

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA



Tuesday 6 May 2014

at 4.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber.
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Atkinson, Fleet, Griffin, James, Lauderdale and Simmons

Co-opted Members: Sacha Paul Bedding and Michael Lee

Six Young People's Representatives

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2014 (*previously published*)

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Hartlepool Youth Justice Plan 2014 – 2015 - *Director of Child and Adult Services*

5. KEY DECISIONS

No items.



6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 6.1 Adoption Annual Report 2013/14 and Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2014/15 - *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 6.2 Inspection of Services for Children In Need Of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers - *Director of Child and Adult Services*

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Update on Hartlepool Youth Investment Project - *Assistant Director, Regeneration*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Date of Next Meeting – To be confirmed.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

6 May 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: HARTLEPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2014 - 2015

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Budget and Policy Framework

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the final draft of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2014-2015 (Appendix 1) to the Children's Services Committee prior to the Plan being considered by Council in June 2014.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The national Youth Justice Performance Improvement Framework is the Youth Justice Board's primary tool for monitoring and securing performance improvement across Youth Offending Services in England and Wales. The framework builds upon the statutory responsibilities for Youth Offending Services established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 through a requirement for all Youth Offending Services to annually prepare, as part of the local business planning cycle, a local Youth Justice Plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board.
- 3.2 The primary functions of Youth Offending Services are to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people and reduce the use of custody. It is the responsibility of local Youth Offending Services to develop and coordinate the provision of these services for all of those young people in the Local Authority area who need them.

3.3 The annual Youth Justice Plan should provide an overview of how the Youth Offending Service, the Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board and wider partnership will ensure that the service has sufficient resources and infrastructure to deliver youth justice services in its area in line with the requirements of the *National Standards for Youth Justice Services* to:

- promote performance improvement;
- shape youth justice system improvement;
- improve outcomes for young people, victims and the broader community.

3.4 Whilst the local Youth Offending Service partnership can develop its own structure and content of the Youth Justice Plan, national guidance suggests the Plan should address four key areas and it is these areas that will be refreshed to reflect the position for the service going forward.

- Resourcing and value for money - The sufficient deployment of resources to deliver effective youth justice services to prevent offending and re-offending.
- Structure and Governance - The Plan will set out the structures and governance necessary to ensure the effective delivery of local youth justice services. The leadership composition and role of the multi agency Youth Offending Service Management Board are critical to this.
- Partnership Arrangements - To demonstrate that effective partnership arrangements are in place between the Youth Offending Service, statutory partners and other local partners that have a stake in delivering youth justice services and that these arrangements generate effective outcomes for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending.
- Risks to Future Delivery - To ensure the Youth Offending Service has the capacity and capability to deliver effective youth justice services, identifying risks to future delivery and the Youth Offending Service's partnership plans to address these risks.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The planning framework to support the development of the 2014/2015 Youth Justice Strategic Plan has drawn upon the appraisal of the Youth Justice Boards Regional Partnership Manager, the local Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board and the views and opinions of service users, staff and key partners.

- 4.2 Alongside the above, the development of the plan has also incorporated recommendations from Children's Services Committee, the views of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership Executive Group and the current scrutiny investigation into re-offending in Hartlepool. The plan also acknowledges the role of the Youth Offending Service in taking forward the priorities of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 4.3 Based upon the findings from the Strategic Assessment, it is proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader youth justice Partnership focuses on the following key strategic objectives during 2014 - 15:
- **Re-offending** - reduce further offending by young people who have committed crime
 - **Early Intervention and Prevention** – sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that there remain strategies and services in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
 - **Remand and Custody** – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody.
 - **Restorative Justice** – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.
 - **Risk and Vulnerability** – ensure all children and young people entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and vulnerability to inform effective intervention and risk management.
 - **Think Family** – embed a whole family approach to better understand the true impact of families in our communities and improve our understanding of the difficulties faced by all members of the family and how this can contribute to anti-social and offending behaviour.
 - **Maintain Standards** – ensure that all assessments, reports and interventions developed by the Youth Offending Service are effective and of a high quality.
 - **Effective Governance** – ensure that the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board will be a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.

- 4.4 The local Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2015 will establish responsibility across the Youth Offending Service and the Youth Offending Strategic Board for taking each improvement activity forward within agreed time-scales.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Children's Services Committee is requested to ratify the Youth Justice Plan for 2014-2015 prior to the plan being considered by Council in June 2014.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The development of the Youth Justice plan for 2014 - 2015 has been informed by the views and wishes of key stakeholders and as such, will provide the local youth justice partnership with a clear steer to bring about further reductions in youth offending and contribute to the broader community safety agenda.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

The Youth Justice Boards: Youth Justice Performance Improvement Framework (Guidance for Youth Justice Board English Regions available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk>)

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 8.1 Sally Robinson, Assistant Director (Children's Services), Child and Adult Services, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, TS24 8AY.
Tel 01429 523405. E-mail sally.robinson@hartlepool.gov.uk
- 8.2 Mark Smith, Head of Youth Support Services, Child and Adult Services, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, TS24 8AY.
Tel 01429 523405. E-mail mark.smith@hartlepool.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Hartlepool Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2014 - 2015

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1 FOREWARD

Welcome to the 2014 - 2015 Hartlepool Youth Justice Strategic Plan. This plan sets out our ambitions for Youth Justice Services in Hartlepool and how they will contribute to our overarching aspirations for the town, set out in our Community Strategy 2008-20 wherein:

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

The Youth Offending Service has a key role in contributing to this vision by building upon the success of 2013-2014 through the delivery of high quality, effective and safe youth justice services that prevent crime and the fear of crime, whilst ensuring that young people who do offend are identified and managed appropriately without delay.

In recent years Hartlepool has witnessed a significant reduction in youth crime. The local youth justice partnership has been particularly effective in reducing the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time and we are now starting to see a reduction in the rate of crime being committed by those young people who have previously offended.

Beyond this the service was the subject of a Short Quality Screening Inspection in 2013 – 2014 undertaken by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation who found that ‘Hartlepool Youth Offending Service can be ‘rightly proud of the substantial progress it has made since our previous inspection in 2011’. The inspectors highlighted that staff were well supported, committed and were delivering high quality services. They produced good quality assessments and plans and had ready access to an appropriate range of services.

This plan seeks to build upon the above progress by identifying priorities for the Youth Offending Service in the coming year and highlighting further areas for improvement.

As always, the Strategic Management Board is extremely grateful for the skill and dedication of our employees in supporting young people who offend or are at risk of becoming involved in offending in Hartlepool.

On behalf of the Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board I am pleased to endorse the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2014 -2015.

Signature

Lynn Beeston Youth Offending Service Strategic Management Board Chair

2 INTRODUCTION

The national Youth Justice System primarily exists to ensure that children and young people between the age of 10 and 17 who are arrested and charged with a criminal offence are dealt with differently to adult offenders to reflect their particular welfare needs.

In summary, children and young people who offend are:

- dealt with by youth courts
- given different sentences
- and when necessary, detained in special secure centres for young people as opposed to adult prisons.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and statutory partners to secure and coordinate local youth justice services for all of those young people in the Local Authority area who come into contact with the Youth Justice System as a result of their offending behaviour through the establishment and funding of **Youth Offending Services**.

The primary functions of Youth Offending Services are to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people and reduce the use of custody.

Hartlepool Youth Offending Service was established in April 2000 and is responsible for the delivery of youth justice services locally. It is a multi-agency service and is made up of representatives from the Council's Children's Services, Police, Probation, Health, Education, Community Safety and the local voluntary/community sector and seeks to ensure that:

- all children and young people entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and protective factors associated with offending behaviour to inform effective intervention.
- courts and youth offender panels are provided with high quality reports that enable sentencers to make informed decisions regarding sentencing.

- court orders are managed in such a way that they support the primary aim of the youth justice system, which is to prevent offending, and that they have regard to the welfare of the child or young person.
- services provided to courts are of a high quality and that magistrates and the judiciary have confidence in the supervision of children and young people who are subject to orders.
- comprehensive bail and remand management services are in place locally for children and young person's remanded or committed on bail while awaiting trial or sentence.
- the needs and risks of young people sentenced to custodial orders (including long-term custodial orders) are addressed effectively to enable effective resettlement and management of risk.
- those receiving youth justice services are treated fairly regardless of race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor, and actions are put in place to address unfairness where it is identified

Beyond the above, the remit of the service has widened significantly in recent years due to both national and local developments relating to prevention, diversion and restorative justice and there is a now requirement to ensure that:

- strategies and services are in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
- assistance is provided to the Police when determining whether Cautions should be given.
- out-of-court disposals deliver targeted interventions for those at risk of further offending.

- restorative justice approaches are used, where appropriate, with victims of crime and that restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.

The Hartlepool Youth Justice Plan for 2014-2015 seeks to establish how youth justice services will be delivered, funded and governed in response to both local need and the changing landscape and how the Hartlepool Youth Offending Service will work in partnership to prevent offending and re-offending by Children & Young People and reduce the use of custody.

3 STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS

The strategic assessment contains information to aid understanding of the priority youth justice issues identified for the communities of Hartlepool, including what has changed over the last year, what work we are doing and how we are measuring effectiveness and future challenges, alongside a description of the current local and national delivery landscape.

As the service nears the end of its annual Youth Justice Plan 2013-2014, the Strategic Assessment will assist the Local Authority and broader partnership in setting strategic objectives to inform the new Youth Justice Plan 2014 – 2015.

The Delivery Landscape

There are many factors that will impact on the Youth Offending Service in the coming years:

- A challenging economic climate, including the impact of welfare reform.
- Changes to commissioning arrangements following the transition of Public Health into Hartlepool Borough Council and the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Significant changes to and development of Government policy in key areas, including re-offending, anti-social behaviour and alcohol.
- Widespread restructuring and change across local public sector agencies due to the significant loss of funding.
- The transfer of financial burdens associated with the remand of young people to the Local Authority continues to be a key financial pressure.
- The decision to transfer Youth Court listings to Teesside Magistrates

The Hartlepool Youth Offending Service remains well placed to meet these challenges. The service is confident that it has a structure and the staff with the appropriate skills alongside the support of a committed, strong strategic management board to meet any future challenges.

We recognise that youth justice priorities impact upon each other, and those of partner organisations, and with limited resources and budgets, there is opportunity to maximise collaborative working and joint commissioning at a local level.

Local Context

Hartlepool is the smallest unitary authority in the North East region and the third smallest in the country comprising of some of the most disadvantaged areas in England. Issues around youth justice can be understood by a number of contextual factors:

Population

- Hartlepool has a stable population rate, maintained by low levels of migration.
- Hartlepool has become more diverse in recent years, although a very small proportion of the population are from the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community.
- 46% of the population in Hartlepool live in five of the most deprived wards in the country, where crime and anti-social behaviour rates are high.

Unemployment

- Unemployment rates in Hartlepool are above the regional average and more than double the national average.
- 14.5% of young people aged 18-24 years are unemployed.
- Hartlepool has high rates of people incapable of work due to disability and ill health.

Housing

- Strong links exist between the occurrence of anti-social behaviour and the location of private rented housing.
- The percentage of long term empty properties in Hartlepool is higher than the regional average.

Deprivation

- Hartlepool has pockets of high deprivation where communities experience multiple issues: higher unemployment, lower incomes, child poverty, ill health, low qualification, poorer housing conditions and higher crime rates.
- Residents living in more deprived, and densely populated areas have high perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour and feel less safe.

Health & Wellbeing

- The health of people in Hartlepool is generally worse than the England average.
- There is a higher prevalence of long term health problems, including mental health.
- The number of alcohol related hospital admissions and hospital stays for self-harm in Hartlepool are significantly worse than the England average.
- The number of Class A drug users in Hartlepool is more than double the national average.

Geography

- Community safety problems are not evenly spread and tend to be concentrated in geographic hotspots, particularly in the most deprived wards in Hartlepool.

Children, Young People and Families

Most young people in Hartlepool make the transition to adulthood successfully through a combination of supportive families, good schools, colleges and training providers and access to opportunities for personal and social development outside the classroom along with the vision and belief that they can succeed.

Whilst many young people make mistakes along the way and do things they should not do, or wish they had not done, most are able to get back on track quickly with little harm done.

But whilst many young people in Hartlepool are thriving, evidence is clear that it is young people from deprived and disadvantaged backgrounds and communities who lack many of the protective factors highlighted above, who are disproportionately at greater risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour and poorer outcomes generally.

Despite significant regeneration over the past twenty years the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007) indicates that Hartlepool is still ranked as the 23rd most deprived out of England's 354 Local Authority districts. Deprivation covers a broad range of potentially life limiting issues and refers to unmet needs caused by the interplay of a number of local factors that impact upon families living conditions such as:

low Income;

exclusion from the labour market;

impairment of quality of life by poor physical and mental health and disability;

educational underachievement, barriers to progression and a shortage of skills and qualifications amongst adults;

barriers to accessing key local services and affordable housing;

low quality of individuals' immediate surroundings both within and outside the home; and

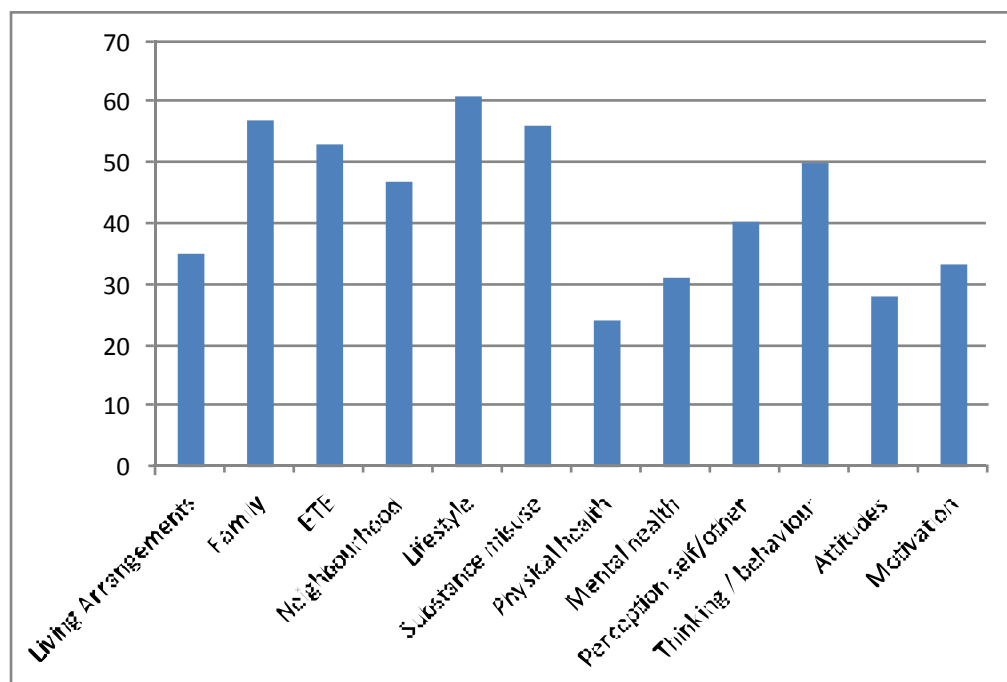
a prevalence of violent crime, burglary, theft and criminal damage in an area.

Local analysis of need and outcomes highlights that, whilst there are families who are more resilient to deprivation, the interplay of the above factors clearly places families who are

contending with deprivation at a disadvantage. This can significantly limit the opportunities and outcomes for their children which, in time, will tend to perpetuate a cycle of deprivation and disadvantage due to diminished life chances.

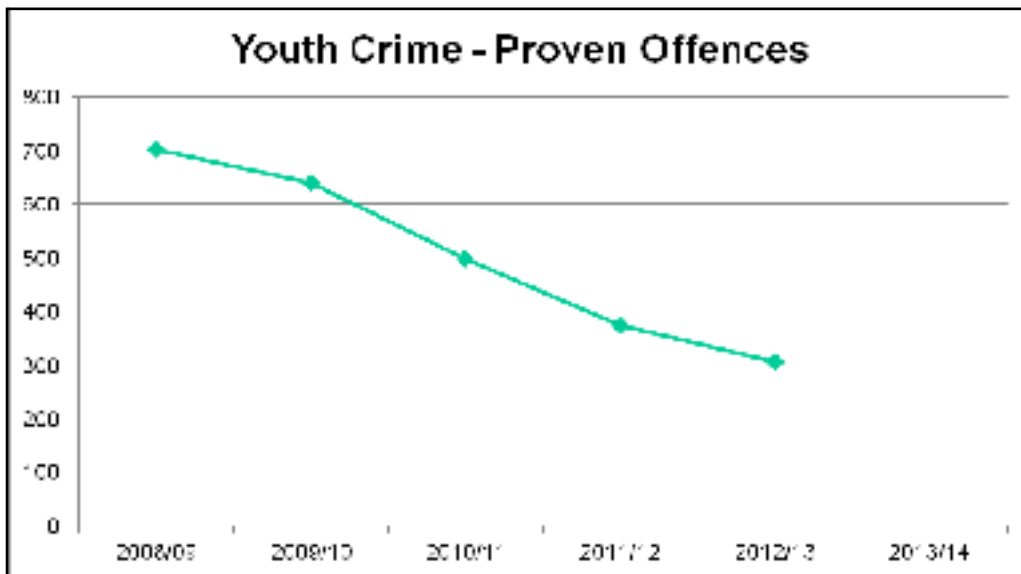
A more detailed analysis of the broader circumstances/factors of families whose children are experiencing difficulties indicates that parenting, parental substance misuse, housing and home conditions, employment issues and domestic violence are often the main factors linked to the prevalence of poor outcomes in local children and young people. It is often the complex interplay of each of these factors that makes problems in some households insurmountable and places the children at significant risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour.

An annual local analysis (see below) of the factors that contribute to young people's offending behaviour highlights that the most prevalent factors are often a combination of the young person's family circumstances, their lifestyle, their misuse of substances and a lack of engagement with education and/or further learning all of which shapes thinking and behaviour.



Youth Crime

In spite of the adversities that significant numbers of young people, families and communities contend with in Hartlepool the local Youth Justice Partnership has had significant success in recent years in terms of preventing and reducing youth offending behaviour.



It is notable that there have been significant reductions in:

- Violence against the person
- Criminal Damage
- Public Order offences
- Breach of Bail

Some crimes, particularly those falling within the acquisitive crime category are estimated to be on the increase with projections indicating an increasing trend for the following twelve months. Whilst current socio-economic factors can affect this crime type, locally it is recognised that substance misuse continues to be the key driver in the prevalence of acquisitive offences across the young offender cohort..

Given the recent decision to transfer Youth Court listings to Teesside Magistrates it is anticipated that there is likely to be an increase in Breach of Bail as young people and their broader families struggle to undertake the journey to from Hartlepool to Teesside.

Anti-social behaviour relating to young people continues to follow a strong seasonal trend with incidents and complaints often related to alcohol reaching their peak during the summer months.

Community perception results from the recent Household Survey indicate that from a town wide perspective the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour related issues have generally improved, however it is noted that these results do vary across wards with perceptions in our most disadvantaged communities remaining high.

Youth crime continues to be concentrated in our most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, co-existing with high levels of anti-social behaviour, health inequalities, unemployment and poor housing all of which place a significant demand on partner resources. People living in deprived areas experience significantly higher levels of crime and disorder; therefore they are at greater risk of victimisation and for this reason remain vulnerable.

Offence Category - Year on Year Comparisons

OFFENCE CATEGORY	Apr 2010 - Mar 2011	Apr 2011 - Mar 2012	Apr 2012 - Mar 2013	Actual Change 2011/12 Vs 2012/13
Arson	7	0	0	0
Breach of Bail	26	26	10	-16
Breach of Conditional Discharge	14	14	12	-2
Breach of Statutory Order	67	65	27	-38
Criminal Damage	144	121	77	-44
Domestic Burglary	39	10	15	5
Drugs	30	19	20	1
Fraud and Forgery	6	4	0	-4
Motoring Offences	39	13	22	9
Non Domestic Burglary	26	11	9	-2
Other	41	10	18	8
Public Order	189	92	69	-23
Racially Aggravated	5	5	1	-4
Robbery	7	3	0	-3
Sexual Offences	8	2	11	9
Theft and Handling Stolen Goods	221	111	114	3
Vehicle Theft / Unauthorised Taking	26	5	9	4
Violence Against the Person	156	126	93	-33
TOTAL	1051	637	507	

Prevention and Diversion

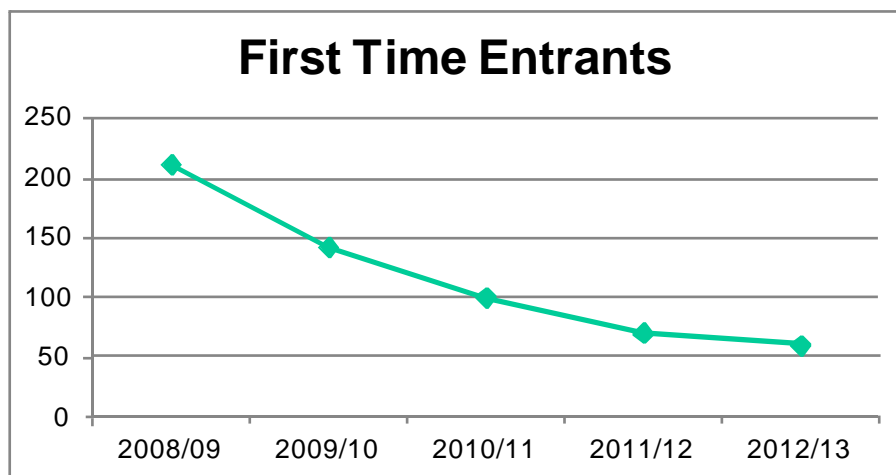
Research consistently highlights that children and young people who are exposed to multiple risks and disadvantage are more likely to become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. Similarly, children and young people who engage in anti-social behaviour at an early age are more likely to become serious persistent offenders.

In addition to this, research highlights that young people involved in offending behaviour are more likely to experience significant difficulties during adulthood in relation to housing, health, relationships, substance misuse and employment.

Youth crime prevention and diversion is based on the premise that it is possible to change the life-course trajectories of young people by reducing risk factors that may lead to offending behaviour and building on protective factors that might help prevent offending.

It marks a concerted shift away from reactive spending towards early action and intervention through a range of programmes for young people who are deemed to be at risk of offending, which can result in better outcomes and greater value for money.

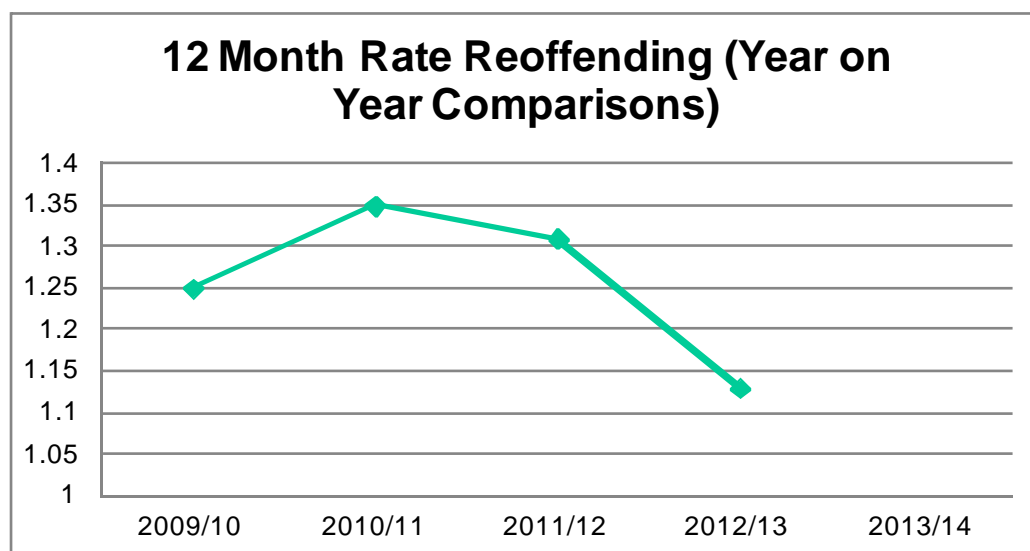
In recent years, Hartlepool Youth Offending Service and the broader youth justice partnership have placed a significant emphasis on the prevention of young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour and this has had a notable impact upon the numbers of young people entering the Youth Justice System.



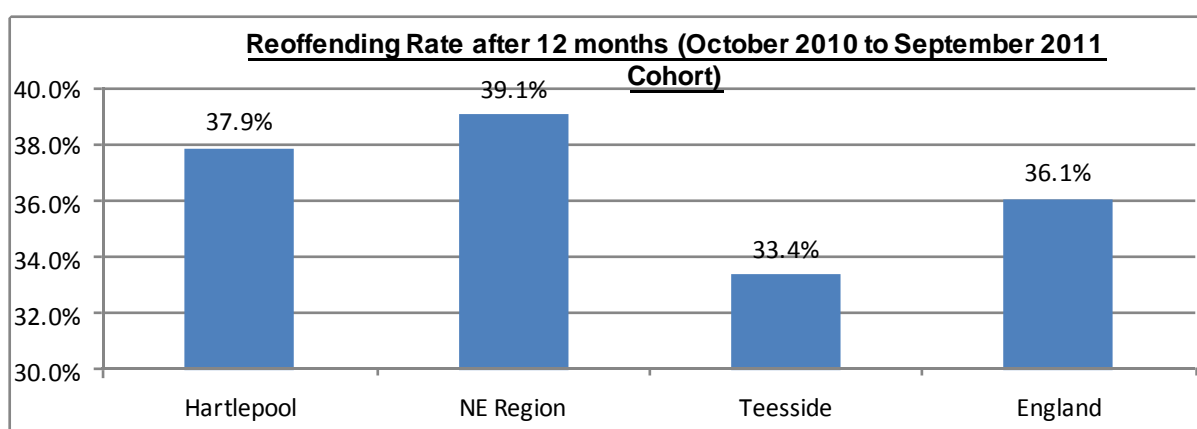
For young people whose behaviour has become more problematic robust pre-court interventions have proven to be highly successful in diverting young people away from further involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour through the use of interventions that whilst impressing upon the young people the seriousness and potentially damaging effect of their actions, do not criminalise the young people in the way that statutory court orders inevitably do.

Re-offending

On top of the continuing reductions in the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time, we are now starting to see a reduction in the rate of crime being committed by those young people who have previously offended.



However, the re-offending rate for young offenders in Hartlepool remains higher than both the Teesvalley average and the national average.

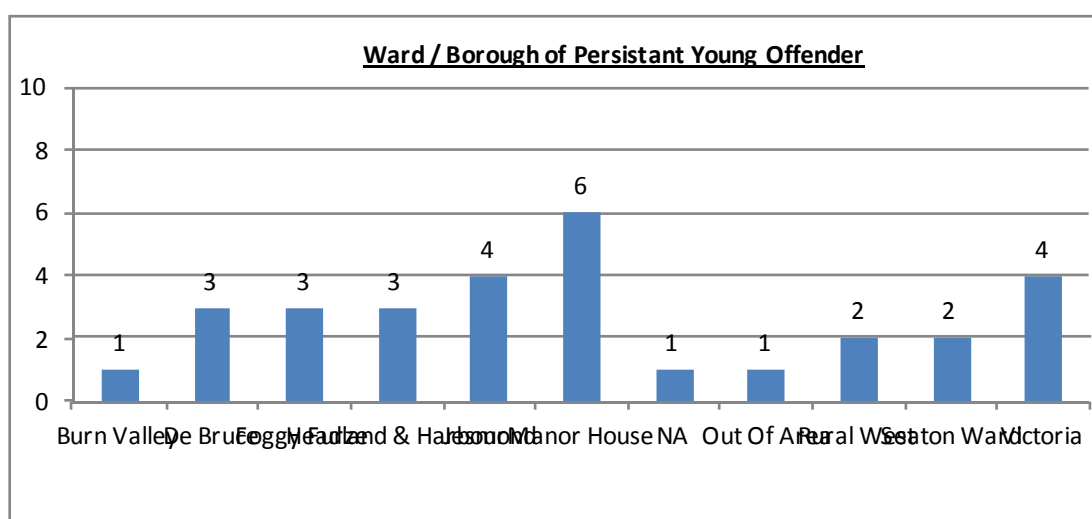


Data highlights that were a young person offends for the first time in Hartlepool 60% do not go on to re-offend. Analysis highlights that the service is dealing with a small number of persistent offenders (see below) who repeat offend; often in line with broader lifestyle choices relating to substance misuse and the need to generate income to maintain substance misuse levels.

Number of Re-offences Committed

No. of Offenders	77	28	13	5	3	5	5	4	2	1	1	1
No. of Re-offences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	13	14

This cohort of persistent young offenders are predominantly young men who are aged between 15 and 17 and who reside within Hartlepool's most deprived neighbourhoods.



These young people are often the most socially excluded and often have complex and deep rooted health and social problems such as:

- higher than average mental health needs
- higher levels of drug and alcohol use than for the general population and in particular 'heavy cannabis use'
- low educational attachment, attendance and attainment
- having family members or friends who offend
- higher than average levels of loss, bereavement, abuse and violence experienced within the family
- a history of family disruption

Working in partnership with the local 'Think Families – Think Communities' initiative will be key to supporting a greater understanding these underlying issues and addressing them in a holistic and co-ordinated way to provide “pathways out of offending”, reduce crime and break the cycle of offending behaviour across generations.

Victims of Youth Crime

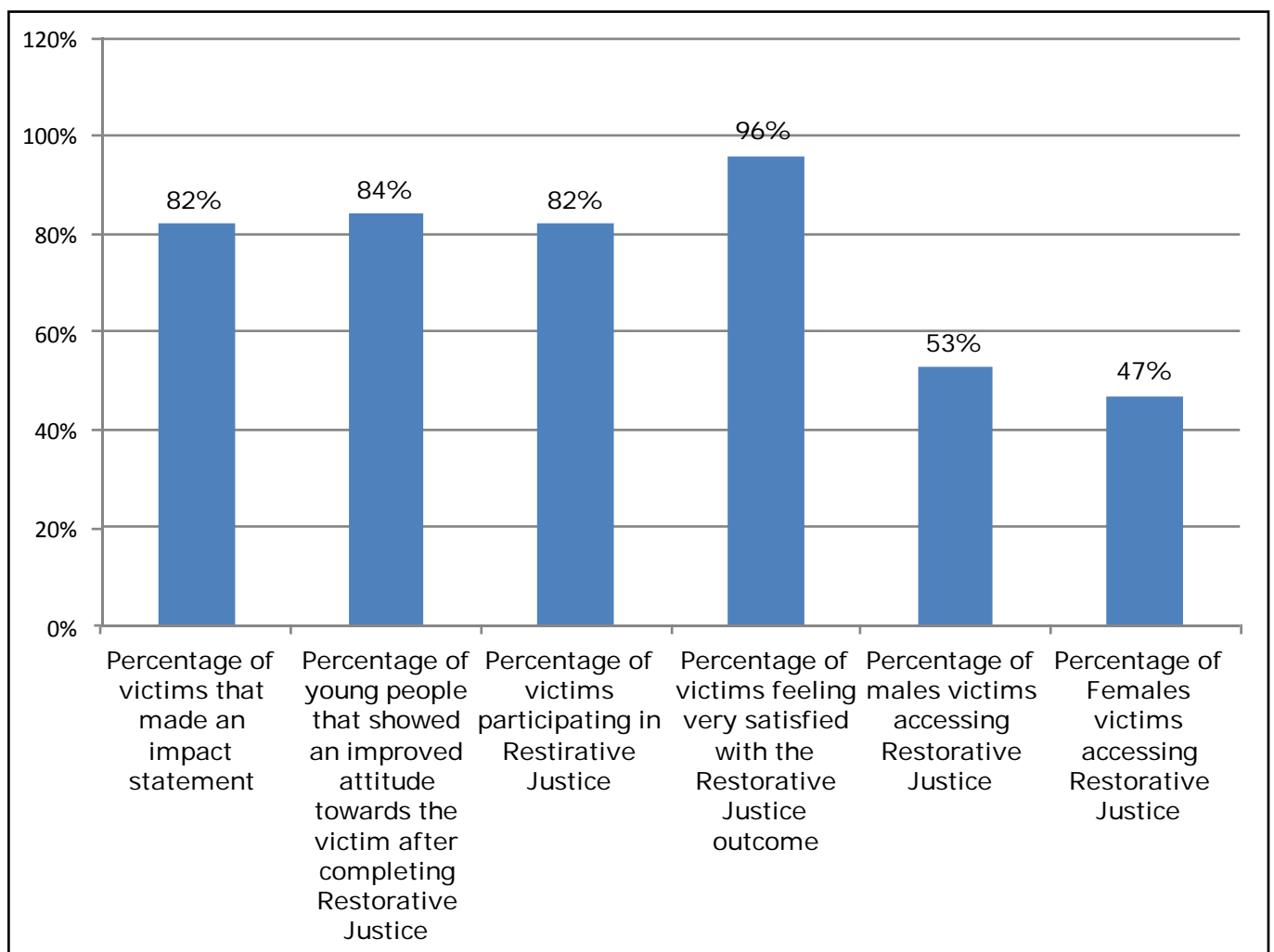
Whilst crime rates in Hartlepool have fallen, the likelihood of being a victim of crime still remains a reality, especially in our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. The Youth Offending Service is working hard to reduce the numbers of victims of crime, including the successful use of restorative justice to achieve this objective. Restorative Justice aims to give victims of crime a voice, choice and control in the criminal justice system. Personalised victim impact statements are collected to enable the offender to hear first-hand how their offence has impacted on the victim and wider community.

Restorative Justice in Hartlepool has contributed to the reduction in reoffending rates and repeat victimisation. Over the past 4 years victim satisfaction rates have significantly improved following participation in a Restorative Justice process. This year 96% of victims reported feeling very satisfied with their participation in restorative justice. 84% of offenders also showed an improved attitude towards the victim of their offence.

Victims of crime are helped to access appropriate support pathways that enable them to move on from the impact of crime. A personalised approach is taken to ensure that victims of crime in Hartlepool are placed at the centre. This includes ensuring that individual needs and wishes are fully taken into account. As a result we aim to visit all victims of crime so they are able to access pathways to support, including the option to participate in restorative justice.

Hartlepool is no different from many other areas across England. It has pockets of Anti-Social behaviour which tend to be more prevalent in some of our more disadvantaged areas. To tackle this we gather intelligence to identify the issues that are cause for concern, and are committed to using restorative justice to resolve issues of Anti-Social Behaviour and restore community confidence. To build on this, we are encouraging local communities to get involved in restorative justice and where possible volunteer their time to make a difference. This approach has been successful and we are now looking at how young people tend to migrate out of their local communities to commit crime and or anti-social behaviour.

Hartlepool recognises that females are more likely to suffer repeat victimisation in general; particularly in relation to domestic abuse. As a result Hartlepool is committed to providing services to stop this cycle of abuse from happening. Restorative Justice in some incidences can be used to help victims of domestic violence to tell the perpetrator how they feel about the abuse and how to stop it from reoccurring. Perpetrators of domestic violence are then supported to acknowledge how the victim feels with the aim of stopping cycles of abusive and harmful behaviour from reoccurring. Restorative Justice in Hartlepool has successfully resolved domestic incidents involving young people assaulting their parents/carers. As a result we are currently exploring the wider use of restorative justice to reduce the number of repeat domestic violence incidents in Hartlepool.



Quality of Services

In May 2013 a Short Quality Screening Inspection of Hartlepool Youth Offending Service was undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

The Short Quality Screening inspection is an inspection of the initial assessment, planning, effective management and partnership working undertaken by a Youth Offending Service in response to young people who are subject to a court order.

The inspection focused upon the timelines and quality of the work undertaken to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes relating to:

- Reducing the likelihood of reoffending
- Protecting the public
- Protecting the child or young person
- Ensuring that the sentence is served

Overall, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation found a 'very positive picture' in Hartlepool. The Inspectors reported that Hartlepool Youth Offending Service can be 'rightly proud of the substantial progress it has made since our previous inspection in 2011'. The inspectors highlighted that staff were well supported, committed and were delivering high quality services. They produced good quality assessments and plans and had ready access to an appropriate range of services.

The Inspectors found that Hartlepool Youth Offending Service had responded to its previous inspection by implementing a range of measures aimed at improving the quality of their work. This included co-locating the team with relevant partner services and developing practice guidance for work that tackled risk of harm to others, vulnerability and compliance.

The Short Quality Screening inspection determined that staff had welcomed these developments and had incorporated them into their practice. The inspectors found that the Hartlepool Youth Offending Service staff were well trained and supported in their work and that they were clear about what was required of them. The inspectors reported that staff were aware of the principles of effective practice and of the local policies and procedures that related to addressing risk of harm, vulnerability and compliance in their work with children and young people.

The best aspects of work that the inspectors found in Hartlepool included:

- There was routine engagement with children and young people and with their parents/carers in carrying out initial assessments and in case planning. This was often in the face of challenging circumstances and we noted the determination and persistence shown by staff in this respect.

- The assessments of risk of harm and vulnerability issues were of good quality and reflected the skills and experience of staff and the organisational support that underpinned their work.

The areas for improvement identified were:

- In all cases, assessments, plans and reviews of work to tackle risk of harm and vulnerability should be timely.
- There was scope for further improving the quality of the work by ensuring that plans fully reflected the breadth of the issues that had been identified in the assessments undertaken in the cases.

These areas for improvement were swiftly addressed through the development of an action plan.

4 RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

Adequate resourcing and the appropriate use of resources underpin the ability of the Youth Offending Service to deliver high quality services. The Youth Offending Service budget is made up of a central grant from the Youth Justice Board and contributions from statutory partners (Health, Children's Social Care, Police and Probation).

Funding from the national Youth Justice Board for 2014-2015 has remained at the same level to the previous year. However, contributions from some statutory partners will inevitably reduce in light of significant reductions in their own funding arrangements. As a consequence it is anticipated at this stage that the overall budget for the Youth Offending Service will be 3.8% less than 2013/2014.

Organisation	Financial Contribution	In kind staffing contribution	Total
Youth Justice Board	£497,114		£497,114
HBC Children's Services	£355,410		£355,410
Cleveland Police		£36,000 (Police Officer)	£36,000
Durham Teesvalley Probation Trust	£11,146	£29,000 (Probation Officer)	£40,146
Hartlepool Clinical Commissioning Group	£25,736	£33,000 (Nurse)	£58,736
Totals	£889,406	£98,000	£987,406

Alongside this, in 2013-2014 Hartlepool Youth Offending Service was able to secure the funding diverted by the Home Office from Youth Offending Services Service's to support the introduction of the Police & Crime Commissioners. Hartlepool Youth Offending Service has again applied to the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner to secure this money for 2014 – 2015 to support the ongoing continuation of the local Triage and the emphasis on Out of Court Disposals and remains hopeful that this application will be successful given the historical support for the Triage Programme in Hartlepool and its proven track record of diverting young people from the Youth Justice System.

5 STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Service Structure

The Youth Offending Service deploys a staff team of thirty eight people, which includes four seconded staff, four commissioned staff and eight sessional workers (**see Appendix 1**). The service also benefits from a team of thirteen active volunteers who sit as Referral Order Panel members. All staff and volunteers are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)s which are renewed every three years.

The service has undergone undergoing significant service remodelling in response emerging priorities and areas of need. Historically the service was organised into two discreet areas; Pre-court and Post-court provision. The service now operates a 'through court' model that places the majority of the services resources at the point of prevention and diversion to reflect the decreasing numbers of young people appearing before magistrates and the ongoing reductions in court orders.

It is envisaged that for those young people who go onto offend (in spite of preventative and diversionary interventions), the Youth Offending officer who will have established a relationship and rapport with the young person will be provided with the capacity to support the young person and their broader family through the court process, support any statutory interventions and then go on to provide aftercare with a view to reducing any further offending behaviour.

Governance

The Youth Offending Service is located within the Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services Division of Child and Adult Services. The Management Board is chaired by a local Chief Inspector and is made up of representatives from Child and Adult Services, Police, Probation, Health, Courts, Housing, Youth Support Services, Community Safety and the local Voluntary and Community Sector. Effective integrated strategic partnership working and clear oversight by the Management Board are critical to the success and effective delivery of youth justice services in Hartlepool.

The board is directly responsible for:

- determining how appropriate youth justice services are to be provided and funded;

- overseeing the formulation each year of a draft youth justice plan;

- agreeing measurable objectives linked to key performance indicators as part of the youth justice plan'

- ensuring delivery of the statutory aim to prevent offending by children and young people.

- giving strategic direction to Youth Offending Service Manager and Youth Offending Service Team

- providing performance management of the prevention of youth crime and periodically report this to the Safer Hartlepool Executive Group.

- promoting the key role played by the Youth Offending Service within local integrated offender management arrangements.

The Management Board is clear about the priority areas for improvement, and monitors the delivery of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan, performance and prevention work. It is well attended and receives comprehensive reports relating to performance, finance and specific areas of service delivery.

Members of the Board are knowledgeable, participate well in discussions and are members of other related boards, which contribute to effective partnership working at a strategic level. Board meetings are well structured and members are held accountable.

The membership of the Board is as follows:

Lynn Beeston Chair	Local Police Area Commander
Mark Smith	Head of Youth Support Services (incorporating YOS Manager functions)
Sally Robinson	Assistant Director - Prevention, Safeguarding & Specialist Services Hartlepool Borough Council
Dean Jackson	Assistant Director – Performance and Achievement Hartlepool Borough Council
Lucia Saiger	Director of Offender Services - Durham Tees Valley Trust
Louise Hurst	Deputy Youth Offending Service Manager
Emma Rutherford	Education Inclusion Co-ordinator
Paul Whittingham	Commissioning Manager NHS
Lindsey Robertson	Community Services Manager for Children and young people North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation
Lynda Igoe	Principal Housing Officer Hartlepool Borough Council
Sally Forth	Community Safety Manager Hartlepool Borough Council
Dave Wise	Chair of the West View Project (Voluntary/Community Sector representative).
Young people's representative	Currently vacant

6 PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Hartlepool Youth Offending Service is a statutory partnership which includes, but also extends beyond, the direct delivery of youth justice services. In order to deliver youth justice outcomes it must be able to function effectively in both of the two key sectors within which it operates, namely:

criminal justice services.

services for children and young people and their families.

The Youth Offending Service contributes both to improving community safety and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and in particular protecting them from significant harm. Working Together to Safeguard Children highlights the need for Youth Offending Services to work jointly with other agencies and professionals to ensure that young people are protected from harm and to ensure that outcomes for local children, young people and their families are improved.

Many of the young people involved with the Youth Offending Service are amongst the most vulnerable children in the borough and are at greatest risk of social exclusion. The Youth Offending Service's multi-agency approach ensures that it plays a significant role in meeting the safeguarding needs of these young people. This is achieved through the effective assessment and management of vulnerability and risk and through working in partnership with other services, for example Children's Social Care, Health and Education to ensure young people's wellbeing is promoted and they are protected from harm.

In order to generate effective outcomes for children and young people who offend or are at risk of offending the Youth Offending Service has in place effective partnership arrangements and is an important delivery partner for the Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. This close relationship is embedded in Hartlepool's 'Crime, Disorder, and Drugs Strategy' and 'Children and Young People's Plans'.

The Youth Offending Service Manager and nominated officers from within the Youth Offending Service are members of strategic boards relevant to young people who offend. For example representatives sit on the Criminal Justice Intervention Managers Partnership, 11-19 Strategic Board, Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership, Parenting Strategy Board, Substance Misuse Steering Group, Pupil Referral Unit Management Board, Social Inclusion Strategy Group and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). The Youth Offending Service is also represented on the Children's Strategic Partnership, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Health and Well-being Board and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

7 RISKS TO FUTURE DELIVERY

There are many factors that have the capacity to have an adverse impact on the Youth Offending Service in the coming twelve months and potentially beyond.

Secure Remand Costs

The service continues to contend with the financial risks inherent in remand costs following the decision to transfer financial responsibility to Local Authorities for the funding of all remands to Youth Detention Accommodation (A secure Children's Home; a Secure Training Centre; a Young Offender Institution) following the passing of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act in 2012.

In 2013 – 2014 Hartlepool incurred a total of **115 days** at an approximate combined cost of **£77k** which at this stage represents an estimated **27k** overspend against the monies allocated to Hartlepool.

The financial pressure lies in:

- a) the unpredictability of a youth from Hartlepool being charged with a serious offence which then runs for several months whilst waiting to be dealt with in Crown Court. This could result in a lengthy period on remand for the young person.
- b) the desire to advocate for secure arrangements that are commensurate with the young persons needs.

It will be essential that the service can demonstrate to magistrates going forward that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill

These recent reforms set out in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill are intended to ensure that 'professionals have effective powers that are quick, practical and easy to use, provide better protection for victims and communities and act as real deterrents to perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

However, it has been highlighted that the grounds of the new civil injunction - 'preventing nuisance and annoyance' and that it is 'just and convenient' – constitute a lower threshold than that for current anti-social behaviour orders.

For example, a civil injunction can be made on the basis of the balance of probabilities. This is a weaker test than currently in place for ASBOs which are subject to a 'heightened civil standard' of proof. Like ASBO's, the new provisions allow the use of hearsay evidence.

Alongside this, the inclusion of positive requirements in civil injunctions and criminal behaviour orders may support some children to address their problem behaviour. However, they are also likely to make compliance harder for children, resulting in more breaches. Children with learning disabilities, communication difficulties, mental health problems and low literacy have difficulty understanding what is expected of them, and what will happen if they fail to comply. Children may lack parental support to ensure they stick to positive requirements. Take-up of Individual Support Orders at present is limited, and many have questioned whether take-up of the new requirements will be significant.

Access to suitable support locally is already highly variable, and is likely to be limited by current budgetary pressures, which are reducing levels of youth service provision and positive activities, with the greatest reductions focused on disadvantaged localities with high levels of anti-social behaviour.

It is hard to predict the likely impact of the provisions in practice on levels of anti-social behaviour by children. However, it is becoming increasingly accepted that aspects of the Bill are likely to lead to an increase in the number of children being subject to civil injunctions, more breaches of orders and injunctions, and more children being sent to custody.

It will be essential that the service works closely with Police and the local Community Safety Team to ensure that orders support local children and young people to address their problem behaviour, whilst ensuring that the correct support arrangements are secured to enable them to fully comply with requirements stipulated within the orders.

Decision to Transfer Youth Court Listings to Teesside Magistrates

From April 2014 local young people listed to appear before magistrates will be required to present at Teesside Magistrates in Middlesbrough. It is anticipated that this additional requirement is likely to have a significant impact upon the ability of local young people and their families to attend court as and when specified and is likely to have the following consequences:

- Cost and time taken to get to Middlesbrough to attend court – families using public transport will have to set off very early and this is expensive. These are generally the families with little spare capacity in weekly budgets.
- Likely increase in non-attendance at court and issuing of warrants which will result in significant police time in chasing these up.
- Travel to and from Middlesbrough court by Youth Offending Service staff will result in a pressure on resources.
- There is the potential of significant expenses being incurred if Hartlepool has to seek internet access through installation of a fixed line at Teesside Magistrates.
- The whole principle of “local justice” will seem less likely. Hartlepool YOS has a good working relationship with all court staff and other users (Solicitors / Magistrates /Security Staff etc)

It will be essential that the service works closely with Teesside Magistrates to develop a similar relationship to the one experienced in Hartlepool.

Alongside this, the impact on local re-offending rates will need to be keenly monitored to determine if the inability of young people and their families to attend Teesside Magistrates has an adverse impact upon local resources and affects local performance in relation to the reduction of re-offending by young people.

8 STRATEGIC SUMMARY

In spite of the adversities that families and communities contend with in Hartlepool the local Youth Justice Partnership has had significant success in recent years in terms of preventing and reducing youth offending behaviour.

However, an emphasis on prevention and diversion needs to be maintained and in spite of recent reductions in re-offending, the rate of re-offending in Hartlepool continues to be higher than the Tees Valley average and national average.

Evidence highlights that it is often the complex interplay of multiple deprivation factors and difficulties that makes problems in some households insurmountable and places the children at significant risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour. As a result there is a need to place an even greater emphasis on whole family interventions to create “pathways out of offending”, reduce crime and break the cycle of offending behaviour across generations.

Whilst crime rates in Hartlepool have fallen, the likelihood of being a victim of crime still remains a reality, especially in our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and there remains a need to continue to invest in the delivery of restorative approaches to give victims of crime a voice, choice, control and satisfaction in the criminal justice system.

Alongside the above, there has been a significant shift in the local delivery landscape, such as changes to commissioning arrangements, the transfer of financial burdens associated with the remand of young people to the Local Authority and the decision to transfer Youth Court listings to Teesside Magistrates.

Clearly, the Youth Offending Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership will need to be proactive in addressing the above challenges to ensure it continues to achieve its central aim of preventing offending by children and young people.

Proposed Strategic Objectives and Priorities

Based upon the findings from the Strategic Assessment, it is proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader youth justice Partnership focuses on the following key strategic objectives during 2014 - 15:

Youth Justice Strategic Priorities
Re-offending - reduce further offending by young people who have committed crime
Early Intervention and Prevention – sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that there remain strategies and services in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
Remand and Custody – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody.
Restorative Justice – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.
Risk and Vulnerability – ensure all children and young people entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and vulnerability to inform effective intervention and risk management.
Think Family – embed a whole family approach to better understand the true impact of families in our communities and improve our understanding of the difficulties faced by all members of the family and how this can contribute to anti-social and offending behaviour.
Maintain Standards – ensure that all assessments, reports and interventions developed by the Youth Offending Service are effective and of a high quality.
Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board will be a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.

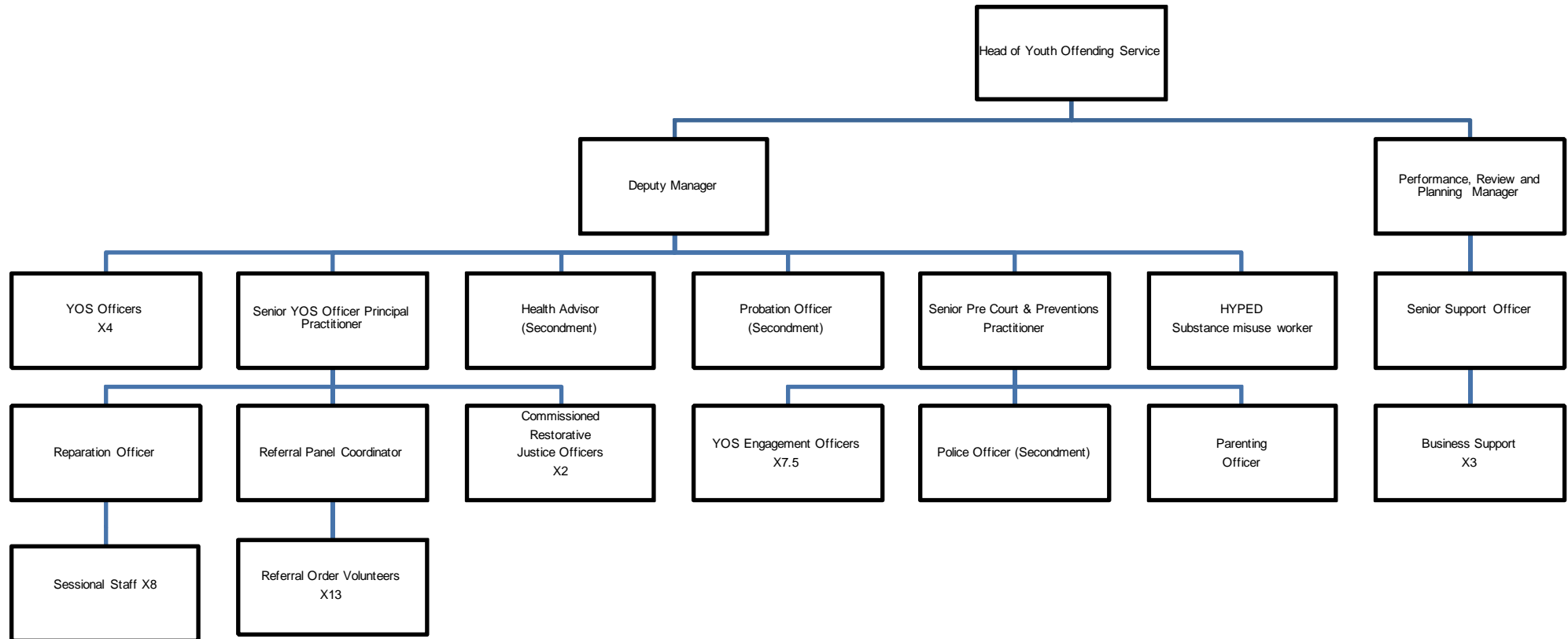
The local Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2015 will establish responsibility across the Youth Offending Service and the Youth Offending Strategic Board for taking each improvement activity forward within agreed timescales.

Hartlepool Youth Justice Partnership



Appendix 1

Youth Offending Service Structure



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

6 May 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 AND
ADOPTION AGENCY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
2014/15

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present Children Services Committee the Annual Report of the Adoption Agency 2013/14 and the Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose for 2014/15.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The work of the Adoption Services is subject to National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of adoption services. The National Minimum Standards together with regulations for adoption and the placement of children looked after form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of adoption agencies.
- 3.2 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards that the service produces a Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide for adoption services and reviews these at least annually. It is also a requirement that the executive side of the local authority receive six monthly reports detailing the management, outcomes and functioning of the Adoption services. This information is provided within the Annual Report, attached as **Appendix 1**. The Statement of Purpose for 2013/14 is attached in **Appendix 2**.

- 3.3 The Annual Report provides details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff, and adopters, the constitution of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective adopters, the achievements of the service during the year and the priorities for further service development in 2014/15.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Children's Services Committee approve The Annual Report of the Adoption Agency 2013/14 is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2014/15 is attached at **Appendix 2**.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note of the Adoption Agency Annual Report and approve the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide in line with the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Adoption Agency is a statutory service of the Council and as such Children's Services Committee, having the responsibility for Children's Services, requires information about how services are delivered and their effectiveness.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Adoption Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

Jane Young
Head of Business Unit
Specialist Services
01429 405584

Adoption Annual Report 2013/14

Together we will build better futures



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Welcome to the Adoption Services Annual Report of 2013-14. In Hartlepool we have set out our overarching ambition and aspiration in our Children Looked After Strategy and Permanence Policy

“Hartlepool Council will provide children and young people with permanence and stability to enable them to thrive, enjoy a happy and secure childhood and become confident adults who achieve their aspirations”.

The Adoption Service has a key role in contributing to this by delivering a high quality and effective Adoption Service.

The service has been successful in recruiting prospective adopters and ensuring children are placed with their adopted parents without delay. This has been confirmed by our excellent performance against the Adoption Scorecard where Hartlepool has consistently performed well, above the England average for all indicators and met government targets. The recent inspection of services for children in Hartlepool judged our adoption performance as good and highlighted the following strengths:

‘Children for whom the best plan is to be adopted, are found good adoptive families quickly and not left to drift in temporary homes. Children are not separated from their brothers or sisters unless this is the best thing for each of them. A specialist and dedicated worker completes good quality assessments prior to making decisions as to whether brothers and sisters are separated. Birth parents are supported to make a good contribution to their children settling with adoptive parents. Adoptive families are given excellent support to help them settle down together.’

Ofsted 2014

Sally Robinson

Introduction

The annual Adoption Agency report provides information about the activity of and outcomes achieved by the service during 2013-14 and outlines plans and strategic priorities for 2014-15.

The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and Adoption National Minimum Standards places a requirement upon Local Authority adoption services to ensure that the Executive side of the Council receive 6 monthly reports on the management and outcomes of the agency. The Annual Report provides a full review of the service and an interim progress report is made to the Children's Services Committee at the end of the second quarter of the financial year.

Following the Government report published in March 2012 'Action Plan for Adoption - Tackling Delay', this report highlights the challenges faced when placing children for adoption. These challenges have been the catalyst for Adoption Reform which is legislated within the Children and Families Act 2014.

The aim of the Adoption Service is to recruit, train and support adopters to provide high quality adoptive placements for the children. This is achieved through the following objectives:

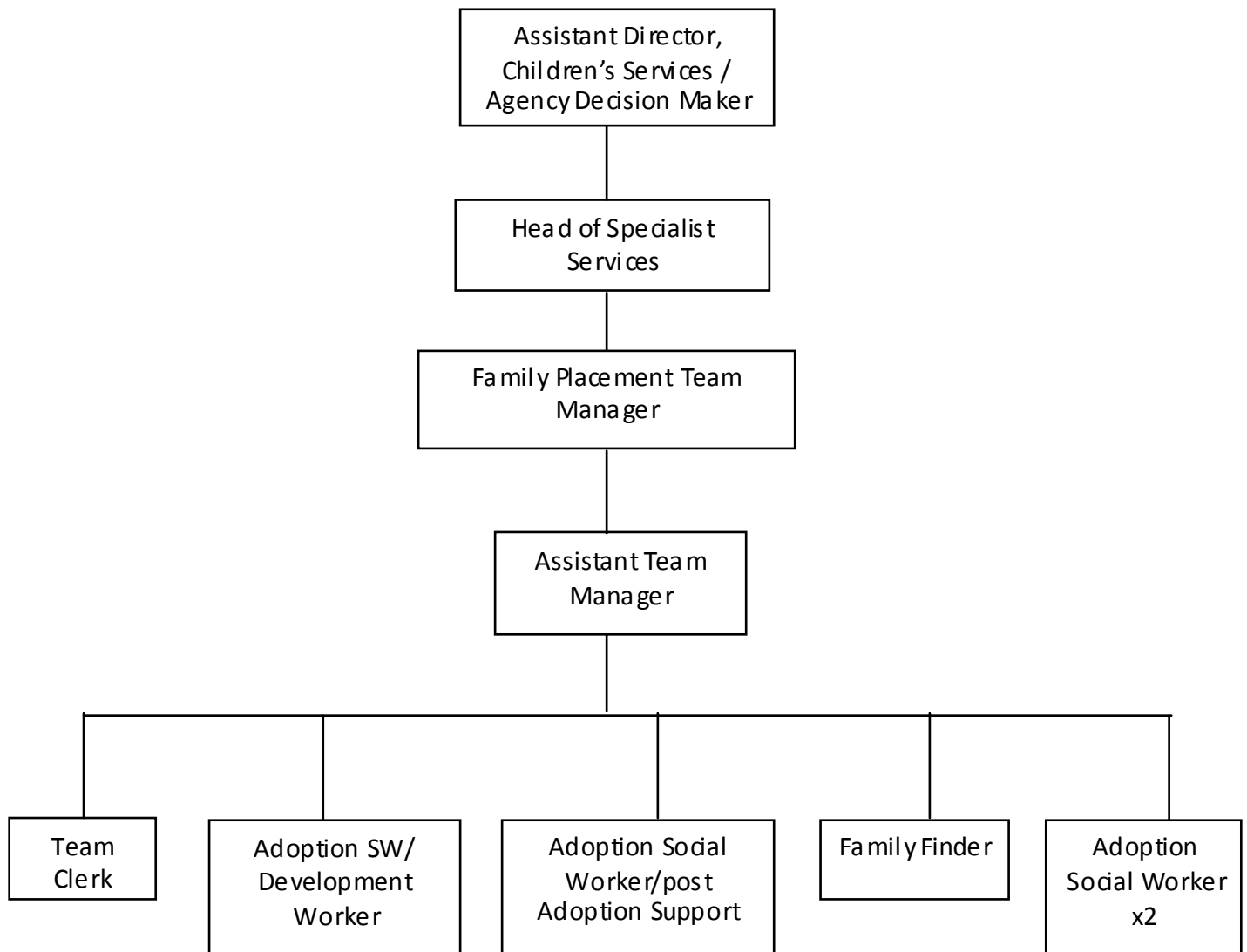
- Ensuring that where children cannot remain in the care of their birth parent/s, they are placed with appropriate adoptive parent/s at the earliest opportunity;
- Providing robust assessment of and support to adoptive carers and children to meet identified needs;
- Providing advice and support to birth families;
- Managing and facilitating Post Box contact arrangements that support the exchange of information which meets the needs of the children, adoptive parent/s and birth parent/s;

- Fulfil statutory requirements in relation to the Adoption & Children Act 2004 for the adoption of a child by a step parent;
- Providing advice, support and guidance in relation to permanence planning and facilitate family finding for children;
- Ensure the Adoption Panel is supported to provide robust consideration and recommendations relating to approval of adopters, and matching of children and adoptive families;
- Providing support to the Agency Decision Maker in relation to consideration and decision making regarding plans for the adoption of children.



Hartlepool Adoption Service is managed in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2004. The Adoption National Minimum Standards and the Regulations 2011 form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of adoption agencies and adoption support agencies.

Adoption Team Structure



Governance and Oversight of Adoption

The Adoption Service prepares an Annual Report and a six monthly progress report on its activities and performance which are presented to Children's Service Committee.

Hartlepool Borough Council was one of the first local authorities to be inspected under a new single inspection framework in November / December 2013. The overall judgement was that the local authority leads effective services that meet the requirements for Good. A separate judgement is made on the effectiveness of adoption performance and this was also judged to be Good. Many strengths of the adoption service are reflected in the inspection report and no areas for improvement were identified.

The Adoption Score Cards are published annually by the Department for Education and measure the effectiveness of the local authority against key targets for adoption performance. The Hartlepool Adoption Scorecard demonstrates that the local authority is performing well and achieving government targets. Information from the Scorecards indicates that :

- For children who are placed for adoption in Hartlepool, the length of time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is shorter than the national average. (444 days in Hartlepool compared with 545 days nationally.)
- The number of adopters who wait more than 3 months from approval to being matched with a child is significantly lower than the national average. (42% as opposed to 58%)
- A higher than average number of children aged 5 years or over being placed for adoption. (8% as opposed to 4%)

Hartlepool Borough Council Family Placement Panel is appropriately constituted with an Independent Chair Person and a number of Panel Members with the appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the Panel for consideration.

Panel Members are fully trained and join a central list of people who can be called on to attend Panel, this includes an Independent Chair, two Vice Chairs, eight Agency Social Workers, an Elected Member, five Independent Members, two of whom are foster carers for another authority, a Medical Advisor and a person who was previously looked after.

The Panel also receives advice from the local authority Legal Advisor and Panel Advisor.

The Panel meets fortnightly and makes recommendations on the suitability of prospective adopters and the matching of children with adoptive families to the Agency Decision Maker.

Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services is the Adoption Agency Decision Maker and as such makes the final decision in relation to approval of prospective adopters, children's adoption plans and adoption matches. Sally is robust in her quality assurance and decision making ensuring that the best interest of children is always at the heart of what we do.

Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters

Number of Approved Adopters as at 31.03.14	14
Number of Adopters currently being assessed	12
Number of Adopters waiting to complete training	4
Number of Adopters with children in placement but not yet adopted	12
Number of Initial Visits undertaken 2013/14	22
Number of applications received 2013/14	13

The Adoption Service recruitment strategy is updated on an annual basis and a range of methods are used to attract prospective adopters to Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Agency. We are particularly successful in achieving personal recommendations from Hartlepool's approved adopters and their families. There is an advertising campaign for adoption which we are currently updating, advertisements are placed in the Primary Times and regional publications. We currently have a need for placements for siblings groups and older children and this will be the priority of the recruitment strategy for 2014-15.

Adopters attend four days of modularised training which has been updated to meet the requirements of the two stage assessment process. This training aims to providing prospective adopters with information and covers the adoption process, legal procedures, child development, attachment and resilience, child abuse and safeguarding and looks at adoption from the perspective of the birth family and the child.

In addition to the training, support groups are held monthly through to approval aimed at supporting adopters and continuing their learning. Topics include talking to your child about adoption, understanding difficult behaviour, managing introductions, post adoption support and facing up to Facebook.

Family Finding

The Adoption Team plays a key role in finding adoptive families for children. From the point of where adoption is likely to be the permanent plan for a child, the adoption team track the planning for that child to ensure there is no delay in finding an appropriate family.

Number of children awaiting adoptive placement as at 01.04.14	8
Number of children matched and placed in an adoptive placement from 2013-14	15
Number of children adopted between April 2013 – March 2014	12
Number of children placed with adopters on 31.03.14	12

A key focus of the adoption reform agenda is to ensure children are placed without any delay. To facilitate this we have a dedicated family finder post whose remit is to become involved with children needing permanence via adoption at the earliest stage.

The Family Finder role ensures the authority is proactive in its search for the right family for a child. This search includes Hartlepool's approved adopters and can be widened to consider prospective adopters available via the Northern Consortium (where members meet regionally to share any adopters approved either by neighbouring authorities or voluntary adoption agencies), the Adoption Register, advertisements in Be My Parent (a publication which features children in need of an adoptive placement), or individual flyers for children sent to all adoption agencies. The Family Finder and Social Worker will, where necessary, attend adoption activity events in search of the right family for a child.

There is a robust matching process which is undertaken in order to identify and prepare a child and prospective adopters for placement. This starts with an exchange of written and verbal information followed by a meeting between foster carer, social worker and adopters.

Preparation for Placement

Children are prepared for placement in accordance with their assessed needs and depending on their age and understanding.

The service has the support of a Play Therapist and Filial Therapist based within the Specialist Services Division who provide advice and where appropriate direct support in the preparation and placement of children



within the adoptive family. The potential disruption and impact on children when moving placement cannot be underestimated and it is crucial that significant planning and support is provided at this time.

Life Story work is completed by the Social Worker, this should be with a child if he or she is old enough or on behalf of the child if they are very young. The Adoption Team has completed training in Life Story Work and direct work with children for foster carers and

social workers. A resource library has been established and the whole service has attended 'direct work with children' seminars where practitioners shared ideas, resources and advice was available from play therapists.

Post Adoption Support

The Adoption Team manage the 'post box system' this is an exchange of information essentially between adopters and adopted children and birth parent/extended family members. There are approximately 200 different pieces of information exchanged annually. The council has purchased an electronic system which will update and improve the management of these arrangements.

The transfer from the manual to the electronic system is almost complete and this is seen as a crucial development in light of the confidential and sensitive nature of the information exchanged. The post box system is a vital part of the statutory services provided to birth parents, adopters and adoptees; it supports the children's sense of identity, their understanding and knowledge of their birth family and can provide reassurance to both children and birth family of each other's welfare.

Local Authorities are responsible for the delivery of post adoption support to adopters and children for 3 years following the making of an Adoption Order. This support is currently provided by the Adoption Team and we have taken the opportunity provided through additional funding to establish a part time dedicated social worker post to this area of practice. The Adoption Team provide regular newsletters to all those who have adopted children via Hartlepool Adoption Agency. They offer training events on subjects such as Life Story Books and behavioural issues such as 'how to develop empathy'. In addition there are social events including the annual Christmas party.

The Council commission a service from After Adoption to provide independent advice and support to birth parents, adopters and adoptees. To increase the numbers of people accessing this valuable service we are (with their permission) currently referring all birth parents to this service. However referrals can still be made by either the person themselves or by a social worker on their behalf where necessary if there is a need beyond the point of social work involvement.

Achievements in the past year

OFSTED's new approach to inspection is a single inspection of the whole of Children's Services and this includes the Adoption Service. Hartlepool Borough Council was one of the first of the Local Authorities to be inspected by OFSTED under this framework with the inspection taking place in November/December 2013.

Overall the Authority was judged as GOOD with a sub judgement of GOOD for adoption. The inspection report highlights a number of strengths of the services and there were no recommended areas for improvement in relation to adoption.

Over the past year, with the benefit of the Government Adoption Reform Grant, the service has strengthened its performance in relation to adoption by recruiting an increased number of prospective adopters and matching more children awaiting adoption with prospective adopters in a shorter timescale.

The adoption team have now firmly embedded the new BAAF Two Stage assessment process. One worker within the team is dedicated to monitoring recruitment activity up until the point of allocation to a worker for assessment. This sharing of tasks and responsibilities enables us ensure that assessments are completed within the required timescale.

The adoption team benefits from having a named Family Finder who attends Permanency Planning Meetings and, where there is a need, initiates the Family Finding process for those children requiring permanency via adoption. Her dedicated role allows us to family find from the earliest stages and has reduced delay in the adoption process.

Hartlepool Borough Council continues to be an active member of the Northern Consortium and has been involved in the development of a BAAF North East Activity day which will take place in November 2014. This event will bring together adopters from the area and will profile the more difficult to place children for example siblings groups and older children. We envisage that this will become an annual event organised by the North East Consortium.

Priorities for 2014-2015

Following a successful year of performance in 2013/14, the service strives to deliver continuous improvement and has identified the following priorities for the coming year:

- To respond promptly to any adoptive enquiries including those received via the new National Gateway;
- To fully embed the BAAF two stage assessment process;
- To deliver the Department's plans for early permanence for very young children with a plan for adoption through foster to adopt and concurrent planning
- To support placing social workers in completing factual, comprehensive and informative Child's Permanency Reports;
- To utilise the existing Family Finding post to identify children needing adoptive placements earlier and using our own resources, established links and new research to positively match with adopters within timescales;
- To work positively and proactively with the child's social worker to improve the quality of Life Story work;
- To provide those who have adopted with post adoption support;
- To implement and utilise the electronic post box system;
- To develop Life Appreciation Days for children whose plan is for adoption;
- Target our current advertising campaign to look specifically at recruiting adopters for older children and siblings group.



Some quotes from Hartlepool adopters;

"Many thanks to the entire team – including those who didn't get to see face to face. We know there will have been a lot more people involved in our adoption process, including admin staff etc. Please extend our thanks to them also. We can't thank the agency enough for such a perfect match"

Adoptive parent

"From our initial enquiry in Jan 2013 we found the process very thorough and all the staff very helpful and friendly. Our assessing Social Worker kept us up to speed with the progress of our journey at each step and it's been really great to work with someone so professional and caring. For example the home study part of the process was very intense but they helped us through it and made it very smooth and 'undaunting'

We thought all in all the process was pretty quick but would have obviously liked it to have gone a bit quicker so we could have had our sibling group placed sooner. All the staff we've dealt with at Hartlepool have been very nice and supportive and we couldn't fault their professionalism.

I think the stories you used to hear about how long and difficult the adoption process is made the idea seem daunting at first but we knew it what we both wanted and made the decision to go for adoption. As we began to share our decision with others, we heard about so many positive experiences and were encouraged by these.

We contacted a couple of places and Hartlepool Adoption Team replied quickly and arranged to come to our house to talk about adoption. Since that first meeting we felt much more comfortable and confident to go ahead with the adoption procedure and have nothing but good things to say about the Hartlepool team.

Adopter of a sibling group

'Our adoption journey with Hartlepool

After making the decision that we would like to explore the idea of adopting a child, we made some initial enquiries with a private agency and three local authorities. From the initial contact that we had with Hartlepool, we both felt that they were right agency to go with. We had an initial home visit and reached the decision that we would like to continue with our application to adopt with Hartlepool.

Some weeks later we attended the preparation group along with three other couples. The preparation training allowed us to make a much more informed decision that we wanted to be adopters ourselves and in June we met our assessing social worker. We agreed a deadline for completing the process, which was actually much quicker than we had imagined. We were quite apprehensive about the home study process and expected some elements of it to be difficult and uncomfortable. Our worker did a fantastic job in leading the process, and although some very personal issues were discussed and it was all sensitively managed. We attended panel in October 2013.

Less than 2 weeks following panel we were contacted to consider a baby girl, her information was shared with us and we reached the decision that we wanted to proceed. We were initially told that she would not be placed with us until after Christmas, however it was a nice surprise when we were contacted to say that an additional matching panel was to be held. This meant we could have our little girl home in time for Christmas.

We are so pleased that we decided to go on this journey with Hartlepool as the whole process has been dealt with sensitively, professionally and timely. The process from attending the preparation group to bringing Amy home only took around nine months. Our daughter has 'turned our lives upside down' however we are so grateful that we have been given the privilege of becoming her Mammy and Daddy. She is an absolute miracle and we cannot imagine our lives without her.



Hartlepool Borough Council

Child and Adult Services

Adoption Service

Statement of Purpose

April 2014

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADOPTION SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Elected Members of Hartlepool Borough Council approved this Statement of Purpose on 29 September 2003.

This Statement of Purpose is reviewed and updated on an annual basis and is submitted for approval to Elected members.

This document was reviewed and updated in April 2014 and is to be submitted for approval by Elected members in April 2014.

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and revised as appropriate by the Team Manager of the Adoption Services no later than April 2015.

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Values, Aims and Objective

Value Statements

The value statements listed below underpin the provision of Adoption services in Hartlepool.

- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- It is best for children where possible to be brought up by their own birth family.
- The child's welfare, safety and needs will be at the centre of the adoption process.
- The child's wishes and feelings will be actively sought and fully taken into account at all stages.
- Delays in adoption can have a severe impact on the health and development of children and should be avoided wherever possible.
- Children's ethnic origin, cultural background, religion and language will be fully recognised and positively promoted when decisions are made.
- The particular needs of disabled children will be fully recognised and taken into account when decisions are made.
- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child who cannot live with their birth family will be valued and respected.
- Adoption has lifelong implications for all involved and requires lifelong commitment from many different organisations, professions and individuals who have to work together to meet the need for services of those affected by adoption.
- Government will work in partnership with local government, other statutory agencies and voluntary adoption agencies to ensure that these standards are delivered.

Aims and objectives of the adoption service

Adoption means an Adoption Order under the 1976 Act or preceding legislation and vests parental responsibility in the adopters. The Order extinguishes the rights and duties of birth parents including any parental responsibility any person had before the Order (updated in 2002 Act).

Adoption affects the following groups of children;

- Babies whose parents cannot or do not wish to care for them.
- Children who are in the care of the Local Authority.
- Children cared for by relatives.
- Children in a step-parenting family.
- Children brought into the country from abroad.

Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Service aims to provide a range of adoptive placements for those children requiring permanent substitute families.

The Adoption Service aims to ensure that prospective adopters are provided with the skills, knowledge and support to enable them to meet the assessed needs of children placed and to provide a safe and secure home environment.

The following guiding principles underpin the services provided by the Adoption Service:

- Adoption is a process with life long implications for adopted people, adoptive parents and birth parents.
- There is a commitment to providing adoption services to all sectors of Hartlepool's population and the surrounding areas and to seek to provide sensitive needs led services to children, parents and adopters.
- There is a duty to establish and maintain services designed to meet the needs of adopted children, adopters and birth parents.
- There is a recognition of the importance of incorporating research and user feedback into the formulation of policies, procedures and practice. Constructive feedback from service users is welcomed and should be directed to the Adoption Service Team Manager.
- The provision of after adoption services to adopted adults, birth relatives, adopted children and their families, intermediary services to birth relatives and support and advice to birth parents where the plan for adoption has been made and the parents are contesting the plan.

Objectives

- To conduct recruitment activities and employ strategies in order to attract the range of adopters identified for children and young people.
- To undertake effective assessments of prospective adopters within timescales specified in National Guidance.
- To continue to regularly hold Permanence Panels to consider assessments and make recommendations for approval to the agency decision maker.
- To provide pre-approval training for prospective adopters equipping them to meet the needs of children referred for adoption and developing their awareness of adoption issues.
- To protect children from abuse and neglect.
- To create stability for children and young people who require permanent substitute families.
- To maintain and promote contact with family members where appropriate.
- To create lifelong attachments with adoptive parents in order that children and young people continue to be supported into adulthood.
- To work in partnership with children and young people, prospective adopters, birth parents and social workers.
- To provide an environment where each child and young person is helped to make the best of his/her abilities emotionally, physically, educationally and socially.
- To provide or contract to provide after adoption services to provide support to people who have been adopted, their birth families and adoptive parents.

Services provided by the adoption agency

The Adoption Service provides the following services and facilities:

- Recruitment, assessment and preparation of prospective adopters.
- Family finding for children awaiting adoptive placements.
- Support to adoptive placements.
- Adoption and Fostering panel training
- Consultation and advice to social workers considering adoption as an option for a child/children.
- Post adoption support service.
- An electronic, secure, Post Box Service.

More detail on each of these areas of service provision can be found in the departmental Adoption Procedures.

In April 2003, Hartlepool Borough Council entered into a formal contract with “*After Adoption*” an agency specialising in post adoption support to provide services to the following groups in the form of individual work or group support:

- Adopted adults
- Birth Parents and Relatives with children under 18 who have been adopted or where the plan is adoption
- Adopted Children and their families
- Special Guardians
- Birth relatives where the children that were adopted are now adults

Staffing information

Name and Job Title	Date of Appointment	Qualifications	Experience
Jane Young Head of Business unit Resources and Specialist Services	October 2010	CSS PQ1 PQ CCA CMS	Qualified in 1989. Experienced in Children & Families Social Work and Fostering & Adoption including managing a leaving Care Team and Family Placement Team
Christine Croft Placement Team Manager	March 2012	DipSW PQ1 PQCCA DiPILM (Management)	Qualified in 1997. experienced in Children and Families Social Work and in establishing and running a fostering service. Fostering Social Worker since February 2009.
Jacqui Dixon Assistant Manager	01.10.09 01.01.14	Dip Sw 2003 PQ1 HCPC Registered	Children & Families Resource Team Manager Nominated Worker
Clare Frankland – Adoption Social Worker and Post Box Coordinator/Post Adoption Support.	April 1989	CQSW PQCCA DiPSW	Qualified in 1981 Generic social work before specialising in Family Placement since 1988. Vast experience of adoption work
Kath Bishop – Adoption Social Worker,	March 2013 – temporary contract March 2014 – permanent contract	BA (Hons) Social Work	Qualified 2009, 3 years experience in Children & Families. Adoption Social Worker since June 2013.
Mojisola Dokubo - Adoption Social Worker	October 2013 – 12 month temporary contract	DiPSW BA Specialist SW	Qualified in 2004. Experienced in fostering and adoption with both IFA and LA. Also experienced working with adults.

Emma Howarth	April 2013	BSC Child Care	Experience as a Family Resource Worker and Safeguarding and Assessment.
Amanda Cusworth	Feb 2010	NVQ level 2 and 3 in Business Administration	C&AS Admin Children and Families Post Box support.
Anne Waites Administrative Staff	09.09.13	NVQ level 2 and 3 in Business Administration	Child & Adult Services Admin Children & Families

Adoption agency - organisation and control of operations

The Placement Team Manager who is ultimately responsible to the Assistant Director within the Children's Services Department manages the Adoption Service. The Agency Decision Maker is currently the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

The Placement Team Manager supervises the Principal Practitioner who in turn takes responsibility for supervising the two full time adoption social workers and one part time (4 days per week). As part of the Government's initiative to improve adoption services the Adoption Team has received 12 months funding to increase recruitment, reduce delay in placing children, to put policies in place in respect of early adoption.

This funding has allowed some change within the structure of the team, the roles and responsibilities of worker.

Alison Garbutt now has a development role focusing upon; improving the quality of Life Story Work, supporting Social Workers in this task providing mentoring, advice and support. This role will also allow Alison to be part of the planning around early adoption and have a scope for developing Life Appreciation Days for children, whilst also taking on some assessment work.

Clare Frankland's roles and responsibilities have also been strengthened. Clare will now focus upon improving the Post Box System electronically and providing improved Post Adoption Support Services whilst still taking on some assessment work.

Emma Howarth has responsibility for Family Finding for both children needing adoptive placements and long term fostering. She is also responsible for supporting and giving advice to the Safeguarding and Assessment Team's in completing Child's Permanency Reports.

The funding has also allowed the Team to increase its capacity. There are plans to recruit two full time workers, on a temporary basis of 12 months, (1 of whom will join the team in June 2013) with another vacancy to be filled later this year.

The roles of these workers will be fundamentally to assist in the recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters and those wishing to consider early adoption.

The Placement Team Manager is also the Agency Panel Advisor.

As with any Adoption Agency, the Adoption and Fostering Panel is critical to the monitoring and quality assurance of the work of the agency and enables the agency to meet its statutory obligations.

The Adoption and Fostering Panel takes place on a fortnightly basis to consider both fostering and adoption matters, reducing any delay in recommending the approval of any matching consideration.

Statutory Requirements

1. Specific requirements govern the composition and terms of reference of Adoption Panels. These are set out in the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendments) Regulations 2011.
2. The Adoption Panel established by Hartlepool Borough Council performs an important role in assisting the agency to reach the best possible decision in respect of:
 - The suitability of prospective adopters and foster carers
 - Whether a child should be placed with a specific prospective adopter.
 - Foster Carer Review and De-registration.
 - Reviews of adopters where they have waited more than 6 months for a child to be placed.
 - Whether a child/ren should be placed with specific foster carers
 - To reach decisions on whether a child's long term interests can be best met via permanency in long term foster care

The Panel can give advice to the agency (but is not required to do so) on:

- Contact arrangements
- The number of children the prospective adopter may be suitable to adopt, their age range, sex likely needs and background.

The panel is also required to feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports presented to panel as part of its quality assurance role.

The Regulations seek to ensure that the Adoption Panel has a separate identity from the agency with an important independent element. The National Minimum Standards (England) 2011, and the Adoption and Children Act 2002 further endorse this level of independence.

Panel Composition

In accordance with amended regulations in force from April, 2011, Hartlepool Borough Council have established a "central list" of persons considered to have the appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the Panel for consideration.

The requirement is that the panel is a multi agency body with a considerable element of independence from the adoption and fostering service. This independence means that they do not make the decisions on behalf of the adoption and fostering service but make recommendations in relation to their statutory functions.

There is no limit to the number of people on the central list and the same people do not have to be appointed to every panel meeting. For the purpose of considering adoption matters the members of the central list will include:

- An Agency Social Worker
- the Medical Adviser to the agency
- Other persons considered suitable including independent persons. These people could include specialists in education, Child and Adolescent mental health and those with personal experience of adoption or fostering
- and may include other Social workers

The Panel Chair is required to be independent of the agency and to have the following significant qualities:

- The authority and competence to chair a panel
- The ability to analyse and explain complex situations
- The ability to identify key issues, problems and solutions
- Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills

Panel business can only be conducted if there are at least five members which for the purposes of considering adoption matters must include

- The Independent Chair or Vice Chair – the guidance now indicates that more than one Vice Chair can be appointed
- An Agency Social worker
- At least two other “independent persons”- who is not a member or employee of the Adoption Agency.

In addition to the members of the Panel, the Adoption Panel should also include:

Panel Adviser: This is the Placement Team Manager who attends the Panel in an advisory capacity. They advise the Chairperson and panel members on matters of agency policy, practice and procedure. The Adviser takes back any issues raised by Panel members to the Adoption Social Workers or the agency as a whole.

The professional adviser is not a panel member and does not take part in reaching a recommendation.

Legal Advice:

Panel are able to call upon the Local Authorities

Legal Adviser: This person advises the Panel on any relevant legal issues. The Legal Adviser is not a Panel Member and does not take part in reaching a recommendation. The Legal Advisor is not expected to attend panel in person, unless specifically asked and required to do so. They are however expected to provide legal advice and guidance in writing to be considered by panel members for each panel meeting.

Membership of Hartlepool Adoption Panel

- Chairperson – Independent Person
- Vice Chairperson Principal Practitioner – Through Care Team
- Vice Chairperson – vacant

- Agency Social Worker – Team Manager, Safeguarding and Assessment Teams x3
- Agency Social Worker – Social Worker, Disability Team
- Elected Member
- Independent member/Adopter
- Independent member/IRO
- Independent member/Education
- Independent members – Foster carers x4
- Medical Advisor
- Previously Looked After Child – currently on hold from panel
- Independent member/attendance education/adopter

Advisors to Panel

- Panel Adviser
- Legal Adviser
- Medical Adviser

Formal voting is not a requirement of the Adoption & Fostering Panel and the Chairperson must try to encourage a consensus view amongst Panel Members. The Panel Chairperson can ask for further information to be made available for Panel Members where a clear consensus is not possible. Any serious reservations expressed by Panel Members must be minuted for consideration by the Agency Decision Maker. The Agency Decision Maker in Hartlepool is Sally Robinson the Assistant Director of Children's Services.

All Panel members are required to have confirmed that they have had sight of and will adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998 and new members are also asked to provide two references which are verified by telephone, an employment history and verification of their identity. New members of the Panel attend a Panel as an observer prior to attending as a full member. They will also receive an induction programme relevant to their needs as part of this process.

Panel members are required to participate in annual reviews. Reviews of the panel members are conducted by the Panel Chair and the Panel Adviser. The annual review of the Panel Chair is conducted by the Agency Decision maker.

The agency is required to arrange panel training at least one day a year but the intention is to extend this to provide additional half day sessions to update on developments throughout the year.

The Adoption & Fostering Panel meets twice monthly and is instrumental in monitoring and evaluating the provision of services to ensure that the quality and effectiveness of the adoption service are of an appropriate standard.

On occasion additional panels may need to be arranged to meet the needs of the service.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints can be made about any aspect of service provided by the Children's Services Department. Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days. There are up to three stages to the complaints system but the aim is to resolve complaints quickly and informally at Stage One wherever possible.

The complaints system can be used by; users of services, carers of those using services, potential service users, foster carers or adopters. The system can also be used to appeal about a decision made about a service provided by the department.

Complaints are dealt with in three stages:

- Stage One: The informal resolution stage. A complaint will be acknowledged and a Social Work Team Manager will look in to the complaint and try to resolve it. The complainant will be notified of the outcome within 10 working days or 20 working days if the complaint is complex.
- Stage Two: The complaint will be considered by an Independent Person who will check that the investigation is fair and complete
- Stage Three: The Review Panel Stage. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with any part of the written response at Stage 2 it is possible for the complainant to go to a review panel.

As well as the corporate complaints system detailed above, prospective adopters who have not been approved by Panel have two main options:

Prospective adopters who have not been approved by Panel are entitled to make further representations to Hartlepool Borough Council, as the Adoption Agency;

OR

From 30 April 2004, prospective adopters have the right to refer their case to an Independent Review panel for a review of the agency's determination. The independent panel do not have the power to overturn the original decision but will make a recommendation to the agency on the suitability of the applicants to be adoptive parents.

These options cannot be run simultaneously; prospective adopters who have not been approved by panel must decide whether to make further representations to the agency or seek an independent review of the decision.

Useful Contact Numbers and Addresses

Placement Team
8-9 Church Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7DJ

Tel: 01429 405588
E-mail – fosterandadopt@hartlepool.gov.uk

After Adoption
Unit 112
The Design Works
William Street
Felling
Gateshead
NE10 OJP

Tel: 0191 4788396
Action Line: 0800 056 8578
Website: www.afteradoption.org.uk
E-mail – helpline@talkadoption.org.uk

British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)
Head Office
Saffron House
6-10 Kirby Street
London
EC1N 8TS

Tel: 0207 7421 2601

BAAF Northern England Tel: 0113 289 1101

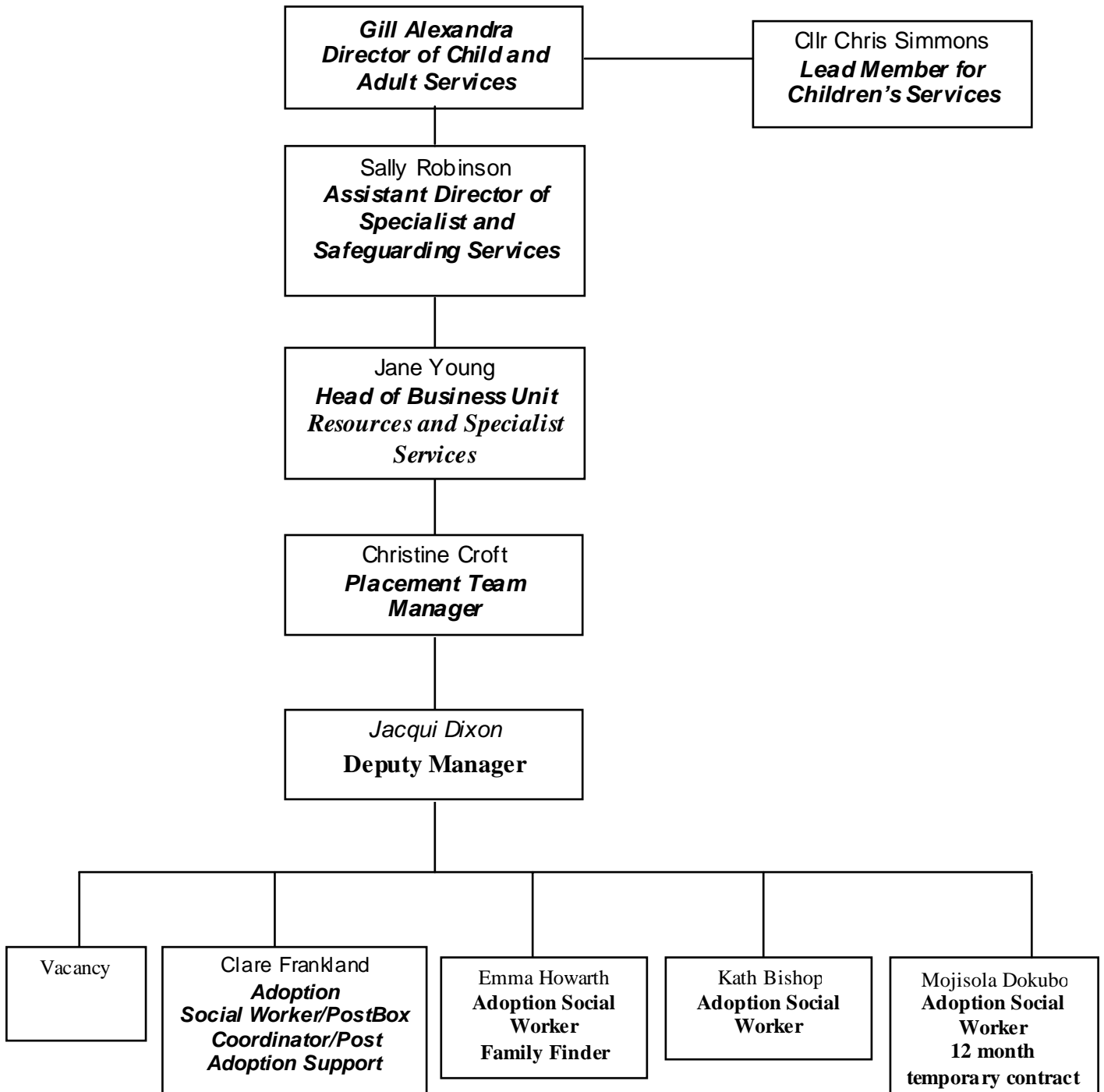
Website: www.baaf.org.uk
E-mail: mail@baaf.org.uk

Dr Roger Morgan
Children's Rights Director
Ofsted
Aviation house
125, Kingsway
LONDON WC23 6SE

Tel: 0800 528 0731
Website : www.rights4me.org

APPENDIX 1

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL – ADOPTION SERVICE





Adoption And You

The Adoption Service in Hartlepool.



This booklet is to answer some of the questions
you might have about adoption.

Hello.

This book has been written by Hartlepool's Adoption Team to help you to understand what adoption is all about.

You can read this with your foster carers or your social worker and ask them about anything that you don't understand or tell them about how you feel

What do we do?

We find families who want to adopt a child and make sure they can look after you, keep you safe and help you to be happy.

We also help your social worker find the best family for you.

We are also the people who make sure that letters which are sent between you and your birth family arrive safely.

What is adoption?

If you can't live at home with the family you were born into, the decision may be made that you should be adopted.

Adoption means belonging to and growing up in a new family, where you will be safe, loved and cared for. Adoption is agreed in Court so it is 'legal'.



How is adoption different from fostering?

Foster families usually look after children until they can go home or move to a new adoptive family. Sometimes, a foster family looks after a child until he or she is grown up and sometimes a foster family will arrange to adopt their foster child. Foster families do not usually look after children until they have grown up, although sometimes they keep in touch after their foster children have moved on to new families.

Adoption means that your adopted family will be your family for the rest of your life.

Why are children adopted?

There are lots of reasons why children sometimes can't live with their birth families. Maybe your parents found it hard to look after you properly – or to keep you safe. This does not mean that they don't love you.

What is it like being adopted?

If the court decides that you should be adopted, a lot of things will change in your life. You live in a new home with your new family. You may have new brothers and sisters; maybe new grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles.



Your surname will change to the name of your new family. Your family will live in a different town and you will attend a new school and have new friends.

Sometimes, all these changes can feel quite scary. Your social worker, your foster carer and your new family will all try to answer your questions and help you to get used to all the changes in your life.

Who decides I am going to be adopted?

The Judge at Court decides whether or not you should be adopted after listening to your birth parents, your social worker and your Children's Guardian.

What is a Children's Guardian?

A Children's Guardian is someone who listens to your feelings about what is going on and makes sure that everyone at court knows how you feel.

You can trust them and talk to them. They will make sure your thoughts and feelings are listened to.



What does a Judge do?

Judges and courts look at the problems and make plans and decisions about children, to make sure that they are looked after and can grow up safe and well cared for.

An important decision made in a court by a Judge, is whether or not a child should be able to live with their birth family.

What if I don't want to be adopted?

You should talk to your Children's Guardian and to your social worker. They will listen to your reasons and explain the way you feel to the Judge. The Judge may not always make the decision you want, but what they decide will always be in your best interest.



What will my new family be like?

There are some families who really want to be parents and would like to have a child come to live with them. Some of these families might not have had any children born to them; some may have children; some may have grown up children; some may have adopted before. Families come in all shapes and sizes. All kinds of people adopt children. There may be just one parent or there may be two. Some live in the town, others live in the country.

Social workers will try to find the right family for you. Your social worker will talk to you about how they are looking for a family and you can talk to them about what is important for you about a family.

Adoption social workers check that everyone who wants to adopt children knows how to look after them and that they will give them a caring and loving home where they will be safe. Those families then have to wait until a child like you needs parents like them.

Who chooses my new family?

It is a big decision and will change your life forever, so a lot of people help to make the decision. Your social worker will talk to you about the type of family you want and take great care choosing a family that is just right for you. It can take a few months to find the right family, but we try hard to make sure that you do not have to wait too long. If the plan is for you to live with your brother or sister, we try to find a family where you can live together.



When your social worker thinks they have found the right family for you, they will go to a special meeting called an Adoption Panel to make sure that everyone agrees.

Meeting your new family

Your social worker will arrange for you and the family to meet so they you can start to get to know them and they can start to get to know you. When you feel happy with them, you can go and see your new home and when everyone feels ready - you will go and live with your adoptive family. This is a big change which can be exciting, but it can also make you feel a bit sad and scared. Your social worker will visit to see how you're getting on.

Once I go and live with them am I adopted?

When you have lived with your adoptive family for a while, your new parents will ask a Judge if they can adopt you. The court will set a date when you and your new family can go and meet him or her, to talk about how things have been going.

If everything seems fine, the Judge makes something called an Adoption Order and that is when you legally become a member of your new family. That doesn't mean that you have to forget about your birth family or that they have to forget about you. You can ask questions and talk about them with your new family

What about my birth family?

Adoption doesn't mean forgetting about the family you were born into. Most children who are adopted keep in touch with their birth families by sending a letter every year. This letter lets them know how you are and tells them about what you have been doing. Often, someone in your birth family will write back so you know that they are well and pleased that you are happy. Contact arrangements can change as you grow older.



Who will help if I am not happy?

Sometimes children, when they are first told about being adopted, can feel a bit sad or a bit worried. If you feel unhappy then it is important to talk to someone you feel you can trust who can help you such as;

- ❖ Your foster carers
- ❖ Your new parents
- ❖ Your social worker
- ❖ Your family's adoption social worker
- ❖ Your teacher

If you are still not happy, you can make a complaint and share your worries with the social services managers who have made the arrangements for you.



The social workers involved with you try very hard to do a good job and there are other people who check to make sure we are doing our best for you. There are some addresses of other people you can contact about any worries you might have about adoption at the end of this book.

Names and contact details of people you can talk to...

Your Social Worker:

Name

Telephone

Email

Your Social Worker in the Adoption Team:

Name

Telephone

Email

If you are not happy about something your Social Worker has said or done you can contact their boss who is:

Name

Telephone

Email

If you are not happy about something your social worker in the Adoption Team has said or done you can contact their boss who is:

Name

Telephone

E-mail

Independent advocate

An independent advocate is someone who does not work for the agency that your social worker works for, and who will speak up for you if there are things you are not happy about. There are organisations that can find an independent advocate for you and support groups, such as Talk Adoption, who will listen and help.

The following organisations can find an independent advocate for you:

Talkadoption

This is a helpline for young adopted people on 0808 808 1234. They can help with any worries or questions you have.

Voice of the Child in Care Freephone: 0808 800 5792

Email: info@voiceyp.org

Website: www.voiceyp.org

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Freephone: 0800 61 61 01

Email: help@nyas.net

Website: www.nyas.net

Childline Freephone: 0800 111

Adoption UK Helpline 0844 848 7900

www.adoptionuk.org

NORCAP 01865 875000

(Counselling service) www.norcap.org.uk

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Ofsted 0300 123 1231

www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Rights Alliance 020 7278 8222

www.crae.org.uk

If you are not happy with how the social worker and the adoption agency have been handling your adoption, you can make a complaint to the Children's Rights Director.

Office of the Children's Rights Director 0800 528 0731

www.rights4me.org

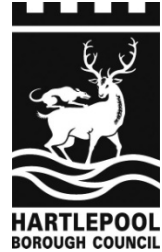
Adoption and You
Adoption Team
8-9 Church Street
Hartlepool
TS25 1DX
01429 405700

AH/02/13



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

06 May 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek the approval of Children's Services Committee to the action plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 19 November 2013, Hartlepool Borough Council received notice of its inspection which commenced on 20 November 2013 and concluded on 11 December 2013. During the period of the inspection, eight inspectors were involved in the process and the scope of the inspection considered the following areas of practice:

- Children receiving preventative services and early help;
- Children referred to the local authority for social care services including urgent protective action;
- Children subject to a child protection plan;
- Children who have ceased to be subject to a child protection plan but still receiving services;
- Children in need;
- Children looked after;
- Children missing from education or in alternative provision;
- Children preparing to or leaving care;

- Children who have left care either through returning home, or through Special Guardianship, Residence or Adoption Orders; and
- Review of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

3.2 The report of the inspection was published by Ofsted on 11 February 2014 and the table below summarises the judgments for Hartlepool.

<p>The overall judgement is good.</p> <p>The Local Authority leads effective services that meet the requirements for good.</p> <p>It is Ofsted's expectation that as a minimum all children and young people receive good help, care and protection.</p>		
1. Children who need help and protection		Good
2. Children looked after and achieving permanence		Good
	2.1 Adoption performance	Good
	2.2 Experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
3. Leadership, management and governance		Good

The judgement for the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is **requires improvement**

The LSCB is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.

- 3.3 The inspection report summarises the key findings and highlights a number of areas of strength where the local authority performs well in providing services to and supporting vulnerable children and their families. The report also identifies where the local authority needs to improve and there is a requirement (as per regulation 3 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007) to submit a written statement of proposed action in response to the inspection. This statement should be provided within 70 working days of the publication of the report (20 May 2014) and should address the findings and areas for improvement.
- 3.4 Attached at **Appendix 1** to this report is the proposed action plan for submission to Ofsted. The action plan details the individual areas for improvement identified by the inspection, action to be taken to deliver improvement, timescales for completion, lead officer and how the effectiveness of implementation will be evaluated.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to approve the action plan for submission to Ofsted.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Children's Services Committee has responsibility for the delivery of Children's Services and ensuring compliance with regulations.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Ofsted (2013) Hartlepool Borough Council Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and Care Leavers

7. CONTACT OFFICER

Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Child and Adult Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
01429 523732
sally.robinson@hartlepool.gov.uk

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

The Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and Care Leavers and review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board took place in Hartlepool between 19 November 2013 and 11 December 2013.

The overall judgement is that services for children are good; the local authority leads effective services that meet the requirements for good. The judgement for the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board is requires improvement; the LSCB is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of good.

The inspection identified a number of strengths within the local authority children's services which are detailed within the inspection report which can be downloaded at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/hartlepool>.

The local authority shared with Ofsted its Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan during the inspection which highlighted where the authority performs well and identified areas for improvement to strengthen performance and practice. The areas for improvement highlighted during the inspection reflect the priorities identified by the local authority which are included within the Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan. The action plan below summarises the priorities for action detailed in the Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan with specific reference to the Areas of Improvement identified through the inspection. In their inspection, Ofsted identified the following areas for improvement:

- Social workers need to ensure that the rich knowledge of the children they work with is reflected in case records.
- Social workers must be supported by managers in supervision to 'think the unthinkable' at all times so that the experiences and views of both children and parents are equally understood and considered in decisions about risks and next steps.
- Social workers should, in every case, assess the risks and use complete chronologies more effectively to consider and take account of the family history, including recent events.
- Children's participation in the arrangements to protect them should be well supported, and monitored by managers.
- Managers need to ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are used more regularly to influence service developments and improve existing services.
- Accelerate progress in implementing the management improvement plan to further raise practice standards and more effectively quality assures key aspects of social work practice.
- Child protection conference chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) must improve their practice in questioning the quality and content of assessments and plans for children. They must challenge social workers to clearly set out (in key

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

documents) what a child thinks about their situation, and what they would like to see happen to improve things. The recording of children's wishes should be clearly documented.

- Implement the child sexual exploitation strategy and screening tool so that early identification of those at risk is effective, routine and systematic.
- Promote police attendance at child protection strategy meetings routinely, so that in every case the most recent information can be shared, understood and used to plan the most effective protective actions.
- Ensure the 'Throughcare Team' develop more effective ways of understanding and describing the impact of their work. The use and regular review of clear targets in pathway action plans should show the difference the actions have made. They should also ensure that care leavers are routinely provided with information about their legal entitlements.
- Further increase the proportion of young people moving into education, employment, training or university.

The implementation of this action plan will be monitored through the Children's Services Management Team, the Departmental Management Team and Children's Services Committee.

The effectiveness of the action plan and the improvement in services will be evaluated through the Performance Management Framework which includes monthly audits of case files, monthly performance clinics, quarterly themed audits and service user feedback interviews. These will demonstrate the implementation of learning from the inspection and embedding of improved practice.

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

WHAT DOES THE LOCAL AUTHORITY NEED TO IMPROVE?

Areas for Improvement	Action	By Whom and When
Social workers need to ensure that the rich knowledge of the children they work with is reflected in case records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Recording Standards for social workers demonstrating best practice in recording and implement through practice clinics • Commission Write Enough training for staff • Deliver practice clinics in effective use of summaries and chronologies using best practice examples 	<p>Social Care Heads of Service / Principal Social Worker</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>
Social workers must be supported by managers in supervision to 'think the unthinkable' at all times so that the experiences and views of both children and parents are equally understood and considered in decisions about risks and next steps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and amend system generated supervision record to support reflective practice; • Develop practice guidance for supervision using Tony Morrison material and tools which support reflective practice; • Heads of Service and Assistant Director to undertake case reviews with workers and managers which support reflective practice; • Implement decision making recording tool. 	<p>Assistant Director / Heads of Service</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>
Social workers should, in every case, assess the risks and use complete chronologies more effectively to consider and take account of the family history, including recent events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording standards will outline best practice in preparing chronologies and case summaries • Assessments when a child is referred for services will require the preparation of a summary of previous involvement in context of current presenting need and risk; • Assessments will require the chronology to be prepared for the 25 day supervision checkpoint; 	<p>Social Care Heads of Service / Principal Social Worker</p> <p>Team Managers</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>
Children's participation in the arrangements to protect them should be well supported, and monitored by managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the conference improvement plan and user engagement plan for child protection conferences to increase children's participation in conferences and ensure effective advocate arrangements are in place; 	<p>Head of Safeguarding and Review / Principal Social Worker</p>

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

Areas for Improvement	Action	By Whom and When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase take up of advocacy support for children subject to child protection conferences through contract with NYAS • IRO's to report quarterly to Divisional Management Team on children's participation in conferences • Deliver solution oriented toolkit and guidance to support social workers in developing effective working relationships with children • Team Managers to ensure all assessments record the child's views. 	<p>31 July 2014</p> <p>IRO's</p> <p>Head of Access and Strategic Planning / team managers</p>
Managers need to ensure that the views of children, young people and their families are used more regularly to influence service developments and improve existing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team managers to undertake feedback interviews with children and parents on a monthly basis. • Implement user engagement plan for safeguarding • Deliver Participation Strategy with particular focus on children subject to safeguarding arrangements. • Introduce comment forms and feedback cards (already in place in conferences) in reviews; • Ensure learning arising from complaints is effectively communicated to workforce and embedded in practice. 	<p>Team Managers</p> <p>Principal Social Worker</p> <p>Participation Manager / Safeguarding and Review Manager</p> <p>Assistant Director</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>
Accelerate progress in implementing the management improvement plan to further raise practice standards and more effectively quality assures key aspects of social work practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan through Divisional and Business Management Teams. • Finalise and implement the Performance Management Framework and update Standards/Quality Assurance documentation. • Implement Solution Oriented Toolkit and Guidance for staff to improve standards of practice. 	<p>Assistant Director / Heads of Service</p> <p>30 June 2014</p> <p>Head of Access and Strategic Planning</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

Areas for Improvement	Action	By Whom and When
Child protection conference chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) must improve their practice in questioning the quality and content of assessments and plans for children. They must challenge social workers to clearly set out (in key documents) what a child thinks about their situation, and what they would like to see happen to improve things. The recording of children's wishes should be clearly documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete implementation of Safeguarding and Review Service Development Plan. Finalise and implement IRO Professional Challenge document; Deliver training to independent chairs / IRO's on above and best practice standards. 	<p>Safeguarding and Review Manager / Assistant Director</p> <p>31 July 2014</p>
Implement the child sexual exploitation strategy and screening tool so that early identification of those at risk is effective, routine and systematic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Tees Strategic and Hartlepool VEMT action plan 2014/15 Child sexual exploitation Risk Assessment Tool implemented from 01/05/14; Children vulnerable to exploitation to be discussed at VEMT practitioners group to share intelligence and ensure appropriate services are in place to reduce risk and safeguard child. 	<p>Tees Strategic and Hartlepool VEMT group led by LSCB Business Manager.</p>
Promote police attendance at child protection strategy meetings routinely, so that in every case the most recent information can be shared, understood and used to plan the most effective protective actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet regularly with police to discuss any barriers to attendance at strategy meetings and share management information on attendance. Consider effective use of ICT and video conferencing; Discuss with police option of placing officer in Hub as part of development of multi agency safeguarding hub. 	<p>Head of Safeguarding, Assessment and Support / Assistant Director</p> <p>30 June 2014</p>
Ensure the 'Throughcare Team' develop more effective ways of understanding and describing the impact of their work. The use and regular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Recording Standards for social workers demonstrating best practice in recording and implement through practice clinics Commission Write Enough training for staff 	<p>Head of Specialist Services</p>

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

Areas for Improvement	Action	By Whom and When
<p>review of clear targets in pathway action plans should show the difference the actions have made. They should also ensure that care leavers are routinely provided with information about their legal entitlements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver development session with team to strengthen practice around Pathway Planning and reviews of targets with young people. • Provide copy of entitlements to each care leaver and ensure they fully understand these. In future, these will be provided to young people at the time of needs assessment and annually thereafter. 	<p>September 2014</p> <p>Team Manager Through Care Team</p> <p>30 June 2014</p>
<p>Further increase the proportion of young people moving into education, employment, training or university</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with colleges and employers to increase number of education, employment and training opportunities. • Implement Care to Work scheme. • Work with Higher Education establishments to offer aspirational training sessions to young people. • For all care leavers at risk of being NEET deliver bespoke package of support to enable them to access learning and development opportunities 	<p>Head of Specialist Services / Head of Youth Support Services</p>

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

WHAT DOES THE LSCB NEED TO IMPROVE

Areas for Improvement	Priority and Immediate Action	By Whom and When
The Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) must take steps to support the identification, assessment and safeguarding of children at risk of sexual exploitation screening methodology and developing a plan for implementation to ensure that professional staff are able to use this resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Tees wide Risk Assessment tool; • Launch of tool through awareness raising sessions to all agencies. • Deliver practice clinics and workshops for multi agency staff on implementing screening tool. • Evaluation of use of screening tool by practitioners and deliver targeted support where needed. 	<p>Hartlepool Operational VEMT group</p> <p>May - July 2014</p> <p>Summer 2014</p>
The HSCB must accelerate its work with the Tees-wide Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked group (VEMT) and fully implement the Child Sexual Exploitation strategy to ensure effective, early identification, assessment and intervention for children and young people who may be at risk of / or are being exploited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and VEMT action plan in place at Tees and local level. Implementation has commenced and will be fully delivered during 2014/15. • VEMT Operational and Practitioners group to monitor progress of implementation and report quarterly to Board. Board to challenge any delays or difficulties experienced • VEMT operational group to audit cases discussed in practitioners group to ensure children are identified and referred for appropriate services for intervention. 	<p>Strategic and Operational VEMT group</p> <p>Quarterly reporting to LSCB</p> <p>30 September 2014</p>
The HSCB should ensure that its work with 'young inspectors' informs the planning and evaluation of service delivery and that this is extended to include feedback from children and families who have directly received help and protective services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise an agreed work plan with young inspectors for 2014/2015 including terms of reference for work; • Set up liaison meetings between Young Inspectors and Business Manager and Independent Chair; • Young Inspectors to be supported to include compliance with section 11 in all their inspections • Young inspectors to be involved in user engagement plan for child protection conferences 	<p>LSCB Business Manager / Participation Manager</p> <p>Completed Quarterly</p> <p>30 June 2014</p> <p>30 April 2014</p>

SINGLE INSPECTION FRAMEWORK STATEMENT OF ACTION

<p>The HSCB needs to accelerate progress and implementation of its strategic action plan, with a particular focus on children who experiences domestic violence and who abuse drugs or alcohol, so that it has a positive impact on outcomes for these vulnerable children and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB development day to determine priorities for 2014/15 and determine work plans which will impact upon these issues and improve outcomes for children; • Strategic Group for Hidden Harm to be established with annual work plan and outcomes to be achieved; • Strategic domestic violence group to be re-established with annual work plan and outcomes to be achieved. 	<p>LSCB Business Manager / Assistant Director / Independent Chair April 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p> <p>May 2014</p>
<p>The HSCB should develop an effective multi-agency data set and routinely scrutinise partners performance, challenging and auditing where necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi agency dataset to be developed which reflects the priorities of the Board and is regularly scrutinised by Board and performance challenged. • Single agency audits of safeguarding practice to be reported to LSCB • Performance and Quality sub group to undertake multi agency audits which are reported to and scrutinised by LSCB. • LSCB will track implementation of recommendations arising from audits. 	<p>LSCB Performance and Quality subgroup</p> <p>Quarterly</p>
<p>The HSCB should increase its influence and effectiveness through improved strategic arrangements with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Family Justice Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Chair to attend Health and Wellbeing Board and Family Justice Council bi-annually. • Annual Report of LSCB to be presented to Health and Wellbeing Board and Safer Hartlepool Partnership; • Bi-annual meetings to take place between independent chair and Chief Executives of strategic partners in LSCB 	<p>Independent Chair</p> <p>Bi annually</p>

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

6th May 2014



Report of: Assistant Director (Regeneration)

Subject: UPDATE ON HARTLEPOOL YOUTH INVESTMENT PROJECT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress of the Hartlepool Youth Investment Project.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Hartlepool Youth Investment Project (HYIP) is the over-arching key strategic project in Hartlepool, which brings together all key partners such as schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, Jobcentre Plus, National Apprenticeship Service, voluntary sector and critically employers. The project commenced in September 2012 and will be delivered to September 2015. However, the project will extend beyond this time as it is now fully established and new targets will be set after this period.

4. AIM OF THE HARTLEPOOL YOUTH INVESTMENT PROJECT

4.1 The aim of this project is:

To improve the employability and entrepreneurial skills of young people so that they are prepared for the world of work and enterprise through improved collaborative working between schools, colleges, post-16 providers, universities and employers.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE HARTLEPOOL YOUTH INVESTMENT PROJECT

- 5.1 The Hartlepool Youth Investment Project has adopted Hartlepool Economic Regeneration Strategy Objective 3 which complements the initiative as shown below:

To increase employment and skills levels and develop a competitive workforce that meets the demands of employers and the economy.

6. ACTIONS REQUIRED FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 There are 8 key actions that will need to be completed are shown below:

Action 1: Developing a curriculum offer for 14-16 year olds so that young people can access relevant vocational training programmes at Key Stage 4 (Including improved access to a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) vocational training programme)

Action 2: Delivering work-related learning, including work experience for 14-16 year olds

Action 3: Developing a high quality internship and mentoring programme for 16-19 year olds who are studying vocational or non-vocational educational courses

Action 4: Ensuring all schools provide impartial Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) for all 14-16 year olds.

Action 5: Developing an enhanced pathway for 14-19 year olds who have been identified as at risk of becoming long term NEET or who are currently NEET

Action 6: Develop partnership working between Economic Regeneration Team, Jobcentre Plus, post-16 providers and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to increase engagement with employers to promote Apprenticeships, internships and work experience programmes.

Action 7: Raise awareness of self-employment and enterprise opportunities to all young people.

Action 8: Marketing of the project to all key partners.

7. TARGETS FOR THE PROJECT

- 7.1 The following targets have been set for the project.

- 1000 14-16 year olds will have access to vocational training

- 1000 14-16 year olds will have access to work-related learning, including work experience with local employers
- 500 16-18 year olds to have access to an internship with a local company who will provide mentoring support
- 200 young people identified as at risk of becoming long term NEET to have access to mentoring support and a re-engagement programme
- 500 local employers engaged to promote the project
- 150 16-24 year olds to enter into employment (with access to training).

8. CONTRIBUTION TO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (PIs)

8.1 This project will directly contribute to a wide range of PIs outlined within the Hartlepool Economic Regeneration Strategy, such as:

- Reduce the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are NEET to 6.5% by 2014
- Employment rate (16-24). Increase the proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who are in employment to 46.5% by 2014
- Youth unemployment rate (Hartlepool). Reduce the proportion of economically active 18 to 24 year olds who are unemployed to 14.1% by 2014
- Raising the Participation Age for all 18 year olds by 2015.

9. PROGRESS TO DATE

9.1 Since the project commenced, there has been significant progress made. This includes:

- Successful launch of the project in September 2013 with over 80 partners attending. There was excellent media attention of this event including coverage from Hartlepool Mail, BBC Radio Tees and BBC Look North.
- There is now a dedicated Hartlepool Youth Guarantee Working Group who are responsible for monitoring the progress of the HYIP.
- The Youth Unemployment rate has reduced from 17% (1,405 young people) in September 2012 to 12.7% (1,050) in February 2014.

- Hartlepool now has the highest numbers of young people in post-16 learning in the North East and is placed 12th best in the Country for progressing school leavers.
- The Council has supported an additional 104 young people aged 16-24 year olds into employment and 299 into training.
- The Council's Going Forward Together NEET Project (2010-13) was successfully delivered and supported 372 young people at risk of becoming NEET, progressing 195 into training and 78 into employment. (Progression rate of 74%).
- The Council supported Stockton Borough Council to secure £2.1m of European Social Fund (ESF)/Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funding to support 1,022 (14-19 year olds) across Tees Valley who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The Tees Valley YES project is now operational.
- The Council is heavily involved with the Tees Valley Jobs and Skills Investment Scheme where Tees Valley Unlimited has secured £7m of Regional Growth Funding to create 700 jobs in the next year. The Council has worked with employers and there are 199 proposed jobs for Hartlepool which are currently being processed.
- Delivery of the Choices (Careers) Events in October 2012 and 2013 which was attended by Year 10 and Year 11s linked with employers
- Supported the Tees Valley Skills Event in November 2013 at Hartlepool Dome which was targeted at young people and attended by schools, post-16 providers and employers.
- Securing over £3.5m of ESF/SFA funding to deliver the Tees Valley Workforce Skills project which will upskill over 3000 employed adults over the aged of 19 plus.
- The Council successfully delivered enterprise activity to 60 young people as part of National Youth Work Week in 2013.
- The Council is delivering on the 'Employer Core Offer' project which has brought together JCP, NAS, National Careers Service promote business support services, including advice on recruiting an apprentice. This group has been given a target of supporting 200 people into employment from April 2014 to March 2015.

10. PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

Outcome	Profiled Targets	Actual Delivery
14-16 year olds with access to vocational training	1000	1900
14-16 year olds with access to work-related learning	1000	233
16-18 year olds with access to an internship with a local company	500	270
Young people identified as at risk of becoming long term NEET to have access to a mentoring support programme	200	733
Local employers engaged to promote the project	500	226
16-24 year olds to enter into employment (with access to training)	150	104

11. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

11.1 There are ongoing activities to support young people including:

- A Youth Enterprise Event will be held on Friday 21st November 2014, coinciding with Global Entrepreneurship Week (Monday 17th and). The event will be targeted at groups of Year 10 pupils from each of the secondary schools to develop the key skills needed to become an entrepreneur or run your own business through interactive activities.
- Development of Work Based Enterprise Project in conjunction with secondary schools and employers, with the latter designing business projects for pupils to work on including research, marketing and product development.
- The Council secured €250,000 from European Commission to deliver the Hartlepool Youth Guarantee scheme which will provide an additional 30 hours mentoring support to 200 (Year 11 pupils) who have been identified as at risk of being NEET on leaving school. The aim is to support each young person to progress into post-16 activity by September 2014. The secondary schools will deliver this activity and will be supported by post-16 providers.
- The development of the Youth Exchange project in partnership with Hartlepool's twin town of Hückelhoven in Germany. A bid to the European Commission's Erasmus+ fund will be submitted by the end of April 2014 and if successful will see 60 young people (30 from Hartlepool and 30 from Hückelhoven) involved in a five day exchange scheme.

- The Council; in partnership with the other Tees Valley Local Authorities, Hartlepool College of Further Education and Heritage Craft Alliance will be delivering the Heritage Skills Apprenticeship Scheme which will see 40 young people employed for up to two years. The first 10 apprentices are due to start in May 2014.

12. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

12.1 It is worth highlighting that there is significant funding which has been allocated to the Tees Valley area including:

- £170m of European funding allocated to Tees Valley over the period 2014-2020.
- An additional £33m (including match) of Youth Employment Initiative funding.

13. DATA REVIEW

13.1 When reviewing the current dataset, it reinforces that there are still key challenges as shown below:

- Hartlepool has the highest youth unemployment rate in England at 12.7% or 1,050 young people aged 18 to 24 years and the second highest rate in Great Britain, only behind Derry which has 14%.
- Hartlepool also has the highest level of long term (over 6 months) youth unemployment rate in England at 5% or 410 young people aged 18 to 24 years and the third highest rate in Great Britain only behind Derry at 6.1% and Strabane at 5.4% respectively.

14. IMPACT ON CHILD / FAMILY POVERTY

- 14.1 HYIP will positively contribute to ameliorating the longer term causes and consequences of child and family poverty by providing young people with access to provision that will enable them to reach their aspirational goals and become economically active.
- 14.2 The wider project objectives will also align young people and their families to additional support services, such as Think Families/Think Communities, Early Intervention Teams and FamilyWise programmes.

15. SECTION 17

- 15.1 This project will positively contribute to Section 17 by improving education and employment routeways for young people. This will include providing

early interventions to intensive support programmes for individuals who have been identified as high risk of offending.

16. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

16.1 This project is aimed at supporting all young people to achieve their aspirational goals, help to narrow the education attainment gap and positively contribute to tackling employment inequality, particularly amongst vulnerable groups such as the seven priority groups shown below:

- Looked after children and care leavers
- Young offenders (including those leaving the secure estate)
- Teenage parents
- Young carers
- Young people with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities (SLDD)
- Young people with mental health issues; and
- Young people with drug and alcohol misuse issues.

17. CONCLUSION

17.1 At a time when young people remain the most disadvantaged cohort within the labour market, the establishment of the HYIP can be seen as a major success for the Borough. Through a co-ordinated approach, the Council and its partners have managed to reduce the youth unemployment rate by 4.3% since the project commenced in September 2013.

17.2 There have already been substantial activities delivered through the HYIP which will help prepare young people for the world of work and move them into a positive outcome. As tackling youth unemployment is an ongoing process, the Council will continue to work with young people, partners and the business community (all of which are our greatest assets in successfully delivering the project).

18. RECOMMENDATION

18.1 The recommendation is for members to note the contents of this report.

19. CONTACT OFFICER

Damien Wilson
Assistant Director (Regeneration)
Level 3 Civic Centre
Hartlepool
TS24 8 AY

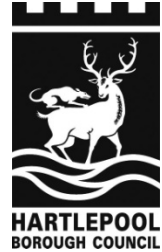
Tel (01429) 523400
E-mail damien.wilson@hartlepool.gov.uk

Julie Seymour
Tees Valley Works Project Co-Ordinator
Hartlepool Enterprise Centre
Hartlepool

Tel (01429) 857088
E-mail julie.seymour@hartlepool.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

6 May 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: PRIORITY SCHOOLS BUILDING PROGRAMME –
BACK TO BACK AGREEMENTS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non - key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To request authorisation for the Chief Executive to sign the Back to Back Agreements on behalf of the Council as part of the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Three Hartlepool schools are part of the North East 2 (NE2) Capital batch of schools benefiting from the PSBP, namely Barnard Grove Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School and Manor College of Technology.
- 3.2 The Education Funding Agency (EFA) undertook a procurement process to appoint the contractor utilising the Partnerships for Schools Contractors Framework. The selected panel member is Kier Construction with Nexus as their IT partner.

4. BACK TO BACK AGREEMENTS

- 4.1 On 22nd April the Council received a request from the EFA to approve and sign a Back to Back agreement for each of the PSBP Hartlepool schemes.
- 4.2 The agreements are in the form of a letter which each school Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the Council is required to sign prior to contract close, please see **Appendix A**.

- 4.3 The agreements form part of the contract between the Secretary of State and Kier Construction. As the Secretary of State is not the owner of the school sites and does not have day-to-day control over the school activities, the letter seeks formal agreement that the school and Local Authority will assist the Secretary of State in fulfilling his contractual obligations that relate to the School's site and activities.
- 4.4 If the Back to Back agreements are not approved and signed by the Council the Hartlepool PSBP schemes will not be in a position to progress to contract close. Contract close must be achieved before building work can commence.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 A copy of the agreement has been reviewed by our Legal Team. The EFA has requested that the 'Back to Back' agreement be signed and returned by mid June.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To authorise the Chief Executive to sign the Back to Back agreements on behalf of the Council for each Hartlepool scheme.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report – 24 October 2011
Children's and Community Services Portfolio report – 4 December 2012
Cabinet report – 4 February 2013
Children's Services Committee – 30 July 2013
Children's Services Committee – 7th January 2014
Children's Services Committee – 31st March 2014

8. CONTACT OFFICER

Dean Jackson, Assistant Director (Education),
Child and Adult Services,
Level 4, Civic Centre,
Hartlepool,
TS24 8AY.
Tel: (01429) 523736.
E-mail: dean.jackson@hartlepool.gov.uk



Education Funding Agency
Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith
Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0370 000 2288
Email enquiry form:
www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

XXXXXXXXXX
Head Teacher
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
Hartlepool,
XXXXXXXXXX

7th April 2014

Dear XXXXXXXX

Priority School Building Programme (PSBP) Capital Project at XXXXXX School

The Secretary of State for Education (the "Secretary of State") intends to enter into a Design and Build Contract with Kier Construction Limited (the "Contractor") for the carrying out of design and construction work relating to XXXXXX School (the "School"). A copy of the proposed Design and Build Contract (the "Contract") has been made available to you and you will be aware that by entering into it, the Secretary of State will assume various obligations to the Contractor. However, the Secretary of State is not the owner of the School's site nor does he have day-to-day control over the school's activities. As such, this letter seeks your formal agreement that you will assist the Secretary of State in fulfilling those of his obligations that relate to the School's site and activities.

Requirements of you

In consideration of the Secretary of State entering into the Contract with the Contractor we ask that each of the other signatories to this letter agree to the following:

1. you will at all times act reasonably in all dealings with the Secretary of State concerning the Contract;
2. to the extent that you are able to do so, you grant to the Secretary of State such property and other rights as are necessary to allow the Secretary of State to grant to the Contractor those property and other rights granted to him by the Contract.

3. to the extent that you are able to do so, you consent to the carrying out of the construction works as described in the Contract (including as that contract may be varied from time to time) by or on behalf of the Secretary of State;
4. you will co-operate fully and in a timely manner (at your own expense) with any request made by the Secretary of State to provide documents, or ensure the provision of documents relating to the School, and to provide, or ensure the provision of any oral or written information relating to the School;
5. you will not wilfully impede either the Secretary of State or the Contractor in the performance of their obligations under the Contract;
6. you will regularly liaise with the Secretary of State and assist with anything that is required of you by the Secretary of State to discharge his obligations under the Contract including (without limitation) complying with the requirements of the planning permission, the obtaining of any third party consents and compliance with the agreed programme for decanting from the old to the new premises; and
7. you will behave reasonably at all times and not do anything or omit to do anything that would cause the Secretary of State to breach his obligations under the Contract or would otherwise allow the Contractor to claim additional time or money.

It is intended that this letter creates legal relations between the Secretary of State and the other parties to it.

Please acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the terms of this letter by signing, dating and returning both copies. Once the EFA has signed both copies a completed version will be returned to you for your records.

Yours faithfully,

Mike Green, Director of Capital EFA

Authorised to sign for and on
behalf of the SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR EDUCATION

Name in CAPITALS:

Position in Organisation:

Date:

We hereby acknowledge receipt and accept the contents of this letter:

XXXXXXXXXXXX School

Authorised Signatory:	
Name:	
Position in Organisation:	
Date:	

XXXXXXXXXXXX School Governing Body

Authorised Signatory:	
Name:	
Position in Organisation:	
Date:	

Hartlepool Borough Council

Authorised Signatory:	
Name:	
Position in Organisation:	
Date:	

Appendix 1 – List of Addressees

1. XXXXXXXX
Head Teacher
XXXXXXX School
XXXXXXXXX,
Hartlepool,
XXXXXXX
2. Chair of Governors
XXXXXXX School
XXXXXXXXX,
Hartlepool,
XXXXXXX
3. Chief Executive
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY