which is currently being reviewed to facilitate joint meetings with the Children in Care Council. These reporting arrangements provide the Corporate Parent Forum with the opportunity to challenge how services are delivered to children in care and measure whether they are achieving desired outcomes. The Corporate Parenting Forum has a pivotal role in listening to the voices of children and young people in care, speaking out on their behalf and being aspirational to make sure that future generations in Hartlepool grow up happy, healthy, with stable relationships and a first class education. The Corporate Parent Forum must strive to achieve this by challenging officers on the services provided, the performance of the Council against key performance indicators for looked after children and listening to the experiences of children in care. At its most effective, the Corporate Parent Forum in partnership with the Children in Care Council drives the change agenda to achieve the vision laid out within the Council's Looked After Strategy and holds officers of the Council and wider partners to account.
- 9.5 The Council has a Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) which brings together agencies who have a responsibility to deliver services to children looked after. This partnership meets every two months and works to an action plan that is agreed at the beginning of each year. The action plan priorities require multi agency engagement but a considerable proportion of the work relates to the services delivered by the local authority. Many of the priorities for the MALAP flow from the Children Looked After Strategy but the tasks are much more detailed for this partnership and it is expected that they can be achieved within a single year.

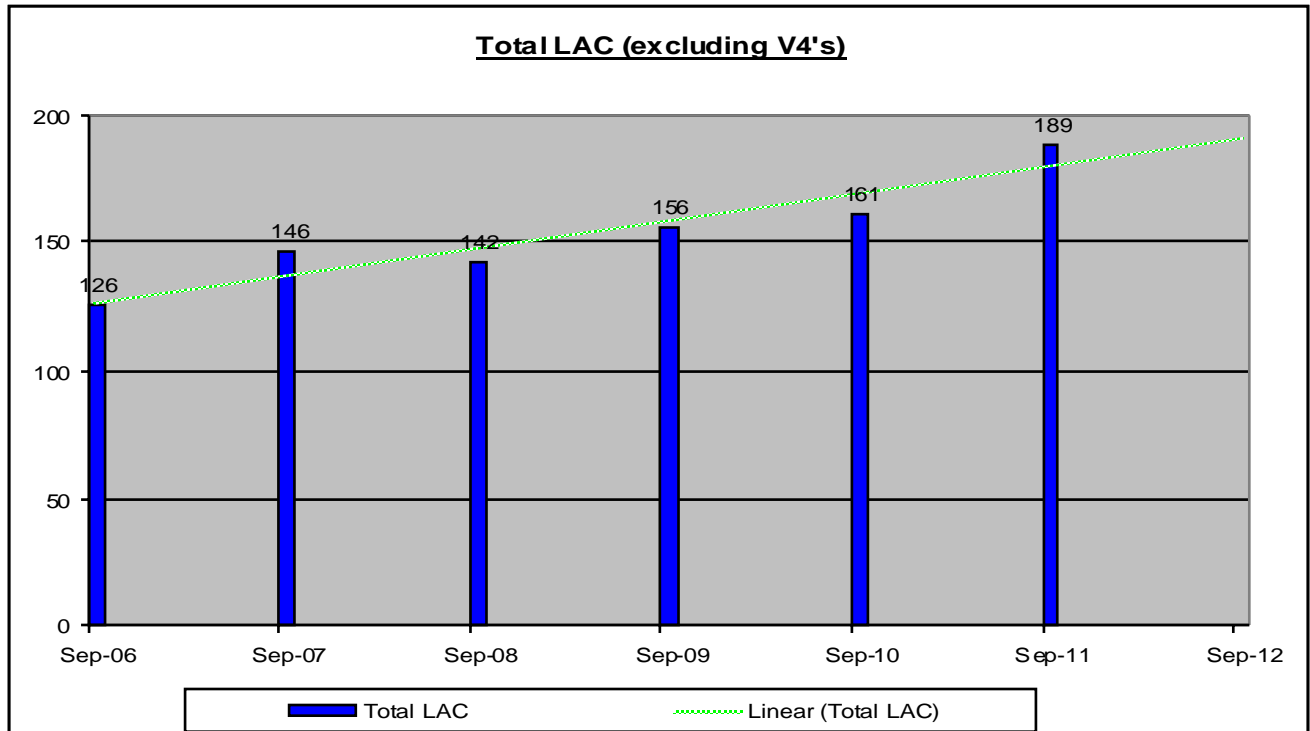
10. HOW CAN THE COUNCIL REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE

- 10.1 The numbers of looked after children in Hartlepool are increasing. Analysis was undertaken to look into the significant increase in June 2011 and Members were advised that it was due to two large sibling groups being taken into care. Never the less, Members support opportunities and initiatives to reduce the number of looked after children and welcomed evidence from officers from the Child and Adult Services department on future plans.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

10.2 The graph below show the increase in the numbers of looked after children and young people.

Table 8 Increase in Numbers of looked after children and young people (2006 – 2012)



10.3 Members believed that better early intervention services could also be contributing to the rise, as more children and young people are being identified as at risk.

10.4 One initiative to reduce the number of looked after children is the support foster care scheme. This pilot scheme aims to provide intensive support to families and children and young people who are on the edge of care this support could include the provision of support foster care for 2 or 3 nights per week. The Forum raised concerns that the proposal to reduce the number of children looked after by developing a support foster care scheme to enable children to remain in the family home could potentially increase the risks to the child. The Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Specialist Services provided assurances that the proposal to strengthen provision of support to children on the edge of care by preventing family breakdown would only be utilised in such circumstances where the child was not considered to be at risk of harm. It was highlighted to Members that there was a statutory duty upon the local authority to do as much as possible to maintain a child in the family home, however, where there was a clear risk to the child, arrangements were in place to take decisive action to protect them.

11. HOW THE COUNCIL AND PARTNER ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES

- 11.1 As part of this investigation, the Forum at its meeting of 23 November 2011 split into small groups to gather views from looked after children; foster carers; partner organisations; and officers from the Child and Adult Services Department including social workers on how looked after children / young people are supported across all aspects of their lives. Several organisations attended including Cleveland Police; Housing Hartlepool; Hartlepool College of Further Education; a General Practitioner; Young Foundations; and representatives from the NHS. Several foster carers and looked after young people attended and contributed to the discussions.
- 11.2 The Forum and attendees split into small groups and explored four key areas, Corporate Parenting; Placements; Health and Housing; and Education. The complete feedback from this exercise is attached as **Appendix 4**. The comments are listed alongside each of the questions that were asked with a column outlining the suggestions for improvement which were made. In addition to the feedback, written views were also submitted and are attached to the feedback. A summary of the key points from each of the groups is highlighted below.

Group 1 – Health and Housing

- 11.3 The Group discussed the physical health monitoring process of children in care and access to the looked after children dedicated nurse. It was noted that 90% of health assessments were completed in the timescales and children looked after were aware of the process for accessing such services.
- 11.4 The emotional wellbeing and mental health of looked after children was debated including the process for measuring emotional and mental health issues. The need to continue to develop a multi-agency approach was emphasised.
- 11.5 In discussions regarding the standard of residential care provided, the group referred to difficulties in relation to sustaining tenancies, the reasons for failed tenancies, the need to extend joint working and liaise with a range of housing providers with a view to addressing these problems. The lack of residential provision in Hartlepool for young people was noted. It was suggested that young people should be encouraged and supported to remain in their carer provision until they are prepared and ready to leave and certainly not at aged 16 years. The group acknowledged that some young people are not ready to live independently at 18 and supported accommodation should be available to a young person up until they are ready to live independently / sustain a tenancy.

Group 2 – Corporate Parenting

- 11.6 The need to ensure that placements were appropriate to meet the needs of the child was highlighted. The importance of questioning whether it was appropriate to place a child outside the town as well as consider the impact of placements outside the area and how best to reintegrate children into an area as part of adulthood was emphasised by the group.
- 11.7 In terms of security and stability of looked after children, the group discussed the importance of suitable matching and the potential impact of emergency foster placements.
- 11.8 In considering what more could be done to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as a corporate parent, the group emphasised the need to question whether the level of support for a looked after child would be acceptable for their own child and emphasised the benefits of placing siblings together.

Group 3 – Education

- 11.9 Statistical information was provided which indicated that outcomes for looked after young people at key stage 2 (end of year 6) and key stage 4 were significantly lower than their peers. It was noted that four looked after young people were currently studying at university.
- 11.10 Reference was made to tracking information which indicated the level of attainment on the date the child or young person became looked after to the level of attainment on the date they left the system as a comparator, which suggested that the majority of young people were making progress. School attendance levels of looked after children had improved year on year since 2006.
- 11.11 A looked after young person shared her experiences with the group highlighting that being looked after had a significant impact on her education. She felt that as a looked after child she was singled out at school and suggested that any meetings in relation to personal circumstances should be held out of school hours to maintain confidentiality and schools should provide an individual they could talk to.
- 11.12 In relation to post 16 education, whilst the Hartlepool College of Further Education was not officially advised of details of looked after children, as a result of the recent removal of the education maintenance allowance and the need to apply for a bursary this information was no longer confidential. Whilst the improvements in attendance figures were noted, it was stated that further improvements were necessary.
- 11.13 With regard to support mechanisms, it was noted that effective support mechanisms were in place for children looked after when problems arose. The benefits of monitoring Personal Education Plans to provide clarity in terms of funding availability were outlined. Social Workers indicated that their role was key in supporting improvements in education attainment and the

potential benefits as a result. The need for settled placements and to improve links with foster carers to ensure young people were placed at the right schools was highlighted. It was considered that changes in social workers affected performance in school.

Group 4 – Placements

- 11.14 The Forum was advised that the number of children planned for adoption was rising and the number of adopters was reducing nationally. The methods of addressing this issue were outlined, which included a recent successful advertising campaign which resulted in an increase in adopters for Hartlepool. One of the measures was finding the right match and reference was made to Hartlepool's success in the adoption process. One of the main issues identified was the need to support carers to accommodate sibling groups with complex needs.
- 11.15 The approval and matching process was discussed including the need for improved links with the adoption team.
- 11.16 In relation to how well the current foster care arrangements worked, arrangements were in place to ensure appropriate levels of support were available. However, the benefits of appointing a second point of contact in the event that the link worker was not available was suggested. In relation to sharing information, the need to publicise the 24 hour support service and improve communication methods with foster carers was highlighted. The group noted the detrimental impact legal proceedings placed on looked after children.
- 11.17 In relation to the support provided by the Council to young people leaving foster care, the need for improvement was acknowledged as well as the need to co-ordinate services and ensure the appropriate skills were available to move onto adulthood.
- 11.18 Members were astonished that not all foster carers took their fostered child or young person on holiday with them. Members believed that fostering was about integrating that child or young person into the family. Members felt strongly that becoming a foster carer was a life style choice and vocation and not simply a 'job'. Members suggested that before approval is granted for a person to become a foster carer, the question should be asked whether they are willing to take the child or young person on their family holiday. If yes, then they would be suitable for long term placements, if no, then they would be suitable for short term placements. Members did not believe that leaving a child or young person in respite care while their foster carers went on a family holiday was acceptable practice.
- 12. THE VIEWS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE IN RELATION TO THE SERVICES AND SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE**

- 12.1 Members welcomed looked after children and young people along to their meeting of 31 January 2012. The looked after children and young people delivered a very detailed presentation focusing on the following questions:-
- (a) What do you like about being looked after in care?
 - (b) What don't you like about being looked after in care?
 - (c) Is there anything which would have made coming into care easier for you? What would have made your time in care easier?
 - (d) If you were able to change the care system, what things would you change?
- 12.2 Members of the Forum were delighted to hear the children's and young people's views which were very informative and covered a number of issues both positive and negative. All the young people's views are attached as **Appendix 5**.
- 12.3 One of the main areas of concern highlighted by the children and young people was the separation of siblings and staying in contact with siblings when fostered or adopted. Officers did confirm that that where possible siblings were placed together but unfortunately there were some instances where this was not appropriate or space was limited in a foster family. Regular contact between siblings was encouraged with foster families. Clarification was sought by the Forum on the arrangements for contact where siblings were separated through adoption. The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Specialist Services confirmed whilst that the Council would aim to broker an agreement for contact between siblings who lived separately, the adoptive parents had the authority to veto contact should they choose to do so unless an appropriate court order was in place. However, the fact that the local authority would provide support to enable the adopted child or young person to have direct contact with family members was included as part of the training and preparation to become adoptive parents. Members of the Forum stressed the importance of placing siblings together and were pleased to hear that the payment system for foster carers takes into account situations where three or more siblings are placed together as it is often a more difficult situation to manage.
- 12.4 One young person referred to 'being picked up from school with no warning', which they did not like. Members asked why this would happen and were assured that this would only happen in exceptional cases where there were serious child protection issues. Under normal circumstances, taking a child into care was planned in a way that was in the best interests of that child.
- 12.5 The Forum asked the children and young people how often they had contact with their social worker. Some young people said on a daily basis and some said weekly or monthly. In general, the opinion was that children and young people can arrange their contact arrangements on what they feel is necessary. Members were informed that the Council had adopted a minimum

requirement of contact every month, although this was flexible and the child or young person could contact their social worker more or less if required, which was confirmed by the children and young people who attended the meeting.

- 12.6 Members asked the young people whether they had contact cards for their social workers and the answer was yes. However, the card did not include details of the Emergency Duty Team, which operated outside normal Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 working hours. It was suggested by Members that all children and young people who were looked after should be personally introduced to members of the Emergency Duty Team to ensure they did not feel like they were contacting strangers with their problems. The children and young people thought that this was a good idea and also having contact details for an appropriate alternative contact on the cards.
- 12.7 Members were pleased to hear that children and young people had a chance to say whether they were happy with a placement that was being offered to them, with introductions and visits made before the commencement of the placement. Every effort was made to ensure the stability of the first placement as moving children from one placement to another was very disruptive for everyone. However, if a child indicated they were unhappy within a placement, alternative placements would be explored.
- 12.8 A concern was raised by Members of the Forum in relation to a comment made by one of the young people about friends' families having to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check. Members were pleased to hear that this practice was stopped in 2001. Foster carer's act as the parents for the child or young person and base decisions on their own judgement.

13. THE IMPACT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE BUDGET PRESSURES ON THE WAY IN WHICH SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PROVIDED IN HARTLEPOOL

- 13.1 Members were keen to examine the impact of current and future budget pressures in relation to services provided for looked after children and young people.

Evidence from the Child and Adult Services Department

- 13.2 Members heard that as part of the 2012 / 2013 budget proposals a savings target of £348,000 was to be achieved by reducing the level of expenditure on commissioned services whilst continuing to maintain high quality provision for children in need and children looked after. The following objectives were established for the review:

- (a) To commission cost effective, high quality care placements for children;
- (b) To reduce divisional expenditure on commissioned services;
- (c) To ensure all commissioned services are effective, efficient and deliver value for money;
- (d) To explore alternative delivery models and how effective and sustainable they are; and
- (e) To ensure risk is effectively managed.

- 13.3 Members were informed that wherever possible, looked after children and young people were placed within Council resources, with 70.9% of children placed with foster carers approved by the Council.
- 13.4 The budget for each area was presented to the Forum and is detailed below.

Table 9: Budget area and budget allocation

BUDGET AREA	BUDGET
In house foster care/allowances Residence Order/Special Guardianship	£2,624,575
Agency foster care	£1,021,681
Agency residential care	£1,235,104
Other commissioned services	£287,269
TOTAL	£5,168,629

- 13.5 Therefore, in order to realise the savings the Council challenged providers on their statutory responsibility, for example, the nurse for looked after children and young people is a statutory responsibility of the PCT therefore the Council has ceased to contribute. Assurances were sought that when the PCT ceased to exist, the Looked After Children Nurse position would be retained and that this arrangement had been referred to the new Clinical Commissioning Group and endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board. A number of posts had been reviewed and / or deleted. Savings had been realised from cost centres with uncommitted balances and the review of commissioned services identified savings of £267k. In addition to this a review of the divisional management structure contributed to the savings.
- 13.6 The training budget for children's services is £165,869 with the proposal to discontinue the annual secondment to the degree in social work. This proposal is based on the fact that there are a high number of social work graduates looking for posts and this is likely to continue. The use of training venues has been reviewed and the newly qualified social worker programme has been brought in house. There is a feasibility study underway regarding Tees workforce development and joint commissioning of high cost training events with external facilitators.
- 13.7 The Forum was informed that that there was no scope to reduce in house foster care. The average cost of an in house foster placement is £362 per child, per week compared to £1,034 per child, per week for an independent foster placement.
- 13.8 In relation to residential care provision, it was reported that there was no Council residential provision and all residential care was commissioned through the independent sector. The average cost of a commissioned placement was £3,068 with a projected cost of delivering the service in house

at £3,682. A full detailed breakdown of how the figure of £3,682 for in-house residential provision was provided for Members information and is attached as **Appendix 6** along with details of the costs from the independent and voluntary sector as a comparator.

- 13.9 In addition, it was suggested by Members that the costs of utilising a Council owned building or a building currently included on the asset transfer list for this purpose should be considered and also low cost borrowing.

Site Visits to the Star Centre, an Independent Providers Children's Home and a Council run Children's Home

- 13.10 As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of this investigation, Members of the Forum attended a site visit on 12 December 2011 to The Star Centre, formerly a children's home. The Centre is now used to work creatively with children and young people in care, their carers and other professionals to achieve positive outcomes. Members were of the opinion that the building was run down and did not feel homely.
- 13.11 The Independent providers children's home in Hartlepool is a large detached property with occupancy for three children / young people. Members considered the home to be too large for its purpose and were of the opinion that it did not feel homely as it was in the middle of redecoration. There were a number maintenance issues in and around the building and Members were informed that maintenance was undertaken separately and was not the role of the staff within the home. Members highlighted that this was not the standard that they would want for their looked after children and young people.
- 13.12 The Children's Home in Stockton was a 4 bedroom terraced property ran by Stockton Borough Council. Members considered the home to be very homely and the impression Members were given was that the children living in the home were being looked after by a 'house mother' who took charge whilst working under the ethos of a foster care family. In addition to this, the home was spotlessly clean. Members considered that the success of such an operation was linked to having the right staff in place who considered this type of employment to be a vocation as opposed to a job.
- 13.13 Members felt very strongly that the Council should own and run one or more, three to four bedroom children's home(s) to enable looked after children and young people to remain within their home town. It was suggested that the option of 'selling' one of the beds to another local authority may subsidise the operational costs of running the home.
- 13.14 Members were of the opinion that Hartlepool could learn from the way the children's home provision was run in Stockton and believed that this should be the vision for Hartlepool.

14. WAYS OF HOW SUPPORT AND SERVICES COULD BE PROVIDED IN THE FUTURE TO MOST EFFECTIVELY / EFFICIENTLY MEET THE NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN / YOUNG PEOPLE AND PROMOTE IMPROVED OUTCOMES

- 14.1 The Forum was pleased to receive evidence from a statistical neighbouring authority, South Tyneside. The Head of Children and Families Social Care at South Tyneside attended a meeting of the Forum to discuss the provision of support and services to children and young people looked after by South Tyneside Council and also innovative ways of working.

Evidence from South Tyneside Council

- 14.2 Members were informed that looked after children and child protection / safeguarding issues inter-relate and that they are both at the top end of the responses that the Council offer. A child or young person may move from child protection to being looked after. For both services the Council aim to provide focused and purposeful intervention to enable the child to live with, or return to their own family in a safe and caring environment. However, if this is not possible, the aim is to secure a stable long term alternative, ideally adoption.
- 14.3 South Tyneside is very similar in terms of numbers for both looked after children and young people and children and young people who are subject to a child protection plan.
- 14.4 Members noted that review mechanisms were in place for all team managers with responsibilities for looked after children to discuss all cases individually and each are challenged on how each case is progressing. As with all local authorities, the challenge is to reduce the number of looked after children, and the Head of Children and Families Social Care believed that this reduction would be achieved by prevention, with the need to get the whole system running well, not just parts of it, including preventative services. Members were informed that looked after children and young people will have the best outcomes if the following are achieved:-
- (a) Stability of placement and community based, ideally early adoption where possible;
 - (b) Education to gain good qualifications;
 - (c) Preparation for independence, which involves good planning and emotional resilience;
 - (d) Stable accommodation while looked after and good quality accommodation when leaving care along with support if needed; and
 - (e) Employment or continue in education
- 14.5 The Forum was keen to examine the fostering arrangement in South Tyneside. The Head of Children and Families Social Care identified the key elements of their success in this area:-
- (a) well-resourced team, which is cost effective;

- (b) continuous recruitment to cover for retirement, burn out or becoming adopters; and
 - (c) high quality support
- 14.6 These elements have allowed for the reduction in the use of external fostering agencies, which has resulted in a significant saving in excess of £700k.
- 14.7 In relation to support for care leavers, South Tyneside's leaving care service has established close relationships with:-
 - (a) training providers – care leavers are seen as a priority;
 - (b) education providers;
 - (c) local authority economic regeneration;
 - (d) South Tyneside Homes for accommodation and support; and
 - (e) Other accommodation providers for a range of tenancies.
- 14.8 The Head of Children and Families Social Care highlighted that in view of the current budgetary challenges faced by South Tyneside Council, a number of innovative ways of providing services and proposing savings had been implemented which included:-
 - (a) implementing a front door multi agency panel to establish a multi agency approach;
 - (b) a review of new birth procedures;
 - (c) reconfiguration of children's centres way of working;
 - (d) challenged the Primary Care Trust about the funding for placements with success;
 - (e) driven down agency foster care costs resulting in savings in excess of £459k;
 - (f) have no agency social work staff because South Tyneside recruit 3 or 4 over number to ensure no gaps in service provision;
 - (g) recruitment of career foster carers; and
 - (h) recruiting staff to become foster carers who are at risk of redundancy;
- 14.9 Members queried the career foster care initiative. The Head of Children and Families Social Care explained using an example. Officers from within the Youth Offending Service were approached to become foster carers for the more complex cases such as remand cases. They would continue to receive their full salary along with time off to do remand work and additional salary. This pilot was in its early stages but may prove an incredibly cost effective invest to save method. Members thought that this should be an avenue that the Council explores along with considering staff who are at risk of redundancy as prospective foster carers, subject to the necessary checks and training being in place.
- 14.10 Members were very interested to hear about the 'bring a gift initiative'. The Head of Children and Families Social Care explained that at the Strategic Partnership, she had asked partners to donate a gift to looked after children, rather than monetary, a gift in kind. For example, accommodation for when

looked after children are home from university or cinema tickets. Members thought that this was an excellent initiative.

- 14.11 In conclusion, South Tyneside identified their long term task is to maintain a high quality of care, gain better outcomes and balance the budget. This change is likely to take 5 years to take full effect and prevention is key with the best interests of the child always the priority.

15. CONCLUSIONS

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

- (a) The Council has a lack of residential provision in Hartlepool and Members were impressed with the standard of residential care provided by Stockton Borough Council for looked after children and young people with lower level care needs;
- (b) As corporate parents, Members have a moral responsibility for their looked after children and young people, including the responsibility to address their needs. Therefore, by running an in-house children's home, this will provide a 'homely' environment, in Hartlepool, for the children and young people. It also presents a good business case, that may in part address the current impact and future budget pressures placed on services for looked after children and young people;
- (c) In-house foster placements are cost effective and that improving the take up of fostering within the boundaries of Hartlepool is essential;
- (d) Fostering is about integrating a child or young person into a family and it is a life style choice and vocation, not simply a 'job'. Therefore the child or young person should be included in all family events and activities;
- (e) It is necessary to reduce the numbers of looked after children and young people through strengthening provision of support to children on the edge of care by preventing family breakdown and delivering intensive packages of support. Members supported opportunities and initiatives to reduce the numbers of looked after children and young people;
- (f) All looked after children and young people should have the same opportunities, both academically and socially as other children and young people;
- (g) Stability of placement is essential and children and young people need to be suitable matched to placements based on their own individual needs;
- (h) Foster care and adoption arrangements work well but additional support should be offered where required.

- (i) In relation to the recruitment of foster carers and adopters, Members recognise that there is a national shortage and recruitment remains a difficult task;
- (j) Siblings should be kept together when taken into care and all options to make this possible need to be explored, for example, recruiting foster carers who have the capacity to take three or four children and / or young people;
- (k) All agencies need to work together to provide the best possible services for looked after children and young people; and
- (l) Looked after young people should have the option to remain in their placement beyond the age of 18 and if they wish to live independently, support should be available if needed

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 16.1 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:-

Residential Care

- (a) That the Council explores the viability of buying or building, and running, one or more 3 to 4 bedroom children's home(s) in Hartlepool, whether that be through the utilisation of existing buildings, buildings on the asset transfer list or new builds;
- (b) That the Council extends joint working and liaises with a range of housing providers in order to provide a breadth of accommodation for young people including supported accommodation, floating support, single person accommodation and accommodation whilst home from University;

Foster Care and Adoption

- (c) That the Council ensures that all looked after young people are equipped with the skills required for adulthood and independent living and extends care provision beyond the age of 18 for anyone not wishing to live independently at 18 and this may include supported accommodation, which should be available to a young person up until the young person feels ready to live independently;
- (d) That the Council, as part of the redeployment process, highlights to staff the option of becoming foster carers and explores the option of offering a 'career foster care' scheme to the staff at risk of redundancy, with the necessary skills;

- (e) That the Council aims to recruit more adopters and foster carers for children and young people with complex needs, giving thorough support and contact throughout the placement and post adoption;
- (f) That the Council keeps sibling groups together, where ever possible, and additional support is offered to foster carers to accommodate sibling groups;
- (g) That the Council improves links and communication with foster carers by:-
 - (i) providing additional support where required;
 - (ii) keeping foster carers up to date with developments;
 - (iii) publicising the 24 hour support service; and
 - (iv) using improved communication methods
- (h) That the Council considers, during the recruitment process, whether foster carers are better suited to long or short term placements, taking into account whether foster carers are willing to take their fostered child or young person with them on their family holiday;
- (i) That the Council ensures that a clear set of criteria is in place so that placements are appropriate to meet the needs of the child or young person including involving the child or young person in the planning processes for all placements;

Partnerships

- (j) That the Council and partner agencies outline in their service plans what they can and will do for looked after children and young people and continues to develop a multi agency approach;
- (k) That the Council develops and implements a scheme similar to the 'bring a gift' initiative, whereby partner organisations across all Council activities are asked to donate a gift in kind (for example, cinema tickets) for a looked after child or young person;
- (l) That the Council explores the development of innovative ways of providing early intervention services to hard to reach children and young people to avoid children and young people becoming looked after; and
- (m) That the Council ensures that any meetings in relation to the personal circumstances of a looked after child or young person are held out of school hours to maintain confidentiality and ensures that all schools provide a designated person to act as a mentor to the looked after child and young person.

17. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 17.1 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
Jane Young – Head of Business Unit, Specialist Services
Ian Merritt – Head of Commissioning and Children's Trust
James Sinclair – Connexions Team Manager
Zoe Westley – School Improvement Adviser
Emma Rutherford – Social Inclusion Co-ordinator
Camel Jackson – Independent Reviewing Officer
Annette Hall – Participation Officer
Wendy Rudd – Head of Business Unit
John Ellison – Social Worker
Cath Bishop – Social Worker
Margaret Hennessey – Team Manager
Jacky Yeoman-Vass – Family Placement Team Manager
Maureen McEnaney – Head of Safeguarding and Review Unit
Sylvia Lowe – Manager of Exmore Grove
Simon Field – Principal Practitioner
Terry Moore – Principal Practitioner
Angela Laughton – Social Worker
Denise Sutton – Social Worker
Dawn Thorpe – Social Worker
Gladis Mante-Nyadu – Social Worker

Co-opted young people on the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum:

Ashleigh Bostock
Robyn Reid
Danielle O'Keefe
Hannah Bew
Millie Allan
Kimberley Henry
Demi Coull

External Representatives

Amanda Bradley – South Tyneside Council
Angie Askins - Stockton Borough Council
Andy Powell – Housing Hartlepool
Lynn Beeston – Chief Inspector, Cleveland Police
Brian Durham – Young Foundations

Trish Weatherill – Hartlepool College of Further Education
Khalid Azaam – Assistant Director of Commissioning and Systems Development
Dr McKinity – General Practitioner
Gillian Sild – Brougham Primary School
Foster Carers

Looked after children and young people:

Leigh (19)
Becky (21)
Simon (20)
Claire (17)
Mark (16)
Jordan (16)
George (13)
Paul (16)
Jack (15)
Caitlin (13)
Shelby (14)
Billie Jo (12)
Sarah (11)
James (9)
Marcus (14)
Scott (20)
Jamie (8)
Jordan (15)
Nicola (16)
Michael (17)
Arron (18)

**COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER AKERS – BELCHER
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

March 2012

Contact Officer:- Laura Stones – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 087
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 The Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 October 2011.

- (b) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Investigation into the Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children - Setting the Scene - Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 October 2011.
- (c) Presentation of Officers from the Child and Adult Services Department entitled 'Services for Children and Looked After Young People' delivered to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 October 2011.
- (d) Report of the Head of Business Unit entitled 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Provision Support and Services for Looked After Children and Young People – Setting the Scene Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 October 2011.
- (e) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Budget Consultation – Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 1 November 2011.
- (f) Presentation of the Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services 'Savings 2012/13 – Safeguarding and Specialist Services' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 1 November 2011.
- (g) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Investigation into the Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People – Group Exercises - Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 23 November 2011.
- (h) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People: Evidence From South Tyneside Council - Covering Report presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 17 January 2012.
- (i) Presentation of the Head of Children and Families Social Care at South Tyneside Council entitled 'Looked After Children and Child Protection in South Tyneside' delivered to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum Services Scrutiny Forum of 17 January 2012.
- (j) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People - Feedback From the Group Exercises Undertaken by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 23 November 2011 and Feedback From the Site Visit – Covering Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 17 January 2012.
- (k) 'Feedback from Group Exercises held on 23 November 2011' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 17 January 2012.
- (l) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Investigation Into the Provision of Support and Services to Looked After Children / Young People

- Views of Looked After Children / Young People - Covering Report presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 January 2012.
- (m) Presentation from looked after children and young people entitled 'Children and Young People's Views' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 31 January 2012.
- (n) Minutes of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 18 October 2011, 1 November 2011, 23 November 2011, 17 January 2011 and 31 January 2011.
- (o) Poverty website - <http://www.poverty.org.uk/29/index.shtml#def>
- (p) Hartlepool's Children Looked After Strategy – www.hartlepool.gov.uk
- (q) Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services – 16 July 2010 - <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/hartlepool>
- (r) Messages for Munro – A report of Children's Views collected for Professor Eileen Munro by the Children's Rights Director for England
- (s) Centre for Public Scrutiny – 10 Questions to ask if you're Scrutinising Services for Looked after Children

Looked after children who were adopted during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority^{1,2}
 Years ending 31 March 2007 to 2011
 Coverage: England

	numbers and percentages														
	<u>Number</u> of children who ceased to be looked after during the year ³					<u>Number</u> of looked after children adopted during the year					<u>Percentage</u> of looked after children adopted during the year ⁴				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
England	24,990	24,500	25,030	25,310	26,830	3,330	3,180	3,330	3,200	3,050	13	13	13	13	11
North East	1,430	1,430	1,510	1,480	1,600	240	210	240	220	240	17	14	16	15	15
Darlington	65	70	80	75	70	20	10	x	10	x	28	13	x	14	x
Durham	240	215	190	190	225	40	35	15	30	35	16	17	8	16	15
Gateshead	115	110	100	145	125	20	20	20	35	20	16	20	20	23	17
Hartlepool	65	75	105	85	70	5	x	10	5	15	11	x	9	8	19
Middlesbrough	135	130	145	150	165	15	10	20	10	25	10	8	14	7	14
Newcastle Upon Tyne	155	205	205	200	210	25	35	30	20	35	16	17	16	11	17
North Tyneside	125	130	140	95	130	25	15	30	25	15	18	11	20	26	13
Northumberland	130	125	120	95	90	20	20	25	10	15	15	14	19	13	14
Redcar and Cleveland	55	70	55	80	95	10	10	10	10	15	16	12	18	12	14
South Tyneside	95	105	120	95	120	30	20	25	20	25	29	20	22	22	23
Stockton-On-Tees	120	80	120	130	145	15	5	15	10	15	12	7	12	9	10
Sunderland	130	120	135	130	155	25	20	35	30	25	19	18	28	21	15
Statistical Neighbours															
Barnsley	115	85	110	105	95	20	20	15	15	20	16	24	14	16	19
Doncaster	175	170	165	190	210	35	15	25	30	25	19	10	14	16	11
Halton	45	60	45	50	75	15	10	10	15	10	30	13	22	27	15
Hartlepool	65	75	105	85	70	5	x	10	5	15	11	x	9	8	19
North East Lincolnshire	90	80	70	75	65	10	5	10	25	15	11	8	17	31	25
Redcar and Cleveland	55	70	55	80	95	10	10	10	10	15	16	12	18	12	14
Rotherham	130	150	100	150	185	20	20	10	25	35	14	13	10	17	20
South Tyneside	95	105	120	95	120	30	20	25	20	25	29	20	22	22	23
St Helens	70	100	105	80	115	10	10	30	15	15	14	11	31	20	14
Sunderland	130	120	135	130	155	25	20	35	30	25	19	18	28	21	15
Tameside	95	120	105	110	150	10	15	20	30	25	13	12	20	28	15

Source: SSDA 903

1. England and regional totals have been rounded to the nearest 10. Other numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. See Technical Notes for more information on rounding.
2. Historical data may differ from older publications. This is mainly due to the implementation of amendments and corrections sent by some local authorities after the publication date of previous materials.
3. Only the last occasion on which a child ceased to be looked after in the year has been counted.
4. Percentages based on the number of children that ceased to be looked after during the year.

x Figures not shown in order to protect confidentiality. See Technical Notes for information on data suppression.
 . Not applicable.

Looked after children who were adopted during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority^{1,2}
 Years ending 31 March 2007 to 2011
 Coverage: England

numbers and percentages

Number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year³

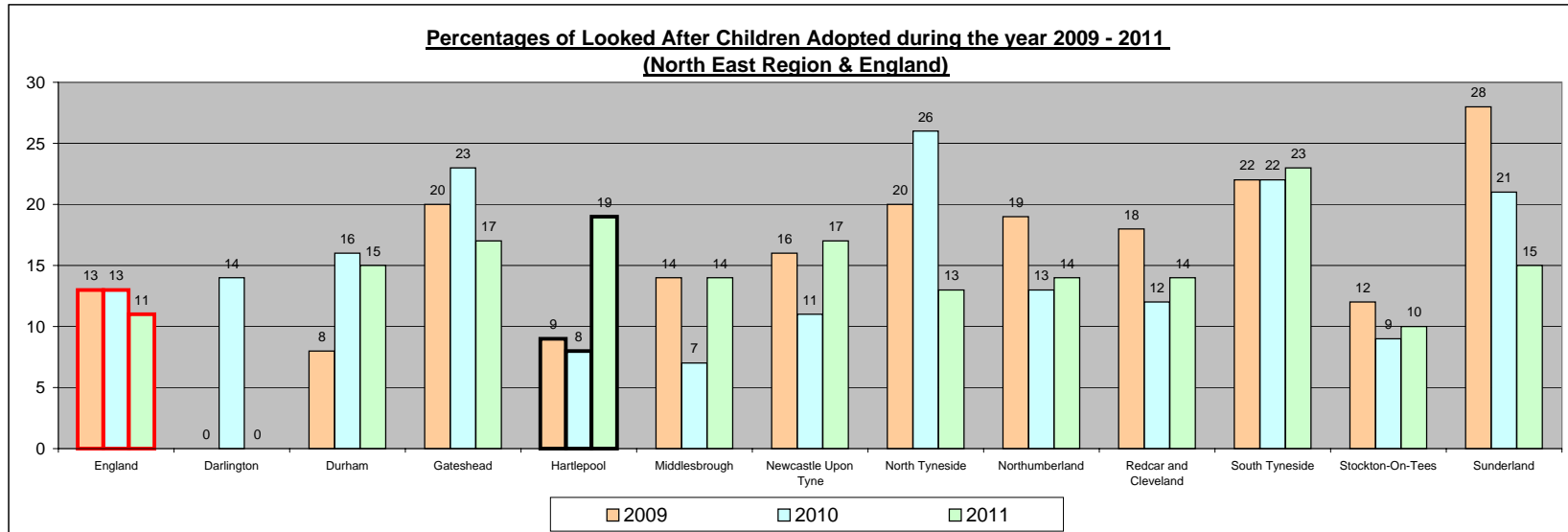
Number of looked after children adopted during the year

Percentage of looked after children adopted during the year⁴

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011



Looked after children who were adopted during the years ending 31 March, by Local Authority^{1,2}

Years ending 31 March 2007 to 2011

Coverage: England

numbers and percentages

Number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year³

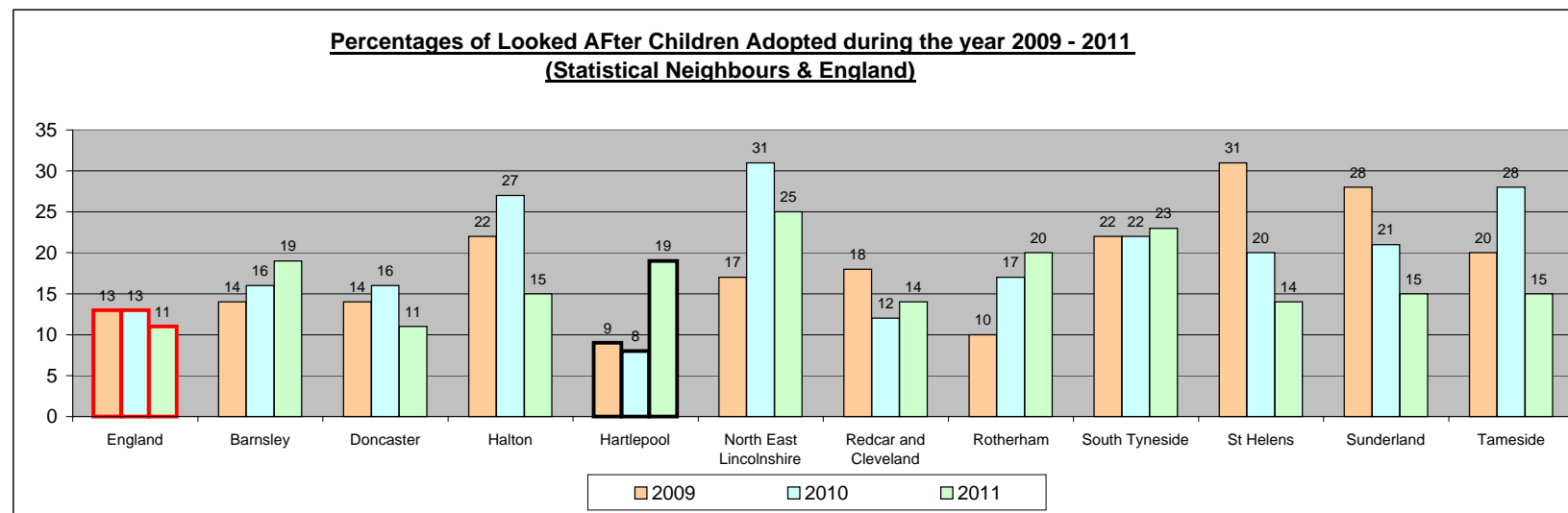
Number of looked after children adopted during the year

Percentage of looked after children adopted during the year⁴

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2007 2008 2009 2010 2011



Children looked after adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision that they should be placed for adoption, and who remained in that placement on adoption, by Local Auth^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

Years ending 31 March 2007 to 2011

Coverage: England

	numbers and percentages														
	2007			2008			2009			2010			2011		
	Number of children adopted	Number of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Number of children adopted	Number of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Number of children adopted	Number of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Number of children adopted	Number of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Number of children adopted	Number of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months	Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months
England	3,330	2,500	75.1	3,180	2,400	75.6	3,330	2,500	75.0	3,200	2,310	72.4	3,050	2,250	74.0
North East	240	190	80.4	210	180	87.8	240	190	78.8	220	180	80.0	240	180	74.7
Darlington	20	15	83.3	10	5	x	x	x	x	10	10	72.7	x	x	x
Durham	40	30	82.1	35	35	91.7	15	15	86.7	30	25	83.9	35	25	73.5
Gateshead	20	15	73.7	20	20	86.4	20	15	80.0	35	20	66.7	20	20	81.8
Hartlepool	5	x	x	x	x	x	10	10	x	5	5	x	15	10	75.0
Middlesbrough	15	10	85.7	10	10	x	20	15	75.0	10	10	72.7	25	20	78.3
Newcastle upon Tyne	25	20	84.0	35	30	83.3	30	25	81.3	20	15	81.0	35	25	75.0
North Tyneside	25	20	87.0	15	10	85.7	30	20	78.6	25	20	88.0	15	15	81.3
Northumberland	20	15	78.9	20	20	100.0	25	15	73.9	10	10	91.7	15	10	69.2
Redcar and Cleveland	10	5	x	10	10	x	10	10	x	10	10	x	15	15	100.0
South Tyneside	30	25	89.3	20	20	90.5	25	25	96.3	20	20	100.0	25	25	85.2
Stockton-on-Tees	15	5	50.0	5	5	x	15	5	42.9	10	5	58.3	15	10	60.0
Sunderland	25	20	80.0	20	15	68.2	35	25	67.6	30	20	76.9	25	10	45.8
North West	20	15	94.4	20	20	90.0	15	10	68.8	15	10	64.7	20	15	72.2
Barnsley	35	25	73.5	15	15	76.5	25	15	65.2	30	20	71.0	25	10	41.7
Doncaster	15	10	92.3	10	x	x	10	x	x	15	10	76.9	10	5	54.5
Halton	5	x	x	x	x	x	10	10	x	5	5	x	15	10	75.0
Hartlepool	10	10	x	5	x	x	10	10	83.3	25	15	66.7	15	10	68.8
North East Lincolnshire	10	5	x	10	10	x	10	10	x	10	10	x	15	15	100.0
Redcar and Cleveland	20	10	56.3	20	15	77.8	10	5	x	25	20	72.0	35	25	67.6
Rotherham	30	25	89.3	20	20	90.5	25	25	96.3	20	20	100.0	25	25	85.2
South Tyneside	10	10	x	10	5	63.6	30	25	81.3	15	10	56.3	15	10	75.0
St. Helens	25	20	80.0	20	15	68.2	35	25	67.6	30	20	76.9	25	10	45.8
Sunderland	10	10	83.3	15	10	80.0	20	15	76.2	30	20	63.3	25	15	69.6
Tameside															

Source: SSDA903

1. England and Regional totals have been rounded to the nearest 10. Other numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5. Percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

See Technical Notes for more information on rounding.

2. Data for all 5 years are based on the snapshot taken in August 2011.

3. This represents part of the previous performance management framework for local authorities on the timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption: This is obtain

X = The number of children included in the denominator who were placed for adoption (SSDA903 placement codes A3, A4, A5 and A6) within 12 months (i.e. less than 365 days, inclusive of date child was placed for adoption) of the decision that they should

This figure excludes children who were placed within 12 months of the decision that they should be placed for adoption, but whose placement for adoption broke down before being adopted.

Y = The number of children who ceased to be looked after during the year ending 31 March as a result of the granting of an adoption order (SSDA903 reason episode ceased codes E11 and E12). Includes only those children who were adopted after having been

immediately prior to adoption. Children placed for adoption or freed for adoption remain looked after until the adoption order is granted.

4. For information only: Special guardianship orders came into force on 30th December 2005.

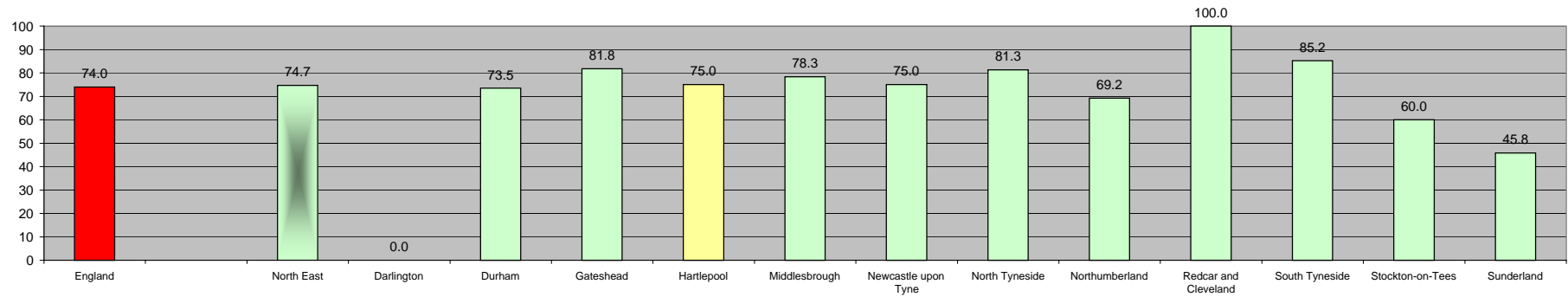
5. Historical data may differ from older publications. This is mainly due to the implementation of amendments and corrections sent by some local authorities after the publication date of previous materials.

6. Children that were adopted but were not placed for adoption are not included in the denominator of the indicator.

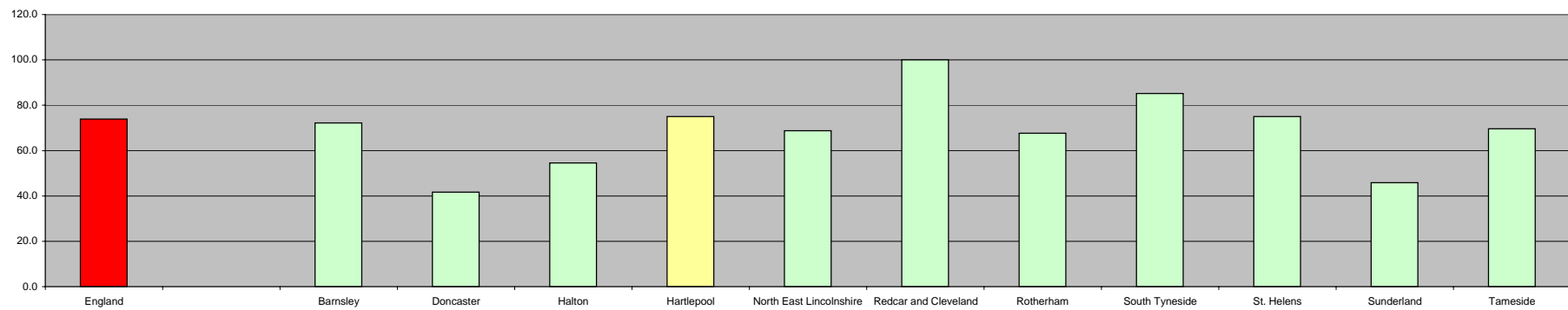
x Figures not shown in order to protect confidentiality. See Technical Notes for information on data suppression.

. Not applicable.

Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months (North East Region) 2011

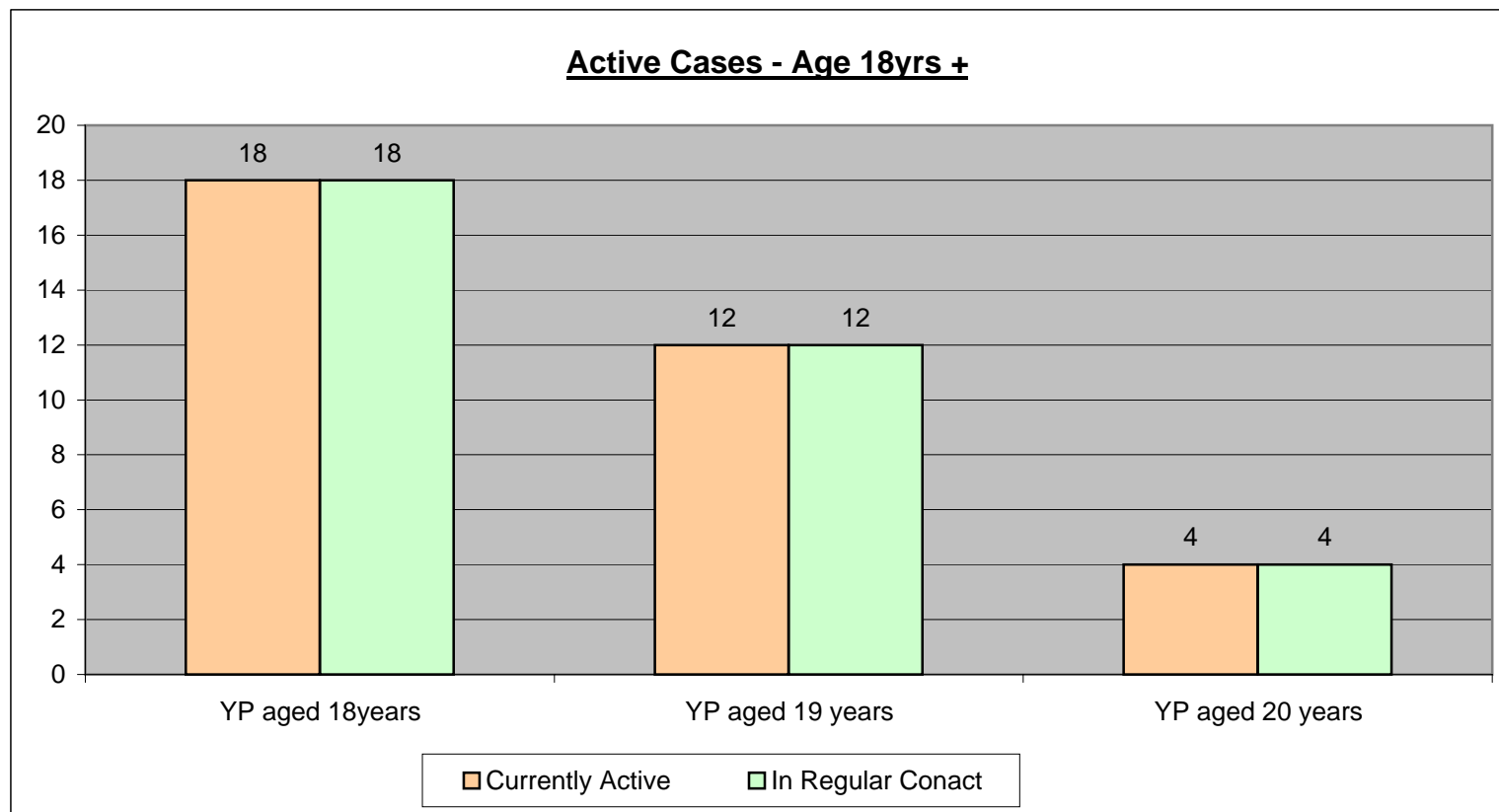


Percentage of children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months (Statistical Neighbours) 2011

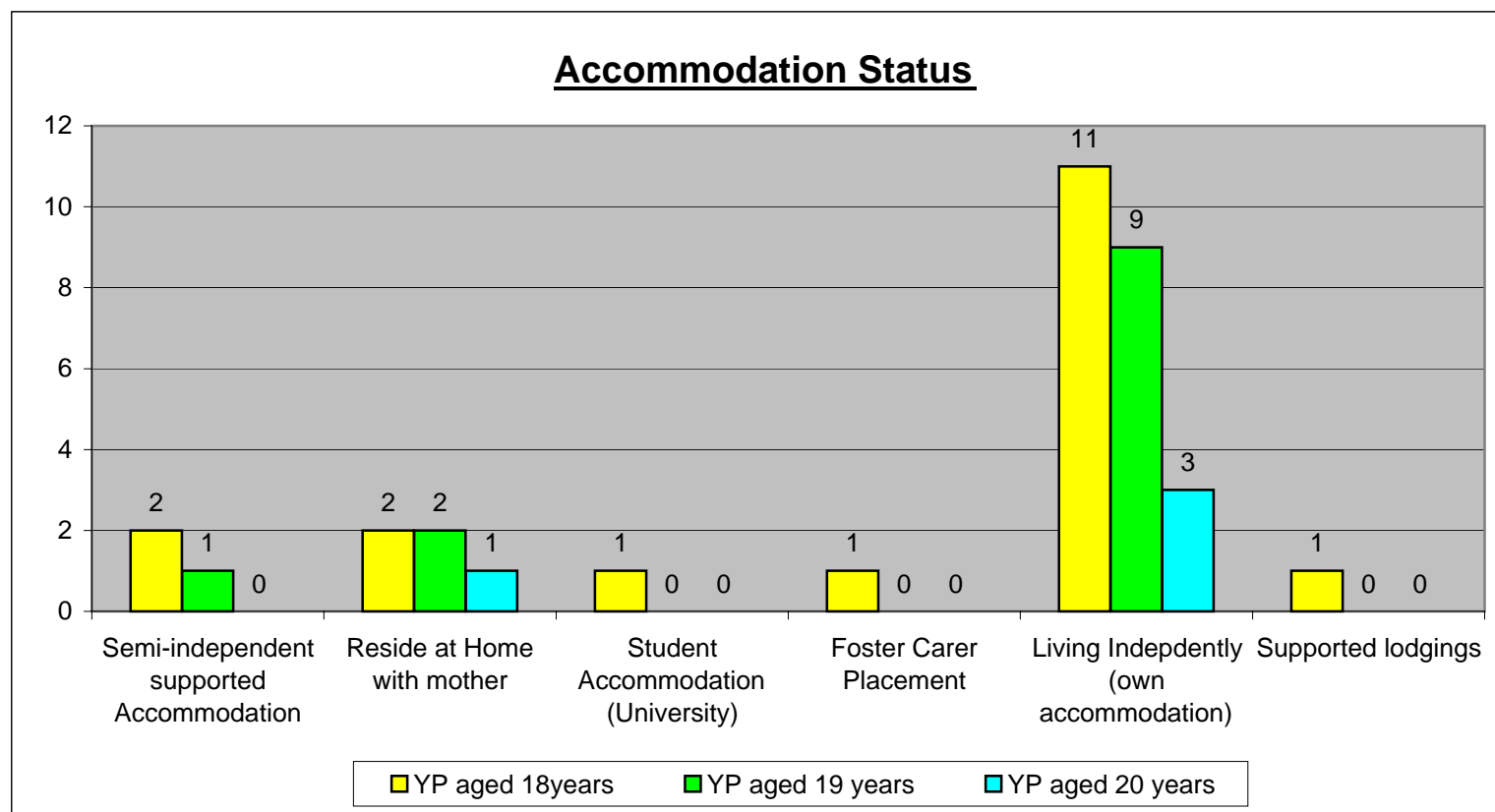


- try very hard to find carers who are the best people to look after you
- give you information about the carers' home
- make sure you know who is responsible for you and how to get in touch with them
- consider your views and wishes, needs, age, culture and any disabilities you may have
- try to make sure you feel safe, have private space and time for yourself

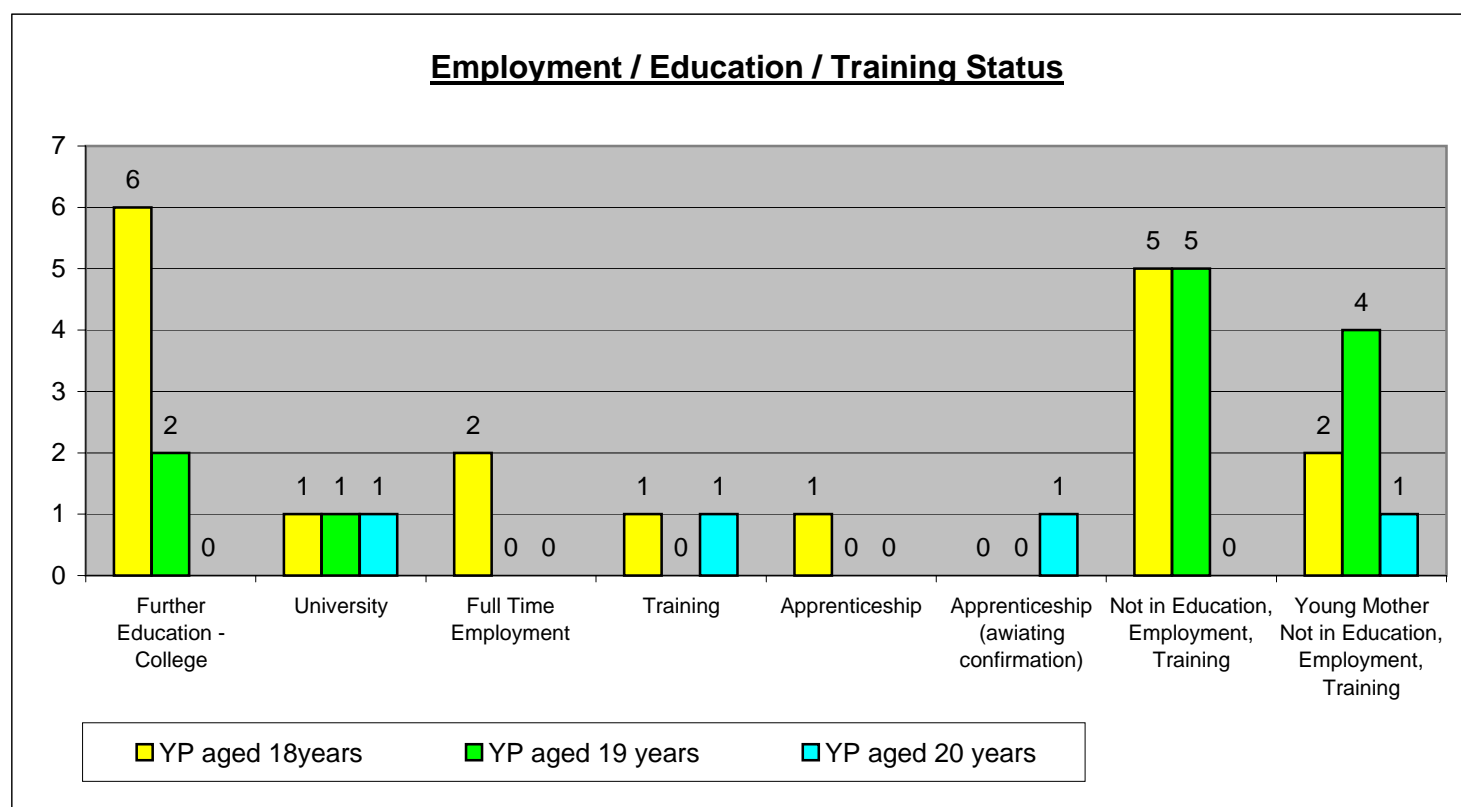
	YP aged 18years	YP aged 19 years	YP aged 20 years	TOTAL
Currently Active	18	12	4	34
In Regular Conact	18	12	4	34



	YP aged 18years	YP aged 19 years	YP aged 20 years	TOTAL
Semi-independent supported Accommodation	2	1	0	3
Reside at Home with mother	2	2	1	5
Student Accommodation (University)	1	0	0	1
Foster Carer Placement	1	0	0	1
Living Independently (own accommodation)	11	9	3	23
Supported lodgings	1	0	0	1



	YP aged 18years	YP aged 19 years	YP aged 20 years	TOTAL
Further Education - College	6	2	0	8
University	1	1	1	3
Full Time Employment	2	0	0	2
Training	1	0	1	2
Apprenticeship	1	0	0	1
Apprenticeship (awaiting confirmation)	0	0	1	1
Not in Education, Employment, Training	5	5	0	10
Young Mother Not in Education, Employment, Training	2	4	1	7



Feedback from Group Exercises held on 23 November 2011

QUESTION	COMMENTS	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>1. How good is the health and wellbeing of children in care? Could this be improved, if yes, how?</p>	<p>90% of health assessments completed in the timescales</p> <p>Dental health ok at present</p> <p>Some issue in being seen / waiting lists to get registered for doctor therefore have access to doctor through One Life Centre (fairly recently moved back into Hartlepool)</p> <p>Emotional health and wellbeing - young people in care for extended periods of time and multiple placements. Transition into adult life has a huge impact. CAMHS can be effective</p> <p>Children looked after aware of the services</p>	<p>Continue multi agency response working</p>
<p>2. How good is the standard of any residential care provided or used by the Council? Could this be improved, if yes, how?</p>	<p>Difficulties in sustaining tenancies</p> <p>When is someone ready to live independently? Don't set young person up to fail</p>	<p>Preparation for independent living</p> <p>Support to help stay with family</p> <p>The need to extend joint working and</p>

	<p>Impact of changes to Benefits in the future</p> <p>Young person feels there is an increased likelihood of eviction and rules are too rigid</p> <p>Low levels of supported accommodation within the Borough and lack of residential provision</p>	<p>liaise with a range of housing providers</p> <p>Care provision be extended beyond the age of 16 for anyone not wishing to live independently at 16</p>
<p>3. How well does the Council do in commissioning or providing services for looked after children / young people?</p>	<p>Would you send a child of your own out of town for a home?</p> <p>Smaller residential -If you have units you would fill them</p> <p>Dunston Road – Independent Provider currently in Hartlepool</p> <p>Over coming barriers / prejudicial against young person</p> <p>Young people placed out of the area run back home</p> <p>Sometimes young person needs to be out of town</p> <p>Issues for young people into adulthood, relationships</p>	<p>The need to ensure that placements are appropriate to meet the needs of the child</p> <p>Need to look at why Children Homes were closed, what were the problems?</p>

	Importance of questioning whether it is appropriate to place a child outside the town as well as consider the impact of placements outside the area and how best to reintegrate children into an area as part of adulthood	
4. How stable and secure are the lives of looked after children / young people while they are in care? Could this be improved? If yes, how?	<p>Security and stability of looked after children – it is important to find suitable matching placements</p> <p>Potential impacts of emergency foster placements</p>	<p>Foster carer should try and plan moves</p> <p>Young person over 18 years, should continue to support young person</p> <p>Reduce respite placement from carers</p> <p>Take children / young person on holiday with you</p> <p>Option to examine performance figures of the Council in relation to stability of placements for looked after children and young people.</p> <p>Additional support for foster carers</p>
5. What more could be done to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as a 'Corporate Parent'?	<p>What would you want for your own children?</p> <p>Should feel part of the family</p>	<p>Ensure young people have the same opportunities / involved in planning process</p> <p>Families should stay together</p> <p>The need to question whether the level of</p>

APPENDIX 4

		<p>support for a looked after child would be acceptable for own child</p> <p>Placing of siblings together</p>
<p>6. How well does the Council do at finding appropriate adoptive families for children for whom it is decided this is the right option?</p>	<p>Numbers of children for whom plan for adoption is rising, number of adopters reducing</p> <p>Report of success of adoption in Hartlepool for statistics in relation to placements within timescale of decisions Identified shortage and successfully advertised – more adopters however, this does not necessarily match the needs of children waiting. One of the measures was finding the right match and reference was made to Hartlepool's success in the adoption process.</p> <p>Trying to be flexible – education, willing to work with and support children</p> <p>Therapeutic support – Acorn</p> <p>How long does process take – balancing act – setting quality info and preparing people in timely way</p> <p>Adoption register process – getting right profiles for children</p>	<p>Measure success by how many placements are the right match evidenced by rates of disruptions compared with other local authorities</p> <p>Need to recruit and prepare adopters for children with more complex needs – support is crucial to this</p> <p>Contact after adoption to support placements</p> <p>Better links with adoption team</p> <p>One of the main issues identified was the need to support carers to accommodate sibling groups with complex needs.</p>

	<p>Prospective adopters attend panel meeting</p> <p>Quality of written information to Panel</p> <p>Disruption meetings</p>	
<p>7. How well do foster care arrangements work? Could this be improved? If yes, how?</p>	<p>Placement breakdown – frequently linked to minimising problems. Once crisis over it has not gone away, need to look at what support is required</p> <p>Foster carers don't always speak out, they look to each other for support. Make judgement when to talk to link worker</p> <p>24 hour telephone support service available – managers from Hartlepool</p> <p>High numbers of foster carers in town</p> <p>Legal proceedings – children not well served by judicial system. Detrimental impact placed on looked after children by legal proceedings</p> <p>Carers need to be jack of all trades</p> <p>Good relationships between foster carer and social workers</p> <p>Situations where carers are left in the dark about future plans of the children they are</p>	<p>Link worker – if not available would like 2nd that has pre-existing relationship with foster carers need to be confident to speak out</p> <p>Foster carer email site. Put number on site</p> <p>Foster carers need to be kept up to date with developments</p> <p>Need to publicise the 24 hour support service and improve communication methods with foster carers</p>

	<p>looking after until the last minute. This leaves the carers having to explain to the children that they can't answer their questions – leaves both carers and children distressed.</p> <p>Foster carers don't have luxury</p>	
8. What support does the Council provide to children / young people leaving care and how effective is it?	<p>Leaving Care service available but often young people vote with their feet.</p> <p>Always room for improvement</p> <p>Getting message across of the reality of leaving home. Children should leave home when ready – children receiving reassurance</p> <p>Shouldn't be leaving care – should be supporting independence</p>	<p>Need innovative ways of providing services to hard to reach young people</p> <p>Provide breath of accommodation for young people, supported lodgings, supported accommodation, floating support, single person accommodation Accommodation whilst home from University</p> <p>Co-ordinate services and ensure the appropriate skills are available to move onto adulthood.</p>
9. How well do looked after children / young people do at school, both academically and in terms of other kind of achievements? Could this be improved? If yes, how?	<p>Results:-</p> <p><u>KS2 (7 children)</u> 43% level 4 Increase from 30%</p> <p><u>KS4 (16 children)</u> 6% A* - C including English and Maths</p>	<p>Mentors – good idea, one trusted person - Each school should have designated person</p> <p>A looked after young person felt that as a looked after child she was singled out at school and suggested that any meetings in relation to personal circumstances</p>

	<p>4 looked after young people were currently studying at university.</p> <p>(Statistics are based on a transient population)</p> <p>Individual progress is now measured with Personal Education Plans – informal progress (e.g sports etc) monitored</p> <p>Attendance monitored weekly and followed up immediately – greatly improved</p> <p>Post 16 education – Hartlepool College of Further Education were not officially advised of details of looked after children, as a result of the recent removal of the education maintenance allowance and the need to apply for a bursary this information was no longer confidential. Whilst the improvements in attendance figures were noted, it was stated that further improvements were necessary.</p> <p>Effective support mechanisms were in place for children looked after when problems arose.</p> <p>Social Workers role is key in supporting improvements in education attainment and the potential benefits as a result.</p>	<p>should be held out of school hours to maintain confidentiality and schools should provide an individual they can talk to eg Citizenship Member.</p> <p>The need for settled placements and to improve links with foster carers to ensure young people were placed at the right schools was highlighted.</p>
--	---	--

	<p>Changes in social workers affected performance in school.</p> <p>Sometimes there is lack of communication between social workers and carers with regards to dates of visits, reviews and Personal Education Plan meetings. School has been left to find out from carers regarding changes of circumstances instead of being told from Duty.</p>	
<p>10. How effective is the professional workforce of social workers and others responsible for running services for and working with looked after children / young people?</p>	<p>Networking is good, helps effective working</p> <p>Getting better at ensuring stability of school</p>	

Comments / views from a Hartlepool Foster Carer fostering children from Stockton:-

Stockton Council offer all of their leisure facilities free to foster children and their carers, even if the foster carers reside in Hartlepool and are fostering children from Stockton. Does Hartlepool offer this?

ANSWER: All foster families receive a free Active card which gives reduced rate admission to leisure and swimming facilities of the council. In addition the sports development team deliver day and residential activities for children looked after on a weekend and during school holidays.

In collaboration with Pony World, children looked after can receive reduced introduction rates to experienced horse riding.

This would help promote health (swimming baths for younger kids or gym membership for older kids). It could promote education (Maritime Experience etc.) Could Hartlepool partner with Stockton and share facilities? (Splash is better than Mill House but Maritime Experience is better than Preston Park Museum). Could each party waver costs to carers and families?

ANSWER: Along with 9 other local authorities in the North East region, Hartlepool participates in the MAX card scheme which offers children in care and their carers free or reduced admission to regional attractions including museums, castles and in 2010 theatre tickets (this includes Maritime Museum). The aim of the MAX card scheme is to increase access to culture for children and young people and is managed by the North East Museums Hub. The Hub is also promoting TECH Max Generation 2012 for its member local authorities which aims to promote a cultural Olympiad. TECH Max will provide funding for 12 projects across the North East region led by children looked after.

Certainly scope for Hartlepool and Stockton to collaborate to mutual benefit with reciprocal access to one another's provision and this can be further explored.

We have also spoken to a few foster carers when on trips out and they asked if they could have discount as they were carers for foster children and were told if they come next time with i.d. then this would be looked at. I know we recently went to lightwater valley with my kids, the foster babies and others. It cost us nothing for the babies but its an expensive day out if you have older foster children. Our agency is going to supply us with id cards.

ANSWER: Hartlepool foster carers are issued ID cards identifying them as foster carers for the Council.

During the summer holidays our agency Reach Out Care arranged a day out each week to the beach, Wynyard Park, Splash etc social workers and support workers attended and everybody met other carers and all the kids played together. Does Hartlepool do this?

ANSWER: Reach Out Care is an independent fostering agency that provides a range of services, from the local authority position we deliver weekend and holiday activities for children, provide funding to the foster care association to support the delivery of activities for foster carers and their children/fostered children. During the summer holiday the local authority take some children on residential break and a fostering allowance is paid to carers for holidays.

Stockton also had an awards day at Preston Park for looked after kids and they received certificates for outstanding progress etc. again not sure if Hartlepool does this?

ANSWER: HBC has the annual 'Celebrating Success' night where children receive awards as well as the summer barbeque and annual Christmas party.

I realise Hartlepool may already do the things I mentioned above but now I work with foster kids I have become quite passionate about their cause.

Comments / views from a co-opted Member of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum:-

What I would like to comment on is that it is all very well attracting new Foster Carers, but what work is being done to match children/young people to the right foster families?

ANSWER: Part of the fostering assessment process is to identify the skills and quality of the carers taking into account their own family situation and throughout the training and assessment, social workers are able to build positive relationships with fostering families and provide a good assessment of their capacity to meet individual needs of children. This information alongside the assessments of children form the initial basis of a match. For children placed permanently in foster care the current carers of the children are involved in seeking the appropriate match as well as the social work applying matching considerations to match children to carers. An assessment report is completed and presented to fostering panel and the agency decision maker before a placement is made. Child Appreciation Days are held to assist and prepare prospective carers for the placement.

What real support is there for foster carers when things don't go so well and the carers are not trained to deal with the emotions/tantrums and even violence of a child/YP?

ANSWER: Hartlepool foster carers have access to a 24 hour telephone support service where they can call for advice, guidance and assistance. The Emergency Duty Team provide out of hours support on an evening and weekends. Every child has an allocated social worker and every foster carer has an allocated supervising social worker. Foster carers are provided a full programme of training and development which aims to prepare them for the challenges they may face in the role of foster carer. Furthermore, where appropriate foster carers through the social worker have access to the child and adolescent mental health service where therapists will work directly to support carers as well as children and the

Placement Support team provide support and respite within the home. There is a monthly Fostering Support Group where foster carers can seek peer support and also request session are held focussing on specific issues if required.

Fairly recent news items indicate that far too many families are taking children and YP into their homes WITHOUT the appropriate training, vetting and support needed. Is this being addressed in Hartlepool?

ANSWER: Yes, all carers receive a comprehensive programme of training, preparation and assessment in line with the national regulations and minimum standards prior to being approved and once approved are inducted into the fostering role.

I personally feel that childless couples who seek to become foster carers can have no idea what they may be letting themselves in for. I have two children and despite being 10 years older than my sibling, changing his nappy and babysitting him, I still found it extremely difficult to cope with all of the changes to our lives, marriage, et al. I am in the fortunate position of knowing the background of my children and being responsible from the onset for their upbringing. Foster carers don't have that luxury. I'm not sure how much of a bond they are able to make, especially if they have to hand the children/YP back to their families. I imagine it to be really tough, but very rewarding when things work out well.

Foster care is important and I fully support the notion of offering children and YP the opportunity to be looked after in a caring home environment, rather than a care home. But, I wonder if YP develop a false sense of what life is like with other families when carers have to abide by so many (necessary) rules/guidelines.

How can carers cope with this? These are some of the issues, how can carers be supported?

Children & Young People's Views



Children & young people who have experienced a variety of care settings to meet their individual and unique needs/circumstances have been consulted and their views obtained. It is these views that we will now share with you.

Appendix 5



We would like to say thank to the following young people for sharing their views.



- Leigh (19)
- Becky (21)
- Simon (20)
- Claire (17)
- Mark (16)
- Jordan (16)
- George (13)
- Paul (16)
- Jack (15)
- Caitlin (13)
- Shelby (14)

- Billie Jo (12)
- Sarah (11)
- James (9)
- Marcus (14)
- Scott (20)
- Jamie (8)
- Jordan (15)
- Nicola (16)
- Michael (17)
- Arron (18)

Appendix 5

What **do** you like about being looked after in care?



- Good relationships with carer.
- Double treats at Christmas, Birthdays Easter etc.
- I have been able to go to places I would never have went with my family.
- Some carers accept you for who you are.
- A bit more freedom.
- I now have opportunities I would never have had with my family.
- Learn good family values and good family morals.
- Better being out of my home town made it easier much happier and more accepted.
- Easier not having as many people living in the home of last carer.
- Comfort of a family home.
- Stability.
- Pocket money.
- Clothing allowance
- Staff/carers
- Friendly people.
- Location.
- Activities.
- Lifestyle.
- Family values.
- Contact with family – (Residential Care)
- Better in general, better prospects as probably wouldn't have gone to college and if I did wouldn't have stuck in.

Appendix 5

What **do** you like about being looked after in care?



- New clothes when I need them.
- I get treated with more respect
- They treat me like an adult.
- I get to do more activities and have more opportunities and good experiences.
- Not as many arguments as there were when I lived at home.
- Someone who can tell me what not to do and try to keep me right and someone to take me to the doctors.
- You get to go on holiday
- You get to go to the pictures
- My carers are kind
- You get pocket money
- They look after us nicely
- I get to do things that I didn't get to do with my mam and dad.
- It is nice to be in foster care
- Someone to talk to a friendship and bonding with Foster Carer and other young people in the household and extended family.

Appendix 5

What **do** you like about being looked after in care?

- Personal belongings.
- Xbox/PSP
- The staff at Exmoor
- Where I live
- Joyful environment
- Stability and having a roof over your head.
- Knowing there is someone there.
- Nice Social Worker
- Someone there to help you.



Appendix 5

What **don't** you like about being looked after in care?



- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get told off for negative behaviour. • Lack of communication (residential care) • Family contact – should be in a family setting instead of a resource centre. • Not having someone to talk to. • Friends parents having to be police checked when I would like to sleep out it is so embarrassing for me. • Some foster carers are in it for the money | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When foster carers go on holiday we should always be included. • Going to respite with carers you don't know. • Building up a relationship with your Social Worker then getting a new one. • Sibling separation • Foster carers saying they understand when they haven't been through what we have been through. • Nothing about being in care – strangers. • Did not know the environment. |
|--|---|

Appendix 5

What don't you like about being looked after in care?



- If I kick off I get locked up – with carers or residential staff.
- I do not get given enough information from my Social Worker
- Families are separated
- Living out of town/shipped out of town.
- Strict boundaries.
- Don't like some other children in placement
- Get told off all the time.
- Not being able to play on my DS when I want.
- Should be able to go home any time you like.
- Nothing x 2



Appendix 5

What don't you like about being looked after in care?



- Lack of choices.
- People that I didn't know.
- Have to go out with random people
- I want to go home.
- Being stereotyped
- Looks bad on families
- Don't like being part of social services.
- Worried that when you reach 18, where you're going to live.
- Should involve families more.
- Too many other people involved.
- LAC Reviews
- Hard to be placed between 16 -18.
- Having to attend meetings (all meetings, puts you on a downer when they talk about you)

Appendix 5

Is there anything which would have made coming into care easier for you? What would have made your time in care easier?

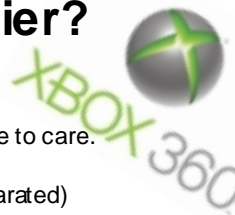
- An explanation to why I am in care.
- Getting informed that you are going into care before it happens.
- When we got taken into care, it felt like we were being kidnapped from school.
- Not getting an explanation to why I went into care wasn't very nice. I think I should have been told why.
- Building a relationship with a foster carer before I lived with them.
- Living with younger foster carers would have helped.
- Making sure that I was going to be with the right foster carer and family.
- Social Worker to have more background knowledge of the foster carer and whether or not they have knowledge of my family.



Appendix 5

Is there anything which would have made coming into care easier for you? What would have made your time in care easier?

- An Xbox
- Getting to know the carers first
- Could have been prepared for transition from home to care.
- Picked up from school with no warning.
- Should have been kept as a family (4 siblings separated)
- We are not given choices of foster carers.
- Have to be totally honest (the Social Workers)
- Meeting the carers.
- Would have been easier if I had been placed correctly the first time.
- Having more choice and say in where to go and being kept informed otherwise it can be scary.
- Social Worker to listen to my worries/concern's about who I am to be placed with.



Appendix 5

Is there anything which would have made coming into care easier for you? What would have made your time in care easier?

- Knowing where you were going and why.
- To be given clear rules and boundaries.
- Different types of care and families to match preferences.
- Choice
- Choose where we go.
- Less carer's – get it right from the beginning.
- Would have liked a Social Worker that listened and sided with the family.
- To have a foster carer that is understanding and can talk too and to be treated as a member of the family.



Appendix 5

If you were able to change the care system what things would you change?



- To keep contact with siblings whether in foster care or adopted.
- Promote family contact more.
- More contact with Social Workers
- More support workers
- More leaving care workers
- To have contact with Social Workers in a more relaxed environment.
- You should be told what a care order is and why you have one.
- More contact with your family and unsupervised.
- Should be able to pick and choose the foster carer you want to stay with, to be able to 'test out' i.e. stay with a week or so to see how you are going to get on with the carer and their family.

Appendix 5

If you were able to change the care system what things would you change?

- To have more family contact.
- Foster carers should take all family members.
- To have a residential home in Hartlepool
- More foster carers homes in Hartlepool
- To have a new bus (Exmoor).
- Its fine the way it is.
- More consistency across the board in regards to finances and make sure that they receive the money.



Appendix 5

If you were able to change the care system what things would you change?

- More places in Hartlepool for young people.
- Not to be judged on past behaviour.
- More funding for Child & Adult Services.
- Being able to stay in one place.
- Not having to move
- Less people fussing around you.
- More choices of foster carers.
- Move leaving care workers and Social Workers – to allow workers to better support young people – would have less young people to support so able to give better service.
- A limit on the number of children/people in a house.
- Don't mix families.



Appendix 5

Additional Comments

- Why don't I see my family when I want to?
- Why don't I see my Social Worker very often?
- Why do staff have to supervise my contact with my family?
- Leigh wishes she had stayed in care a lot longer because things are not as easy as she thought.
- It is difficult learning how to budget.
- Matching Social Workers to our personality.
- Important to attend panel and be fully involved in the process as much as possible.
- Happy in placement and services that are in place.



	Basic £	NI £	Super £	Total Cost £	
<u>Staffing</u>					
Manager	38,042	2,943	6,239	47,224	
Deputy-Manager	36,186	2,737	5,935	44,858	
Staff - Bands 7-9	377,000	28,451	61,828	467,279	2 staff on duty at all times; includes Shift Allowance & Weekend & Night Enhancements
Cook	16,900	1,300	2,800	21,000	
Cover / Overtime	56,000	4,000	0	60,000	
	524,128	39,431	76,802	640,361	
Utilities				16,000	
Cleaning				12,000	
Maintenance				15,000	
Other Premises				10,000	inc Insurance, Trade Waste, Grounds Maintenance
Food				20,000	
Transport				13,000	
General Equipment etc				6,500	inc phones, ICT, office equipment etc
OFSTED Registration				2,000	
Activities				11,000	
Prudential Borrowing				22,000	Cost of £0.5m capital
Total Cost				767,861	
Cost per Placement per week				3,682	Assumes 100% occupancy throughout year

Residential Child Care Salaries**Independent Sector Salaries:****Company A:**

Manager: £33,679

Deputy: £26,104

Senior Qualified: £22,941

Senior Unqualified: £21,611

Care Worker Qualified: £19,663

Care Worker Unqualified: £18,523

Company B:

Manager: £32,000

Deputy: £21,000

Care Worker qualified: £ 14,430

Care Worker unqualified: £ 13,468

Example of voluntary sector salaries:

Different tiers of management dependent on size of establishment and number of children/staff therefore either:

Residential Manager: £32,072 - £39,351 or £33,998 - £41,148

House Manager: £28,922 - £35,784

Unit Manager: £27,323 - £33,998

Standard qualified scale for a project worker: £27,323 to £33,998;

Unqualified rate: £19,817 - £25,727

Assistant unqualified: £15,882 - £19,817

Above does not include enhanced rates for weekends or any on costs, employer NI contributions or pensions