

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE**

# **CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGENDA**



**Tuesday 25 February 2014**

**at 4.15 pm**

**in Hartlepool College of Further Education, Stockton Street, Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Chris Simmons, Chair of Children's Services Committee and Lead Member for Children's Services (Chair);  
Councillor Kevin Cranney, Chair of South Neighbourhood Forum;  
Councillor Sylvia Tempest, Chair of North Neighbourhood Forum;  
Gill Alexander, Director of Child and Adult Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Dean Jackson, Assistant Director, Education, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Damien Wilson, Assistant Director, Regeneration, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Chief Superintendent Gordon Lang, Cleveland Police;  
Lucia Saiger-Burns, Director of Offender Services, Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust;  
Ali Wilson, Chief Officer, NHS Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group;  
Dr Paul Pagni, NHS Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group;  
Linda Watson, Director of Clinical Community Services, Hartlepool & North Tees NHS Foundation Trust;  
Chris Davis, Head of Service, CAMHS, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust;  
Ian Merritt, Strategic Commissioner – Children's Services, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Danielle Swainston, Head of Access and Strategic Planning, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Helen White, Participation Manager, Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Dave Wise, West View Project, Voluntary and Community Sector;  
Andy Powell, Housing Hartlepool;  
John Hardy, Head Teacher St John Vianney Primary School, Hartlepool Primary Schools (Vice Chair);  
Colin Reid, Head Teacher, St Hild's Secondary School, Hartlepool Secondary Schools;  
Karl Telfer, Head Teacher, Springwell Special School, Hartlepool Special Schools;  
Darren Hankey, Principal Hartlepool College of Further Education, Hartlepool Post 16 Colleges;  
Anne Smith, Partnership Manager, Job Centre Plus;  
Karen Gibson, Hartlepool Carers, HealthWatch Children and Young People's Representative Representatives, Children and Young People – c/o Helen White, Participation Manager  
Parent Representatives – c/o Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services



## **PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE**

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

### **3. MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2013.

### **4. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

4.1 Presentation - Draft Children Looked After Strategy 2014-2017 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

4.2 Presentation - Development of a Hartlepool Children and Young People's Entitlement – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

4.3 Presentation – British Heart Foundation – Younger and Wiser 2012-2015 – *Director of Public Health*

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of next meeting – To be confirmed**



## **CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

6 November 2013

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Kevin Cranney

Also present: Gill Alexander, Director of Child and Adult Services,  
Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Dean Jackson, Assistant Director, Education, Hartlepool  
Borough Council;  
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health, Hartlepool Borough  
Council;  
Dr Paul Pagni, NHS Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Clinical  
Commissioning Group;  
Danielle Swainston, Head of Access and Strategic Planning,  
Hartlepool Borough Council;  
Helen White, Participation Manager, Hartlepool Borough  
Council;  
Dave Wise, West View Project, Voluntary and Community  
Sector;  
John Hardy, Head Teacher St John Vianney Primary School,  
Hartlepool Primary Schools (Vice Chair);  
Karl Telfer, Head Teacher, Springwell Special School,  
Hartlepool Special Schools;  
Darren Hankey, Principal Hartlepool College of Further  
Education, Hartlepool Post 16 Colleges;  
Shay Miah, Children and Young People Representative

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Helen Ivson was in attendance as substitute for Andy Powell.

Officers: Deborah Gibbin, Health Improvement Manager  
Roni Checksfield, Youth Inclusion Custody Co-ordinator  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **19. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Linda Watson (Hartlepool and North Tees NHS Foundation Trust), Gordon Lang (Cleveland Police), Karen Gibson (Hartlepool Carers) and Ian Merritt (Strategic Commissioner, Children's Services).

## **20. Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **21. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2013**

Confirmed.

## **22. Presentation – Headliners UK – Participation Project SEND (Author)**

The Partnerships Manager from Headliners UK had been invited to the meeting to present details of a project to support children and young people who were disabled or had Special Educational Needs and their families. The project had been developed as a result of the Government's green paper and Department of Education evaluation report: Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Progress and Next Step. The Partnerships Manager informed the Partnership that the project would address the key question of how to ensure families and young people had the right information and opportunities to participate particularly during policy/service reforms. It was noted that the project would utilise innovative engagement methods, including film and media and would support a minimum of 20 young people and their family members to produce a DVD with their views on the services they receive and their aspirations.

One of the aims of the project was to involve key service providers including the Local Authority, Health Sector and Community and Voluntary Sector Groups. It was suggested that by building a local picture of the issues that matter to the service users of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service, the evidence produced would influence key stakeholders to ensure that local services reflect local needs. The Director of Child and Adult Services indicated that exploring the transition of young people from age 16 to 25, particularly around housing, employment and training would be really useful.

It was hoped that the different Partners could work together to identify young people who may wish to have the opportunity to be involved in this project. It was highlighted that Barnardos had a number of programmes for young people around producing videos and it was suggested that it may be

useful to discuss this with them to gain from their experience. The importance of the support from all organisations involved in the Partnership was reiterated as the feedback that could be gained from this project would be invaluable.

The Partnership were fully supportive of the project and it was noted that the planning of project would commence in January and it would run from February to April 2014.

### **Decision**

The project to be provided by Headliners UK was supported by the Children's Strategic Partnership.

## **23. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Pathfinder Programme** *(Assistant Director, Children's Services)*

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Partnership on the national SEND Reforms, the Pathfinder Programme and the progress towards implementation in Hartlepool.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report provided the background to the Government's proposals to reform special educational needs and the creation of a SEND Pathfinder programme which Hartlepool had been successful in bidding for the funding in September 2011. It was noted that progress on this programme had been monitored with feedback being very positive. It was highlighted that in November 2012 Hartlepool and Darlington had been granted an extension to the Pathfinder programme until September 2014. The specific grant conditions were outlined in the report.

The Partnership were requested to consider the following two proposals which were linked to the Pathfinder programme:

- To consider a letter dated 20 July from the Department of Health, attached at Appendix 1, which requested Lead Members for Children's Services and Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards to sign up to the "Better health outcomes for children and young people pledge".
- To consider the proposal from Headliners UK to work with young people and their families in Hartlepool to gather their views on the changes introduced as part of the Pathfinder to prepare for the SEND reforms.

The Director of Public Health confirmed that an update on the Pathfinder

programme had been received at the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board and highlighted the need to ensure this was embedded in existing planning arrangements and that organisations, including on a national basis, support this through planning and commissioning arrangements.

The representative from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commented that this would support the work already undertaken by the CCG which looked at the reconfiguration of health services as they moved forward, in particular at children's and midwifery services.

The Chair commented that anything that reiterated the importance of children's health was welcomed.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Partnership noted:
  - The success of the programme to date in Hartlepool;
  - The implications of the extension to the programme to September 2014 (outlined in the report);
  - The role of Hartlepool as a national champion for the implementation of the reforms (outlined in the report).
- (ii) To support the continuation of the Pathfinder Programme as Hartlepool was well placed to meet the new statutory requirements in relation to SEND which would be introduced through the Children and Families Bill.
- (iii) To reiterate the Partnership's commitment to improving the outcomes through integration and partnership working to implement the reforms in Hartlepool to meet the requirements of the Pathfinder Grant.

## **24. Think Family, Think Communities (TFTC) (Assistant Director, Children's Services)**

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Partnership on the progress of the Think Family, Think Communities (TFTC) programme.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

A detailed and comprehensive report and presentation provided the Partnership with the national and local context of the 'Think Family, Think Community (TFTC)' programme and the aims of the programme. The presentation included three anonymised case studies in order to provide

the Partnership with a greater understanding of the detail behind how the programme operated.

It was expected that 290 families in Hartlepool would be supported through the TFTC programme. The programme was monitored through regular performance management to help understand whether positive change was occurring for those families involved. Work was currently underway to capture more detailed information for the Year One and Year Two families.

The programme aspired to enable all families to lead themselves with support and challenge service provision as and when needed to ensure that children's lives were improved.

The Chair commented that the single point of contact was an excellent way forward to ensure that families build up a trusted relationship with one person to lead to solution focussed outcomes. The Director of Public Health added that through the simple interventions in relation to vaccinations for children and engagement with health visitors and school nursing, the progress of the TFTC programme could be maximised through the commissioning of services.

In response to a question around the link to the provision of drug and alcohol support services, the Youth Inclusion Custody Co-ordinator informed the Partnership that the Team included two Probation Officers who would bring a new dimension to the whole process focussing on adults. The Director of Public Health added that the involvement of primary care providers would also support this area of the programme.

The Head of Access and Strategic Planning indicated that any additional support that could be provided from Partners around low level emotional support would be welcomed. The representative from the CCG commented that organisations such as MIND and Tees Time to Talk would be able to provide additional support in that area of the programme.

The Chair noted that the discussions on this programme highlighted the importance and potential benefits of all Partners working together through effective communication.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services commented that there were huge benefits from this programme in terms of social return on investment. However, the sustainability of the programme going forward needs to be explored with a view to mainstreaming it into a model within the wider social care to ensure everyone was working towards a one plan approach for all families. All partners were asked to give some thought to the sustainability of this programme and early intervention programmes in the future.

The Director of Child and Adult Services congratulated the team as they had been working with the TFTC programme for a shorter period than a number of other local authorities but had achieved good outcomes. The importance of ensuring the programme would drive system change and not

just become another short term funded programme was reiterated. There were a number of initiatives through the health and education sectors which would assist shape the way services were delivered in the future to ensure more coherent outcomes were achieved for local families.

### **Decision**

The progress of the Think Families, Think Communities programme was noted.

## **25. Bring a Gift Scheme** (*Assistant Director, Children's Services*)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Partnership with information regarding the 'Gifts' received by Children's Services for children and young people looked after following a letter sent to partners by Councillor Chris Simmons in August 2013.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Chair was pleased to inform the Partnership that the following gifts had been donated in line with the 'Bring a Gift Scheme':

- Hartlepool College of Further Education had offered a young person a series of sessions where a young person would receive information about health and lifestyle and support from a personal trainer and a gym membership for two months.
- NHS Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group had gifted £500 to promote healthy living, Sue Coverdale, Looked After Nurse and the Children in Care Council were identifying how this money would be most effectively used.
- West View Project had donated £150 worth of gift vouchers, social workers in the Through Care Team were identifying individual young people would benefit from these gifts.
- Hartlepool Borough Council had created three additional apprenticeship opportunities for young people which would be ring fenced initially to care leavers. Officers in the Through Care Team were working with young people to match these opportunities to their aspirations and interests.

### **Decision**

The Partnership was pleased to acknowledge the 'Gifts' received to date and encouraged others to participate wherever possible.



## **26. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

## **27. Dates of Future Meetings of the Children's Strategic Partnership**

The Chair informed the Partnership that the schedule of meetings for the Children's Strategic Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year would be changed as follows:

15 January – CANCELLED

9 April – CANCELLED

26 February had been rescheduled to 25 February at 4.15pm.

In addition, it was noted that in the new municipal year, meetings of the Partnership would be scheduled quarterly to enable all Partners to be involved in a more strategic approach to the provision of Children's Services.

However, it was recognised that additional meetings could be scheduled with the prior agreement with the Chair, should Partners have specific issues that they wished to be considered outside of this schedule. This could be arranged through the Assistant Director, Children's Services or the Democratic Services Team.

### **Decision**

- (i) The changes to the schedule of meeting dates of the Children's Strategic Partnership were noted.
- (ii) That this would be confirmed through email to all members of the Partnership.

The meeting concluded at 4.25pm

CHAIR

# CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

25 February 2014



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

**Subject:** DRAFT CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER  
STRATEGY 2014-2017

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft Children Looked After Strategy to the Children's Strategic Partnership for consideration, consultation and approval for the document to be circulated for wider consultation.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This strategy builds upon the previous strategy for 2010 to 2013 which provided a framework for the development of services to children who are looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council. The authority performance in relation to outcomes for looked after children is good and this strategy intends to embed and further improve performance. The previous strategy was successfully implemented and provides positive foundation for continued improvement.

## 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The draft Children Looked After Strategy is attached at **Appendix 1**. Members of the partnership are asked to consider the strategy in the context of their own organisation and the services provided for children looked after. The Children in Care Council have reviewed the draft strategy and their feedback has been incorporated. With the agreement of the strategic partnership the next stage will be to facilitate a wider consultation process with looked after children and young people, foster carers and our partner agencies with a view to the strategy being in place for April 2014..

**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Children Service Strategic Partnership are asked to recommend this strategy for consultation.

**5. CONTACT OFFICER**

Jane Young  
Head of Business Unit  
Specialist Services  
01429 495588  
[jane.young@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:jane.young@hartlepool.gov.uk)



## **Child Looked After Strategy**

This strategy outlines the vision of Hartlepool Borough Council for its children and young people in care and care leavers. Hartlepool Children's Services is committed to improving the experiences and outcomes for children looked after and care leavers in the town and is aspirational in its plan to deliver continuous improvement and remove the gap between children in care and their peers.

This strategy builds upon to 2010 to 2013 Children Looked After Strategy recognising the achievements realised through the delivery of the strategy and setting new priorities to deliver continuous improvement for the care of children looked after and care leavers in Hartlepool.

The delivery of the 2014-2017 strategy will be achieved with the active commitment and involvement of all partners which form the Children's Strategic Partnership and Corporate Parent Forum under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Director of Child and Adult Services and Lead Member for Children's Services.

This strategy is based upon the principle question of whether the care and parenting provided would be good enough for one of our own children.

## **Children in Need and Family Support Vision**

The vision is to support children and their families who are at risk of becoming looked after and to deliver a wide range of universal, targeted and specialist services. This will enable children to be safely looked after within their families and receive the right services at the right time.

The provision of tailored family support packages will be based upon a sound assessment of need with clearly defined outcomes to be achieved. Children should only become looked after where this has been assessed as being in their best interest and all available resources within the family and social network have been explored.

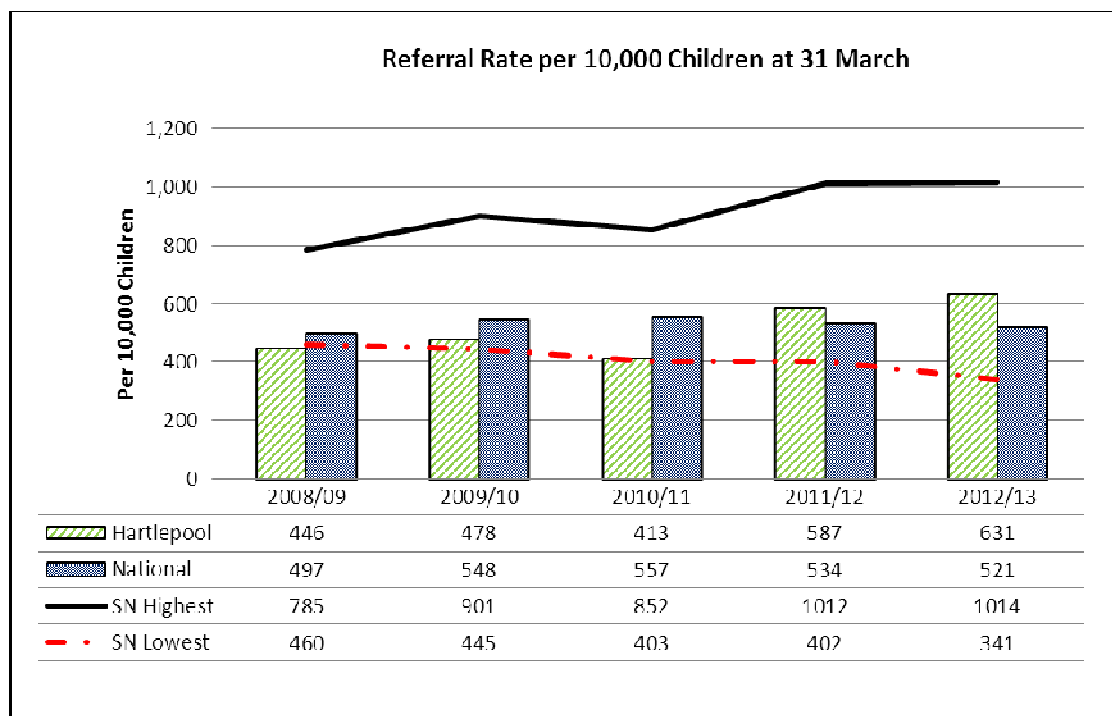
### **What we have done**

- Developed and implemented the Early Intervention Strategy 'A Better Childhood in Hartlepool' 2011-2013.
- Commissioned a range of services to support children and their families including, amongst other things, Parenting Programmes and 1:1 parenting support; activities for children aged 5-19; mentoring for children and young people and substance misuse services.
- Facilitated Family Group Conferences delivered in partnership with Action for Children.
- Developed and implemented an intensive support service for young people who are at risk of becoming looked after including the provision of a support foster carer service.
- Developed and implemented the Hartlepool Think Family, Think Communities Programme, delivering intensive family intervention programmes to children and families who meet the 'Troubled Families' criteria and making a commitment to turn around 290 families by March 2015.
- Implemented the recommendations of the Family Justice Review through local Public Law Outline arrangements and realigned services to strengthen pre-proceedings work with families.
- Completed an annual Matching Needs and Services analysis of all children who become looked after providing longitudinal data to inform service planning and development.
- Reviewed and updated the policy and procedures in relation to Special Guardianship and Residence Order arrangements.
- Completed an audit of children who become looked after to inform service planning and development.

## Needs Analysis

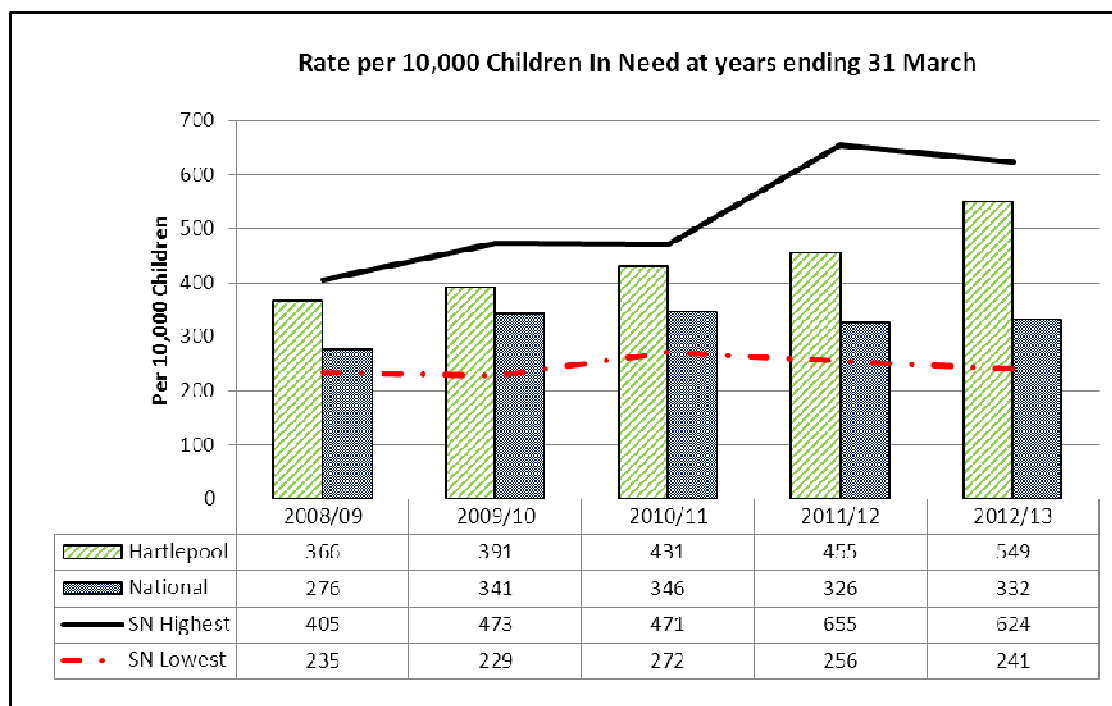
As the graph below shows, Hartlepool has a higher than average number of children looked after when considering the rate per 10,000 of the population.

In the last three years there has been a significant increase in the number of children looked after by the Council which is reflective of the national picture of rising numbers of looked after children for the majority of local authorities.



The increase in the numbers of children looked after in Hartlepool is reflective of the wider picture of increasing demand for services for children in need in Hartlepool. As the table below shows, between 2010 and 2013 there has been a 31% increase in the number of children receiving social care services and more families than ever are receiving help and support. The number of children looked after has increased by 25% in the same period. The increase in demand for services is multi faceted and has no one single causation factor, it is attributable to, for example:

- The increased awareness of the needs of vulnerable children;
- The pressures on families associated with the economic downturn;
- Welfare reforms with the associated increases in child poverty; and
- More families are receiving preventative services than before which are uncovering significantly high levels of need and vulnerability.



### What will we do?

- Review the Early Intervention Strategy in light of budget reductions investing in services which meet the needs of children and their families and prevent the need for statutory services.
- Reduce the care population and realign resources to preventative work by:
  - Increasing the uptake of Family Group Conferences;
  - Implementing system change arising from learning from the Think Family, Think Communities Programme rolling out delivery of intensive family support across early intervention and social care services;
  - Increase the delivery of intensive community support packages across the 0-17 age range.
- Develop and implement a reunification policy for children returning to their families from care;
- Improve care planning arrangements to ensure all admissions to care are underpinned by robust assessments and proactive planning.

### Impact of Measures

- There will be a reduction in the number of children who become looked after and for those who do, their placements will be planned and underpinned by a robust assessment of need. Emergency admissions to care will only occur as a result of an immediate child protection situation.
- There will be an improvement in the stability of placements for children looked after as placements will be better planned and matched.
- There will be a reduction in the number of children who become looked after for a second or subsequent time.



DRAFT

## **Corporate Parenting**

### **Vision**

The vision is to ensure that every looked after child in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships, is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging. Children in care will 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, corporately and operationally in the town.

### **What we have done**

- Hartlepool Borough Council has a long-standing Corporate Parent Forum made up of Elected Members and representatives from the Children in Care Council and foster carers. The Forum receives reports on all aspects of corporate parenting responsibility including, among other things, education and health of children looked after, fostering and adoptions and education, employment and training of care leavers. The Forum provides its members with the opportunity to challenge how services are delivered to children in care and measure the effectiveness of these services. 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 have grown up happy, healthy, with stable relationships and a first class education.
- Established an effective Children in Care Council, supported by dedicated officers, to ensure the voices of children and young people influence service development at a national, regional, local and personal level.
- Established joint meetings between the Corporate Parent Forum and Children in Care Council.
- Undertaken a full Children's Services Scrutiny Investigation into services for children looked after for which Hartlepool Borough Council was nominated for a National Scrutiny Award.
- The Children in Care Council has reviewed and produced a revised Pledge for Children Looked After.
- Trained groups of looked after children and young people as Young Inspectors and Junior Inspectors so they can inspect the quality of aspects of their care and other local services for children.
- Implemented a 'Bring A Gift' scheme through the Children's Strategic Partnership where organisations are encouraged to offer something within their gift to children looked after.

### What will we do?

- Strengthen the governance arrangements around the delivery of the Children Looked After Strategy through the Corporate Parent Forum and Children's Strategic Partnership.
- Strengthen service user engagement for children looked after through, for example, the development of focus groups and specific participatory opportunities including consultation and project groups.
- Empower and support the Children's Care Council to be a widely recognised voice of and lobby for children looked after in Hartlepool and ensure that this group is representative of the views of all children looked after including children with disabilities and younger children by:
  - Exploring innovative ways of ensuring the Children in Care Council can communicate with and receive the views of children looked after who choose not to be members of the Council (websites, e-mail, newsletter, consultation events/activities);
  - Enabling other participation groups to feed into the Children in Care Council either through reports, presentations or joint project, activity events and residential experiences.
  - Ensuring that the findings of both the Junior and Young Inspectors are fed into the work of the Children in Care Council so they can act upon recommendations and instigate change and improvement in the services for looked after child.
- Elected Members will promote the interests of children looked after and care leavers in all aspects of their Council responsibilities.
- Implement the Children in Care Council "Quality Mark" for all reports prepared for Corporate Parent Forum, Children Services Committee and Children's Strategic Partnership.

### Impact of Measures

- The Corporate Parent Forum (in partnership with the Children in Care Council) will drive the change agenda to achieve the vision laid out within this strategy and hold officers and other partners to account.
- There will be an overall improvement in the performance of the Council in relation to outcomes achieved for children looked after and care leavers.
- Children and young people will report that they have influenced and shaped the services of the Council.
- The needs of the children looked after and care leavers will be reflected throughout the business of the Council.

## **Sufficiency**

### **The Vision**

Each child or young person has a right to be looked after in accordance with an appropriate and full assessment of need. When a child becomes looked after, this will be a positive choice which is intended to meet their assessed needs and this decision will have been made, wherever possible, with the agreement of the child/young person, their family and significant others.

When a child becomes looked after, there must be a sufficient range of accommodation options available to be able to match the child to a placement that will meet his/her needs. Once placed, the child will experience stability, continuity and a plan for permanence developed and implemented at the earliest opportunity.

Any placement for a child looked after will, so far as possible and in the child's best interests, enable the child to remain close to home, have continuity of education and health care provision, enable siblings to live together and ensure suitability of accommodation if the child or young person is disabled. The education and health needs of a child should be given a priority consideration where accommodation or placement change is being considered.

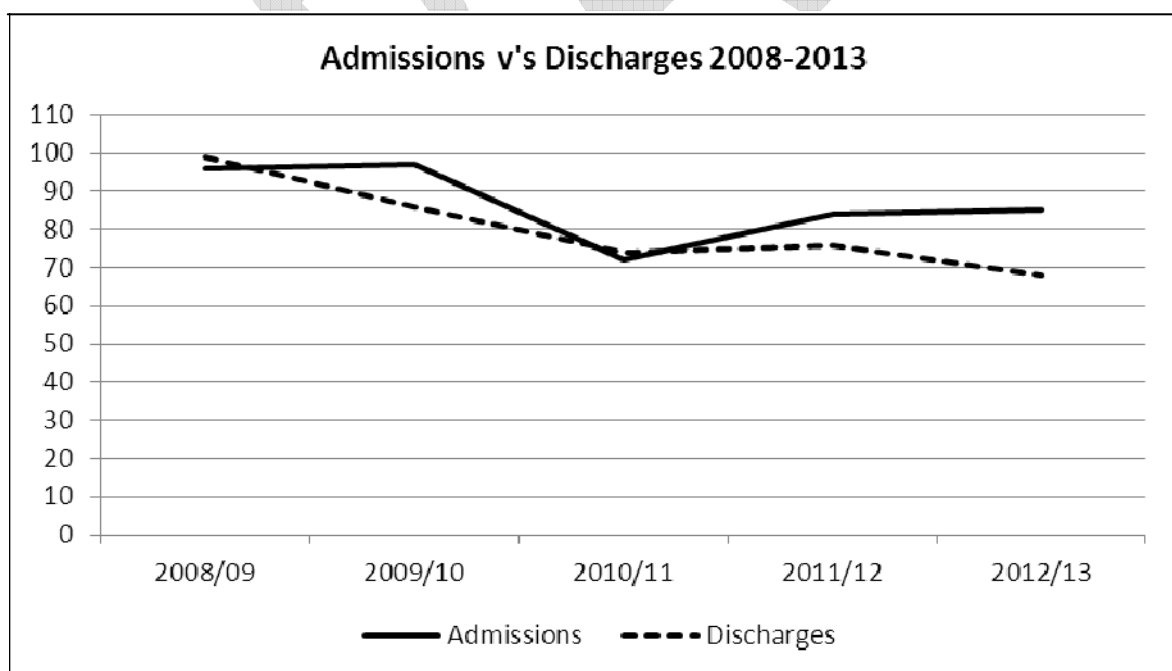
Statutory guidance places a general duty on local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children (the "sufficiency duty").

### **What we have done**

- Developed and implemented plans to open a Children's Home in Hartlepool to ensure that children needing residential care can be cared for within their home town promoting continuity of health education and family and social relationships.
- Re-configured provision at Exmoor Grove Children's Home to offer permanent and short break care to children with a learning disability and associated challenging behaviours.
- Increased in house foster care provision by 20% since 2010.
- Implemented a Connected Person's Policy for children looked after by family or friends.
- Reviewed and implemented a revised banded payment scheme and maintained foster carers allowances in line with Fostering Network recommended rates.
- Designed and delivered an annual foster carers' training programme in consultation with carers.
- Recruited trained and assessed adopters to provide adoptive placements for Hartlepool children.

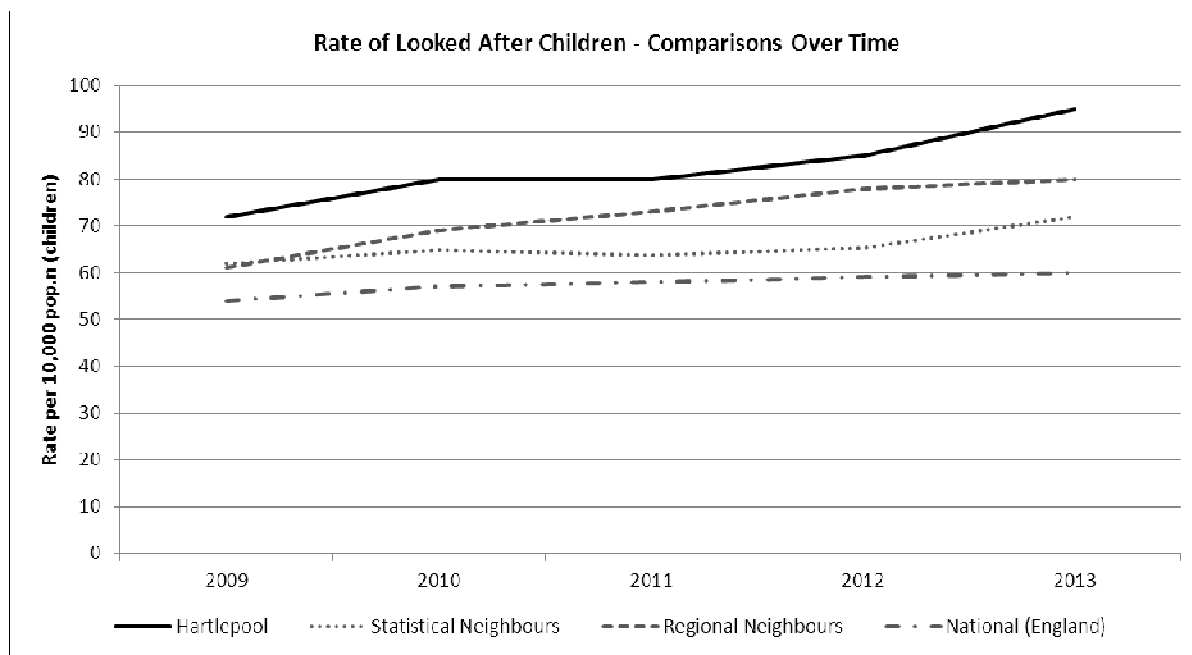
- Facilitated existing foster carers to adopt children in their care.
- Ensured children are placed for adoption at the earliest opportunity through 'Foster to Adopt' arrangements.
- Led the development of a "Market Position Statement" and a sub-regional "Framework Agreement" for the commissioning of independent fostering agency placements.
- Engaged with independent fostering agencies to identify and communicate the needs of Hartlepool children with a view to influencing their recruitment strategies.
- Made use of national data in relation to the availability of residential placements when searching for placements to meet needs of an individual child.
- Implemented systems to ensure that decisions relating to the placement of children within the independent sector are subject to multi agency decision making through a shared Panel.
- Introduced a "Family Finder" social work post whose role is exclusively to provide permanent families for children waiting for long term foster care or adoption and avoid delay.

#### Needs Analysis



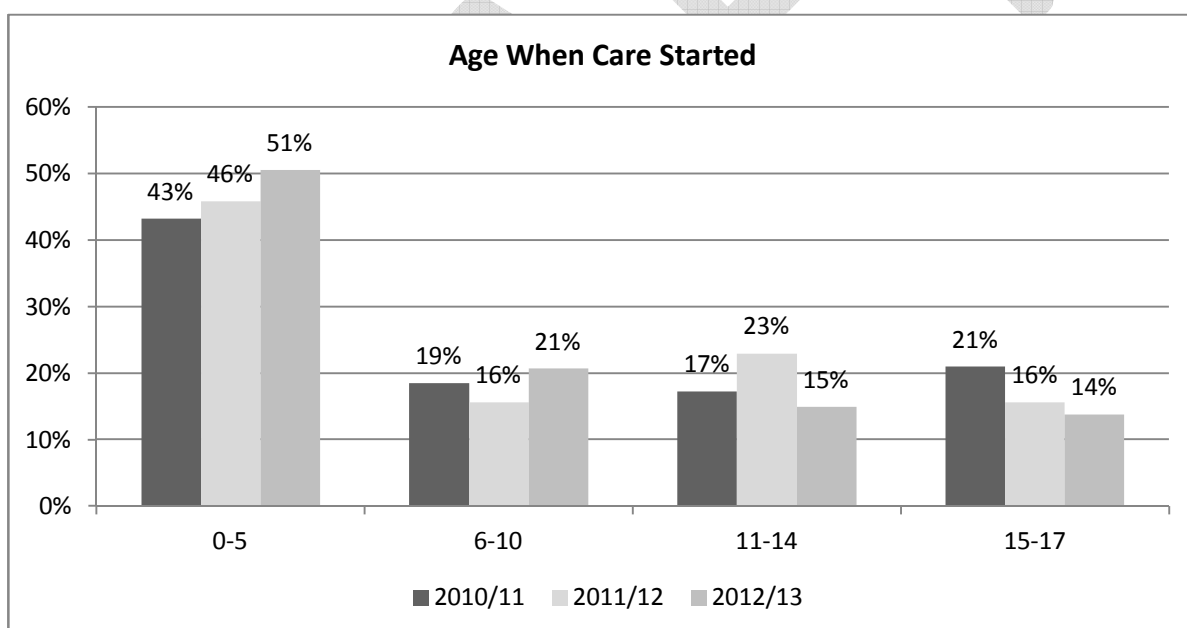
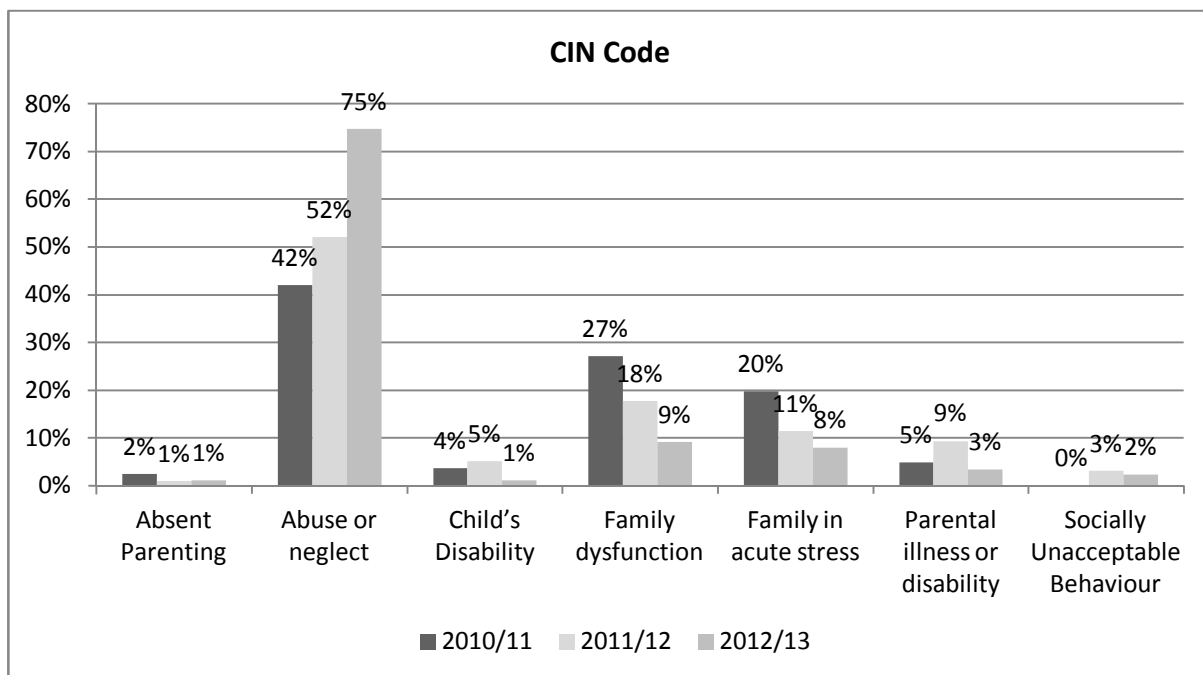
In the context of rising numbers of children looked after, it should be noted that the number of children becoming looked after each year is reducing. In 2012/13, a total of 87 children became looked after (from 50 families) compared with 107 children in 2009/10 (64 families). As the above graph shows, there is a reducing trendline for

children becoming looked after. This reducing number in the context of an increasing number of children looked after means that for those children who become looked after, they remain in care long term and fewer children leave care than enter. This is attributable, in part, to the local authority policy to support young people in transition to adulthood to remain looked after through to 18 years of age. The authority is seeking to strengthen its performance in relation to adoption and increase the numbers of children leaving care through adoption or permanence offered by Residence or Special Guardianship Orders.



Hartlepool has higher than average numbers of children looked after when compared with other authorities nationally, regionally and statistical neighbours. There are very high levels of deprivation within the town with Hartlepool being second highest in the North East region with only Middlesbrough having greater levels of deprivation. Child poverty is increasing and there are high levels of need within the town. This is impacting significantly on how families are functioning and at times placing children in vulnerable situations necessitating their admission to care. Hartlepool Borough Council provides prevention services to support families at the earliest point when need arises, as well as intensive family support services for those children who are on the edge of care or care proceedings, nevertheless there are an above average number of children who need to be cared for by the local authority.

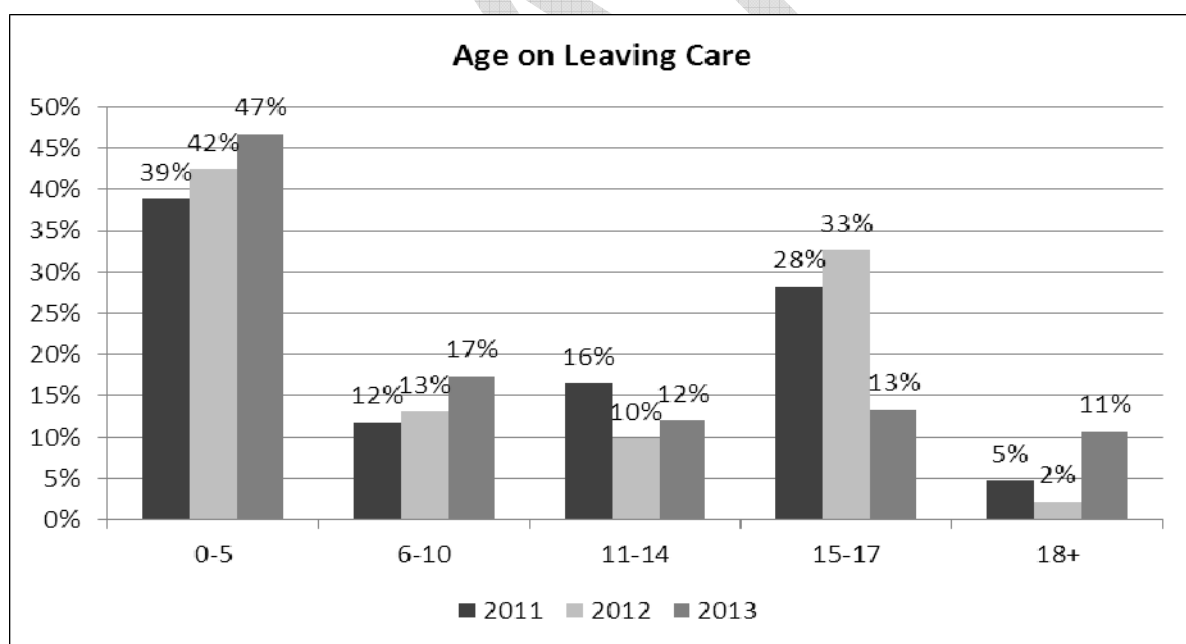
Over the past three years, abuse and neglect has been the primary reason why children have become looked after followed by family dysfunction and family in acute stress. During 2012/13, there was a significant increase in the number of children and young people who became looked after due to abuse and neglect accounting for 75% of the admissions to care. This led to a corresponding reduction in the other two need categories. When taken in the context of the age profile detailed below, with 51% of children becoming looked after being aged between 0 and 5 years, this highlights the vulnerability of this very young age group and their need for care and protection.



As the graph above shows, in 2012/13 just over 50% of the children who become looked after were aged 0-5 years with those under the age of 1 being the highest proportion at 17%. The need to become looked after at the younger end of the age range reflects the increase in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans and care proceedings in the past year. The high demand for looked after placements for the younger age group is met effectively within in house fostering provision and the local authority will continue to ensure that it has a sufficient supply of foster carers to meet this need.

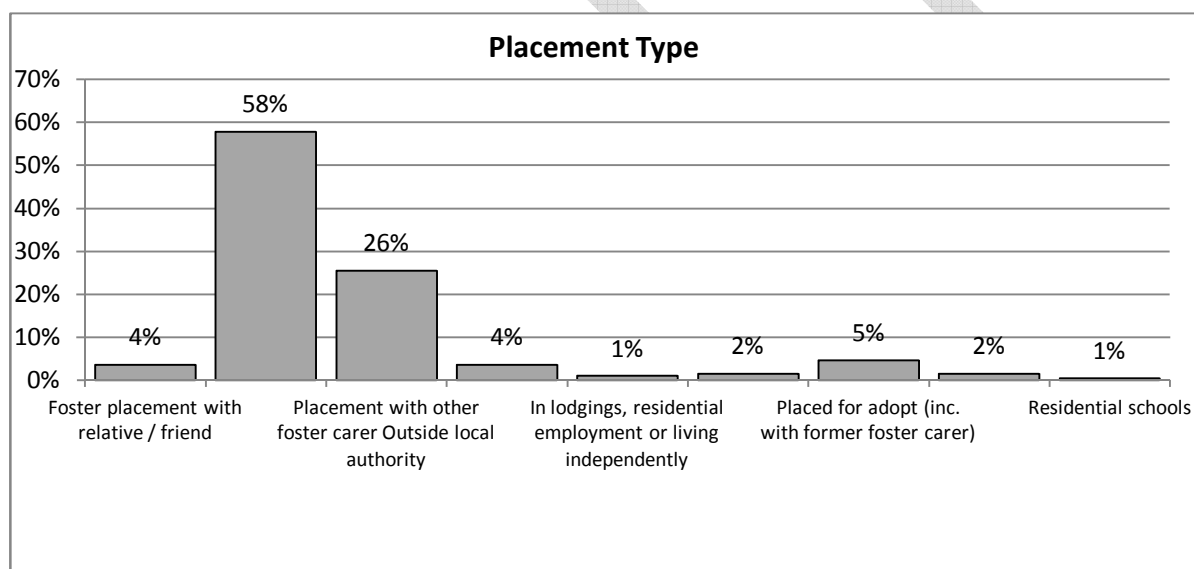
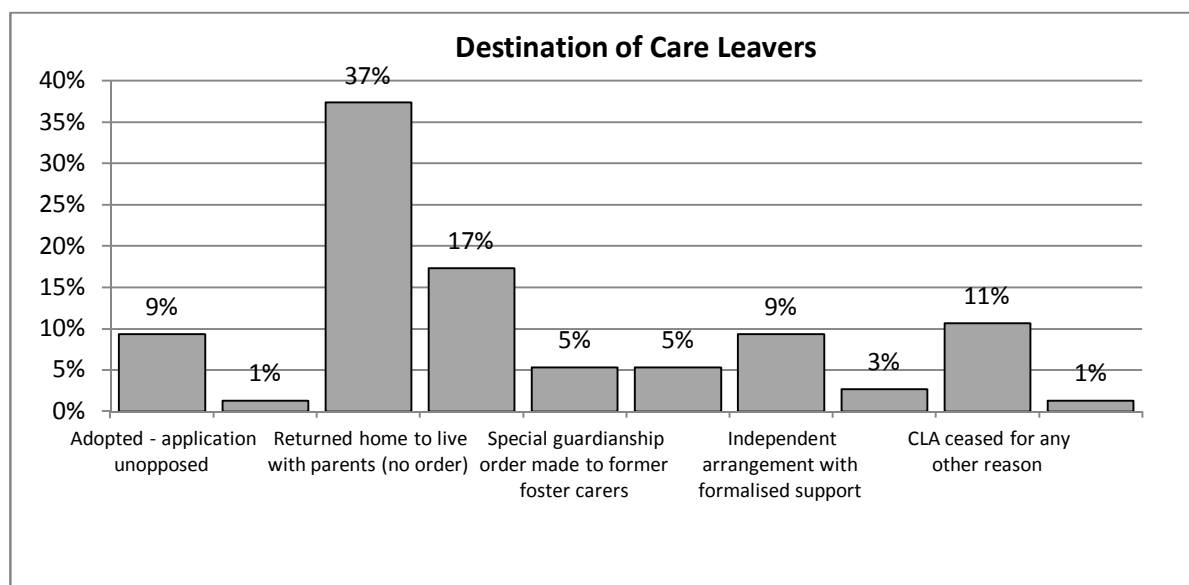
There has been a shift in the age profile of children becoming looked after in Hartlepool with a reduction in the number of adolescents becoming looked after when compared with previous years. This is attributable to the implementation of the Edge of Care Service from September 2012 where families with adolescents on the edge of care have received intense support packages to prevent family breakdown, including the provision of support foster care for families. Evaluation of this scheme has highlighted that the numbers of adolescents becoming looked after has reduced in the last 18 months. Going forward, the local authority intends to further develop this initiative to provide intensive support to children on the edge of care across the whole 0-17 age.

With regard to ethnicity, over the past five years the vast majority of children (average 91%) who have become looked after are of White British origin which is reflective of the local population. As at 30 November 2013, 97% of the children looked after were of white British origin, the remaining 3% were of mixed heritage, black/black British and other ethnic groups. Despite efforts to recruit foster carers from the BME community within Hartlepool, all of the authority foster carers are of white European origin and therefore there is a gap within in house provision for children from BME backgrounds. Targeted recruitment will continue to seek to ensure the authority is able to provide placements for children which are ethnically matched. Where required, it will also commission placements from independent fostering sector to meet ethnic and cultural needs.



Of those leaving care, as would be anticipated, the highest numbers are at the 0-5 years age range and those aged over 16. For the younger age group, as the table below shows, in 2012/13, 37% of children returned to their care of their parents, 9% left care through adoption and 27% have secured permanence through the making of Residence or Special Guardianship Orders. For this age range of children securing permanence is a priority for the Council ensuring that children are afforded, wherever possible, their right to a private family life and stability and consistency where their needs are fully met.





It is the policy of Hartlepool Borough Council, as part of its strategy for children looked after to, as far as possible care, provide for placements for children through its own fostering agency. This ensures that children looked after are cared for within their home community and have continuity of education, health and family and social relationships. Hartlepool Fostering Agency has a good cohort of in house foster carers and, when compared with other areas, a very high rate of foster carers per head of the local population. There are currently 99 foster carers approved by the Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering Agency and this number has increased by 20% since 2010. As the table demonstrates, 88% of children looked after are placed in foster care of whom, 86% are placed with in house foster carers. Just over 70% of children looked after live within the local authority boundary.

The authority has low reliance on independent fostering agencies to care for looked after children and for the vast majority of children, their needs can be best met within

in house provision. Where placements are commissioned from the independent sector, this arises from the individual needs of the young person either through a plan for permanence that cannot be met within in house provision, or placements for adolescents with some associated challenging behaviours. Despite targeted recruitment activity, the Council has struggled to recruit foster carers able to offer placements for adolescents and as the data shows, the placements commissioned from the independent sector are all for children and young people aged 11-15.

In house foster care provision, underpinned by the increased placement capacity provided by the Independent Fostering Agency Framework ensures that the authority has a sufficient supply of foster placements to meet the needs of children looked after by the Council. The local authority will continue to undertake targeted recruitment to increase the number of foster carers able to offer placements for sibling groups, children with disabilities and adolescents. A fostering recruitment strategy is prepared and implemented annually.

Foster care is appropriate to meet the needs of most children in care and is the right placement type for them. However, some children and young people, find significant difficulties residing within a family home setting and residential care offers a positive choice for them. 2% of the children looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council live in residential care and 1% are placed in residential school. The council has a low reliance upon residential care; however for many of the children who require residential provision, they are placed in provision outside of Hartlepool. Decisions to commission residential placements for children are made through a strategic Commissioned Placements Panel which is made up of senior officers from health, education and social care. This Panel makes decisions on joint commissioning and joint funding arrangements.



Between 2003 and 2006, the local authority took the decision to cease to be a provider of residential care, closed children's homes in the town and moved to an

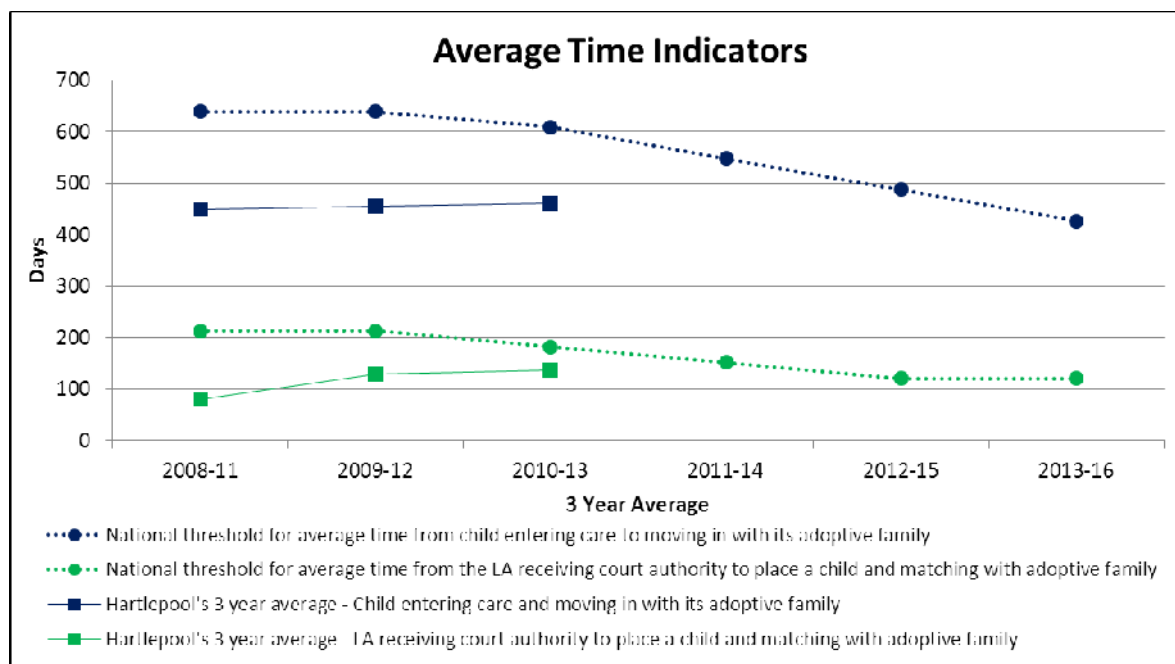
arrangement where all residential placements were commissioned from the independent sector. As Hartlepool is a small town, in effect, this meant that children had to move away to live. In 2011/12, Children's Services Scrutiny Forum undertook an investigation into services for children looked after. Children and young people, foster carers as well as officers were invited to give evidence to the Forum about their views on the services provided. Members heard strongly from children and young people that they wanted to live with their brothers and sisters and that they wanted to remain in Hartlepool. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Members of the Scrutiny Forum made a recommendation that officers should seek to open a 3 to 4 bed children's home in Hartlepool and this led to the development of the children's home at 302 Stockton Road.

The children's homes at Stockton Road and Exmoor Grove will be sufficient to meet the needs of children in Hartlepool who require residential care based on current and historical levels of demand. However, for those children who require residential care and education, there is a very low density of provision within the north east. Some local authorities are entering into partnership with independent providers to commission residential care with education and Hartlepool hope to capitalise on any opportunity this may offer. Currently the local authority commissions placements in residential schools on a needs basis agreed with partners through the Commissioned Placements Panel. Placements are spot purchased once a child or young person has been matched with the most appropriate provision. This approach ensures that individual children's needs are at the forefront of the commissioning process and the primary consideration.

### Adoption

In line with the Government's Adoption Reforms, it is strategic priority for Hartlepool Borough Council to increase the number of children leaving care through adoption. The local authority recognises its small size, however, over the past three years has had very successful performance in relation to recruiting adopters and finding families for children for whom there is a plan for adoption. The local authority annually plans and implements a recruitment strategy for adopters and this has been successful in year on year increasing the numbers of adopters approved by the local authority. Where matches for children cannot be found within existing provision, placements are sought without delay through the Adoption Register, regional Consortium and national advertising. This mixed economy approach to adoption ensures that children are matched as early as possible, they experience minimal delay and permanence is secured at the earliest opportunity. This approach to adoption is effective for Hartlepool and meets the needs of local children.

The table below outlines the performance of the local authority in relation to the Government's adoption scorecard. Hartlepool Borough Council performs well against the national targets and for the last three years has exceeded the thresholds for performance in adoption.



### What Will We Do?

- Provide high quality residential care for children looked after who require this type of placement within Hartlepool.
- Implement recruitment strategies for fostering and adoption with a specific focus on sibling groups, teenagers and children with disabilities.
- Implement adoption reforms to increase the number of children leaving care through adoption, increase the number of adopters approved by the Council and reduce timescales for assessment and recruitment of adopters.
- Improve performance in finding permanent families for children and young people looked after.
- Determine commissioning intentions in relation to local residential care with education and specialist residential provision for children with complex needs.
- Develop the provision at Exmoor Grove to ensure the individual needs of all children who are cared for within the home are met, affording privacy and space for those who live there permanently.
- Work in partnership to proactively manage the independent fostering and residential care market to increase placement capacity quality and choice.

### Measure of Impact

- Children and young people will experience improved placement stability and have their needs met within their home town area.

- There will be an increase in the number of foster carers and adopters approved by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- There will be an improvement in the Hartlepool Borough Adoption Scorecard performance.
- There will be an increase in placement capacity and the range of placement choice to match children with carers.

DRAFT

## **Care Planning for Children and Young People in Care**

### **Vision**

The vision of Hartlepool Borough Council is to ensure children and young people in care benefit from stability and security to enable them to live and enjoy a happy secure childhood and become confident adults who achieve their aspirations.

### **What have we done**

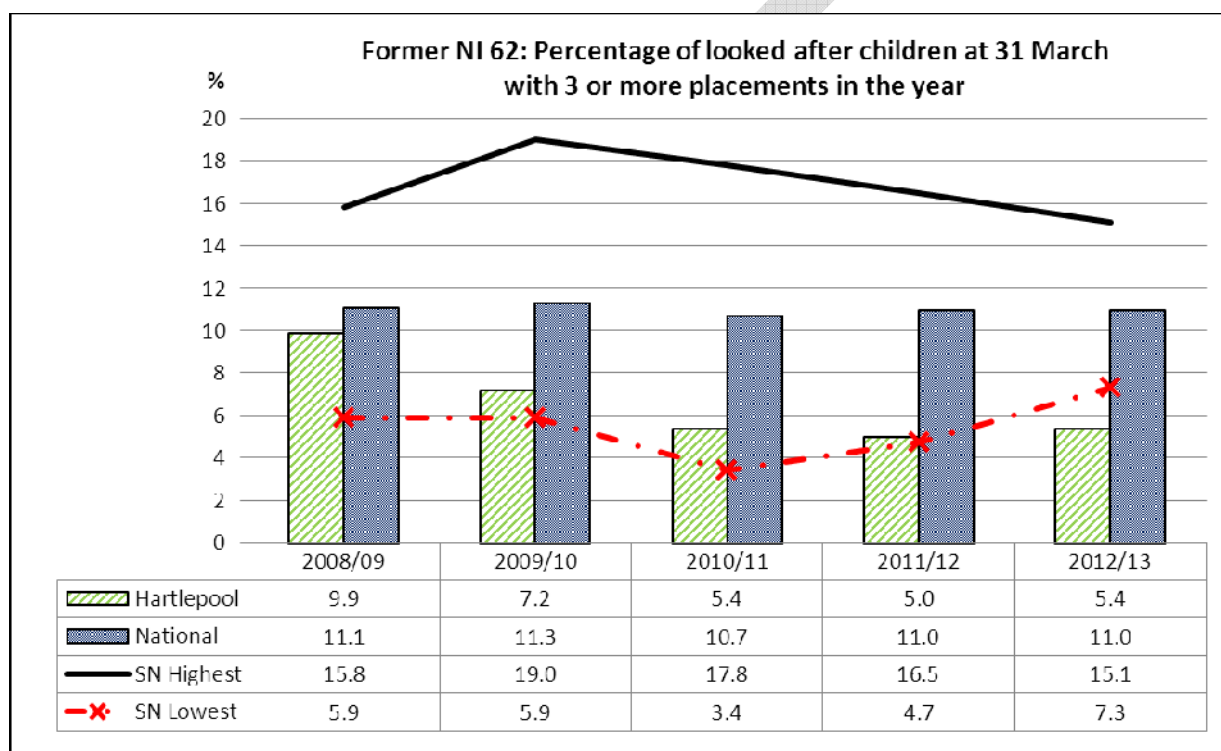
- Implemented a Care Planning Panel which considers all requests for children to become looked after, scrutinising the plan and determining what action is required. It also provides decision making in relation to emergency regulations of connected person placement, Residence Orders and Special Guardianship support and approves the match of permanent foster placement for young people aged 14 years and older. The membership of this panel includes service managers responsible for safeguarding and services for looked after children as well as the Resource Manager and a Legal Advisor to enable appropriate packages of support to be determined.
- Developed an overarching Permanence Policy and Procedure, and policies and procedures in relation to Special Guardianship and Residence Order to enable social workers to make the right decision when planning for the needs of a child.
- Undertaken a review and re-commissioning of Independent Visitor and Advocacy Services for children in care.
- Developed a placement support team to work with children looked after and foster carers where placements are fragile. This multi disciplinary team includes services provided by family support workers, CAMHS/clinician, play and filial therapists, the looked after nurse and an education, employment and training personal advisor.
- Implemented revised Care Planning, Placement and Review regulations.
- Strengthened the role and relationship of the Independent Reviewing Officer as a critical friend in care planning and review arrangements.
- Completed audits in relation to placement stability and drift and delay to inform service development and deliver continuous improvement.
- Developed, in partnership with the Children in Care Council, a Welcome Pack for children who become looked after.
- Developed, published and annually reviewed the Short Break Care Statement for children with additional needs and their families.
- Delivered annual training programme for social workers which focuses on the quality of care plans with an emphasis on the voice of the child being included in

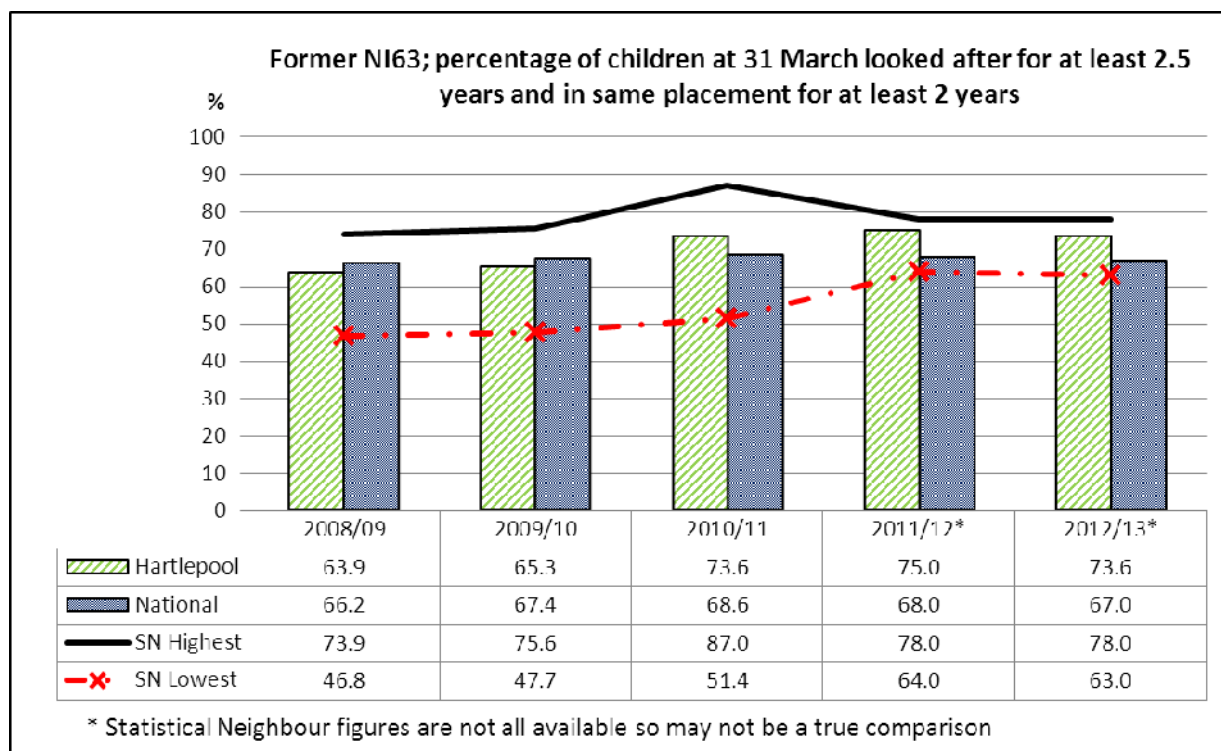
the process and underpinned this with regular practice clinics to embed learning.

- Implemented bi-monthly performance clinics for managers which challenge and scrutinise performance in relation to assessments, care planning and review arrangements.

### Needs Analysis

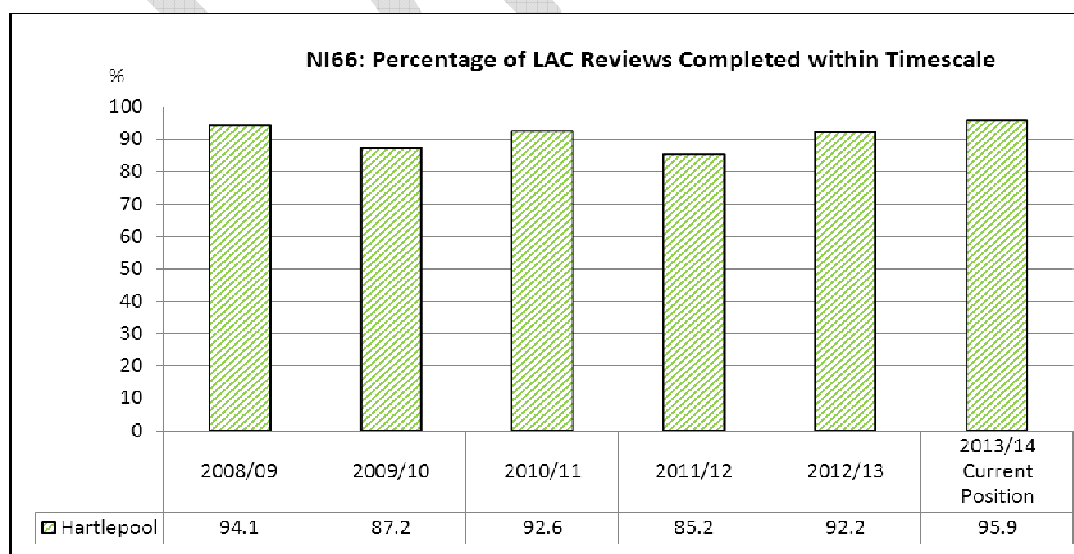
Placement stability has shown excellent performance against the national indicator set. There are two measures in relation to short term and long term stability and in both of these measures performance has been below the target set and in the top performing quartile nationally.



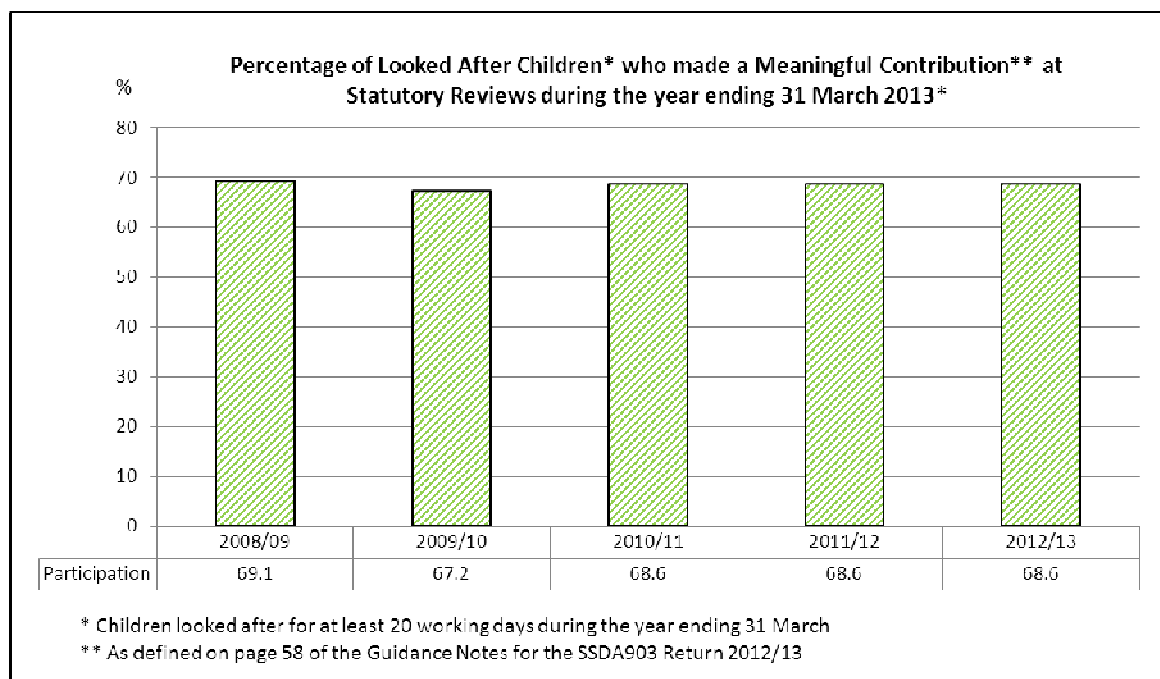


Completion of looked after reviews within timescales shows an improving picture. Timely and responsive looked after reviews are an essential part of planning and decision making for children and vital for securing permanence for children. Where reviews take place out of timescales, the reasons for this are monitored and regularly reported to ensure there is no drift in planning for children.

Performance for children looked after actively contributing to and participating in their looked after review is consistently just below 70%. Increasing meaningful participation and encouraging children to engage in decisions that are made about them is an identified area for development.







### What will we do?

- Find permanent families for children without delay.
- Work to continuously improve placement stability for children in care ensuring children receive consistency and continuity of relationships, care, education and health.
- Re-commission independent visitors service working with local voluntary and community sector to deliver a more responsive, effective and localised service.
- Work with Children in Care Council to review and strengthen voice of child in looked after review arrangements.
- Benchmark local practice against Government document 'Improving Permanence for Looked After Children once final version published.
- Develop and implement training and support programme for connected person carers.
- Improve the quality of care plans in relation to children and young people's participation and evidencing the child's journey.
- Develop the skills of the children's workforce, in particular, foster carers, social workers and residential child care officers to strengthen their practice in relation to understanding and responding to the individual needs of children.
- Embed Child Appreciation Days for all children moving to permanent placements.

- Improve preparation for and post adoption support planning and the range of services to prevent disruption.

#### Measures of Impact

- Improved performance in relation to short term and long term placement stability and care leavers report positive care experiences.
- Improved performance against the national indicator set for children looked after.
- Improved quality of care for children and inspections consistently judge services as being good as a minimum.

DRAFT

## **A First Class Education**

### **Vision**

Children looked after will be encouraged and helped to achieve success in learning to realise their ambitions. As corporate parents we will be aspirational in supporting children and young people to believe in themselves and aim high.

### **What have we done**

- Created a virtual team to promote the achievement and attainment of children looked after.
- Provided support and challenge to Head teachers, designated teachers and social workers to prioritise educational outcomes for children looked after.
- Monitored pupil progress, achievement, attendance and exclusions of statutory school age children and use this information to identify appropriate intervention for those children who are experiencing difficulties.
- Embedded personal education plans that are led by social workers in partnership with teachers, reviewed each term and document the child's educational journey. Six monthly dip sample quality audits are completed.
- Been a pathfinder and pathfinder champion authority for Special Education Needs and Disabilities.
- Facilitated termly designated teacher meeting.
- Presented annual reports of the Virtual Head Teacher to the Corporate Parent Forum.
- Improved performance in relation to the school attendance of children looked after and reduced exclusions.
- Supported schools to use pupil premium funding effectively to target appropriate support so that the majority of children looked after make more than expected progress from entering care.
- Engaged with local Higher Education Institutes to inspire young people to consider university and deliver training to foster carers.

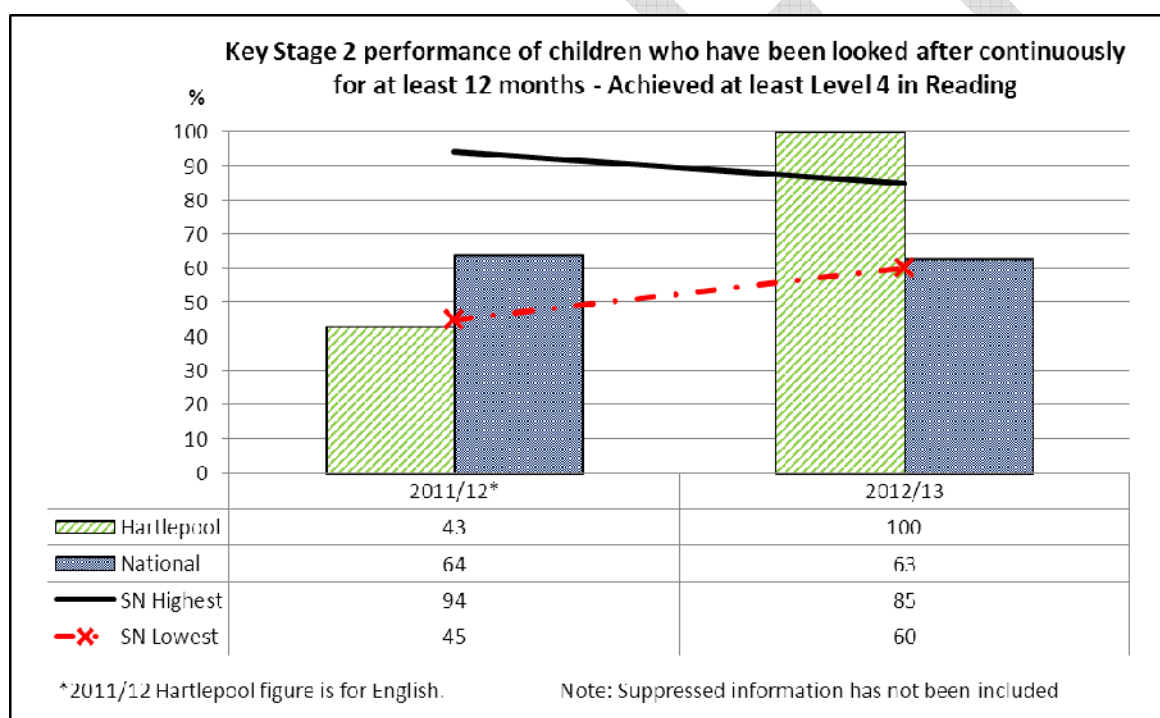
### **Needs Analysis**

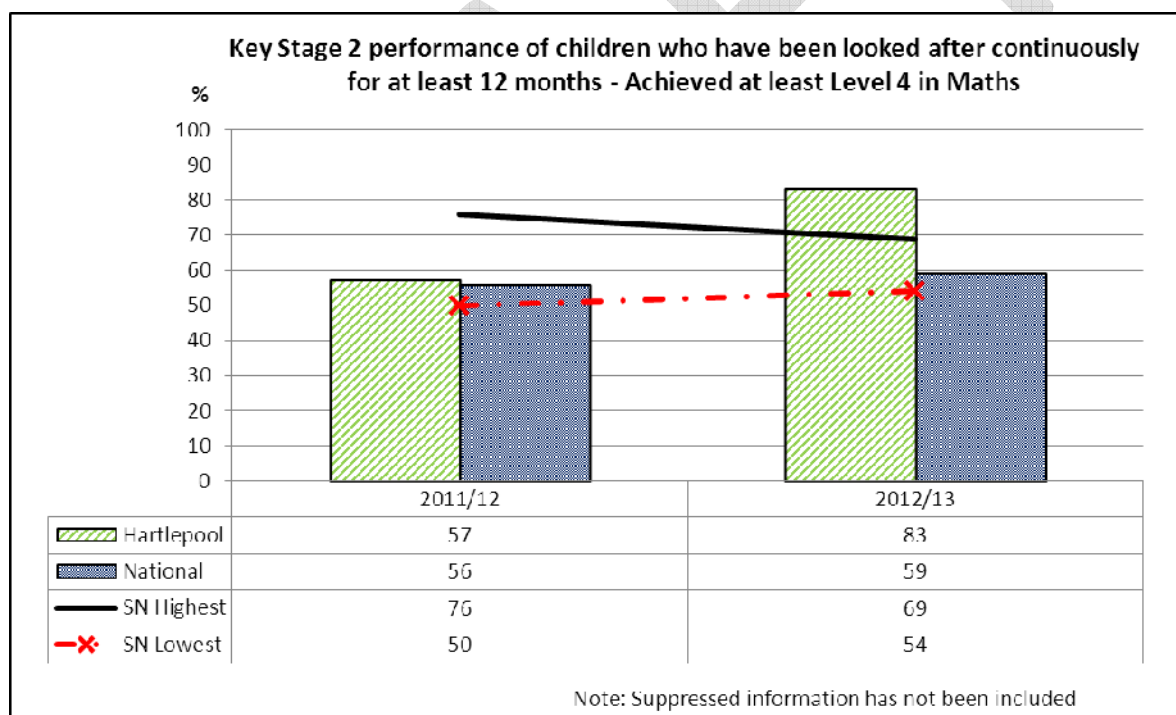
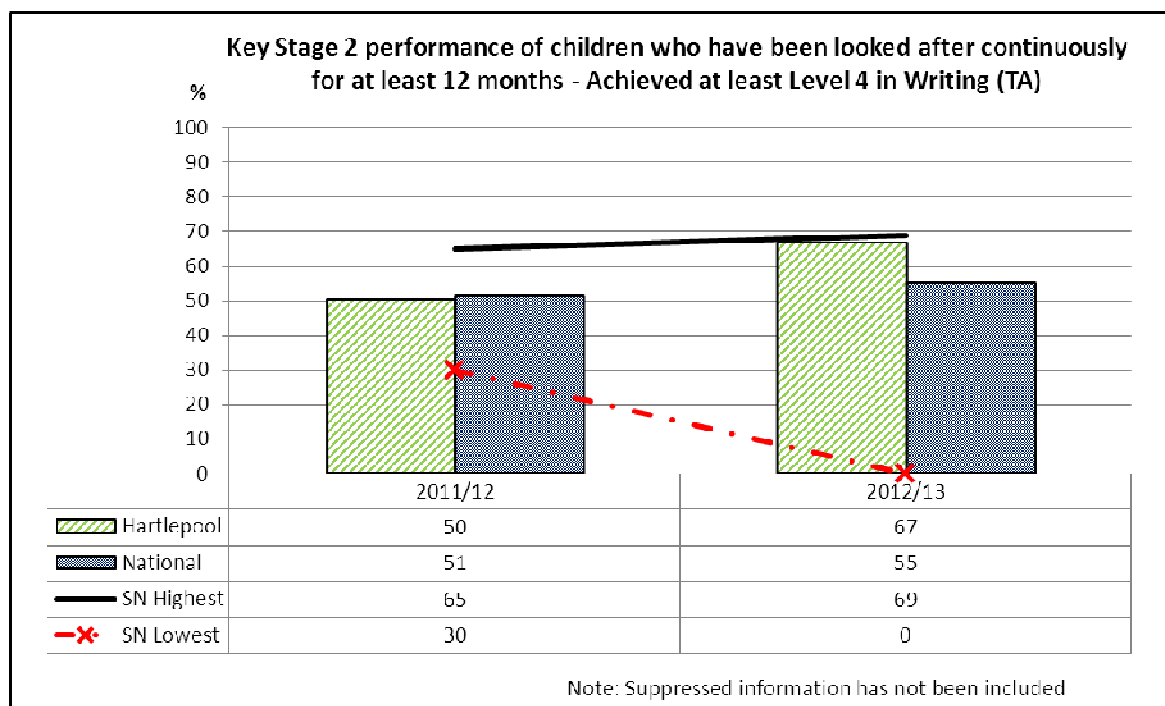
The school attendance of children looked after in Hartlepool has improved over the last three years at a faster rate than both its statistical neighbours and the national average figures.

Over the last 3 years data indicates that on average only 19% of children entering care in Hartlepool were working in line or above national averages. Whilst in care the majority of the children and young people therefore needed to make above average progress in order to reach expected levels and to narrow the gap with their peers. Despite low attainment on entry to care children looked after in Hartlepool make at least good progress and achieve well. Significant numbers of children make better than expected progress from entry to care. During the school year 2012/13 the majority of children in all year groups made at least expected progress based on prior attainment at the end of the previous key stage.

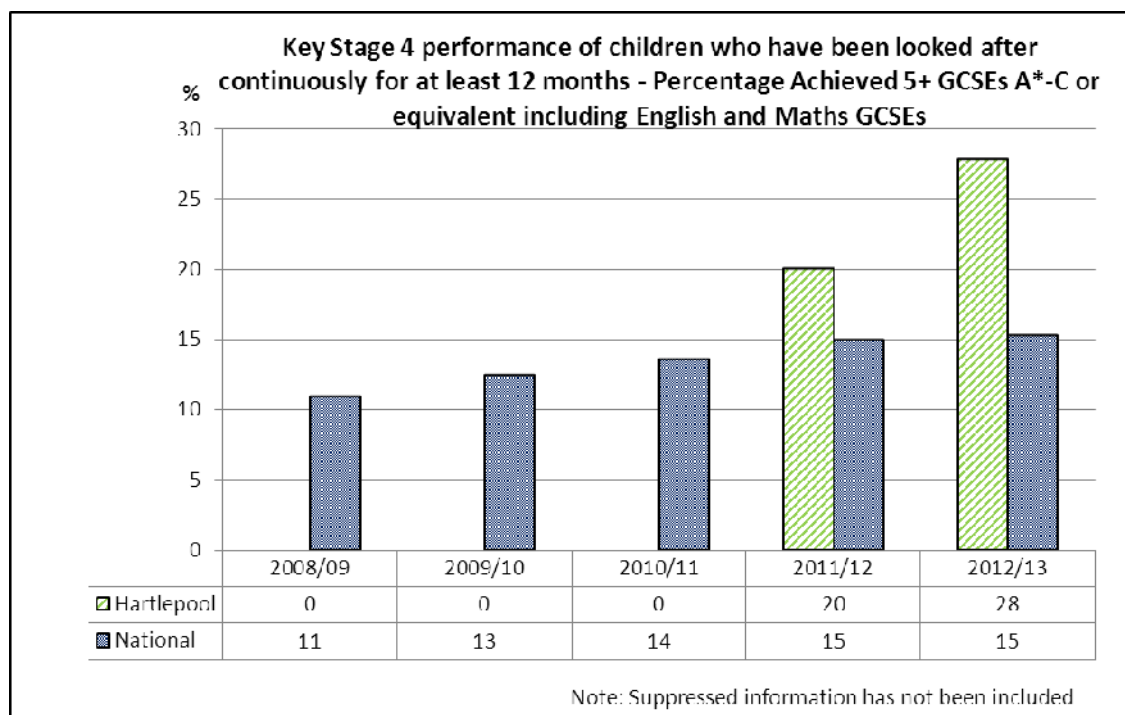
Although the 2013 results show an improving trend over the last 3 years in all subjects, attainment in Key Stage 1 for children looked after is below the national average. However, the gap is closing between looked after children and all Hartlepool children in reading and writing.

At Key Stage 2, the results show an improving trend over the last 3 years in all subjects and the gap has narrowed between Hartlepool children looked after and all Hartlepool children. Attainment at Key Stage 2 for looked after children is in line with the national average.





The 2013 Key Stage 4 results are the best ever recorded for Hartlepool children looked after and show an improving trend over 3 years. The gap between those looked after and all Hartlepool pupils has narrowed for the 5 A\*-C indicators. Attainment in Key Stage 4 for children looked after is above the national average.



### What will we do?

- Ensure all children attend and receive the highest quality education to reach their potential.
- Improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the rate of pupil progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.
- Support all schools to ensure they are judged to be good or outstanding by December 2015.
- Close the achievement gap between looked after pupils and all other pupils.

### Measures of Impact

- There will be a further improvement in the attainment and achievement of children looked after and the gap between them and their peers will continue to close.
- There will be an increase in the numbers of looked after and care leavers in further and higher education.

## **Promoting Health and Wellbeing**

### **The Vision**

Children looked after in Hartlepool will enjoy good physical, mental, emotional and sexual health; have access to a range of services to meet their health needs in a timely and responsive manner. Most of these needs will be met through universal provision, however, where it is required, children looked after will have access to specialist services some of which will be delivered by dedicated staff to promote the health and wellbeing of children in care.

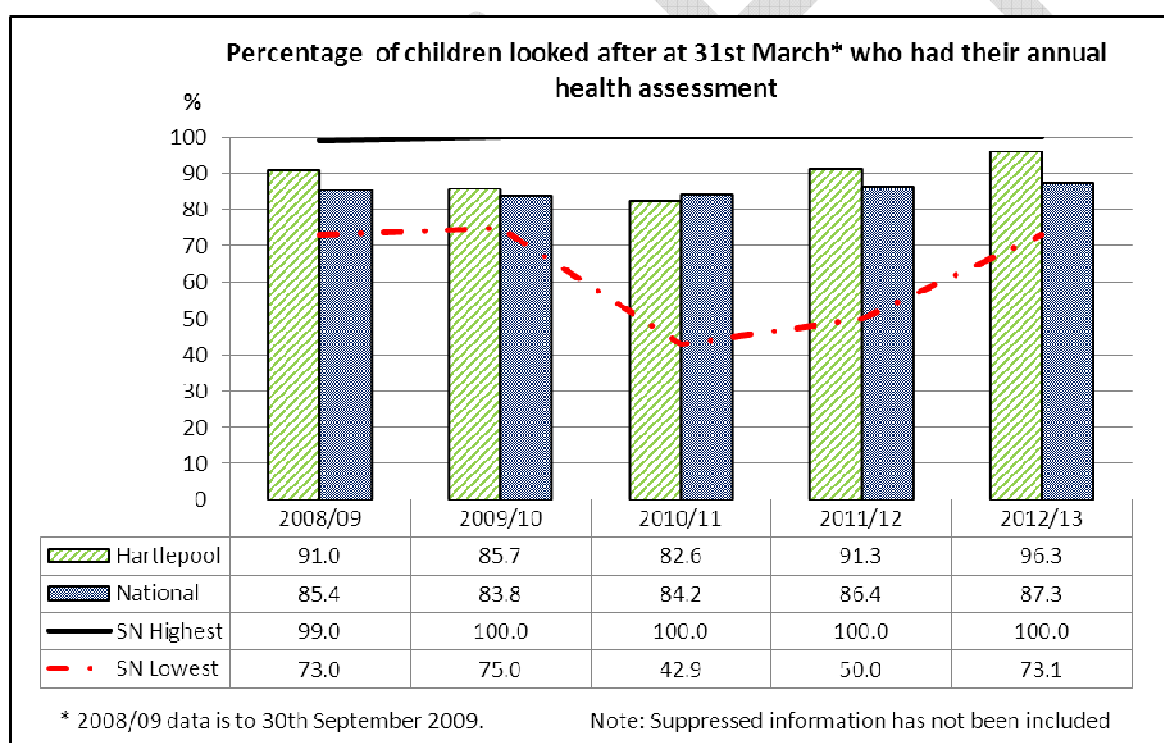
### **What we have done**

- Developed and implemented a Service Specification in partnership with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust to deliver dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health support for Children Looked After.
- Developed and implemented a dedicated therapeutic team for looked after children that provides amongst other interventions, play therapy, filial therapy and direct work.
- Continued to gather Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires data from carers, teachers and for 2013/14 collect data directly from young people.
- Facilitated training and support to foster carers in relation to attachment theory, filial therapy and how to manage children's emotions and behaviour.
- Proactively ensured that children looked after living outside of Hartlepool have their health needs met.
- Delivered, through the looked after children's nurse, individual, group and drop in services for young people at Number Nine Church Street and in supported housing projects where she is able to prescribe and advise on sexual health issues, smoking cessation and offer appropriate sign posting or facilitate access to dedicated drug and alcohol services.
- Ensured all looked after children and young people are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician.
- Ensured all children receive an initial health assessment upon entering care by a suitably qualified doctor.
- Ensured all children looked after receive either a 6 monthly or annual health assessment depending on their age, which is undertaken by a suitably qualified professional. All children have a dedicated health plan.
- Provided care leavers with access to advice, support and prescribing for smoking cessation, contraception and minor ailments from the looked after children nurse.

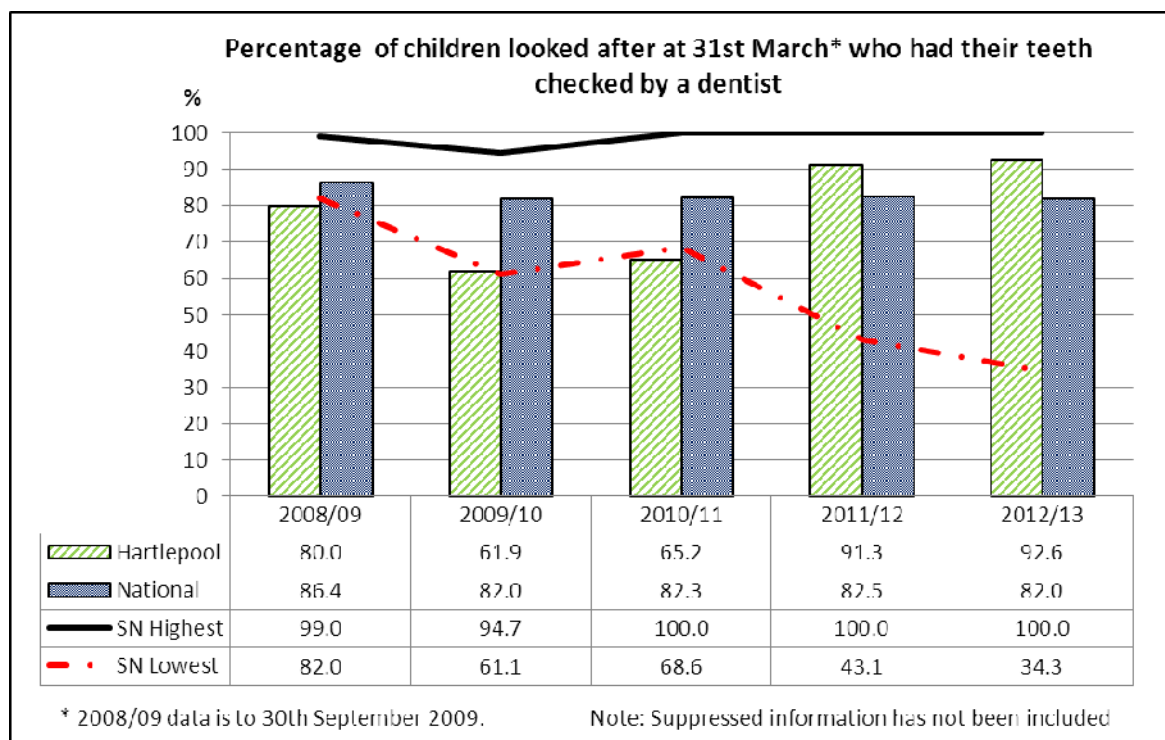
- Ensured all children, where there is a plan for adoption, receive a health assessment from a Consultant Paediatrician who is also available to discuss any medical or development concerns with prospective adopters.
- Provided children looked after, care leavers, foster carers and residential staff with free access to swimming and discounted activities available within the council Leisure, Sport and Recreation Services.
- Delivered training to foster carers and children's residential staff on a variety of health topics, including dental health promotion.
- In conjunction with young people developed and implemented a Health Passport.

### Needs analysis

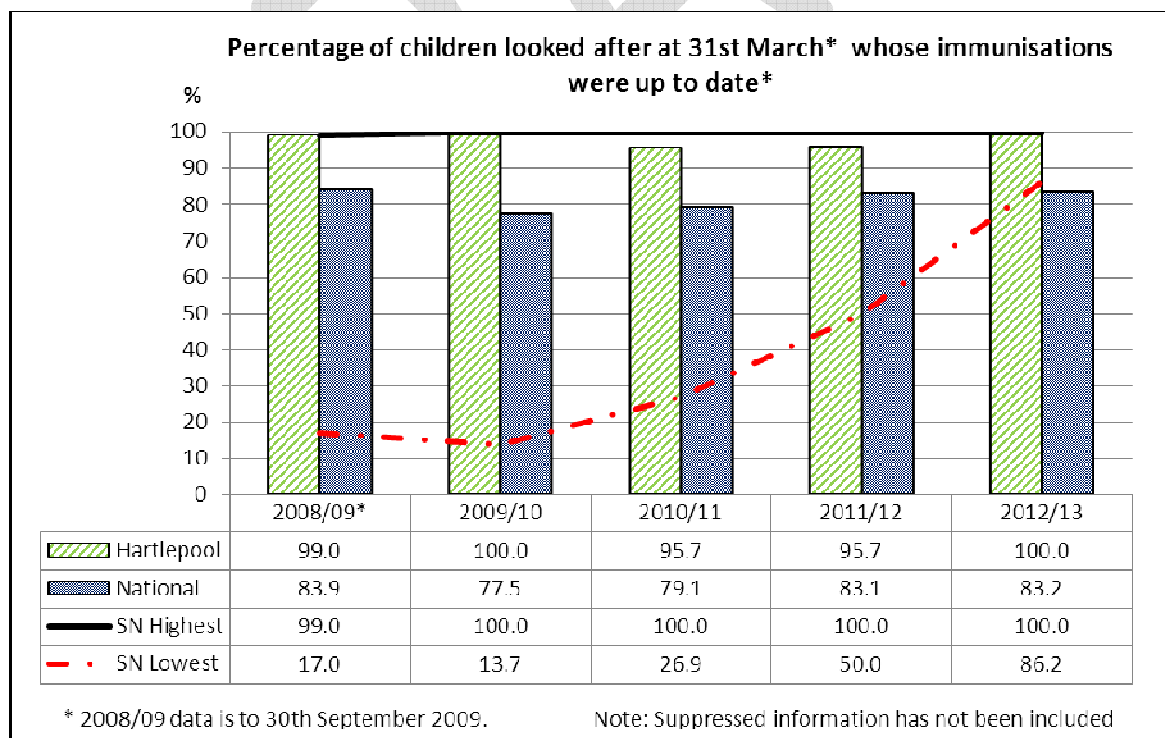
The number of children who have their annual health assessment in Hartlepool is above the national average and shows good performance. A similar picture emerges when considering performance in relation to dental checks for children looked after.







For children who become looked after, the local authority ensures that any outstanding immunisations are brought up to date realising a 100% performance against this indicator which shows an improving picture over the last three years.



### What will we do?

- Ensure that all looked after children receive an initial and review health assessments, are registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician and are up to date with their immunisations. They will have an appropriate, dedicated health plan which is integrated within the child's looked after plan.
- Further embed the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire, with a focus on young people's self reporting and we will ensure that any identified needs are met and services accessed in a timely way.
- Monitor and adapt the service specification with Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust in relation to child and adolescent mental health services to ensure it is meeting the needs of looked after children.
- Implement a training programme for foster carers and residential social care officers to ensure the emotional and mental health needs of looked after children are met.
- Consult with the Children in Care Council, children and young people looked after and care leavers to gather their views on how to further develop health promotion, advice and support.
- Further embed and improve the quality of health passport information in partnership with young people.
- Explore innovative ways of engaging the minority of young people who decline a health assessment.
- Ensure there is an assessment of the emotional needs of children being placed for adoption and this is considered in their adoption support plan.

### Measure of Impact

- There will be an increase in the number of children and young people who have an up to date health assessment.
- All children looked after will have up to date immunisations and dental checks.
- All children placed for permanence will have an assessment of emotional health and well being and there will be a decrease in placement disruption.

## **Care Leavers**

### **The Vision**

To support young people who have experienced care to move towards independence at a time that reflects the individual needs of the young person in relation to emotional maturity and coping skills without creating artificial barriers driven by age.

Hartlepool Borough Council is aspirational and inspirational for the care leavers for whom the authority has corporate parenting responsibility. To achieve this, the council must ensure that the aspirations of care leavers are high and services are configured to support young people to achieve their goals.

### **What have we done**

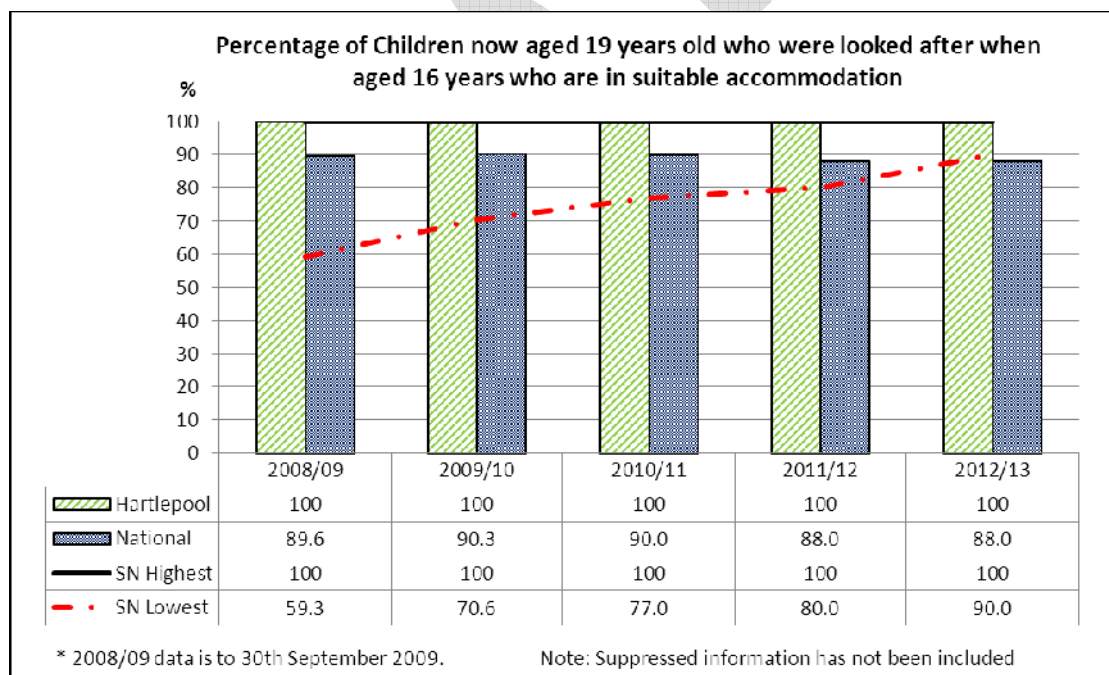
- Developed and implemented a 'Staying Put' policy supporting young people to stay with their carers beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Developed a town centre based provision at 'Number Nine' Church Street where young people can access social work support, services from the looked after children's nurse, employment, education and training advice and group work activities for example a young parent and child group.
- Developed supported accommodation at Rose House. Young people told us they wanted 'their own front door' and good quality supported housing. Young people were involved in the tender process for the providers and agreed on the outcomes to be achieved from the provision, Rose House opened in July 2013.
- Employed a care leaver as an apprentice within the Placement Support Team as a participation worker; she was successful in winning an Adult Learners Award both regionally and nationally.
- Worked closely with Economic Regeneration Department to facilitate apprenticeship opportunities across council departments including in schools, the Youth Support Services and the Economic Development Department.
- Participated in the 'From Care to Work' Scheme working closely with National Care Advisory Service.
- Provided financial support to all young people in higher education including the provision of a home base during holiday times.
- Been active members of the Leave Care Benchmarking Forum and two care leavers are members of the Young People's Benchmarking Forum. Hartlepool young people have been actively involved in national work to improve services for looked after children and care leavers.
- Care leavers are active and supportive members of the Children in Care Council.

- Adopted the Care Leavers Charter which was reviewed by the Children in Care Council who decided that Hartlepool's Pledge to children in care and care leavers encompassed the actions within the Care Leavers Charter.

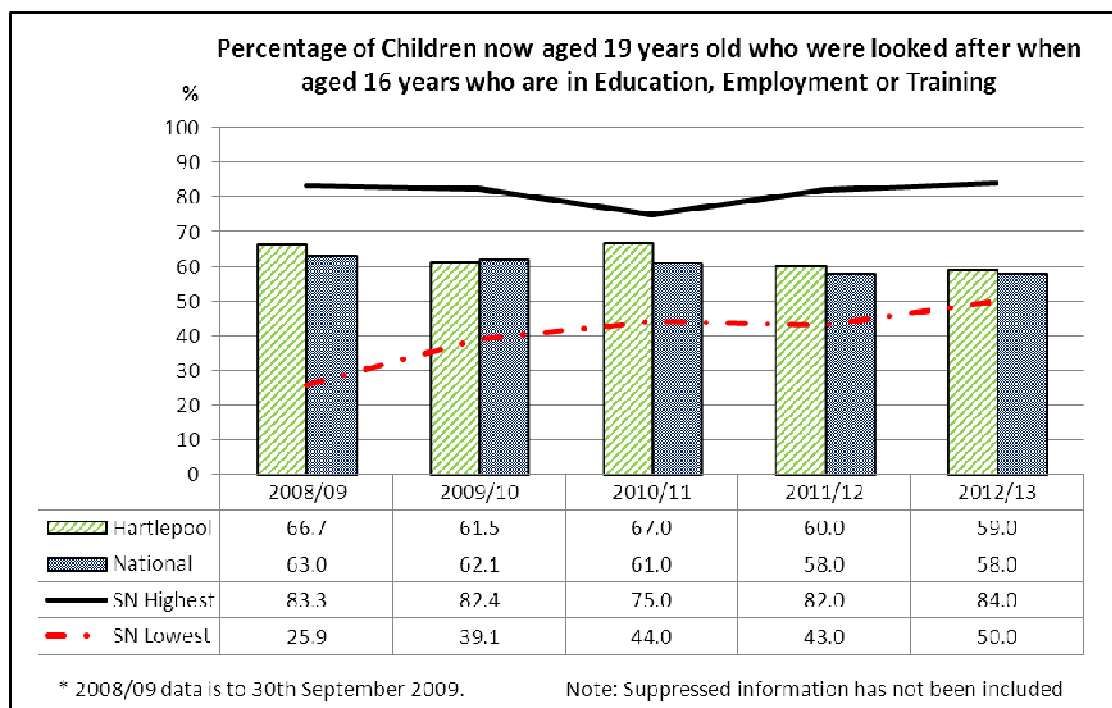
### Needs Analysis

Young people leaving care in Hartlepool receive high levels of support which ensures they make successful transitions to adulthood. For the past 5 years Hartlepool has achieved a 100% return for the national indicator in relation to young people in suitable accommodation. This has been achieved through partnership working with the voluntary and community sector and housing providers to ensure care leavers have access to appropriate accommodation suitable to their individual needs.

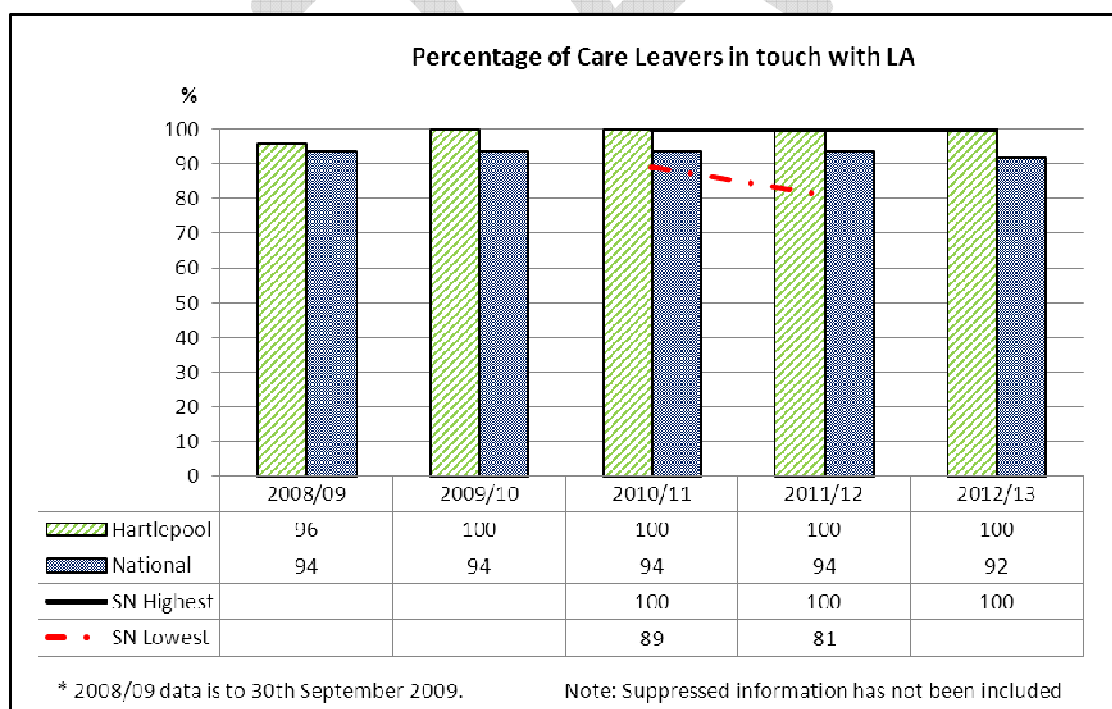
As young people approach adulthood, the priority for the Council is to ensure that children leave care at a time that reflects their individual needs, emotional maturity and coping skills. To this end, the Council has implemented a Staying Put policy which enables young people looked after to remain with their foster carers beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Currently, just over 30% of children previously looked after by the Council are supported in Staying Put arrangements.



The proportion of care leavers not engaged in education, employment and training is in line with the national average. Despite the local challenges of very high unemployment, the care leavers in education, employment and training are in line with the average for the local population.



The table below outlines the local authority performance in maintaining contact and support to care leavers on their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Performance has been consistently high for the past four years and is reflective of the cohort as a whole, i.e. those up to the age of 21 years.



### What will we do?

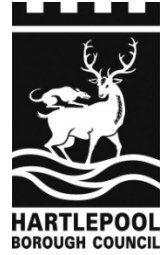
- Review and refresh from Care 2 Work Programme.
- Continue to encourage, support and facilitate young people to access further and higher education.
- Ensure all young people are able to stay with their foster carers beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Develop and implement post 16 Personal Education Plans.
- Work with housing providers to ensure young people have access to permanent housing in an area of their choice and close to their support networks.
- Deliver support and training to ensure young people are equipped with the practical and financial skills needed in adulthood and that they have emotional support through their transitions.
- Provide opportunities for care leavers to inform and lead service development.
- Complete interviews with young people at key stages through their transition to adulthood.
- Benchmark local arrangements against the government's Care Leaver Strategy to ensure we are meeting their vision and aspirations

### Measures of Impact

- Sustained performance in suitable accommodation.
- Young people will report that they feel encouraged and supported to achieve their aspirations.
- Young people will report that they felt supported through their transition to adulthood and helped when they made mistakes.
- Increased numbers of care leavers in further and higher education.
- Evidence of care leavers impacting on service development.

# CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

25 February 2014



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

**Subject:** DEVELOPMENT OF A HARTLEPOOL  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES  
ENTITLEMENT

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Children's Strategic Partnership with initial proposals relating to the development of a local Children and Young People's Entitlement. These proposals should be viewed in conjunction with broader options relating to the reconfiguration of services for children, young people and their families in line with reductions in the Early Intervention Grant and the Council's central revenue budget.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.2 Hartlepool has a proud heritage of providing local children and young people with positive, enriching activities and informal learning opportunities outside of school time alongside access to information, advice and support.
- 2.3 The benefits of children and young people's sustained participation in positive activities, alongside access to support are well documented and will invariably lead to:
- The development of resilience to the negative pressures they may face;
  - Access to the information and advice they need to make safe and healthy choices;
  - The development of skills and confidence to communicate their needs, wishes and aspirations;
  - The creation of a sense of belonging within their community; and
  - Improved outcomes

- 2.4 In addition to paid Local Authority leisure staff, youth workers and family support workers, many individuals in the town provide their services for free so that young people in Hartlepool are able to access things to do, have places to go, have people to talk to and a voice in the decisions that affect them. Indeed, it is estimated that there are over 100 Voluntary and Community Sector groups engaged in the delivery of services to children and young people locally.
- 2.3 The Council has recently begun to build upon this local commitment by working in partnership to ensure that the range of recreational and support opportunities available for children and young people are far more 'joined up', flexible and responsive to local need. This has coalesced in recent months through an emphasis on the development of a local 'Offer' that strives to promote the plethora of opportunities available to children and young people as a cohesive and coordinated whole.
- 2.4 A local Children and Young Peoples Offer could be best described as the amalgam of projects, programmes, opportunities and initiatives that are operational at any given time to provide children and young people with things to do, places to go and people to talk to, which when combined forms the basis of what is available and on offer for local children and young people at that particular point in time within the town's boundaries.
- 2.5 As a result, the depth and breadth of any local Children and Young People's Offer is likely to experience both periods of growth (as new and additional funding becomes available and new initiatives emerge) and retraction in line with national, regional and local funding priorities. Similarly, any Children and Young People's Offer is likely to undergo shifts in what provision is provided and by whom based upon the success of funding applications, the movement of volunteers, the endorsement of service users and the resilience of organisations to withstand broader economic pressures.
- 2.6 Based upon the above, there would appear to be an imperative to ensure that, irrespective of these changes, the provision in place for children and young people at any given time remains safe, supported, coordinated, joined up, and well promoted to ensure that local children, young people and their families are able identify what is available for them locally and to make informed decisions around their levels of engagement based upon their interests, needs and aspirations.
- 2.7 This paper proposes that this could best be achieved through establishing a local **Children and Young People's Entitlement**.



### 3. PROPOSALS

3.1 A local Children and Young Peoples Entitlement should secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, a commitment to providing sufficient levels of access to:

- Out of school activities for children and young people;
- Information, advice and support (particularly in relation to securing young people's participation in learning beyond statutory school age);
- Personalised support for children and young people experiencing difficulties;
- Facilitated activity to secure the voice of children and young people in the decisions that affect them.

3.2 Essentially, this is a statement of intent made by the Local Authority and Partners with regards to the provision of services for children and young people to ensure that the continued funding of the above services remains a key priority amidst broader economic pressures.

3.3 A draft preliminary Children and Young Peoples Entitlement for Hartlepool has been included at **Appendix 1** as an example.

3.5 This paper has identified the following key (interrelated) milestones which will be essential to the successful development of a local Children and Young Peoples Entitlement:

- Secure Strategic 'buy in' across the partnership;
- Establish the views and wishes of local children and young people;
- Calculate the cost of delivering the entitlement and identify savings and areas requiring investment;
- Establish how best to deliver the entitlement in terms of the mixture of internal/external provision;
- Identify the risks to both current and potential providers;
- Establish how delivery of the entitlement will actively contribute to the local **Early Intervention Strategy**, the **Crime, Disorder, Substance Misuse and Reducing Re-offending Strategy** the **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** and the Economic Regeneration Strategy;

- Establish how best to performance manage the delivery of the entitlement, review its effectiveness and ensure robust governance arrangements are in place.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That the Children's Strategic Partnership give consideration to the development of a Children and Young Peoples Entitlement and provide a strategic steer with regards to 'next steps'.

#### **5. CONTACT OFFICER**

Mark Smith  
Head of Youth Support Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
(01429) 523405  
mark.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

**Appendix 1**

Hartlepool Children and Young Peoples Entitlement pledges that all children and young people will have equal and fair access to our services. This will give children and young people 5-19:

- information, available through a range of media about the services and activities available to children and young people in Hartlepool
- access to 2 hours a week of activities in clubs, groups or classes including after school activities no further than ½ a mile from your home (?)
- access to 2 hours per week of cultural activities, including music, dance, drama and a wide range of art forms .through local clubs or after school programmes no further than ½ a mile from your home (?)
- access to 2 hours per week of sporting activity through either community activities, school or college no further than ½ a mile from your home (?)
- opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills recognised where possible through accreditation
- information and advice on education, employment and training, including one to one support in school or at the One Stop Shop in the town centre
- a guaranteed education or training opportunity when you leave school
- opportunities to apply for support for clubs and activities through funds that are managed by young people
- a chance to influence what is going on in Hartlepool by having your say and a chance to vote in and take part in the Hartlepool Youth Parliament
- a chance to become involved in helping your community through properly managed volunteering opportunities
- access to confidential advice and help for problems and concerns you may have
- When you leave school we will provide you with personalised support to help you if you are not in education, employment or training.