

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA



Tuesday 12 August 2014

at 4.00 pm

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Atkinson, Fleet, Griffin, Hall, Lauderdale, Loynes, Simmons

Co-opted Members: Michael Lee

Six Young People's Representatives

Observer: Councillor Richardson, Chair of Adult Services Committee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2014 (*previously circulated and published*).

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Savings Programme – *Director of Child and Adult Services*



5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transitional Arrangements
– *Director of Child and Adult Services*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 6.1 Children Looked After Strategy 2014 - 2017 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 6.2 To Approve the Reconstitution of the Governing Body of Rossmere Primary School and Instrument of Government – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 6.3 Fostering Services Annual Report 2013/14 and Statement of Purpose 2014/15 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 6.4 School Term and Holiday Dates 2015/16 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Holocaust Memorial Project – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd September 2015 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: SAVINGS PROGRAMME

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 identify proposals for the delivery of savings across Children and Education Services as part of the 2015/16 budget process.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The overall reduction in the council revenue budget is currently forecast to be £5.65m. All Council Departments have, therefore, been considering potential options for achieving savings. Across Child and Adult Services the potential impact of the overall reduction in council budgets is currently forecast at £2.86m. In addition the Department is facing ongoing pressure for demand-led services as a result of increasing and high levels of need within families.

3.2 As part of the 2015/16 savings programme a number of options have been identified where savings could be made. As part of the process for setting the 2015/16 budget it has been agreed that individual policy committees will consider savings options prior to consideration by Finance and Policy Committee and then Council.

3.3 Details are provided in this report in relation to the:

- i) Proposals identified to make the savings;
- ii) Risks associated with the proposed savings; and
- ii) Financial considerations taken into account in developing the proposals.

- 3.4 The savings options under consideration involve: the integration of some service teams across the Children's Services Division and the Education Services Division; reducing high-end demand through prevention, early intervention; reducing unit costs; increasing traded services and reviewing the balance between directly provided services and those commissioned from the voluntary sector. Since the services across both these divisions deliver the statutory and non statutory duties of the Council as a Children's Services Authority and include the integration of teams across both Divisions the proposals are outlined in one report.

3.5 **Scope**

The services in scope are focussed on addressing the social care and education needs of all children and young people in Hartlepool, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers. In so doing the Department is also responsible for working closely with local partners to jointly plan and commission services that improve outcomes and the well being of children and young people in relation to their safety, health and education.

- 3.6 As a children's services is responsible for:

- Social care services for children in accordance with the Children Act 1989, this includes provision for children in need (including those in need of protection) children looked after and care leavers;
- The Youth Offending Service in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- Early intervention services for children, young people and their families including the provision of children's centres, family support and the families information service;
- The Youth Support Service including the provision of youth clubs and services for young people not in education, employment or training;
- Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board;
- Strategic commissioning for children.

- 3.7 Education Services Division is responsible for the delivery of:

- All Schools and the National Primary and Secondary Curriculum;
- 14-19 Strategy, Education for 14-19 age group;
- Schools Capital Strategy, Schools Innovation and Health And Safety;
- Social and Educational Inclusion, Vulnerable Pupils and the Pupil Referral Unit;
- Special Educational Needs;
- E-Learning and ICT in schools;
- Governor Support, School Governor Services and training;
- Performance Management/Management Information relating to service area responsibilities;
- School Admissions and School Place Planning;

- Brokering and commissioning general School improvement monitoring, challenge and support and for Schools causing concern;
- Continuing professional development for all school staff;
- Extended Schools and Early Years strategy development and performance;
- Educational Psychology.

3.8 In addition both Divisions contribute to the Council's Public Health responsibilities in relation to children, young people and families.

3.9 **Service Users**

The Department is responsible for securing universal early years services, statutory education and youth services for all children and young people in Hartlepool aged 0-19 and specialist support for those in need of protection, care and additional care and education services for those aged 0-25.

3.10 **Engagement and Feedback**

The Department engages with children, young people and their families through a range of methods including:

- Youth Council
- Engagement with the council's Children's Services Committee
- Corporate Parenting Forum
- Young Inspectors
- Service user focus groups.

Feedback on the performance of services is also obtained from external inspections and reviews, and an analysis of compliments and complaints. Consideration of savings options has taken account of the feedback we have received from service users and OFSTED.

3.11 **Current Budget**

The net General Fund expenditure on Children's social care and education is £19.7m with £4.75m of income generated.

The breakdown of how the £19.7m is spent is as follows:

Children & Families inc. Looked after Children	£12.1m
Early Intervention Services	£4.8m
Education / Raising Educational Achievement	£1.3m
Other (including Integrated Youth Support Service and Youth Offending)	£1.5m
TOTAL	£19.7m

3.12 **Budget Pressures**

Across Children's Social Care the Department is currently facing significant pressure as a result of increasing demand for high- cost specialist services in relation to child protection and Looked After Children. Over the past three years there has been a 30% increase in demand for children's social care services. As a consequence the Department is managing a £400k pressure in relation to looked after placement costs and £175k in relation to social worker posts required to meet the demand in relation to child protection.

- 3.13 These are funded from Departmental Reserves in 2014/15 and 2015/16 however there will be a pressure relating to these in 2016/17 and this will need to be included in the updated Medium term Financial Strategy Report. The remodelling of early help services will be focussed on ensuring interventions are effective in reducing the demand for placements and statutory social work intervention over the next two years within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4. **SAVINGS PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The following services are within the scope of the proposals under consideration in this report:

- Early Help and targeted support across social care, education and health
- Youth Offer
- Looked After children costs
- SEND assessment and resource allocation across pre and post 16 education and care assessments 0-25
- Complex Needs Services
- Premature retirement costs
- Strategic Planning and asset management

- 4.2 The savings target for Children's Social Care and Education Services is £1,789,000.

4.3 **Details**

4.3.1 **Integration of Early Help and Intervention Services across social care, education and public health 0-19**

Saving £1m

It is proposed that we will build upon our approach to family support and to Think Family, Think Community and remodel our early help and intervention services to achieve greater join up across social care, education and public health in order to identify need early and provide effective support to families as soon as possible. This will achieve a more efficient use of resource through the integration of teams, improve the co-ordination of help for families and will be central to our approach to reducing high end demand. This will also

involve the 'outsourcing' of the core youth provision to the voluntary and community sector as part of the activities contract, alongside the remodelling of youth intervention services as part of 3.3.1. This will involve TUPE transfers of staff and approximately six redundancies across early intervention services.

4.3.2 Looked After Children Costs

Proposed saving £440k

In order to achieve the departmental target of £1.79m, the department will need to achieve a saving of £800k in relation to the placement costs of children in care and this will be delivered over a three year period. This £800k is made up of a £400k pressure to be managed down (see paragraph 3.12) and a further £400k saving. Priority will be given to reducing numbers of looked after children and the costs of placements.

The strategy to manage this pressure is to reduce the number of children in care during 2015/16 by 10% (20 children) which will bring the budget spend back in line with budget allocation. Coupled with this, there will be a review of the policy on Child Arrangement (residence) and Special Guardianship Allowances and the use of section 17 budgets to try to reduce the number of looked after children. To achieve the balance of the savings in the following two years, this will be delivered through the remodelling of early help and intervention services and children's social care with a focus on demand reduction leading to fewer children in care. This will strategy be managed over a two year period to phase out the use of reserves and reduce the high levels of demand currently within the system through early intervention.

4.3.3 Review of 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Assessment Arrangements and Complex Needs Services

Proposed Saving £300k

A review of Complex Needs Services will be undertaken to ensure an appropriate balance in meeting the costs of providing for the care, health and education needs of children and young people receiving support from the small steps service, residential schooling for Looked After Children and assessment capacity. We will also integrate our SEND assessment and planning teams to develop a joined up approach to the one Education, Health and Care plans.

4.3.4 Pre Retirement Costs

Proposed reduction £11,000

This budget predominantly covers pre retirement costs relating to former Cleveland County Council. Savings from this budget can only be made when the number of former employees reduces. A review of this budget has identified savings of £11,000. The budget will be kept under annual review.

4.3.5 Strategic Planning and Asset Management

Proposed reduction £38,000

Education services currently hold a revenue budget to support feasibility studies in relation to asset management. A review of the budget has identified a £20,000 saving. Deleting this budget will mean that initially feasibility work will where possible be charged to the education capital programme. In addition a residual budget of £10k is currently held to support the development of the Children's Trust Plan and £8k in relation to the former children's services grant. It is proposed to delete these budgets and support the work through existing strategic commissioning capacity.

5. OPTION ANALYSIS

5.1 A range of options to achieve the required savings have been explored and discounted because of the level of risk involved. These include:

- Reducing capacity in social work teams which is considered to be too high a risk due to impact on case loads and the risk to child protection.
- Reducing capacity in school improvement which is considered to be too high a risk in relation to meeting the Council statutory responsibility for school improvement and the priority to ensure every school in Hartlepool is a good school
- Reducing Foster Carer Allowances which is considered to be too high a risk given the need to avoid expensive placements in the independent sector
- Closure of Children's Centres which would compromise the Council's ability to provide early community- based support to families
- Deletion of funding to support short breaks which would compromise the Council's ability to meet the needs of vulnerable families with disabled children
- Reduction in commissioned services to the voluntary and community sector which would compromise the council's ability to reduce high end demand through community based services.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are a number of risks implicit in the delivery of any package of savings and it is important to recognise these as part of the decision making process.

6.2 The risks relate to

- The need to accelerate service and system change in the reorganisation of services
- The early intervention services will need to bring about sufficient change to reduce high end demand

- Partners will need to fully engage in the process and agree the best ways of working together to achieve the necessary improvements and efficiencies
- Shifting resources to prevention from acute services could destabilise acute services.

6.3 Risk can be mitigated through

- Effective project management and governance
- Commencing the redesign process as early as possible
- Providing effective workforce development to support the change
- Planned short term use of reserves to support the shift from acute spend to prevention.

7. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Failure to progress the proposals outlined in this report will result in the need to make alternative unplanned saving and redundancies elsewhere to balance the 2015/16 budget. The proposals outlined will deliver the following savings:

Service	Proposed Savings
Integration of early help and intervention services across social care, education and public health 0-19	£1,000,000
Looked After Children	£440,000
SEND and Complex Needs Services	£300,000
Premature Retirement Costs	£11,000
Strategic Planning & Asset Management	£38,000
Total Proposed Savings	£1,789,000

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as detailed proposals are developed. By definition all the savings proposals will affect people who access children's services. The proposals will be developed to protect services to the most vulnerable and ensure equality of access to universal provision.

9. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 At this early stage it is anticipated that six to eight posts will be deleted in support of the proposals and a further six will be subject to TUPE. Every effort will be made to achieve the deletions through deletion of vacant posts, turnover management and voluntary redundancy.
- 9.2 Informal consultation with Trade Unions will be undertaken as the proposals develop. Any individual staff affected by the proposals will be informally notified and formal consultation will be undertaken in line with Council policies and procedures.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that members of the Committee note the contents of this report and formulate a response to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee

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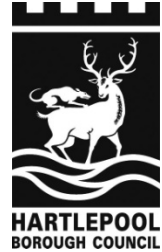
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY
(SEND) TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii)) Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 033/14

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 This report will set out the arrangements to support the transition to the new system of support for children and young people with SEND.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2011 the government published '*Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*' which set out the government's intention to introduce by 2014:

- An integrated streamlined assessment process, which, better involves children, young people and their families and is completed quickly;
- Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, which bring services together and are focused on improving outcomes;
- The offer of a personal budget for families with an EHC plan who want one.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Government wants all children and young people with SEND and their families to benefit from the new arrangements as soon as possible. From 1st September 2014 it will no longer be possible to request a new statutory assessment under the Education Act 1996, and no new Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) under the Learning and Skills Act 2000 can be commenced. As a Pathfinder authority Hartlepool has undertaken all new assessments under the new arrangements since September 2013.

Children and young people with statements and young people in further education or training who are receiving additional provision to meet their special educational needs as a result of a LDA will be gradually transferred to the new arrangements. We have already begun this process as follows:

Statements / Single Plans / Transfers as at 1st July 2014 : Rec – Post 19

Year	Nos with Statements / Transfers / One Plans/LDA's	Of which are Statements/ LDA's	Of which are Transfers / Single Plans	To be transferred by Aug 2015	To be transferred by Aug 2016
Rec	7	3	4	0	3
1	10	5	5	5	-
2	18	10	8	0	10
3	14	7	7	0	7
4	16	8	8	8	-
5	28	5	23	5	-
6	24	2	22	0	2
7	46	40	6	20	20
8	34	19	15	19	-
9	28	16	12	0	16
10	48	25	23	25	-
11	52	0	52	-	-
12	17	15	2	15	-
13	16	14	2	14	-
14	9	0	9	-	-
Post 19	58	58	0	15	43
Total	425	212	198	126	101

All young people with a current LDA will therefore be transferred to a single plan within two years.

All children and young people with a statement will also be transferred to a single plan within 2 years.

The transfer process will include:

- The offer of a personal budget to all young people and the parents of children with transferred EHC plans.
- A transfer review to allow for a needs assessment to be conducted which identifies outcomes to be established for the EHC plan.
- The transfer review replacing the annual review in the academic year that the child or young person transfers to the new SEND system.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The government has recognised the new burdens which have been placed on LA's as a result of the SEND reforms. They have therefore allocated additional funding to help meet these new burdens in relation to:

- Set up costs for EHC Plans and personal budgets
- Set up costs of developing the local offer
- LA costs in relation to mediation and appeals
- Transitions from LDA's to EHC plans
- Transitions from statements to EHC plans
- Recurring costs in relation to all of the above.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that committee approve the transitional arrangements outlined above.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The transitional arrangements will ensure Hartlepool LA meets its statutory requirements in relation to the new arrangements for SEND and will give clear timescales to young people, their parents and the professionals involved with them.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

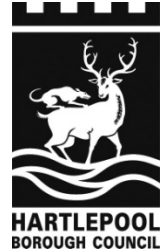
A range of relevant documents are available on the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/schools-colleges/special-educational-needs>. In addition Hartlepool SEND - Assessment and Planning: A guide for parents and carers is attached.

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adults Services

Subject: CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER STRATEGY 2014 - 2017

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the ratification of Children's Services Committee to the final draft of the Children Looked After Strategy 2014-2017 and approve its implementation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The strategy builds upon the previous strategy (2010 – 2013) which provided a framework for the development of services for looked after children in Hartlepool. The performance of the authority in relation to outcomes for looked after children judged to be good and the strategy is designed to embed and improve upon existing performance. The previous strategy was successfully implemented and provides a positive foundation for continued improvement.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The final draft strategy is attached at **Appendix 1** to this report. Early in 2014 2013, a draft of the Strategy was presented to the Corporate Parent Forum and Children's Strategic Partnership for agreement to undertake consultation on the draft document. The Strategy has been shared with all partners who make up the Children's Strategic Partnership, as well as local authority staff and foster carers. In addition the Children in Care Council have participated in the development of the strategy and have approved the final document.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Children Service Committee is asked to ratify the strategy and give approval for implementation. Children's Service Committee will receive an annual report on the implementation of the strategy to enable members to exercise scrutiny and oversight of delivery.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Children Looked After strategy is a key document that provides the vision, and actions necessary to continue to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people looked after. This strategy will provide a framework for continuous improvement in this area of statutory work.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Children Looked After Strategy 2010/2013

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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Children Looked After Strategy 2014-2017



Child Looked After Strategy

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

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

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

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

Children in Need and Family Support Vision

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

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

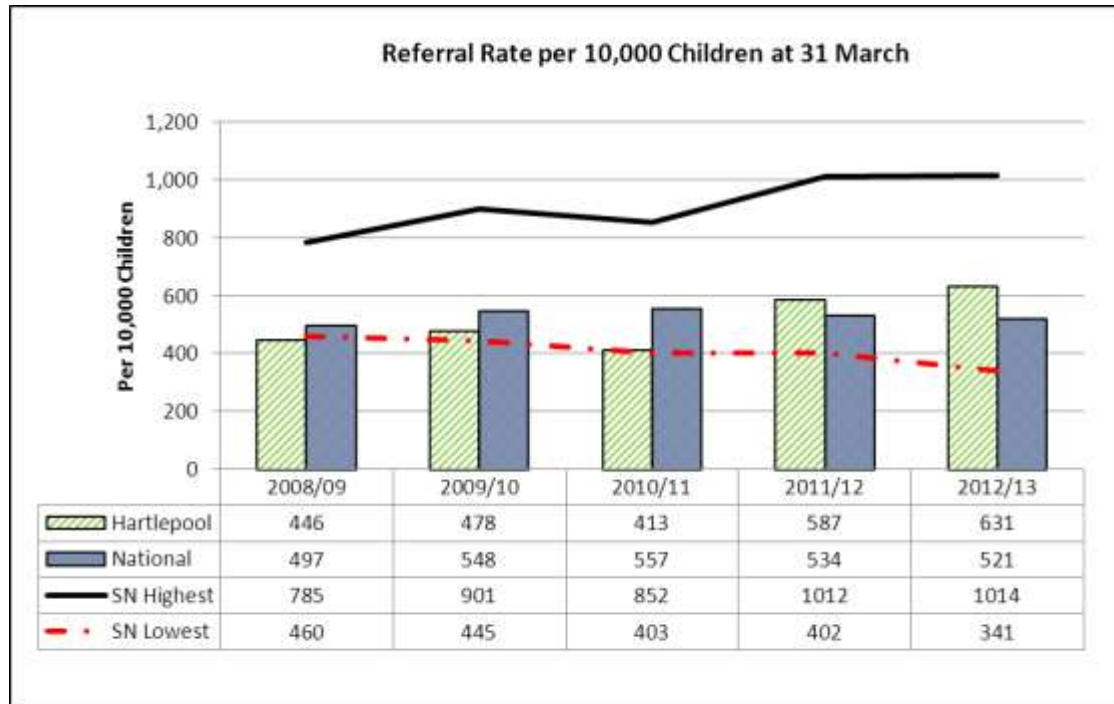
What we have done

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

Needs Analysis

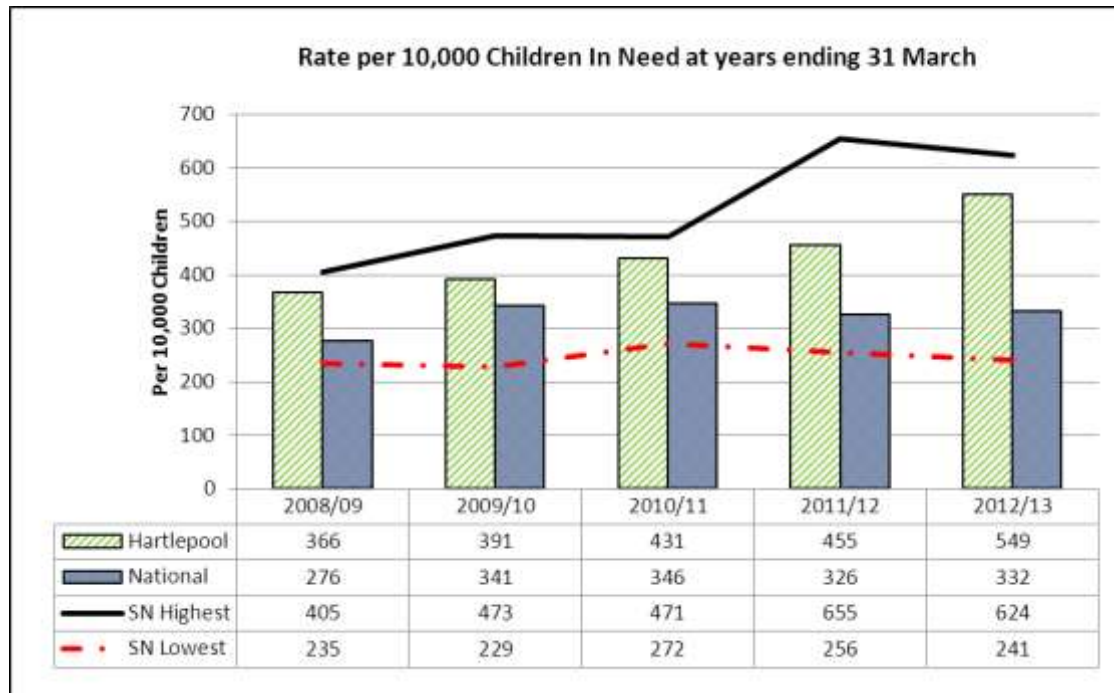
As the graph below shows, Hartlepool has a higher than average number of children looked after when considering the rate per 10,000 of the population.

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



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

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



What will we do?

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

Impact of Measures

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

Corporate Parenting

Vision

The vision is to ensure that every looked after child in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships, is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging. Children in care will feel their needs are given the highest priority and that they are valued and cared about not only by those who look after them on a daily basis but also by those who make decisions politically, corporately and operationally in the town.

What we have done

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

What will we do?

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

Impact of Measures

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

Sufficiency

The Vision

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

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

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

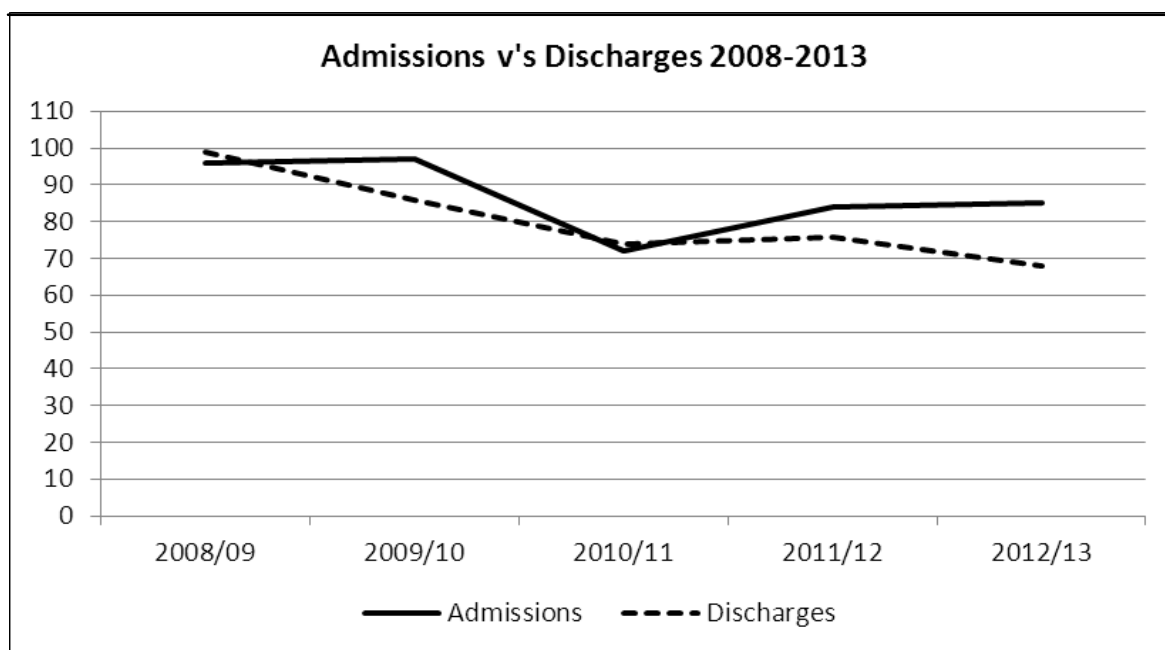
Statutory guidance places a general duty on local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children (the "sufficiency duty").

What we have done

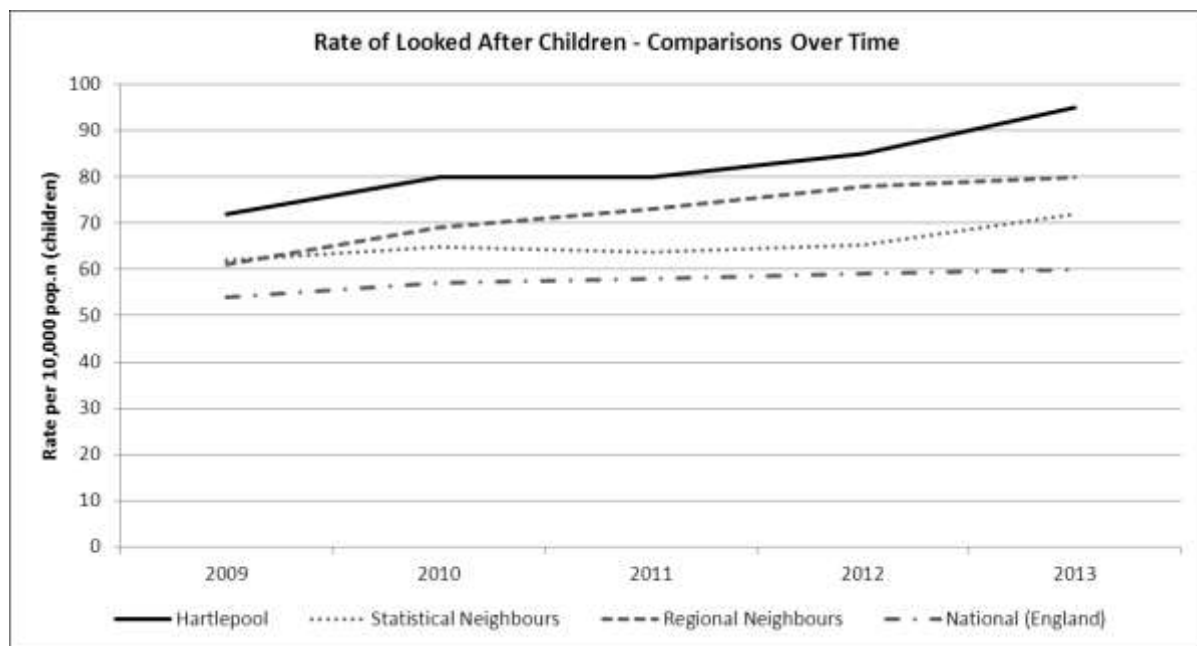
- Developed and implemented plans to open a Children's Home in Hartlepool to ensure that children needing residential care can be cared for within their home town promoting continuity of health education and family and social relationships.
- Re-configured provision at Exmoor Grove Children's Home to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

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

Needs Analysis

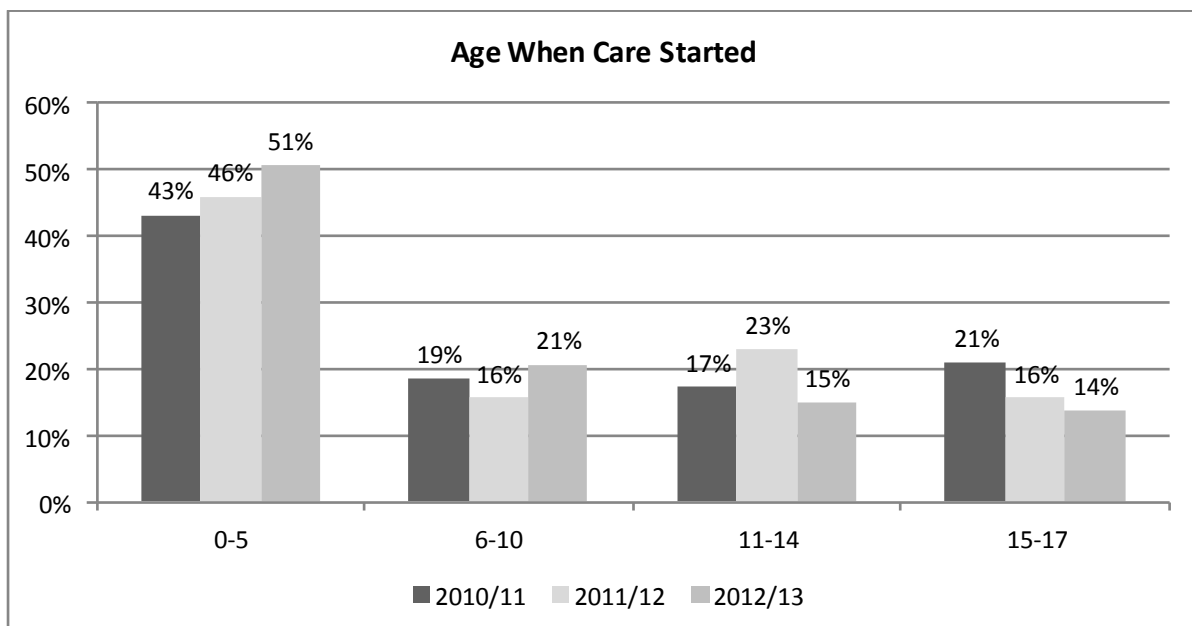
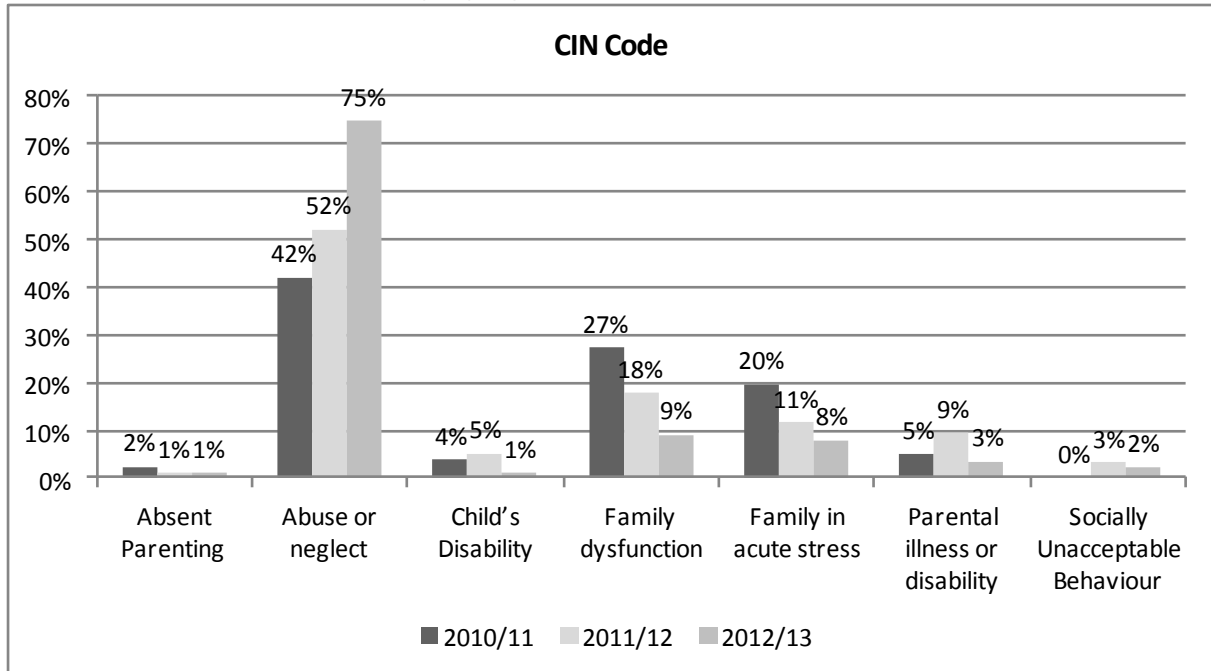


In the context of rising numbers of children looked after, it should be noted that the number of children becoming looked after each year is reducing. In 2012/13, a total of 87 children became looked after (from 50 families) compared with 107 children in 2009/10 (64 families). As the above graph shows, there is a reducing trendline for children becoming looked after. This reducing number in the context of an increasing number of children looked after means that for those children who become looked after, they remain in care long term and fewer children leave care than enter. This is attributable, in part, to the local authority policy to support young people in transition to adulthood to remain looked after through to 18 years of age. The authority is seeking to strengthen its performance in relation to adoption and increase the numbers of children leaving care through adoption or permanence offered by Residence or Special Guardianship Orders.



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

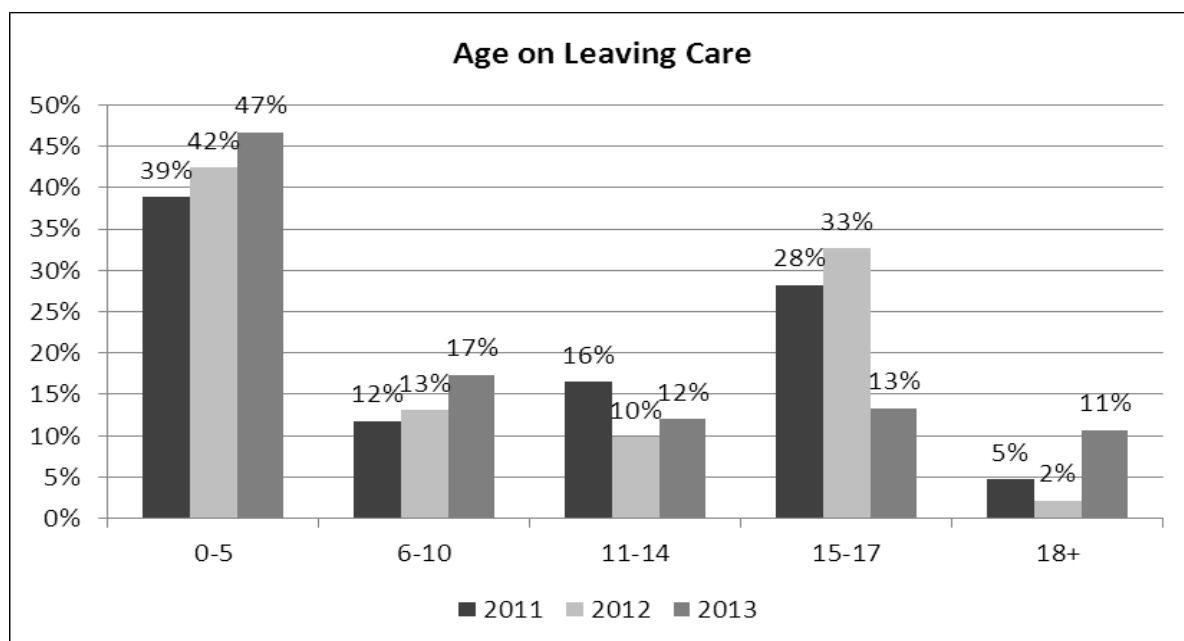
Over the past three years, abuse and neglect has been the primary reason why children have become looked after followed by family dysfunction and family in acute stress. During 2012/13, there was a significant increase in the number of children and young people who became looked after due to abuse and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



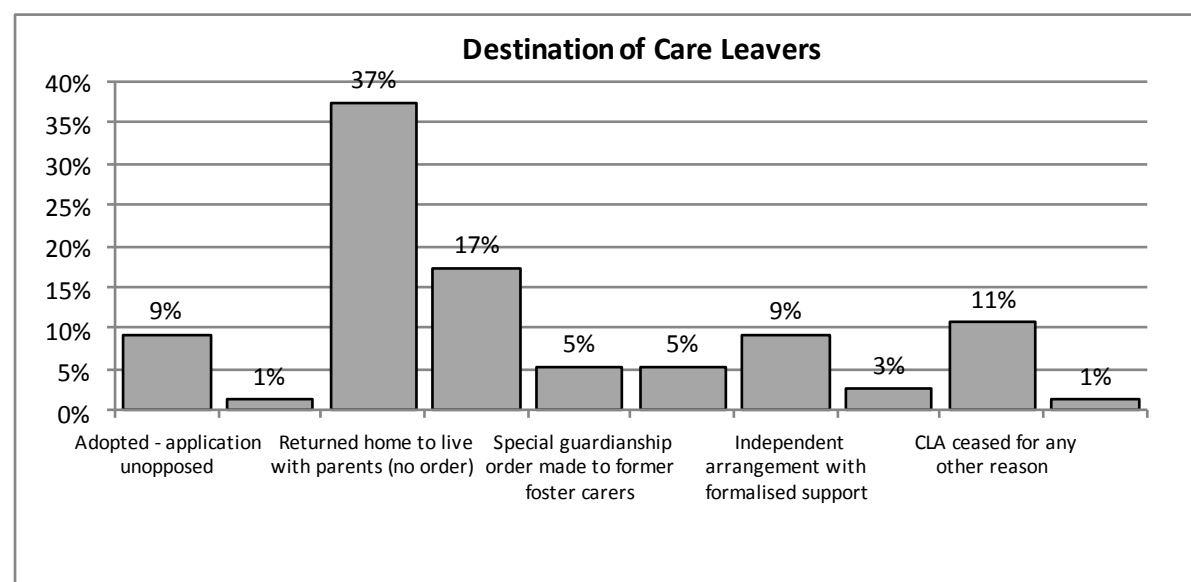
As the graph above shows, in 2012/13 just over 50% of the children who become looked after were aged 0-5 years with those under the age of 1 being the highest proportion at 17%. The need to become looked after at the younger end of the age range reflects the increase in the numbers of children subject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

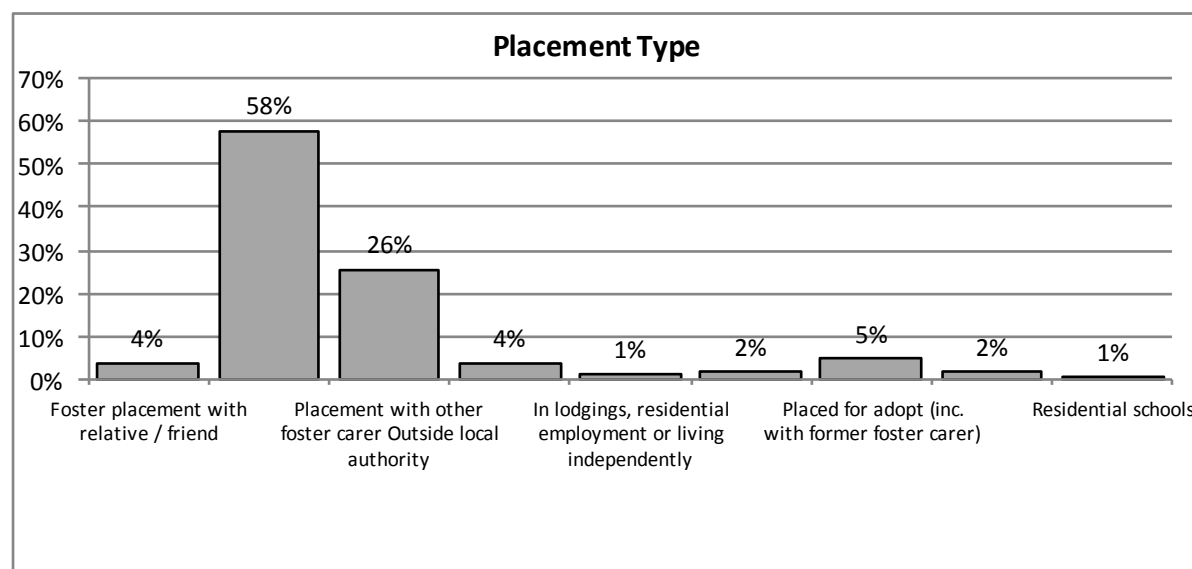
There has been a shift in the age profile of children becoming looked after in Hartlepool with a reduction in the number of adolescents becoming looked after when compared with previous years. This is attributable to the implementation of the Edge of Care Service from September 2012 where families with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

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



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



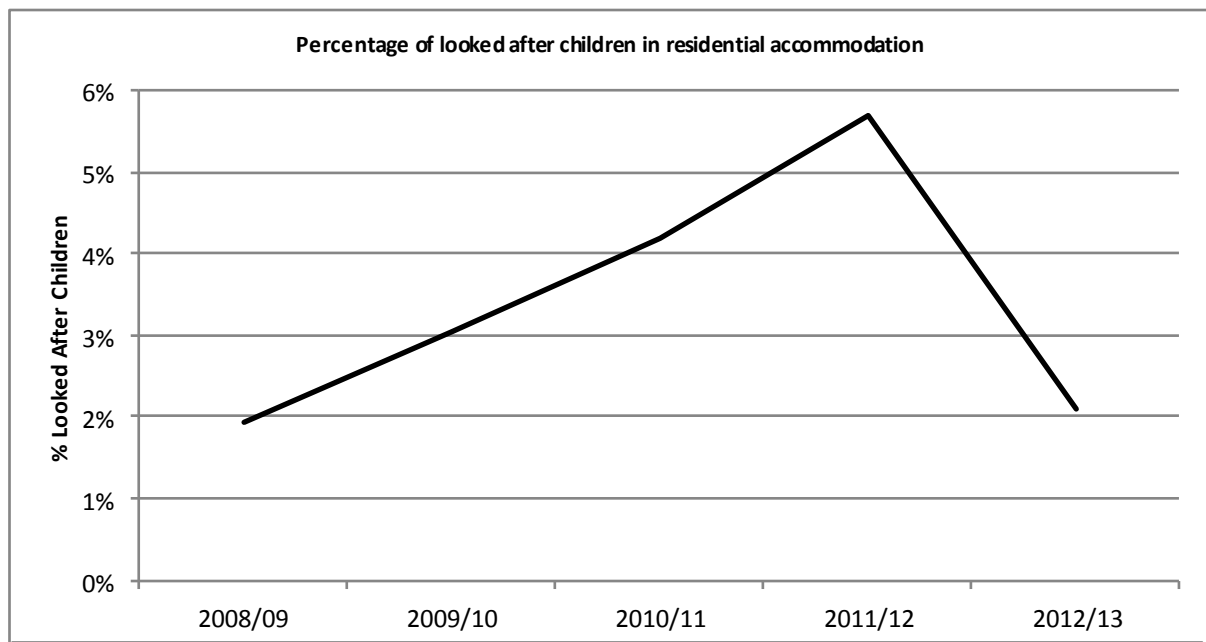


It is the policy of Hartlepool Borough Council, as part of its strategy for children looked after to, as far as possible care, provide for placements for children through its own fostering agency. This ensures that children looked after are cared for within their home community and have continuity of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

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

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

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



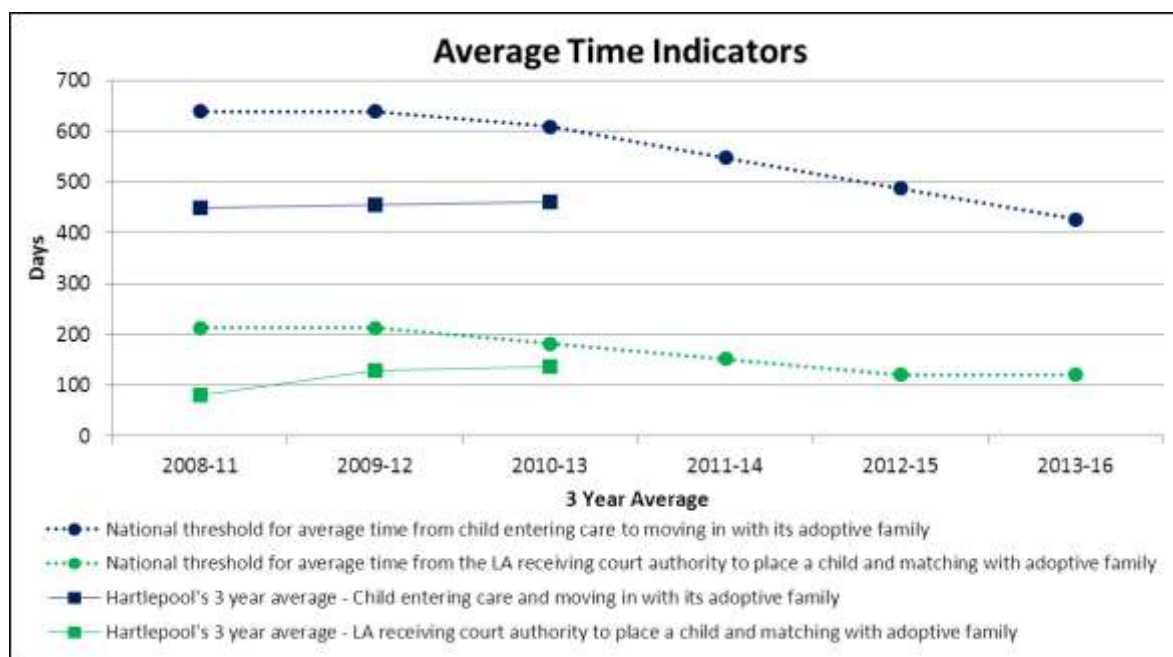
Between 2003 and 2006, the local authority took the decision to cease to be a provider of residential care, closed children's homes in the town and moved to an arrangement where all residential placements were commissioned from the independent sector. As Hartlepool is a small town, in effect, this meant that children had to move away to live. In 2011/12, Children's Services Scrutiny Forum undertook an investigation into services for children looked after. Children and young people, foster carers as well as officers were invited to give evidence to the Forum about their views on the services provided. Members heard strongly from children and young people that they wanted to live with their brothers and sisters and that they wanted to remain in Hartlepool. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Members of the Scrutiny Forum made a recommendation that officers should seek to open a 3 to 4 bed children's home in Hartlepool and this led to the development of the children's home at 302 Stockton Road.

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

Adoption

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

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



What Will We Do?

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

Measure of Impact

- Children and young people will experience improved placement stability and have their needs met within their home town area.
- There will be an increase in the number of foster carers and adopters approved by Hartlepool Borough Council.
- There will be an improvement in the Hartlepool Borough Adoption Scorecard performance.
- There will be an increase in placement capacity and the range of placement choice to match children with carers.

Care Planning for Children and Young People in Care

Vision

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

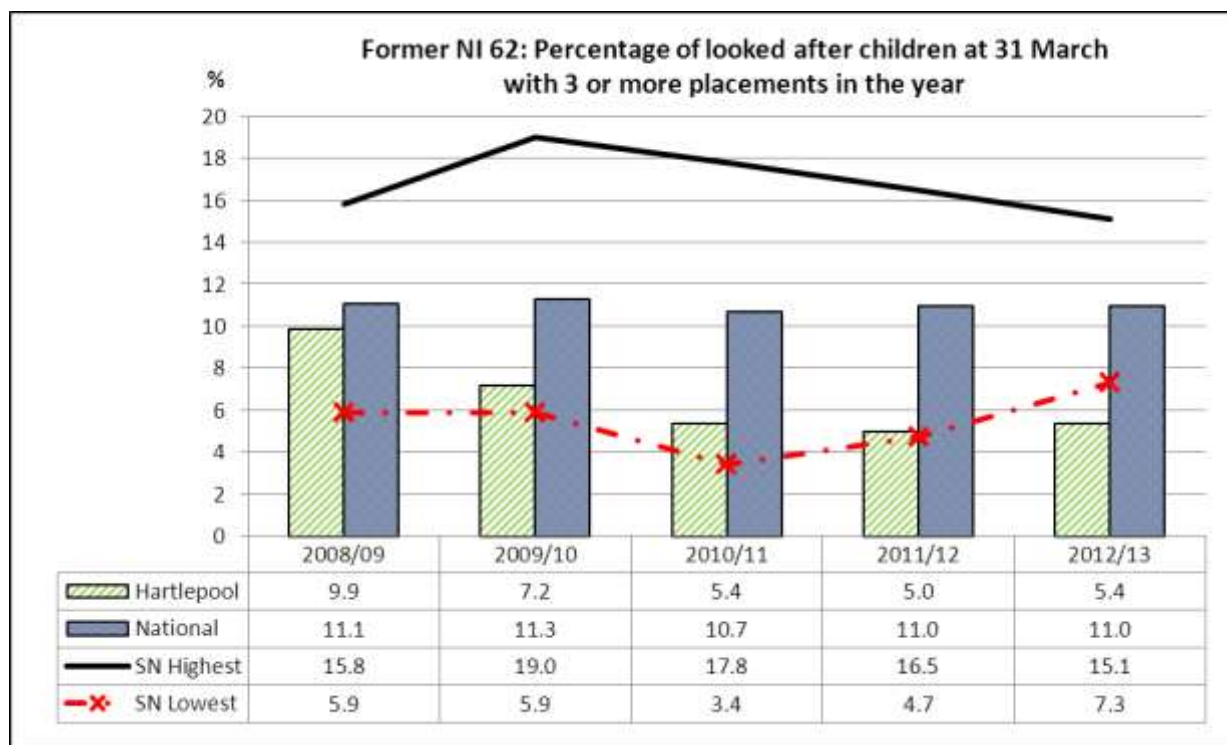
What have we done

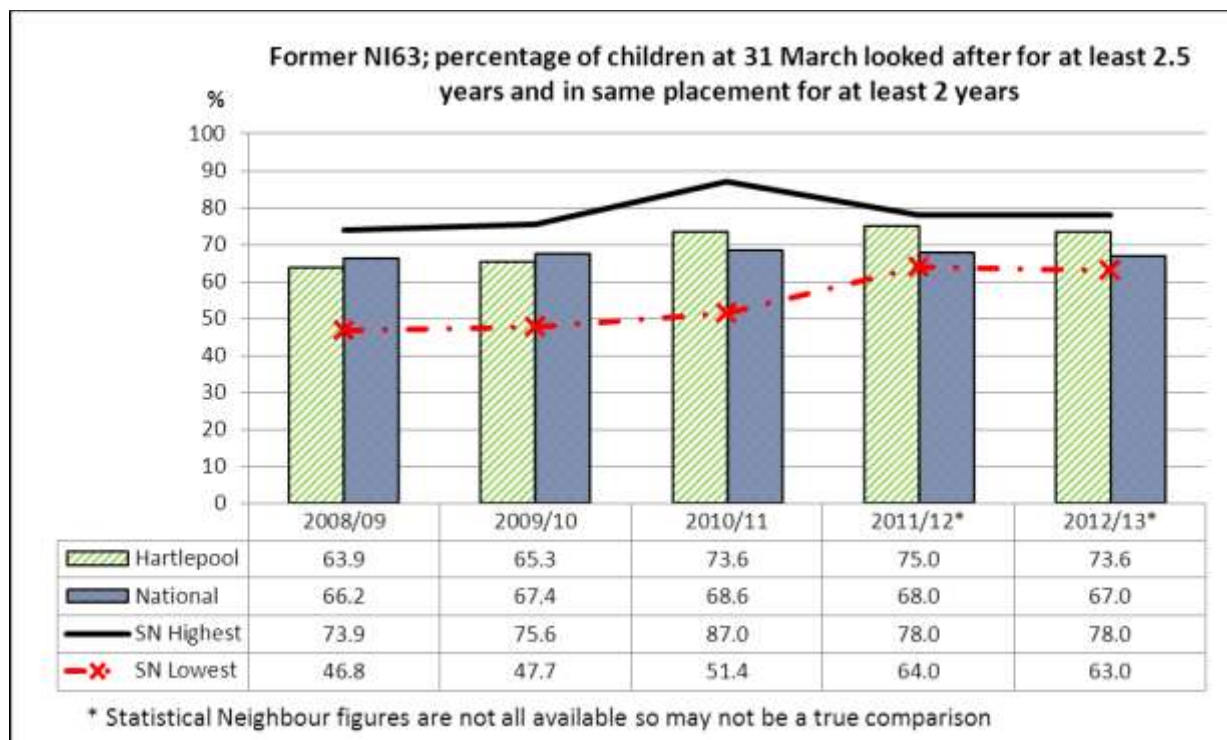
- Implemented a Care Planning Panel which considers all requests for children to become looked after, scrutinising the plan and determining what action is required. It also provides decision making in relation to emergency regulations of connected person placement, Residence Orders and Special Guardianship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

- Delivered annual training programme for social workers which focuses on the quality of care plans with an emphasis on the voice of the child being included in the process and underpinned this with regular practice clinics to embed learning.
- Implemented bi-monthly performance clinics for managers which challenge and scrutinise performance in relation to assessments, care planning and review arrangements.

Needs Analysis

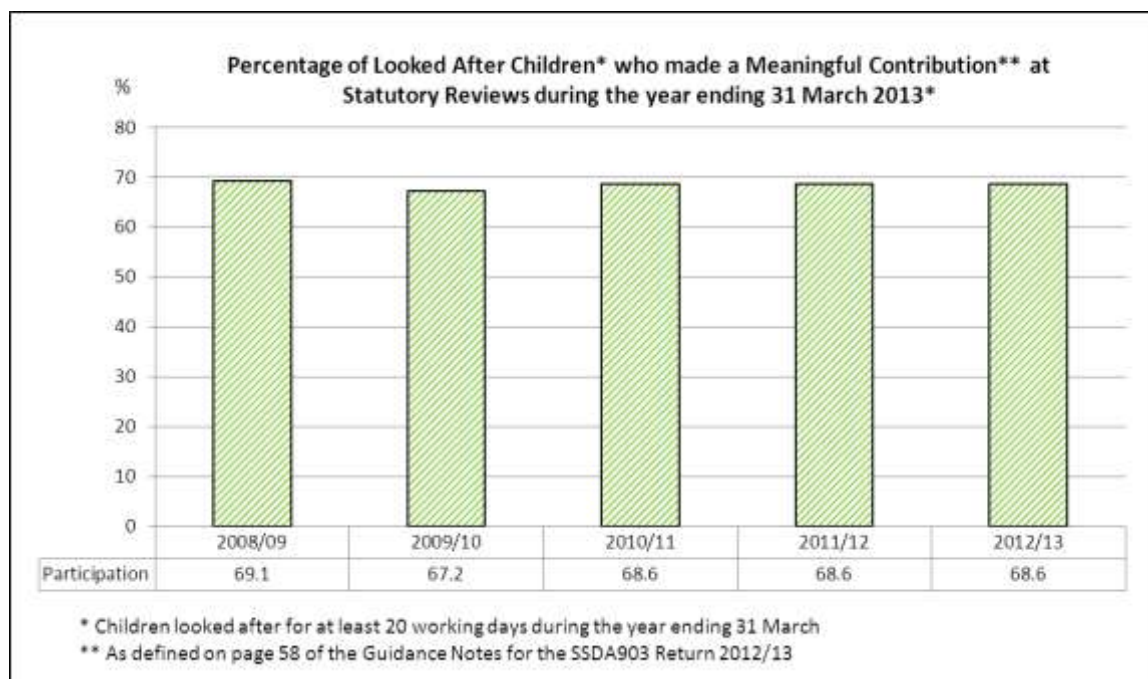
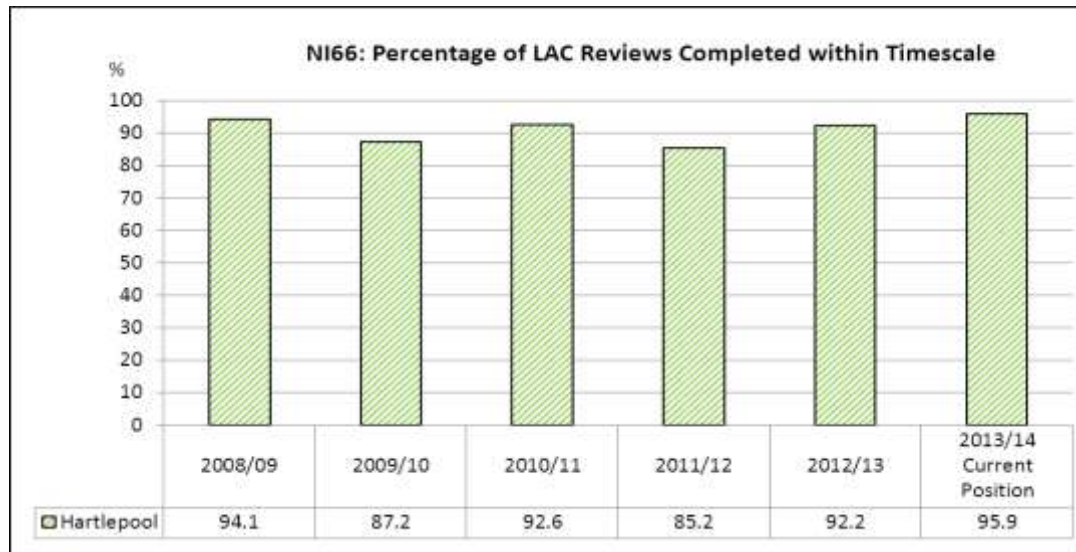
Placement stability has shown excellent performance against the national indicator set. There are two measures in relation to short term and long term stability and in both of these measures performance has been below the target set and in the top performing quartile nationally.





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

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



What will we do?

- Find permanent families for children without delay.
- Work to continuously improve placement stability for children in care ensuring children receive consistency and continuity of relationships, care, education and health.
- Re-commission independent visitors service working with local voluntary and community sector to deliver a more responsive, effective and localised service.

- Work with Children in Care Council to review and strengthen voice of child in looked after review arrangements.
- Benchmark local practice against Government document 'Improving Permanence for Looked After Children once final version published.
- Develop and implement training and support programme for connected person carers.
- Improve the quality of care plans in relation to children and young people's participation and evidencing the child's journey.
- Develop the skills of the children's workforce, in particular, foster carers, social workers and residential child care officers to strengthen their practice in relation to understanding and responding to the individual needs of children.
- Embed Child Appreciation Days for all children moving to permanent placements.
- Improve preparation for and post adoption support planning and the range of services to prevent disruption.

Measures of Impact

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

A First Class Education

Vision

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

What have we done

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

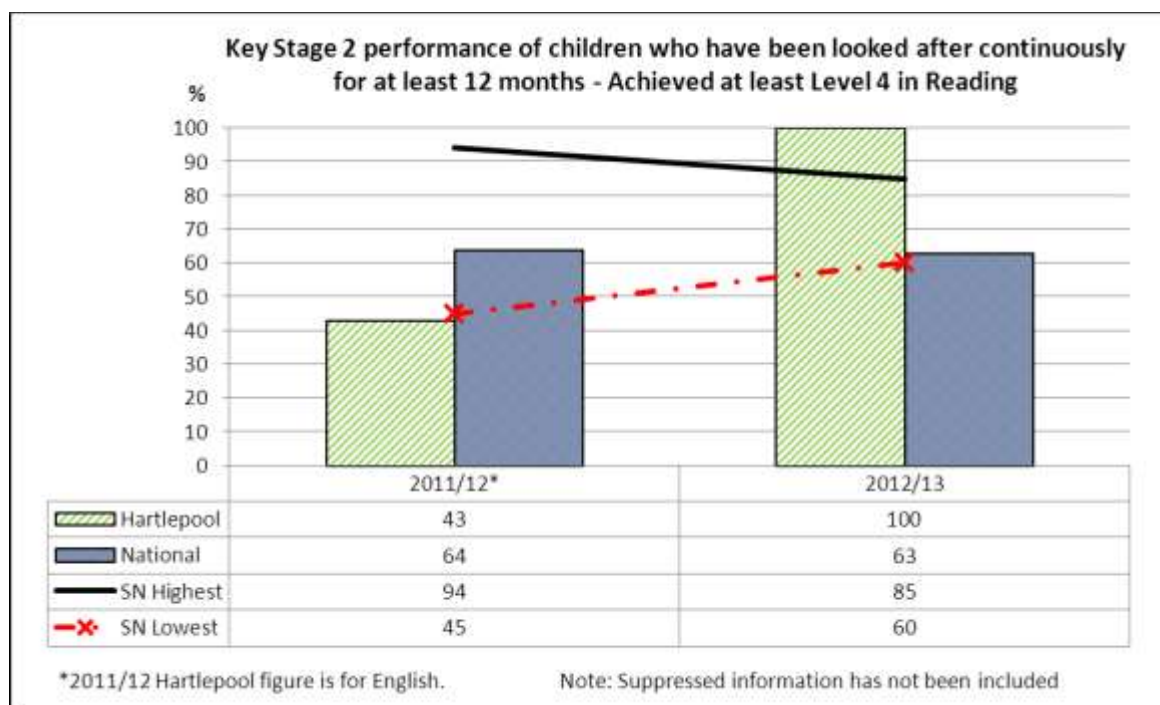
Needs Analysis

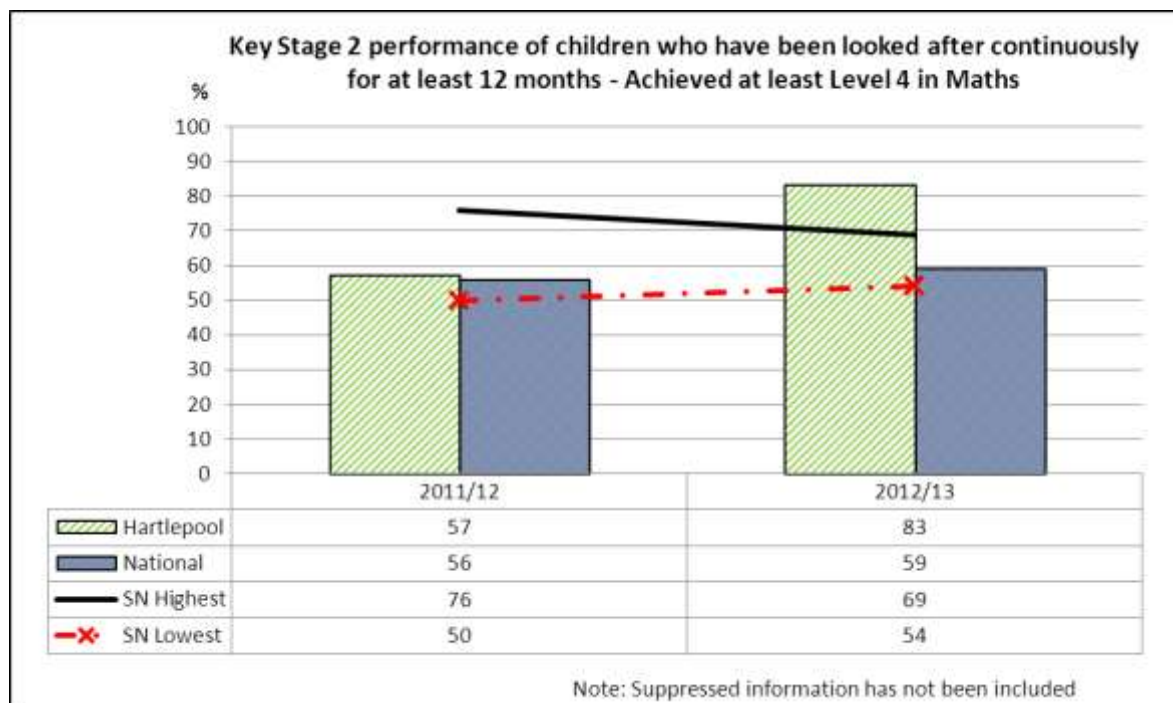
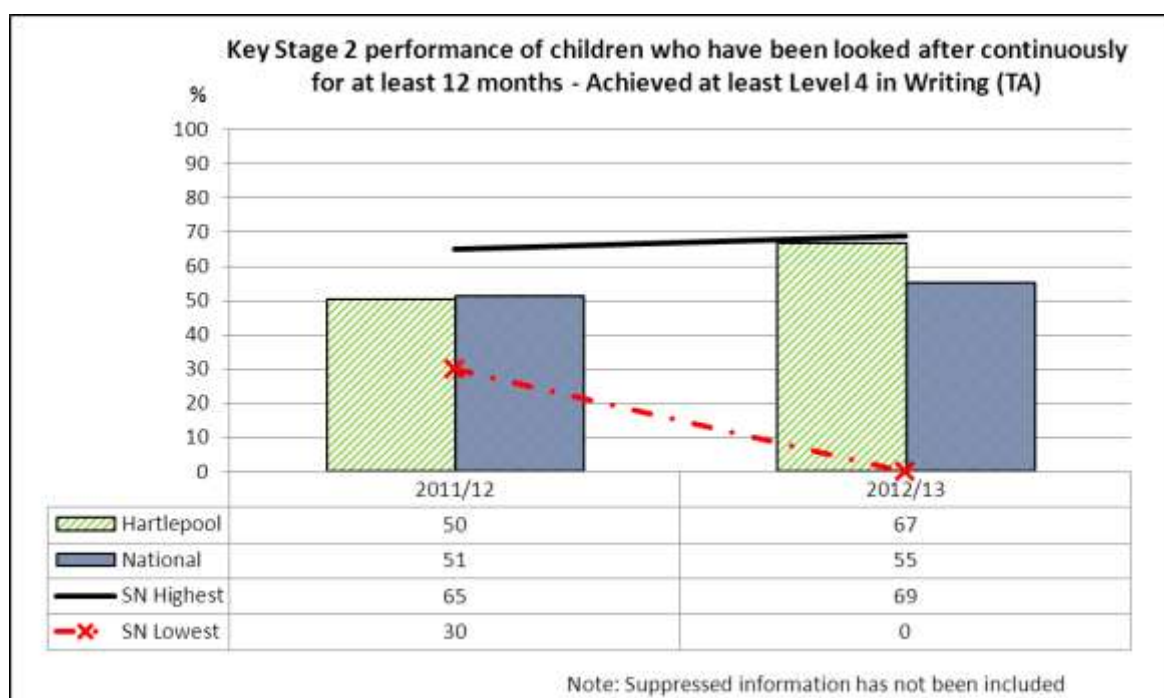
The school attendance of children looked after in Hartlepool has improved over the last three years at a faster rate than both its statistical neighbours and the national average figures.

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

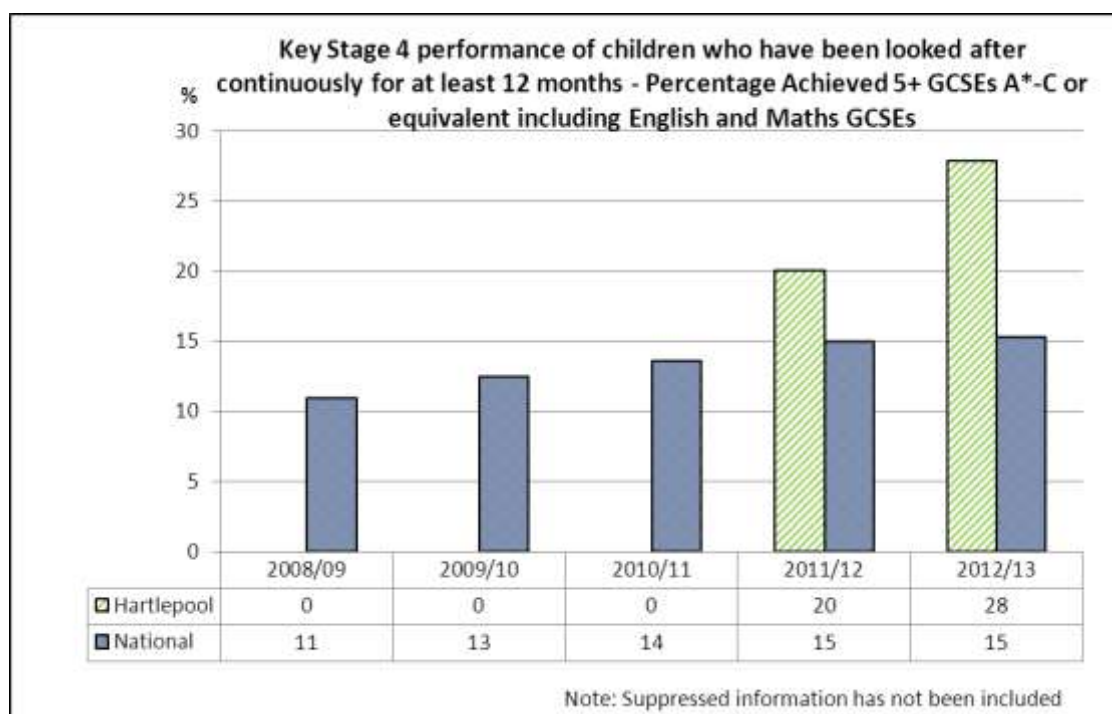
Although the 2013 results show an improving trend over the last 3 years in all subjects, attainment in Key Stage 1 for children looked after is below the national average. However, the gap is closing between looked after children and all Hartlepool children in reading and writing.

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





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



What will we do?

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

Measures of Impact

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

Promoting Health and Wellbeing

The Vision

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

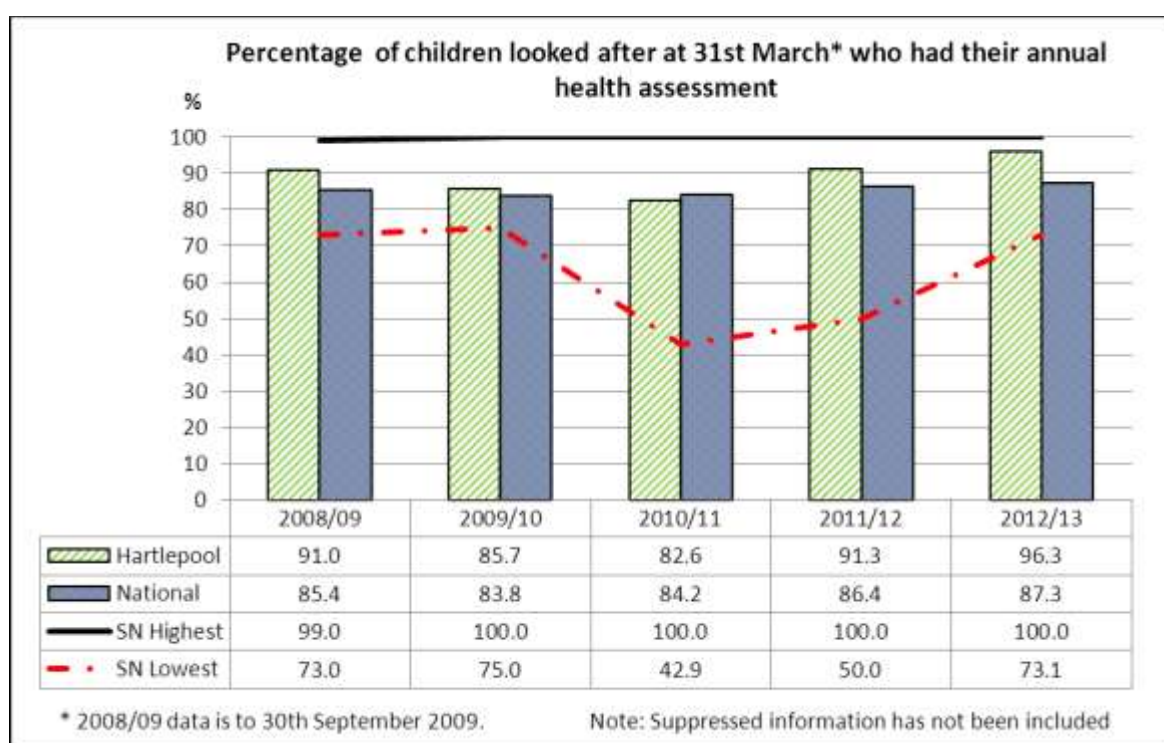
What we have done

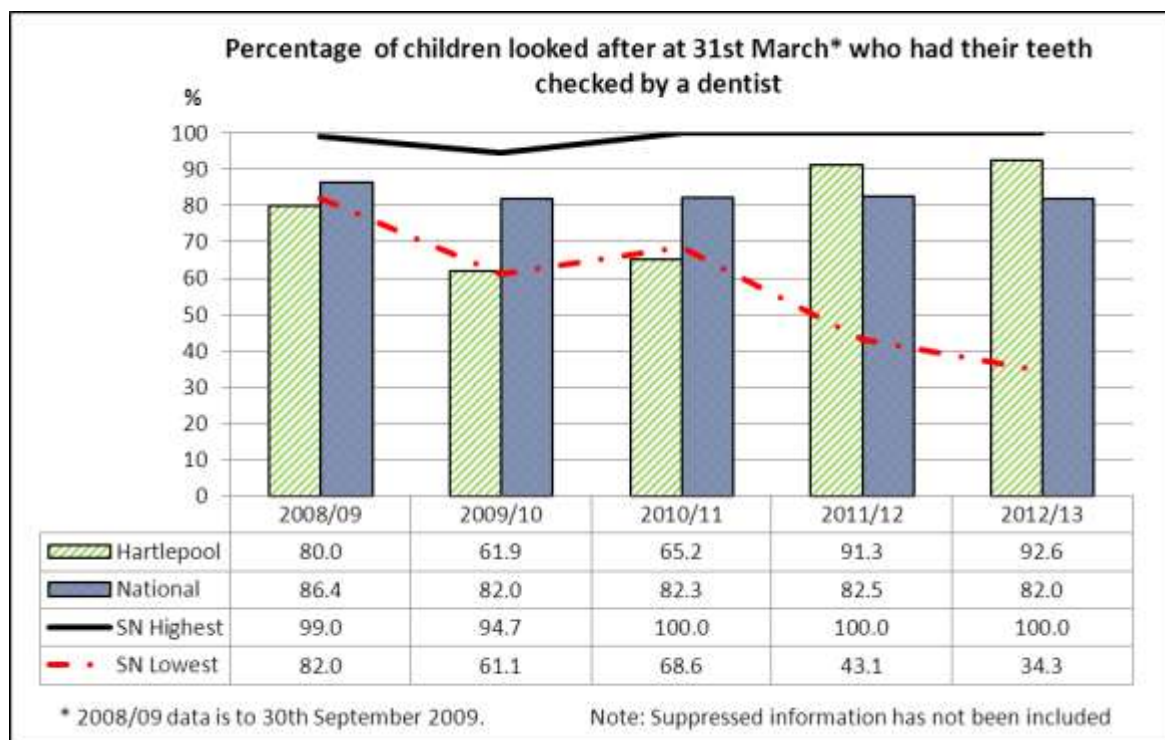
- Developed and implemented a Service Specification in partnership with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust to deliver dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health support for Children Looked After.
- Developed and implemented a dedicated therapeutic team for looked after children that provides amongst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

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

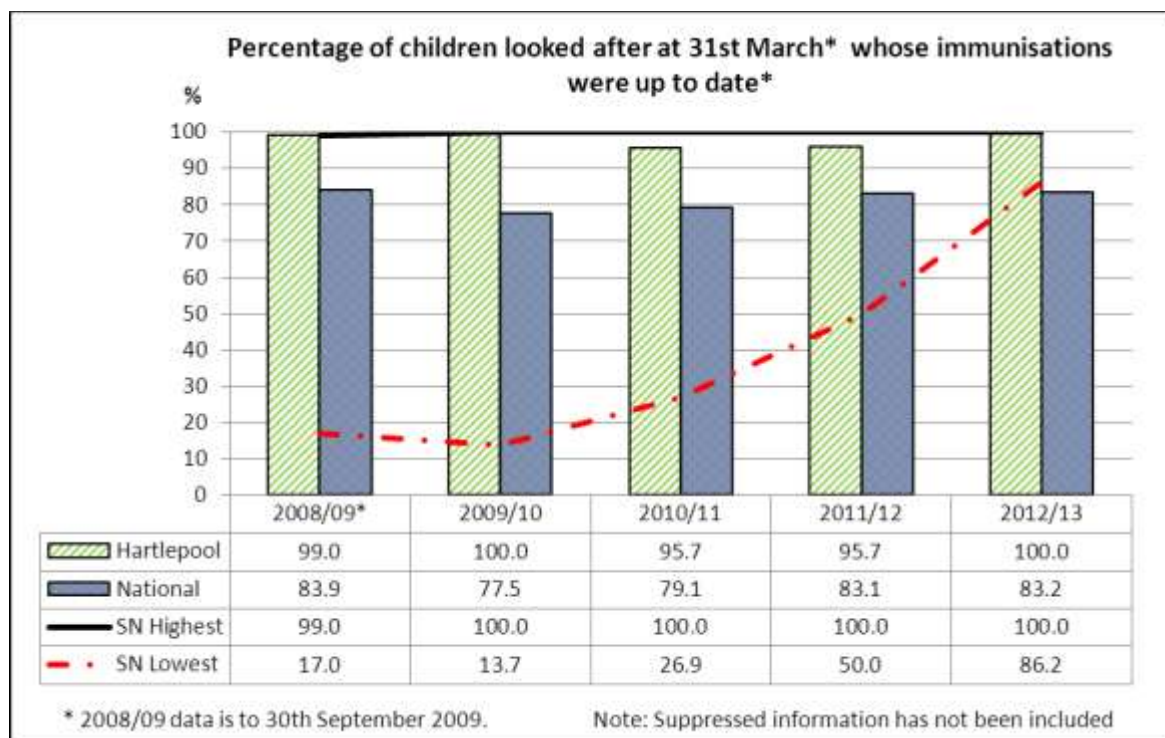
Needs analysis

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





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



What will we do?

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

Measure of Impact

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

Care Leavers

The Vision

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

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

What have we done

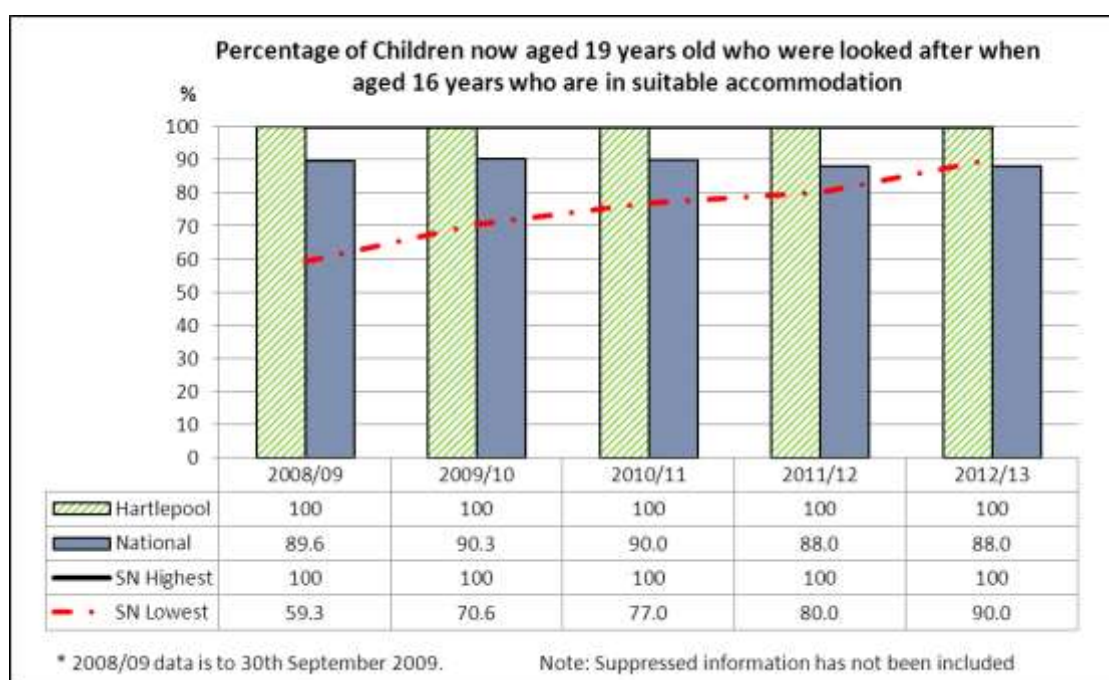
- Developed and implemented a 'Staying Put' policy supporting young people to stay with their carers beyond their 18th birthday.
- Developed a town centre based provision at 'Number Nine' Church Street where young people can access social work support, services from the looked after children's nurse,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

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

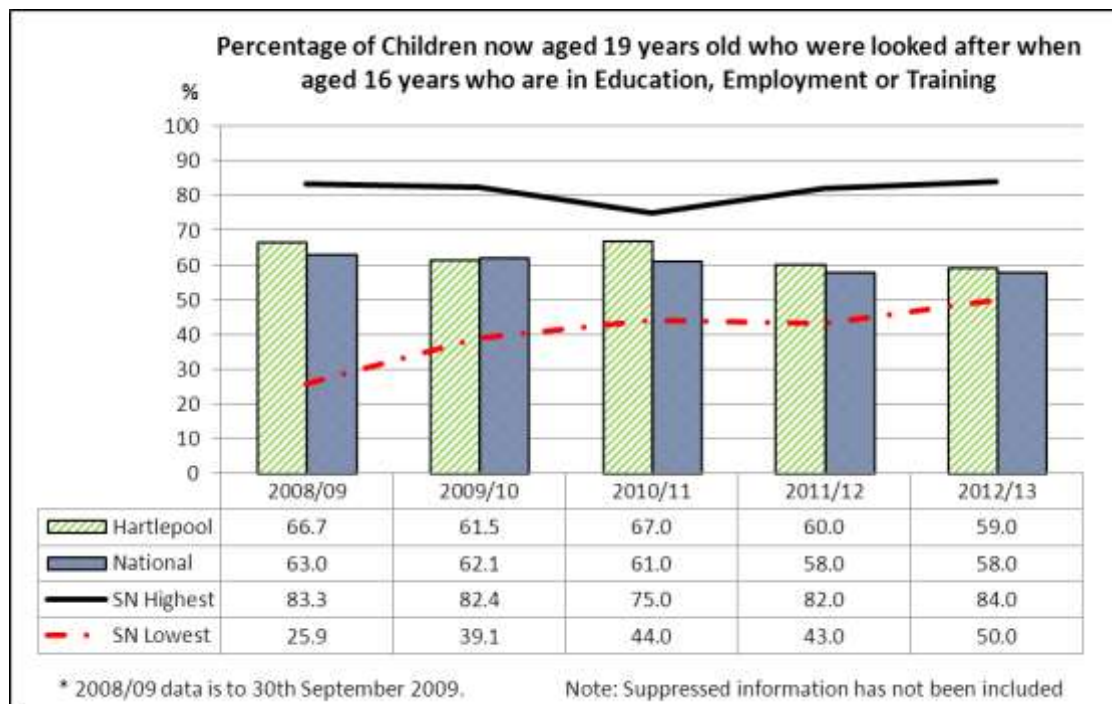
Needs Analysis

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

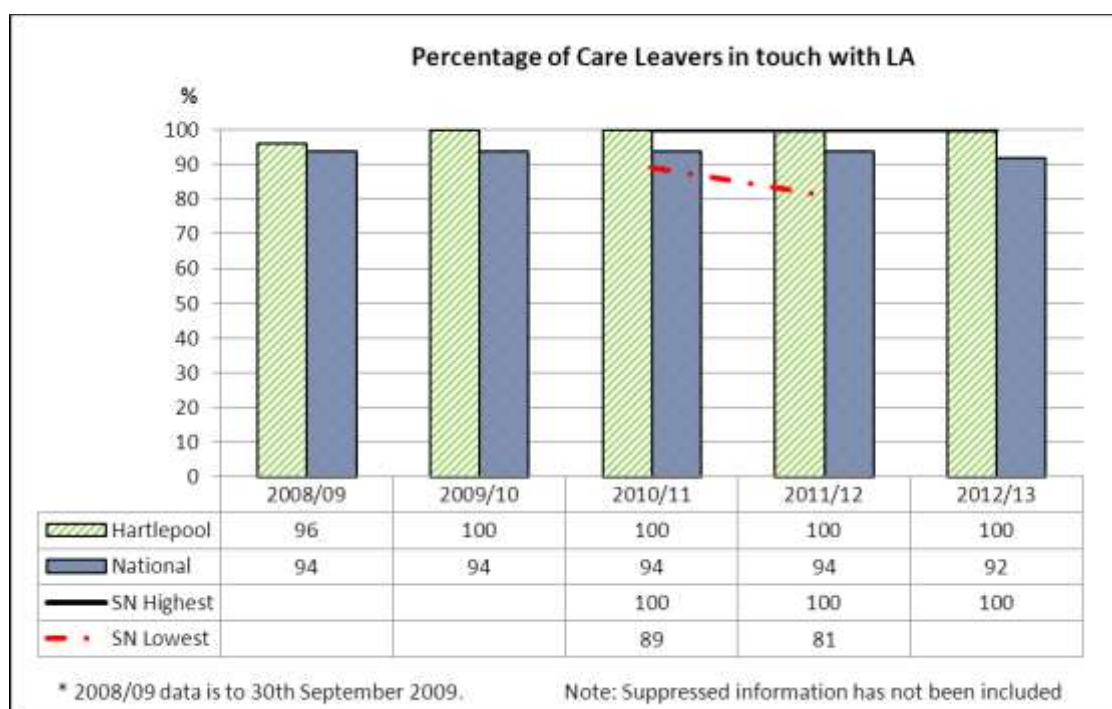
As young people approach adulthood, the priority for the Council is to ensure that children leave care at a time that reflects their individual needs, emotional maturity and coping skills. To this end, the Council has implemented a Staying Put policy which enables young people looked after to remain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



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



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



What will we do?

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

Measures of Impact

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

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: TO APPROVE THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ROSSMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY

1. TYPE OF DECISION / APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of the Children's Services Committee to the reconstitution of the Governing Body of Rossmere Primary School and the Instrument of Government in accordance with the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended by the School Governance (Constitution and Federation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Governing Body of Rossmere Primary School has for some time been considering the size of their Governing Body due to their inability to recruit Governors in particular Parent Governors.
- 3.2 At a meeting of the Governing Body held on 9th June 2014 the Governing Body received a report from the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher, requested by the Governing Body, to explore this matter and formally agree a reconstitution of the Governing Body in accordance with the School Governance Constitution (England) Regulations 2012 as amended by the School Governance (Constitution and Federation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 which are effective from 1st September 2014.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Governing Body proposes to reduce the size of the present Governing Body from 17 to 11 Governors due to the longstanding vacancies, and the need to reconstitute the Governing Body before 31st August 2015 under the new Constitution regulations.
- 4.2 Under the Constitution Regulations a number of changes relating to the make up of Governing Bodies and the process of appointment of Governors have been introduced. These include:
- A change in the minimum number of Governors from 9 to 7
 - Community Governors are replaced by a new category of Co-opted Governor
 - There must be at least 2 Parent Governors
 - Only 1 Staff Governor in addition to the Head Teacher (although additional staff can be appointed as Co-opted Governors but when counted with one staff Governor and the Head Teacher must not exceed one-third of the total Membership of the Governing Body
 - Only 1 Local Authority Governor nominated by the Local Authority but appointed by the Governing Body, where as previously they were appointed by the Local Authority. In nominating Governors, account should be taken of the skills required by the Governing Body.
- 4.3 The revised constitution will consist of the following categories as attached in **Appendix 1**.
- 5 Co-opted Governors
 - 1 Local Authority Governor
 - 3 Parent Governors
 - 1 Staff Governor
 - 1 Head Teacher

The term of office for all categories of Governors will be four years with the exception of Parent Governors who will serve for a period of two years.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

To formally approve the reconstitution of the Governing Body under the School Governance (Constitution and Federation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations and revised Instrument of Government with effect from 1st September 2014 attached as **Appendix 1**.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The reconstitution will improve the effectiveness of the Governing Body and is in line with the requirements for all Governing Bodies to be reconstituted under the revised legislation before 31st August 2015.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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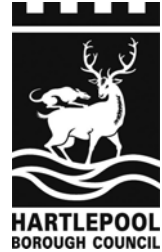


INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

1. The name of the school is: Rossmere Primary School
2. The school is a community school
3. The name of the governing body is "The governing body of Rossmere Primary School".
4. The governing body shall consist of:
 - a. Three parent governors;
 - b. One LA governor;
 - c. One staff governor;
 - d. One headteacher;
 - d. Five co-opted governors
5. Total number of governors (11)
6. The term of office of parent governors is two years
7. This instrument of government comes into effect on 1st September, 2014
8. This instrument was made by order of Hartlepool Local Authority on
9. A copy of the instrument must be supplied to every member of the governing body (and the headteacher if not a governor).

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: FOSTERING SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14
AND 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 Fostering Service 2013/14 and the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose for 2014/15.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The work of the Fostering Services is subject to National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of foster care for children looked after. The National Minimum Standards together with regulations for fostering and the placement of children looked after form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of fostering agencies.
- 2.2 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards that the service produces a Statement of Purpose for fostering services and reviews these at least annually. It is also a requirement that the executive side of the local authority receive three monthly reports detailing the management, outcomes and functioning of the Fostering Services. This information is provided within the annual report attached at **Appendix 1** and the Fostering Statement of Purpose for 2014/15 attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.3 The Annual Report provides details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff and foster carers, the constitution of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective foster carers, and the priorities for further service development in 2014/15.

- 2.4 The Fostering Services Minimum Standard 25.7 requires fostering services to ensure the executive side of the local authority:
- Receives a written report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency once every 3 months;
 - Monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and achieving good outcomes for children;
 - Satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of the registration.

4. PROPOSALS

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

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Children's Services Committee are asked to approve the Fostering Annual Report for publication and approve the Statement of Purpose line with the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Fostering Service is a statutory service of the Council and as such Children's Services Committee requires information about how services are delivered and their effectiveness.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

Jane Young
Head of Business Unit
Specialist Services

Fostering Service Annual Report 2013/14



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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report of the Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering Service. Fostering children is the cornerstone of our services for children and young people looked after and the Council and our children looked after could not achieve what we do without the dedication, commitment and support of our foster carers. Fostering in Hartlepool is a real success story; our recent successful recruitment campaign has resulted in us expanding the number and range of placements, providing placement choice for placing Social Workers and also enabling us to continue to provide high quality foster care placements that enable children and young people to remain within their home town. With over 80% of all our children and young people in foster care within the provision of the Local Authority, the service leads the way in ensuring we achieve the vision and aspirations for looked after children as detailed in the Children Looked After Strategy 2014 -17:

Hartlepool has now fully implemented its Staying Put Policy and for our young people, care does not end at 18; our foster carers continue to support children whom they have previously looked after into adulthood providing them with a home and support and guidance until they are ready to live independently.

The Ofsted inspection of services for children which was undertaken in November 2013 considered our fostering service and commented as follows:

“The council’s fostering service is highly effective in recruiting, training and supporting foster carers and continues to increase the number of carers. In most cases it is able to provide well matched and well supported placements for children who become looked after, including keeping them with their brothers and sisters.”

We continue to strive to ensure that every looked after child in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships, is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging. This is our absolute priority and one which underpins all our work with children.

The stability of care placements is key to children and young people achieving positive outcomes and over the past 6 years the performance of the local authority has improved year on years ensuring that our children have stable foster homes from which to achieve their dreams, aspirations and goals.

I look forward to another successful year and would like to thank all our foster carers for the support, commitment and high quality of care they offer to our children and young people.



Sally Robinson

Introduction

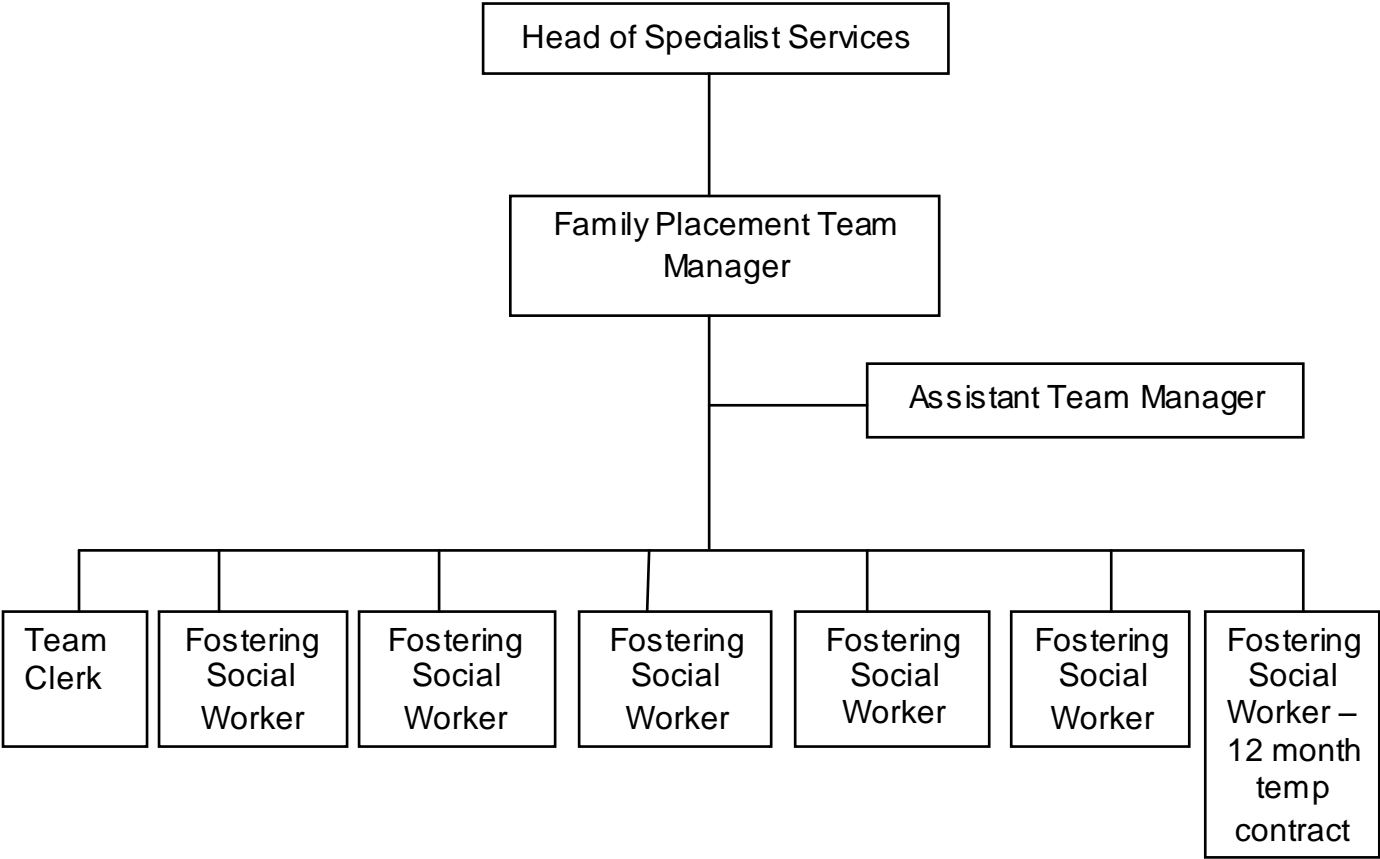
The annual report of the Fostering Service for Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) provides information about the activity of and outcomes achieved by the service during 2013/14. The report will reflect on the work of the team and service provided, identify changes that have taken place within the service and detail the statistical information in respect of the Fostering Service from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2014. Finally the report will set out priorities for service development during 2014/15.

The Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 places a requirement upon Local Authority Fostering Services to ensure that the Executive side of the Council receive 3 monthly reports on the management and outcomes of the service. This Annual Report provides a full review of the service and interim progress reports will be presented to Children's Services Committee on a quarterly basis throughout the financial year.

The aim of the fostering service is to recruit, train and support foster carers to provide high quality placements for the children of Hartlepool. This is achieved through the following objectives:

- The Fostering team actively works in partnership with children, young people, their families and other stakeholders involved in promoting positive outcomes for children and young people looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council in order to deliver a high quality foster care service;
- The Fostering team actively seeks to involve foster carers, children and young people looked after and children of foster carers in the development and continuous improvement of the service;
- The Fostering team recruit, assess, train and support a suitable and diverse range of foster carers to provide quality care and placement choice for children and young people;
- The Fostering team promotes stable placements and continuity of care for children to ensure carers, children and young people receive appropriate support and minimum disruption leading to good outcomes;
- To ensure that wherever possible and appropriate siblings will be accommodated together;
- The individual child's needs/wishes and feelings are paramount and taken into consideration in relation to placements.

The following table provides information relating to the staffing structure of the Fostering Service



Governance and Oversight

OFSTED's new approach to inspection is a single inspection of the whole of Children's Services and this includes the Fostering Service. Hartlepool Borough Council's Children's Service was one of the first of the Local Authorities to be inspected by OFSTED using this framework and our most recent inspection took place in November/December 2013. Overall the authority was judged as good and this included the Fostering Service where specific mention was given to some exemplarily features.

The Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011 set out the expectations in relation to the management, performance and governance of a fostering service.

The Fostering team are required to provide a quarterly report to Children's Services Committee detailing performance in relation to fostering.

Hartlepool Borough Council has established an appropriately constituted Family Placement Panel which, in accordance with the Regulations, is chaired by an Independent Person and has established a 'central list' of persons who have the appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the Panel for ratification.

This central list includes the Independent Chair, two Vice Chairs, two Agency Social Workers, an Elected Member, six 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.

Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, is the Fostering Agency Decision Maker, and as such makes the final decision in relation to foster carer approval, Connected Person's approval, children's permanence plans and matches. Sally is robust in her quality assurance and decision making ensuring that the best interest of children is always at the heart of everything we do.

Governance and Oversight

The Panel make recommendations on the suitability of prospective foster carers, long term foster care plans for children, foster carer reviews and the matching of children with permanent foster families. This also includes recommendations of the suitability of Connected Person's Foster Carers.

The table to the right highlights the Fostering Panel activity for 2013/14.

Recommendation to agree a plan for long term fostering for a child looked after	9
Matches considered by the Panel	14
Number of matches involving foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies.	1 match/ 2 children
Recommendations for approval of prospective foster carers	10
Resignation of foster carers	9
The Fostering Panel considered and endorsed the recommendations of Foster Carer Reviews	8
The Fostering Panel met in the last year	22 times

Preparation for Placement

The Fostering Service operates a duty system for responding to placement requests. Supervising Social Workers will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the child's needs so that they are able to match him/her to the most appropriate carer. We have recently introduced a more robust Request for Placement Form which can be used in matching placements both in house or where there is a need for an external placement.


For permanent fostering placements we now have a Guide to Permanence via Long term Fostering and Adoption. This guidance clarifies the process and outlines what information is required to be presented at Panel.

The Hartlepool Borough Council Permanence Policy recognises the importance of Child Appreciation Days and this is now regular practice when considering and securing a long term match for a child with both in house and external providers. Child Appreciation Days are held following the approval of a match by the Family Placement Panel and Agency Decision Maker.

All of our approved foster carers have a foster carer profile which is shared with children as part of preparation for placement, as is the Children and Young People's guide to Fostering.

Page extracts taken from the Children's Guide to Fostering






A thorough matching process is undertaken prior to placements being made and where time allows, a planning meeting is held prior to the child being placed, involving foster carers and the child's parents.

In some instances it is necessary for a child to be placed at short notice to safeguard and promote their welfare. On these occasions a planning meeting is held as soon as is practically possible following the placement.

The team take into account the assessed needs of the child and the child and his/her family's wishes, and wherever possible maintain siblings together in the same placement.



There have been a series of articles within local press in relation to the positive experiences of young people who are care leavers in Hartlepool and also current foster carers sharing their positive experience through editorials in the press.

[illegible]

The table below details the foster care capacity as at 31 March 2014

Number of foster carers	104
Number of placements available	23
How many children in placement?	163
How many vacancies?	26
How many not able to use/on hold?	2

The table below details the recruitment activity for 2013/14.

Initial enquiries - where did people hear about the service?	67 Initial enquiries Where stipulated: 3 TV advert (by another authority) 11 Hartlepool Mail 11 Internet 4 Recommendation from current carers 0 Evening Gazette 0 Primary Times 30 Own Volition
Information pack sent out between 1.4.13 – 31.3.14	64 packs sent out
Initial visits - How many proceeded	34 23
Preparation Group held:	April 2013 6 Fostering households attended July 2013 8 Fostering households attended

	January 2014 4 Fostering households attended
How prospective carers many waiting for a group?	Preparation Group planned for April 2014 9 Prospective households will be attending

All the Council's approved foster carers have completed the Children Workforce Development Council – Standards for Foster Carers and new carers are working on the standards and on target for completion within required timescales.

Prior to approval, all prospective carers undertake a 4 day preparation course ran by the team following the BAAF Skills to Foster Programme. The Preparation Training is regularly reviewed to ensure that the material remains up to date, is relevant and reflects recent research. All foster carers undergo a full home study assessment which also assists them in preparing to become foster carers and care for other people's children.

Post approval training includes access to all courses available to the children's workforce in Hartlepool and three mandatory training days for foster carers. In 2013/14 the bespoke training days covered:

- Attachment;
- Caring for a child who has been abused;
- Managing disclosures.

The fostering team facilitate monthly support groups for foster carers, these groups consists of informal discussion and support as well as the provision of information and an opportunity to offer peer support.

Foster carers now have access to the Council Children's Services Practice Manual that provides information of policy, procedures and regulations and training and support materials.

Over the last year foster carers have all been given a Hartlepool Borough Council e mail address and have received appropriate training on information governance. All foster carers are now successfully using this as a means of secure communication with fostering social workers, children's social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers and the training department.

A Survey was completed with all foster carers to identify their training needs for 2013/14. This survey will inform this year's annual training programme.



Post Approval Support and Participation

The fostering service is part of the Specialist Services Division and is located at Church Street where the following support and participation activities are available:

- All foster carers have an allocated Supervising Social Worker and receive a monthly supervision and support visit. Supervising Social Workers also make two unannounced visits a year to foster carers, this undertaken by a different member of staff to the foster carers allocated Social Worker.
- Funding is provided directly to the Hartlepool Foster Carer Association which provides regular communication with carers, a newsletter and activities for all foster carers and their families to participate in. A Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering team acts as a contact point and supports these activities. The Foster Carer Association hold regular coffee mornings for carers.
- The Placement Support Team provides individual support to carers, children and young people. This support can range from practical and emotional advice and guidance to respite support and will be identified as part of an assessment of need in partnership with the children's Social Worker and fostering Supervising Social Worker.
- The Department commissions services for Looked After children and Foster Carers from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. Carers have access to support in relation to individual young people for whom they are caring and psychologists have attended support groups to discuss general issues and challenges relating to caring for children looked after.
- The Placement Support Team facilitates the Foster Carer Sons and Daughters group, meeting on a monthly basis and providing activities and advice for children and young people.
- A support group for male foster carers has recently been established and is facilitated by a Supervising Social Worker.



- The Fostering Team has a duty worker throughout the working week who is available to respond to any calls from carers. In addition to this, foster carers have access to the Emergency Duty Team, the commissioned out of hours service and an out of hours telephone support service provided by Jane Young, Head of Business Unit (Specialist Services), Wendy Rudd, Head of Business Unit (Safeguarding, Assessment & Support and Maureen McEnaney, (Safeguarding and Review Manager) on a rota basis. Foster carers can contact the support phone line at any time.
- Foster carers are represented on the Council's Corporate Parent Forum and participate fully in these meetings.
- Foster carers are represented on the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership which takes the lead in the implementation and delivery of the Children Looked After Strategy.
- A newsletter which is written by the Foster Carer Association and supported by a Social Worker within the fostering team is distributed to all carers.
- All foster carers have access to the Departments web based Practice Manual which contains the Foster Carer handbook, Departmental Policies and Procedures and research information. The manual also provides a vehicle of communication and participation.
- There have been several drop in events held at Church Street throughout the year including sessions with health visitors, providing advice on weaning babies and a health promotion moving covering topics including healthy eating, smoking cessations and dental health.



The Fostering service holds an annual Celebration Evening to celebrate the achievements of the longest serving foster carers namely those that have been approved for ten years or more and also to demonstrate our gratitude to all our carers for the care that they provide to the Looked After Children of Hartlepool. This year, 14 Foster Carers were presented with Special Recognition Awards for the care and dedication shown to the children in their care; these awards were nominated by children's Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

Foster Carers were delighted with their Special Recognition Awards.



There is also a Celebration Evening and Summer Barbeque for children and young people who are looked after. Foster carers are very supportive ensuring attendance and participation of children and young people.



Priorities for 2014-2015

- To continue to offer families support from the Edge of Care Support Carers Scheme and to look at further recruitment to expand this project.
- Target recruitment to attract foster carers for older children and sibling groups and those with more challenging behaviours.
- To continue to offer and deliver an extensive training programme to our carers to ensure that all of our fostering households have achieved the CWDC qualification within the allocated timescales and can demonstrate continued professional development as foster carers.
- To continue the pilot foster carer support group for male carers and extend this to all male carers
- To continue with family finding post enabling children and young people to have 'permanency' in their lives as early as possible
- To hold life appreciation events for all children where permanency is the option.
- To continue to demonstrate our appreciation of the commitment provided by our foster carers.
- To continue to strive to support our carers to engender stability within placements for our looked after children.
- To consult foster carers in relation to the performance of the Local Authority in relation to support, training and retention of foster carers and to use this information to develop future priorities.
- Continue to facilitate sons and daughters group for children of foster carers.
- To further improve the quality of the care provided to children and young people to ensure better outcomes are achieved for children and young people in all aspects of their lives.
- To review the approval ages and status of the more experienced carers with a view to encouraging them to provide placements for older children with more complex needs.
- To look to secure funding to recruit a marketing/publicity person via the local universities to assist in recruitment and advertising.
- To embed the Guide to Permanence via Long Term Fostering and Adoption, meeting with the teams to clarify roles and develop joint assessments where permanency via long term foster care is being considered.
- To embed the BAAF 2 stage assessment process with more prescriptive timescales for assessments, recruitment, training and assessment.

Some quotes from Foster Carers, Social Workers and Young People

Comments from Social Workers:

“This Foster Carer is caring, competent and very committed. Everything that she does is for the children in her care. She never complains, and nothing is ever too much trouble. The little boy in her care has made exceptional progress and this is all down to the care provided. This carer is commended for never giving up”.

“These carers are a couple who have worked particularly well with birth family despite very difficult circumstances. Their level of commitment and care is exceptional and they work very well with all professionals involved in the care of the children”.

“They have shown excellent commitment and understanding in very difficult circumstances. Their understanding and management of the children’s behaviours and emotions is outstanding and creative. They work very well with all professionals and birth family members and were instrumental in supporting the boys to have a positive relationship with their social worker”.

“These carers are a couple who never give up and always look for the positives in any situation. They have worked with the young person in their care to obtain 100% attendance at school and have encouraged further education. They have openly welcomed birth parents in to their home and have gone out of their way to support contact”.

Comments from Children who foster:

“I feel comfortable sharing my house with foster children, it makes me happy meeting new children and bringing them in to our home so that they have someone to play with”.

“I like fostering because the children become like brothers and sisters to me. We do everything together as a family and I love film nights in together”.

Comments from children who are fostered:

“I think being in foster care is very good, they are nice people and I get on with all the kids. I like everything about it and nothing is not good”.

“I love being fostered by this family because I am a lot more settled, I love the animals and I get on well with all of the family”.



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILD AND ADULT SERVICES

FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This Statement of Purpose was initially approved by the Elected Members of Hartlepool Borough Council on 29th September 2003.

It was signed on behalf of the Elected Members by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

This Statement of Purpose was reviewed and up dated in March 2014 and is to be approved by the Elected Members of Hartlepool Borough Council.

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and revised as appropriate by the Team Manager of the Fostering Service no later than April 2015.

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Introduction

It is a requirement of the Fostering Services England Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, that each fostering agency produces a statement of purpose, including its aims and objectives, a description of the service it provides and the facilities that are provided. This Statement of Purpose gives an outline of those requirements and also how the services is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. It shows the policy and performance framework that underpins our work and shows how the welfare of children will be met and good outcomes achieved for all children in its care. It also demonstrates the systems which we have set in place to recruit, train, supervise and support foster carers.

This statement is available to all members of staff, foster carers, children and birth parents and is available on our Practice Guidance site fostering microsite. A copy of this statement is also to be lodged with Ofsted. The information contained is regularly updated, and will be amended annually.

A separate Children's Guide to the Fostering Service is given to all young people who are to be placed with foster carers. This is also available on the micro site.

Children's Guide

Subject to the child's age and understanding, the fostering service ensures the child received the Children's guide at the point of placement and that the foster carer explains the contents of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible. The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern. The fostering service will update this guide as required on an annual basis to ensure that information is current and reflects developments in the service. The service would seek to ensure that the guide was available in a format appropriate to the communication needs of the child concerned and would access council resources such as language translation to achieve this.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR STANDARDS OF CARE

AIMS

The main aim of Hartlepool Fostering Service is to provide safe, high quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. As well as promoting their health and general well-being the service is committed to ensuring that foster carers and family friends or Connected Persons carers are encouraged to help children and young people to reach their maximum educational ability.

Foster carers will provide good parenting for all children who are looked after and children will be consulted and encouraged to actively participate in their care and family life.

The Fostering Service will ensure that foster carers are provided with the skills, knowledge and support to enable them to meet the assessed needs of children placed.

Our service is committed to multi-agency working and develops partnerships and protocols with organisations which can progress the needs of our looked after children. We work at all levels in partnership with Education and Health to promote the well being of children in public care in Hartlepool.

To ensure foster carers make children and young people aware of their rights and the comments, complaints and advocacy process by passing on the relevant information.

Ensure that all practice promotes equal opportunities for all and value diversity of both foster children and carers regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, age, religious beliefs, disability or marital status.

To ensure that any decisions are transparent and fair and that any concerns are addressed and information about the complaints procedure is made available to all.

The service will consult regularly and learn from those that are in receipt of services through comments, compliments or complaints and have regular meetings with foster carers, senior managers and elected members.

The service will consult regularly with children who are fostered, using a variety of methods to ensure their voice is heard.

The service will also undertake the assessment and support to family and friends or Connected Persons carers to ensure they are equipped to provide the high quality of care aspired to for all children who are looked after. The process including timescales and responsibilities for undertaking a Connected

Person assessment are detailed within the Hartlepool Borough Council Connected Persons Policy and Procedure document.

OBJECTIVES

- To plan and implement effective recruitment campaigns and strategies in order to attract the number and range of carers identified to meet the complex and diverse needs of the looked after population of Hartlepool and to ensure a choice of high quality foster placements.
- To ensure that wherever possible and appropriate siblings will be accommodated together.
- The individual child's needs/wishes and feelings are paramount and taken into consideration in relation to placements.
- To undertake effective timely assessments of prospective carers including Connected Persons carers within specified timescales to ensure that children are afforded safe and effective placements.
- To maintain and support an Adoption and Fostering Panel to consider Foster Carer and Connected Persons assessments and make recommendations for approval of prospective Foster Carers, children's plans for long term foster care, plans for Special Guardianship and approval of the match of Named Children with Foster Carers. The panel also considers the first reviews of Foster carers and subsequent reviews where category changes are being agreed or there have been issues regarding placements
- To provide pre and post approval training for applicants and carers, equipping them to meet the diverse needs of this group of children and young people.
- To provide regular recorded supervision and support contacts with carers by suitably qualified and experienced staff.
- To ensure that additional and flexible support is available to carers to underpin placement stability and improve outcomes for children in placement.
- To protect children and young people from abuse and neglect through safer recruitment practices and adherence to safeguarding policy and procedures in all areas of the service including for staff, carers and panel members.
- To create stability for children and young people in foster care through robust matching processes and a good standard of consistent and effective support.

- To achieve better life chances for looked after children particularly in relation to health, education and employment and leisure activities through promoting the development of skills and expertise within the fostering community and engendering and supporting a culture of aspiration for our looked after children.
- To maintain and promote contact with family members where appropriate.
- To prepare young people adequately for when they eventually leave their foster placement.
- To create lifelong attachments with carers in order that children and young people continue to be supported into adulthood.
- To work in partnership with children and young people, their parents and carers and social workers.
- Provide an environment where each child and young person is helped to make the best of his or her abilities emotionally, physically, educationally and socially.

PRINCIPLES

The work of Hartlepool Fostering Service is based on the following principles:

1. **Child focussed** – the child's welfare and needs are at the centre of the fostering process and their wishes and feelings are sought and taken into account in all aspects of their care.
2. **Partnership** – the Fostering Service will work in partnership with children and their parents, foster carers and their families, and social work staff and other professionals when delivering the service.
3. **Anti-discriminatory practice** – the Fostering Service will respect human rights and will ensure that there is fair and equal access to all its services. The services it provides will be free from discrimination, prejudice and racism. The service will value diversity and promote equality.

THE STANDARDS OF CARE

The Fostering Service will in its delivery support Hartlepool Child and Adult Services in meeting the child focussed standards which set out what children in foster care need as detailed in the Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011:

Standard 1: The child's wishes and feelings and the views of those significant to them

- Children know that their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account in all aspects of their care; are helped to understand why it may not be possible to act upon their wishes in all cases; and know how to obtain support and make a complaint.
- The views of any others who have important relationship to the child are gathered and taken into account.

Standard 2: Promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care

- Children have a positive self view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background.

Standard 3: Promoting positive behaviour and relationships

- Children enjoy sound relationships with their foster family, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Children

- Children feel safe and are safe. Children understand how to protect themselves and are protected from significant harm, including neglect, abuse and accident.

Standard 5: Children Missing from Care

- Children rarely go missing and if they do, they return quickly
- Children who do go missing are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return

Standard 6: Promoting good health and wellbeing

- Children live in a healthy environment where their physical, emotional and psychological health is promoted and where they are able to access the services to meet their health needs.

Standard 7: Education, employment and leisure activities

- Children are able to enjoy their interests, develop confidence in their skills and are supported and encouraged to engage in leisure activities
- Children are able to make a positive contribution to the foster home and their wider community

Standard 8: Promoting educational achievement

- The education and achievement of children is actively promoted as valuable in itself and as part of their preparation for adulthood. Children are supported to achieve their educational potential.

Standard 9: Promoting and supporting contact

- Children have, where appropriate, constructive contact with their parents, grandparents, siblings, half-siblings, wider family, friends and people who play a significant role in their lives.

Standard 10: Providing a suitable physical environment for the foster child

- Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable standard. The child enjoys access to a range of activities which promote his or her development.

Standard 11: Preparation for a placement

- Children are welcomed into the foster home and leave the foster home in a planned and sensitive manner which makes them feel loved and valued.
- Children feel part of the family. They are not treated differently to the foster carer's own children living in the household. The child's needs are met and they benefit from a stable placement.

Standard 12: Promoting independence and moves to adulthood and leaving care

- Children are prepared for, and supported into, adulthood so that they can reach their full potential and achieve economic well-being.

Children Looked After Strategy

In addition to the national standards, Hartlepool Fostering Service has adopted the visions or aspirations for Looked after children detailed in the Children Looked After Strategy which underpin its approach to service delivery. These include:

- The vision is to ensure that every looked after child in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships, is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging.
- When a child becomes looked after, there must be sufficient range of accommodation options available to be able to match the child to a placement that will meet his/her needs.

THE SERVICES PROVIDED

The services provided specifically by the Fostering service fall into two main areas:

- 1) those provided to registered foster carers and potential foster carers including Connected persons carers
 - initial visits to people expressing an interest in becoming foster carers
 - preparation training for applicants
 - competency based assessments of applicants
 - support systems for approved foster carers and Connected Persons carers including allocated Supervising Social Worker and regular supervisions
 - post-approval training and development for foster carers and Connected Persons carers
 - consultation with carers over the development of the service
- 2) those provided to children requiring a foster placement
 - a duty social worker available during office hours Monday to Friday
 - provision of a range of foster care placements for children looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council
 - the provision of carers for use by the Emergency Duty Team for placements at evenings, weekends and bank holidays.
 - Consultation with looked after children on all aspects of the service.

The Fostering service also works in conjunction with a number of other agencies and professionals to ensure a cohesive and effective package of support is available to children who become looked after. The Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership provides a valuable forum for the review of progress and service effectiveness and to plan the implementation of work projects. The agencies and partners involved with looked after children and young people including carers and young people are represented on this forum and are fully involved in its activities. The Child in Care Council plays a critical role in service development and has a valuable contribution to make in terms of feedback. The authority is committed to learning from the experiences of its children in care and to seek improvements.

Provision of Therapeutic Services

The Fostering Service has a discreet service the Therapeutic Social Work team (ACORN) and commission a discreet service from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), who provide therapeutic input to children and young people in foster placement, consultation to carers and other professionals. CAMHS comprises of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, child and adolescent mental health practitioners and social workers with expertise in children's mental health. A worker from CAMHS is now co-located with the team in the church street premises.

In addition the members of the Therapeutic Social Work Team (ACORN) work closely with carers and often work directly with them in conjunction with the child in placement. The key objectives of the work is to provide a regular, easy to use guidance and support service to all foster carers and to improve placement stability for children in care. They also provide training to foster carers, Connected Persons carers, social workers and other professionals.

Provision of Health Promotion Support Services

There is a Designated Nurse for Looked after Children and Young People who oversees Children's Annual Health Assessments and has a proactive input into the health promotion of Young People. She will provide support to foster carers in addressing the range of health issues which may present with looked after children. She also provides advice and support to young people on an individual basis on issues such as contraception and sexual health matters.

A dedicated consultant paediatrician advises the Adoption and Fostering panel on medical issues for applications to foster and children with a plan for long term fostering.

Provision of Educational Support Services

The Fostering service has strong links to the educational support services for Looked after children and in particular works closely with the Inclusion Co-ordinator (Looked After children/young offenders), the Head of Social and Education Inclusion – Children's services who have a strong commitment to the looked after population.

Provision of Leisure, Sport, Cultural and Religious Activity

Foster carer training and supervision promotes the importance of leisure provision for looked after children and young people, and the expectation that carers will seek out and support new experiences and activities to enhance children's self-worth, social development and independence.

We aim to support all young people in their religious and cultural beliefs and customs. We ensure that information is available to provide understanding of different cultures and religions. We provide resources that may be needed to ensure young people are able to practice their beliefs and customs.

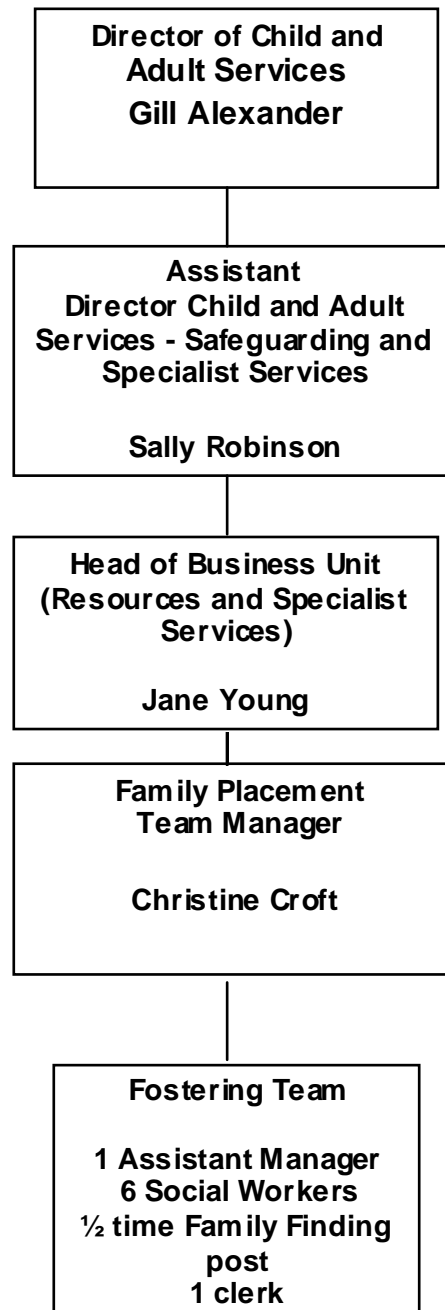
We are committed to directly challenging racism and ensure that all young people who access our services are aware of our policies in relation to anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism. We will ensure that all people are treated equally, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or religion. We have supervising fostering social workers to help carers with issues with trans-racial placements.

Preparation for Adulthood/Pathway Planning

The Through Care Team and the Fostering Service work closely with other professionals to provide a holistic approach to meeting young peoples needs. Hartlepool is committed to supporting care leavers and ensuring that they are able to build the skills and ability to eventually live independently. The service is committed to the ethos of 'Staying Put'. We acknowledge that young people mature at different rates and we will support where possible young people to remain in their foster placement beyond 18 years of age in order to experience normal family life if this supports them more effectively.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Fostering Service of Hartlepool Borough Council is provided by designated workers from the Family Placement Team who are based within the Resources and Specialist Services section of the Child and Adult Services Department.



SPECIFIC SERVICE INFORMATION

NUMBERS OF FOSTER CARERS

The number of Foster Carer approvals achieved 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 comprised 9 approvals of mainstream carers, approvals of support carers and 8 approvals of Connected Person carers. In the period 2013 - 2014 the fostering service accepted the resignation of 4 mainstream carers, and 1 Connected Persons carers and 1 short break carer. There were no foster carer or Connected Persons cases tendered.

The total number of Foster Carers approved by Hartlepool Borough Council on 31st March 2014 was 103. This number includes 2 approved as Short Break Carers and 2 support carers.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

The total number of Looked After children at 31 March 2014 was 103 (prev. 190), of which 10 are Connected Persons foster carers. The number of children placed in foster care placements provided by Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering Service on 31st March 2014 was 159 (prev. 169), 19 of whom were placed with Connected Persons.

DESIGNATION OF CARERS

The majority of carers are mainstream offering either short or longer term care to children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

A banded payment scheme is in place ranging from band 1 to band 4. Progression is based on experience, competencies and training. This scheme also includes the potential to make the payment of a Specialist fee for placements for children with more complex needs.

Of the 103 carers approved, the Fostering Service had, as of 31 March 2014, 16 foster carers who were designated Specialist Carers due to the complex needs of the children placed.

2 Carers approved are designated as a 'Short Break Carer' (previously Sharing the Caring). They provide short break care for children and young people with disabilities to provide them and their carers with some respite. However one carer is currently on hold while she gives consideration to her personal circumstances.

Hartlepool also has 2 Remand Carer who were recruited specifically to look after young people who have been remanded in care by the Courts. However one carer is on long term sick. It is proposed that the remit of one Specialist carers will include remand provision although the demand for such a provision has not been evident over the past 12 months. Additional training is to be provided to ensure that this service is available.

Hartlepool currently has one carer whose remit is to specifically provide 'parent and child' placements but also have carers who have the capacity to provide such placements in very specific circumstances. This is an area which continues to require attention so that our resources are able to meet the demand for these placements in the most effective manner.

SAFEGUARDING, COMPLAINTS & ALLEGATIONS

Protecting Children from Harm

Hartlepool Fostering Services operates a safe recruitment process for all staff employed by the agency and panel members. In addition, there is a rigorous vetting and assessment process undertaken with all potential carers. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring checks (previously CRB) are repeated every 3 years for all carers and all staff panel members are required to confirm that they have had sight of and will adhere to the Data Protection Act which regulates the use and sharing of any personal and confidential information.

Hartlepool Fostering Service has policy and guidance underpinning our service on safe caring, health and safety, bullying, management of behaviour and foster carer agreements.

Our processes and procedures will ensure that any concern is addressed and monitored by the management team and will inform service developments, for example:

Poor quality of care/breach of foster care agreement, child protection procedures which deal with allegations of abuse against foster carers and through the complaints procedures.

Children will know about these procedures through their social worker and the Children's Guide. They also have had access to a children's rights and advocacy service independent of the service currently provided by Barnados.

Complaints Procedure

Hartlepool Borough Council Child and Adult Services operates a complaints service which is independent of the Fostering Service.

Foster Carers are given a Complaints and Compliments Leaflet at the outset of the assessment, detailing the process if they wish to make a complaint, and also when they sign the Foster Carer Agreement.

NUMBERS OF COMPLAINTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

In the year 1 April 2013 to 31ST March 2014 there were 0 complaints made against a foster Carer in respect of the standard of care provided.

Allegations

All allegations in relation to foster carers are investigated and actioned through Hartlepool Child Protection Service reporting to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on behalf of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board under the procedures for Managing Allegations against people who work with children or who are in a position of trust. Foster carers are offered independent support during this process which can be accessed via their fostering Social worker.

NUMBERS OF ALLEGATIONS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

Between 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014 there were 3 child protection referrals made in respect of allegations by looked after children against their carers. All 3 children were referred to the LADO and managed via the Managing Allegation against people who work with children or who are in a position of trust. Where necessary Independent assessments have been commissioned and the recommendation of this has been included within the foster cares subscript review and panel for consideration.

THE PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES FOR RECRUITING, APPROVING, TRAINING, SUPPORTING AND REVIEWING CARERS.

1. RECRUITMENT:

Publicity

- 1.1 Hartlepool's recruitment strategy is reviewed annually. All enquirers are asked where they obtained the contact details of the service and this information is analysed in order to target specific campaigns. From information regarding the previous years' enquiries there again appears to be greatest response to adverts in the local press and from people known to current carers.
- 1.2 Methods currently used include leaflets being displayed in council and public buildings in the town, local advertising and editorials in the Hartlepool Mail including the Mail website and related guides such as the Parenting Guide. Advertisements are also regularly placed in Stockton and Sunderland within the Primary Times. The publicity materials reflect the brand which we hope will assist in our efforts to attract new carers.
- 1.3 There are also regional efforts orchestrated through the Regional Marketing Forum to attract new foster carers such as a regional radio advertising campaign. Advertisements for carers for specific children can be placed in the local media.
- 1.4 We also have access to the Hartlepool Borough Council Press Office who are able to help us promote the service to the press through editorials and we have a page on Hartlepool Borough Council website and a micro-site for fostering and adoption information where potential carers can register interest in becoming a foster carer. This has recently been updated. Features within, newspaper articles, community meetings and briefings are all undertaken regularly.

Response to Enquiries

- 1.5 Enquiries regarding fostering are responded to quickly. An Information pack is normally sent out within one day of the enquiry being received. Once the return slip is received from the enquirer a joint home visit is normally made within five working days. Information about the assessment process is given and information about the family is gathered, including their motivation to foster. They are asked to make a formal registration of interest to proceed. If no response is received within 8 weeks then a further contact is made to ascertain their wishes and reason for delaying or withdrawing. If the potential applicants do not respond in a further 4 weeks then the file will be closed.

2. ASSESSMENT:

- 2.1 The process for assessment leading to presentation to the Adoption and Fostering Panel for approval is clearly explained and keeping applicants informed of the progress of statutory checks etc, is considered important.
- 2.2 All applicants are normally required to attend a 4 day preparation course. The preparation training undertaken uses the Fostering Networks Skills to Foster programme including, Skills to Foster, Child Development, Separation and Loss, Attachment, Working Together, Safer Care, Moving On, Life Work. There is an evaluation at the end of the course and applicants are requested to give feedback.
- 2.3 Medical examinations are carried out by the applicant's doctor using the BAAF medical form and returned to the Hartlepool Medical Adviser for comments and a recommendation regarding suitability to foster. The applicants are required to undergo a number of statutory checks including an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, local authority checks, current employer and NSPCC checks. The purpose of these checks is to safeguard the children to be placed. Personal references are also undertaken.
- 2.4 The allocated workers undertaking the home study make an agreement with the applicants for the completion of the assessment including agreeing dates and times of visits and the target for completion of the home study. The applicants are required to view the assessment report and give written feedback prior to the Panel consideration of their application.

3 APPROVAL:

- 3.1 The applicants will be invited to attend the Adoption and Fostering Panel that is held every second and fourth Thursday in the month. They will be given the opportunity to answer questions put by the Panel members and to make any additional comments they may wish to make. Applicants are to be informed verbally of the Agency Decision Maker's decision within two working days of the ADM meeting taking place and are to receive confirmation in writing five working days of the Agency Decision Maker's confirming or otherwise the Panel recommendation. The Applicant will be asked for their comments regarding the process and evaluation forms are to be used to achieve this.
- 3.2 Applicants who are not deemed suitable to foster may access the review procedure or seek an independent review through the Independent Review Mechanism.

4. SUPPORT:

- 4.1 Once a foster carer has been approved by Panel they complete a foster carer agreement and are provided either with the paper copy of or information to access the Foster Carer Handbook electronically. All foster carers are allocated a supervising social worker from the Fostering Service. This person will visit the foster carers, provide formal supervision on a monthly basis or at an agreed level dependent upon current placement and carer capability. They will also provide directly, or facilitate access to, any practical, emotional or professional support required.
- 4.2 Foster carers are provided with equipment to enable them to care for a child in placement.
- 4.3 Foster carers will be invited to attend a monthly support group that is facilitated by two members of staff from the team. The group is an opportunity to build networks of support amongst other carers, exchange ideas about fostering and to have the opportunity to hear guest speakers on a variety of relevant subjects. This provides a valuable forum for carers to be updated regarding service developments and to network with other professionals.
- 4.4 The Fostering Service operates a duty system within office hours which is staffed by a fostering service worker. Foster carers can access support and advice from this worker if their allocated worker is not available. An out of hours telephone support service is also provided additional to the Emergency Duty Team arrangements which are in place. This telephone support is provided by the Heads of Business Unit within Children's Services.
- 4.5 All foster carers receive full membership of Fostering Network and access to an independent advice and mediation service should an allegation be made against them.
- 4.6 The agency also provides financial support to the Hartlepool Foster Carers Association which arranges a number of social events throughout the year. Members of the team also meet with representatives of the Foster Carers Association to be kept informed of any issues they wish to raise
- 4.7 The Fostering Service arrange a yearly Celebration evening event to commemorate the efforts of the longest serving foster carers initially those that have been approved for ten years or more and more importantly to demonstrate our gratitude to all our carers for the care that they provide to the looked after children of Hartlepool.
- 4.8 The fostering service has a Foster carer Charter and this sets out the local authority's role detailing what the department will provide for its carers including in terms of support and information. It also sets out the

Foster Carers' role detailing their commitment to such concepts as working in partnership and their learning and development.

5. TRAINING:

- 5.1 An annual training plan details and supports the provision of sufficient and regular training opportunities for foster carers through the approval process and throughout their career in fostering.
- 5.2 All foster carers will attend a preparation training course incorporating the Skills to Foster materials during their preparation and assessment.
- 5.3 An Induction programme involving the completion of the Children's Workforce Development Council workbook has been developed and all new foster carers will be required to undertake this piece of work within the first twelve months. Foster carers will have the opportunity to be supported on an individual basis to complete the workbooks by their Link Workers. There is also the opportunity for carers to be mentored by more experienced carers if they wish.
- 5.4 Foster Carers are required to complete a training portfolio and their Supervising Social Workers are to support each carer to ensure they have a Personal Development Plan which is reviewed as part of the Foster Carers annual review.
- 5.5 Foster carers are given support and encouragement to attend all training events that are relevant to their role. Any places available on relevant staff training events are offered to foster carers to increase their sense of working in partnership with the professional team and to ensure the best care is offered to children and young people. Carers are provided with information regarding training provided corporately, through Child and Adult Services and through the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All carers are provided with a training portfolio to record their training and development activity which in turn is used to inform and create their personal development plan.
- 5.6 Where possible Foster Carer representatives are supported to attend specialist training events by external providers such as BAAF and the expectation is that they will then cascade the information to the other carers.

6 REVIEW:

- 6.1 The registration of all foster carers is reviewed on a regular basis. The views of the foster carer are sought, together with the views of children and placing Social workers via end of placement reports and within the review documentation. The supervising social worker is responsible for

collating the information and adding their own views based on the placements that have taken place and their observations of the carer during visits and supervision

- 6.2 The first review is held after six months and then annually thereafter. Reviews are chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers who are independent of the Fostering Service. The review report is presented to the Fostering Panel by the supervising social worker for consideration after the first review and if there is a proposal to change the approval category or recommend de-registration. Foster carers have the option to attend panel if they wish.
- 6.3 The registration of foster carers may be reviewed by Panel at any time if there are changes of circumstances or events indicate that foster carers are no longer suitable to care for children.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Foster carers are provided with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on carers and looked after children, who are subject to National Standards and Data Protection legislation. Staff and foster carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest, as are panel members.

7. DE-REGISTRATION:

- 7.1 Most foster carers voluntarily withdraw from the fostering task. The details of their resignation are placed before the Fostering Panel and their de-registration is formally recorded.
- 7.2 There are occasions when the registration of a foster carer is reviewed with a view to considering the options available, i.e. changes to approval or de- registration. Foster carers are offered the opportunity to submit a response attend the Fostering Panel in these circumstances. Also if unhappy with the decision reached they are also able to request a review of the decision or to have their case addressed by the Independent Review Mechanism.

8. THE ADOPTION AND FOSTERING PANEL:

- 8.1 The fostering agency is required by the Fostering Services Regulations to establish a Fostering Panel. The membership, role and functions of the panel are prescribed within the Regulations. Hartlepool have moved away from separate panels for Adoption and Fostering matters and have now amalgamated the panel and hold a joint 'Adoption and Fostering panel. This is in order to ensure quoracy and to allow for flexibility

regarding the presentation of cases. Panel membership is now drawn from a central list of members and quoracy dictates that at least five members are present. These members must comprise the chair or vice chair, 2 social work representatives and 2 independent members. Panels must also have access to medical and legal advice as required.

- 8.2 Hartlepool's Adoption and Fostering Panel currently meets every second and fourth Thursday in the month and considers assessments of prospective foster and connected persons foster carers, annual reviews of carers and where necessary connected persons foster carers, de-registrations and issues in relation to foster carers. Although not a requirement within the regulations the Adoption and Fostering Panel also considers the plan for a child for long term fostering. The business of the Panel is formally recorded.
- 8.3 The Adoption and Fostering Panel makes recommendations that are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for consideration. These decisions are recorded and notified in writing to the prospective/existing foster carers.
- 8.4 Foster carers who disagree with the Panel decision regarding their approval, de-registration or changes to category of approval will have the opportunity to request a review of the decision made by the Fostering Panel either through the agency or through the Independent Review Mechanism which is provided by BAAF.
- 8.5 The Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption and Fostering Panel policy and procedures document provides additional information regarding the constitution and running of the panel.

APPENDIX 1 Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards:

The work of Hartlepool Fostering Service is delivered within the following legal framework and in accordance with the following standards:

- Fostering Service Regulations 2011
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 from section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for local authorities 2010.

This Statement of Purpose is produced in accordance with the following standards and regulations

NMS 2011 Standard 16

- 16.1** The fostering service has a clear statement of purpose which is available to and understood by foster carers, staff and children and is

reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. It is available to the responsible authority and any parent or person with parental responsibility.

- 16.2 The aims and objectives of the statement of purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.

The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)

- 4.1 The Fostering service provider must compile a Statement of Purpose , which sets out the aims and objectives of the service as a whole, and the services and facilities which are provided (including the provision of any 'parent and child arrangements'). The statement must be reviewed and updated as necessary , but at least annually and published on the provider's website (if they have one), with a copy provided to Ofsted. Copies must also be available upon request to anyone working for the purposes of the fostering service, any foster carer or potential foster carer of the service, and to any child placed with one of the service's foster carers and their parents.
- 4.2 The Statement of purpose is a key document which sets a framework for all of the business of the fostering service . it must be consistent with relevant legislation, Regulations, NMS and statutory guidance, be child focused and show how the fostering service will help children achieve positive outcomes. The manager of the fostering service must ensure that the service is at all times conducted in a manner consistent with the Statement of Purpose.

APPENDIX 2

NUMBERS, RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF as at 1st April 2013

The staff of Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service consists of:

NAME & STATUS	DATE OF APPOINTMENT			QUALIFICATIONS	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE
Jane Young Head of Business Unit Resources and Specialist Services	01	10	10	CSS 1989 PQ 1 PQ Child Care Award 2004 CMS 2006 HCPC registered	Children & Families LAC Team Manager Fostering & Adoption Team Manager. Fostering & Adoption Panel member

Christine Croft Team Manager	02	02	09	Dip SW 1997 PQ1 CCA HCPC Registered ILM Diploma in Management	Nominated Worker Children & Families Independent Fostering Agency Team Manager
Jacqui Dixon Assistant Team Manager	01 01	10 01	09 14	Dip Sw 2003 PQ1 HCPC Registered	Children & Families Resource Team Manager Nominated Worker
Glynis Howe Social Worker	04	11	02	CQSW 1984 PQ1 CCA HCPC Registered	Children & Families Family Placement Training
Julie Levitt Social Worker	02	02	07	BSc Childhood Studies Dip SW 1997 HCPC Registered	Children & Families Leaving Care Family Placement
Janet McGreevy Social Worker	10	01	05	Dip SW 1992 BA (Hons) Social Work Studies PQ1 HCPC Registered	Residential Social Work Family Support Child Protection Nominated Worker
Keith Munro Social Worker	01	04	12	BA Hons Social Studies Dip SW 1992 HCPC registered	Children & Families Connexions Children's Society Research and Policy
Leanne Harris Social Worker	02	09	13	BA (Hons) in Social Worker July 2011	Children's Safeguarding Drug and alcohol practitioner Family Placement Social Worker
Alison Wallace Social Worker	09	09	13	BA (Hons) in Social Work July 2013	Family Placement Social Worker
Anne Waites Administrative Staff					Child & Adult Services Admin Children & Families

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2015/2016

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek the agreement of the Children's Services Committee to the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2015/2016.
- 2.2 To seek the agreement of the Children's Services Committee in recommending these dates to governing bodies of Aided and Foundation schools and Academies in Hartlepool.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As the Local Authority (LA), the Council has the responsibility for setting the school term and holiday dates for Community and Controlled schools in Hartlepool. Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools' governing bodies and Academies are responsible for setting their own school holiday pattern within the agreed national framework of working days. Traditionally the LA and the governing bodies of all the Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools work together to ensure a consistent pattern across the town in respect of school term and holiday dates, although, in the case of Roman Catholic schools in particular, some variation does occur in some years.
- 3.2 The pattern proposed for 2015/2016 provides for an "envelope" of 195 days, with five days designated by the school as Professional Development (PD) days. Five PD days are provided for in the Conditions of Service and can be taken in combinations of part-day "twilight" sessions at the direction of individual schools.

- 3.3 Local Authorities for a number of years have tried, with some success, to agree a unified calendar of term dates across the Northern region from Yorkshire to Northumberland.
- 3.4 In 2012/ 2013 the regional group met and agreed draft guiding principles for consideration to establish as far as possible school term dates for each year and to take account of changing times and the decision of the Local Government Association (LGA's) to no longer recommend school term dates.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 North East representatives have in the main consulted on the school year pattern for 2015-2016 based on the guiding principles within their own authorities.
- 4.2 Following consultation with North East representatives, arrangements were made to consult with all Head teachers in Hartlepool and also the relevant professional associations / unions on the school year pattern for 2015/2016.
- 4.3 In response to the consultation, responses were received from three primary schools who expressed a desire to work until 22nd December 2014 and return to school on 6th January 2015.
- 4.4 On the completion of local consultation in the region, the general consensus from the Local Authorities is to adopt the model attached as **Appendix 1** for school term dates 2015/16

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To approve the schedule of term dates and holiday dates for 2015 / 2016 for Community and Controlled Schools as shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2 To recommend the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2015/2016 to governing bodies of all Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies in Hartlepool as shown in **Appendix 1**

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The proposals seek to achieve common term dates across Yorkshire and the North East based on guiding principles enabling continuity for parents, carers, other schools, local authority staff and other agencies.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

8. CONTACT OFFICER

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6.4 Appendix 1

DRAFT HARTLEPOOL SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2015 -16

	AUGUST 2015	SEPTEMBER 2015	OCTOBER 2015	NOVEMBER 2015	DECEMBER 2015	JANUARY 2016
Monday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Tuesday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Wednesday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Thursday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Friday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
Saturday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Sunday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31

	FEBRUARY 2016	MARCH 2016	APRIL 2016	MAY 2016	JUNE 2016	JULY 2016
Monday	1 8 15 22 29	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Tuesday	2 9 16 23	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Wednesday	3 10 17 24	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
Thursday	4 11 18 25	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
Friday	5 12 19 26	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29
Saturday	6 13 20 27	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Sunday	7 14 21 28	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31

The number of term dates shown is 195 .Within the period of 1st September 2015 and 31st August 2016,5 days within the above school terms will be used as professional development days for teaching staff and children will not attend on these dates .Each school /academy will determine when these dates are to be taken and inform parents accordingly

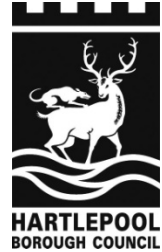
■ Bank Holiday
■ Holiday

CHILD AND ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th August 2014



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PROJECT

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To inform members of the on-going work being carried out in relation to Holocaust Memorial activities in preparation for Holocaust Memorial Day January 27th 2015 which is themed 'Keep the Memory Alive'.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Youth Support Services were approached by the Holocaust Memorial Trust alongside Hartlepool Borough Council's Education Division to support the development of a series of Holocaust Memorial events in Hartlepool in late 2013.
- 3.2 An open call was made to local young people who would be interested in raising their awareness and developing peer education programmes with other young people which resulted in a Development Day being held at Brinkburn Youth Centre on the 25th January 2014. During the event young people learned about the holocaust and the 2014 years theme of 'Journeys'. Young people committed themselves to supporting the development of an action plan to develop interactive activities to raise awareness amongst their peers.
- 3.3 Two 'Love Book, Love Film' events were held at the Town Hall Theatre. One was an event for schools held during the day on the 3rd February to explore the book and film 'The Boy in The Striped Pyjamas' and one an open event for young people aged 15 to 19 years to explore the book and film 'Defiance'. Young people from the development group carried out presentations and helped to organise both events. In total, over 120 young people attended these events.

- 3.4 Following this, young people from the development group attended a residential in February 2014 at the National Holocaust Centre to speak to survivors and, following this, provided their first peer education course to young people in Hartlepool. The aim of the presentation was to educate young people further on the process of genocide and the importance of equality and tolerance within society. Alongside this, young people also developed an action plan which prioritised raising other young people's awareness of the holocaust and other genocides and linking this to equality issues more locally.

4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.1 In preparation for the forthcoming Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2015, young people have identified that they would like to build upon the previous year's event to enable them to have an even greater impact on other young people. They have decided that they would like to undertake an international visit to Auschwitz – Birkenau and couple this with their experiences so far. Alongside this, they have decided that they would like to develop a book to give out to all schools for young people in preparation for forthcoming Holocaust Memorial events and they are busy organising to go into secondary schools in the coming months and to hold a public launch event.
- 4.2 The young people have been involved in fundraising and organising the above visit – through raffles, cake sales, and bag packs, they have raised over £1000. They have also received funding from Youth Support Services, Education and resources from ITV fixers to enable the international visit and the events to go ahead as planned. The visit is due to take place from the 25th to the 29th August.
- 4.3 Officers will be liaising with the Holocaust Memorial Trust, Secondary Schools, ITV Fixers and other providers to ensure that the work is promoted and as many young people benefit from the project as possible.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the committee acknowledge the importance of maintaining young people's cultural awareness through this project and where appropriate support by attending future events.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

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