

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Tuesday 12 July 2016

at 4.00 pm

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

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Beck, Clark, Hall, Hamilton, Harrison, Lauderdale and Moore.

Co-opted Members: Julie Cordiner (C of E Diocesan representative) and Michael Lee (RC Diocesan representative).

School Heads Representatives: Mark Tilling (Secondary), David Turner (Primary)

Six Young People's Representatives

Observer: Councillor Thomas, 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 14 June 2016 (*previously circulated and published*).

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

- 4.1 Hartlepool Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2016 – 2020 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*
- 4.2 Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2016/ 2017 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*



5. KEY DECISIONS

5.1 Revised Developer Contributions – Early Years and School Infrastructure Plan – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

5.2 Suitability Projects – Update – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

6.1 Adoption Annual Report 2015/16 and Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2016/17 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

6.2 Fostering Services Annual Report 2015/16 and Statement of Purpose 2016/17 – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

6.3 To Nominate Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7.1 Proportion of Young People Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 13 September 2016 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: HARTLEPOOL CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY
STRATEGY 2016 - 2020

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Budget and Policy Framework

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To consult members of the Children's Services Committee on the Child and Family Poverty Strategy and to make any recommendations on changes to the strategy.

2.2 Finance and Policy Committee will receive a final draft of the Child and Family Poverty that will include any recommendations from the Children's Services Committee on 5 September 2016.

2.3 Full Council will be asked to ratify the strategy in October 2016.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The government's Child Poverty Act 2010 placed new requirements on local authorities and its partners to mitigate the effects of child poverty in their area. A series of key actions were set for local authorities including duty to co-operate, to undertake a child poverty needs assessment and to produce local child poverty strategies. Hartlepool has produced two strategies since the Act was made law and updated its needs assessment annually.

3.2 The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed much of the Child Poverty Act and redefined poverty with a focus on work and educational attainment. The government's latest child poverty strategy is for the period 2014 -2017. In this they set out their intentions to support families into work and increase their earnings, to improve living standards and to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through raising of educational attainment. The goal to

end child poverty by 2020 remains their commitment however the way they measure this has changed.

4. DEFINING POVERTY

- 4.1 Poverty can be defined in many different ways. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as "when a person's resources are not enough to meet their basic needs." The indicator most widely used to measure poverty and to assess progress on 2020 target is:

"Relative poverty: each household's income, adjusted for family size, is compared to median income. Those with less than 60 per cent of median income are classified as poor. The measure is broadly used by many countries and the European Union. In the UK this information is taken from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey."

- 4.2 The new Welfare Reform and Work Act has retained the relative poverty measurement and included new reporting obligations:-
- Children living in workless households
 - Children living in long – term workless households
 - Educational attainment of children at end of Key Stage 4
 - Educational attainment of disadvantaged children at end of Key Stage 4
- 4.3 The overall level of child poverty in Hartlepool is currently 31% (Child Poverty Commission, 2015)

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Draft Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2016 – 2020 is attached as **Appendix A**. The draft strategy has been developed with partners as set out below:
- A child and family poverty consultation workshop was held on 28th January 2016 with representatives from the Hartlepool Financial Inclusion partnership with council officers. The workshop focussed on three themes and asked a series of questions about child and family poverty in Hartlepool.
 - A further stakeholder event took place on 24th March 2016 which included members, voluntary providers, schools and health. This session looked at the strategic priorities and discussed practical solution to the challenges facing the town.
 - Young People were consulted about their thoughts on the impact of poverty and this information was presented to the stakeholder event on 24th March to inform the discussions.
 - A draft strategy was produced and circulated to all those that attended the consultation events for further comments. These have been included in the final draft attached.

6. KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Hartlepool's key strategic priorities to reduce child and family poverty in Hartlepool are:
- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
 - Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
 - Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.
- 6.2 The strategy sets out the actions needed to take place to address these priorities.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is a risk that the actions set out in the strategy will not have the impact needed on the child poverty level due to external economic factors. However, it is important that the council continue to aspire to the eradication of child poverty and regularly review the action plan to understand progress.
- 7.2 Progress on the strategy will be reported to Children's Services Committee on an annual basis.

8. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 If poverty levels continue to rise then potentially more families will require support from the Local Authority. The impact of the next round of Welfare Reform is expected to further increase demands on services.
- 8.2 Members have allocated reserve funding for Child and Family Poverty. The commitment of this additional funding can support system change to prevent children and young people being affected by poverty in the longer term.
- 8.3 In considering the issues outlined in this report Members are reminded that significant additional Government Grant cuts will be made over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. As a result the Council faces a budget deficit for the next three years of between £16.3m and £18.3m, depending on the level of Council Tax increases approved by Members over this period. The recommended strategy for managing the 2016/17 budget position is predicated on the use of significant one-off resources to provide a longer lead time to make permanent budget reductions and the following table summarises the annual budget deficits. Detailed proposals for achieving 2017/18 and 2018/19 budget reductions will need to be developed. Any additional budget pressures will increase the budget cuts which will need to be made and will need to be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration.

	Revised Forecast based on actual grant cut and 1.9% Council Tax increase £'m	Revised Forecast based on actual grant cut and 1.9% Council Tax increase and 2% Social Care Precept £'m
2016/17	4.749	4.179
2017/18	9.638	8.663
2018/19	3.945	3.443
Total	18.332	16.285
Cut as %age 15/16 budget	21%	19%

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 There are no legal considerations for this report.

10. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 Please see attached pro-forma.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 Poverty can affect anyone however research shows us that specific groups of people are more susceptible than others. Their needs must therefore be considered. Groups at risk include:

- Young working age people 18-21
- Those who are disabled or suffer from illness/ mental illness
- Those with low educational attainment
- Those who are unemployed
- Children born into families in poverty
- Those who find difficulty in managing their finances
- Lone parents
- Those from minority ethnic backgrounds

12. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 There no staffing considerations for this report.

13. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 There are no asset management considerations for this report.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 For members to make recommendations for amendments to the strategy to be presented for approval at Finance and Policy Committee.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 To ensure that Hartlepool's Child and Family Poverty Strategy meets the needs of families in Hartlepool.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 None

17. CONTACT OFFICER

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Penny Thompson, Head of Service (The Children's Hub and Partnerships),
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POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**1. Is this decision a Budget & Policy Framework or Key Decision? YES****If YES please answer question 2 below****2. Will there be an impact of the decision requested in respect of Child and Family Poverty? YES / NO****If YES please complete the matrix below**

GROUP	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
Young working people aged 18 - 21	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are disabled or suffer from illness / mental illness	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those with low educational attainment	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are unemployed	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who are underemployed	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Children born into families in poverty	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those who find difficulty in managing their finances	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Lone parents	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed
Those from minority ethnic backgrounds	Yes			Actions in strategy set out how being addressed

Poverty is measured in different ways. Will the policy / decision have an impact on child and family poverty and in what way?

Poverty Measure (examples of poverty measures appended overleaf)	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
All measures should be addressed through the strategy as these are outcomes being measured	Yes			Strategy objectives are linked to improvement in all these areas

POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Overall impact of Policy / Decision			
NO IMPACT / NO CHANGE	Positive impact	ADJUST / CHANGE POLICY / SERVICE	
ADVERSE IMPACT BUT CONTINUE		STOP / REMOVE POLICY / SERVICE	
Examples of Indicators that impact of Child and Family Poverty.			
Economic			
Children in Low Income Families (%)			
Children in Working Households (%)			
Overall employment rate (%)			
Proportion of young people who are NEET			
Adults with Learning difficulties in employment			
Education			
Free School meals attainment gap (key stage 2 and key stage 4)			
Gap in progression to higher education FSM / Non FSM			
Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils (key stage 2 and key stage 4)			
Housing			
Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council tax benefit claims			
Number of affordable homes built			
Health			
Prevalence of underweight children in reception year			
Prevalence of obese children in reception year			
Prevalence of underweight children in year 6			
Prevalence of obese children in reception year 6			
Life expectancy			



Hartlepool

Child and Family Poverty Strategy

2016 - 2020

Child and Family Poverty – A Partnership Approach

CONTENTS

1. Context
2. Defining poverty
3. What does child poverty look like in Hartlepool?
4. Why do we need to end child poverty and who is most at risk?
5. What is the vision for Hartlepool?
6. The need for a partnership approach
7. Outcomes and priorities
8. Principles
9. How will we deliver our strategic priorities?
10. Mitigating the impact of poverty on children and families
11. Building pathways out of poverty for children and young people
12. Creating new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty
13. Food poverty and holiday hunger
14. Monitoring progress and success
15. Tackling child poverty – actions for 2016 to 2020
16. What are the resource implications for tackling child poverty in Hartlepool?
17. Conclusion

Appendix A – What are young people telling us?

Appendix B – Local Needs Assessment

Appendix C – Action plan

1. Context

The government's Child Poverty Act 2010 placed new requirements on local authorities and its partners to reduce and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their area. A series of key actions were set for local authorities including the duty to cooperate, to undertake child poverty needs assessments and to produce local child poverty strategies. Hartlepool has produced two strategies since the Act was made law and updated its needs assessment annually.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 repealed much of the Child Poverty Act and redefined poverty with a focus on work and educational attainment. The government's latest child poverty strategy is for the period 2014-17. In this they set out their intention to support families into work and increase their earnings, to improve living standards and to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through raising educational attainment. The goal to end child poverty by 2020 remains their firm commitment however the way they will measure it has changed.

Locally, Hartlepool Borough Council remains an active partner within the North East Child Poverty Commission which aims to build public and political support for actions that improve the lives of poor children living in the North East. Hartlepool's child and family poverty strategy compliments the work of the Commission and the Regional Child Poverty officer group. *'Child Poverty in the North East' (The University of York, June 2015)* and *'Child Poverty in the North East' (North East Child Poverty Commission, December 2015)* should be read in conjunction with this strategy as they give clear indications of levels of poverty between 2007 and 2015.

2. Defining poverty

Poverty can be defined in many different ways. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation defines poverty as *'when a person's resources are not enough to meet their basic needs'*.¹ The indicator most widely used to measure poverty and to assess impact on the 2020 target is –

Relative poverty: each household's income, adjusted for family size, is compared to median income. Those with less than 60 per cent of median income are classified as poor. This measure is broadly used by many countries and the European Union. In the UK this information is taken from the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) survey.²

The new Welfare Reform and Work Bill has retained the relative poverty measurement and included new reporting obligations –

- children living in workless households
- children living in long-term workless households
- educational attainment of children at the end of Key Stage 4
- educational attainment of disadvantaged children at the end of Key Stage 4.

3. What does child and family poverty look like in Hartlepool?

¹ Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Policy Institute, 2015.

² Households Below Average Income Statistics, DWP, 2014.

Appendix A

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) families living on or below £375 per week (couple with two children) and £181 (single person with one child) before housing costs are living in relative poverty.³

The government's Child Poverty Unit (CPU) publishes a 'Basket of Indicators' for Local Authorities.⁴ Data used to create the indicators comes from a variety of government sources with dates ranging from 2012/13 to 2014. Hartlepool's CPU government data tells us that between 2006 and 2012 poverty rates in Hartlepool increased from 27.9% to 28.1% compared to 20.8% and 18.6% nationally and that 25% of children in Hartlepool live in a workless family compared to 18% in the North East and 14% nationally. However it is advisable to use more up to date information to understand levels of poverty in Hartlepool. Our own local needs assessment tells us -

- That the overall level of child poverty in Hartlepool is currently 31% (Child Poverty Commission, 2015)
- Unemployment claimant rates range from 8.1% in Victoria to 1.1% in Hart and Rural West (TVU 2015)
- Numbers of children receiving a free school meal are as high as 496 in De Bruce compared to 37 in Rural West (School census 2015)
- On average 4.5% of young people aged 16 to 19 are NEET (CCIS 2016).

[See appendix B for Local Needs Assessment]

4. Why do we need to end child and family poverty and who is most at risk?

Poverty is a cost that Hartlepool cannot afford. Poverty has an adverse effect on our wider society and our economic success. Research tells us that growing up in poverty has a devastating effect on our children and young people and that in many cases poor children grow up to be poor adults. Poverty reduces a child's sense of worth and can impact on their ability to achieve at school. Links between child poverty and health are clear, not least the likelihood of dying prematurely.

It is estimated that child poverty currently costs the UK government £29 billion a year – this includes the costs of welfare and benefits, loss of tax revenue, the extra costs of services to deal with consequences of poverty and an estimate for loss of earnings. This problem looks avoidable if more families were in work however research also tells us that 56% of households living in poverty are in work. Work therefore needs to pay (the Living Wage), housing needs to be affordable and families need the skills to secure employment with an opportunity for progression. Many people cannot work due to illness, disability and caring responsibilities and these people need to be supported to live with dignity and respect whilst contributing to society in other ways.

Almost anyone can experience poverty however some people are at a greater risk of poverty than others. These include families with children (in particular single people with children and larger families with three or more children); the working age unemployed; disabled working age adults; children with SEND; Black Minority Ethnic Groups; social renters; those living in particular areas in the town. According to the

³ Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2014, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2014.

⁴ Child Poverty Basket of Indicators, Child Poverty Unit, 2015.

Appendix A

Joseph Rontree Foundation for the first time ever 'age' can be a determining factor in poverty – pensioners are less likely to be in poverty however young people aged 18-25 are more likely to be in poverty – largely due to changes to welfare and benefit entitlement.

5. What is the vision for Hartlepool?

Hartlepool Borough Council fully supports the government's ambition to reduce and ultimately eradicate child poverty by 2020. This will be done by enabling families break out of intergenerational cycles of deprivation using a family centred approach, ensuring all children and families have support at the earliest possible stage to prevent families reaching crisis. We aim to prevent poor children becoming poor adults through improved educational attainment and better opportunities for all.

6. The need for a partnership approach

Child Poverty is everybody's business and Hartlepool Borough Council and partners are wholly committed to achieving an end to poverty by 2020. This is a significant undertaking and the only way this will happen will be through a partnership approach. All services need to work together.

7. Outcomes and priorities

Hartlepool's three key strategic priorities to reduce child and family poverty in Hartlepool are -

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
- Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
- Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

In addition Hartlepool wants to be sure that no child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not able to access a Free School Meal.

8. Principles

These priorities are underpinned by a series of key principles that should be adopted by all partners working with families -

- The safeguarding of children is paramount
- Families will be encouraged to seek help early
- One worker, one assessment and one plan.
- Workers will own and intervene and acknowledge the need to cut across their own professional boundaries for the benefit of the child.
- Relationships will be a new focus with the aim of strengthening ties and increasing efficacy of actions.
- Parenting remains a critical factor and will continue to be at the heart of the strategy
- The workforce will be solution focussed and will encourage ownership of goals and actions within the family
- Families will be partners with the workers that are in place to support them
- All workers will make judgements based on guidance and procedures but grounded in seeing the world through the child's eyes
- Children and young people's voices will be heard in the development of services and in any support offered.

9. How will we deliver our strategic priorities?

Consultation with young people and with service providers across the town has helped identify the following key actions.

10. Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families

The Institute of Fiscal Studies predicts a total of 800,000 children living in poverty by 2020⁵. This growth can be directly linked to changes in welfare and benefit entitlement enacted in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the new Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2016. In real terms new legislation has seen families in Hartlepool £42 million worse off through reforms such as the benefit cap, changes to disability related benefits, council tax benefit, housing allowances and the under occupation charge⁶. With further reform planned we need to -

<p>Early help</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure residents know where they can go in times of crisis but also to seek early help when they need it • Focus on relationships and couple support with an understanding that families are stronger when they work together • Offer long term, intensive support for complex cases where it is needed 	<p>Money management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to • Help people make good use of the money they receive, take an active approach to money management including savings, planning for crisis and for the future • Know where to get low cost credit and where to get money advice if needed • Keep a close eye on the cost of living and use this information to inform the development of family services
<p>Skills, training and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage those that can to work • Support those at risk of 'in work' poverty to access benefits and entitlements • Improve adult skills increasing their work opportunities • Ensure children that are entitled to a Free School Meal are identified automatically and an award made • Make maximum use of e.g. Pupil Premium reducing the gap between those that are more disadvantaged than others 	<p>Housing and homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with social housing providers and support them in a moral duty to ensure they help families at risk • Support families in rent arrears to take positive action on their tenancy with the aim of preventing eviction and homelessness • Target fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency

⁵ Child and Working Age Poverty from 2010 to 2020, Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2011.

⁶ The Impact of Welfare Reform in the North East, Association of North East Councils, 2013.

11. Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people

Poverty is about more than just money. It is disadvantage, hardship and lack of opportunity. Children and young people need to be supported from pre-birth through their early years and throughout their statutory education. Young people need to have choices moving forward. We need to reduce the gap between levels of attainment of children and young people who receive a free school meal and those who do not. We must -

<p>Care, education and learning – young children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support eligible children to take up their free early education and childcare place with high quality providers • Ensure our schools offer education that meets the needs of a child growing up in the 21st century • Support education providers to make effective use of Pupil Premium narrowing the gap in attainment where appropriate • Ensure pathways for SEND children are clear and that learning and work expectations of children and young people with SEND are high • Ensure children are taught about money, money management, savings, credit and debt. Support them to develop practical skills that will go on to help them in adult working life 	<p>Care, education and learning – young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our secondary school and post 16 learning providers offer information, advice and guidance to young people helping them make informed choices about their future • Improve transition arrangements from formal education providers to service providers such as Adult Education and other Training Providers ensuring young people are clear on training pathways available to them • Ensure our post-16 providers offer education that meets the needs of young people enabling them to acquire skills necessary to join the workforce • Encourage an appetite and love for learning that supports children and young people to continue to learn throughout their adult life
<p>Work focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Apprenticeships are available, offer excellent work based learning opportunities and include high quality accredited training that will help meet future work needs • Ensure advice on self-employment, enterprise and commerce is available across all age groups and abilities • Identify skill shortages across employment sectors and share this information with young people enabling them to make informed choices about their future career opportunities 	<p>Participation, positive role models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children and young people to participate in organisations and activities that support them to develop skills and acquire experiences that will go on to help them in adult life • Encourage volunteering to develop skills and experience and help them take ownership within their community • Ensure adults that engage with children and young people - through childcare, education, volunteering – are of a high quality, are well

	<p>trained, motivated and enthusiastic role models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parents to display positive attitudes to education and to share this with their child/ren
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12. Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

Research has consistently shown that the best route out of poverty for children, young people and their families can be secured by increasing parental employment rates and therefore raising family income. Increasing the overall employment rate will be a key aim of the strategy and supporting adults to enter into sustainable work will be achieved in the following ways –

<p>Young people and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure young people leaving education are ready and able to work • Develop strong links between education providers and employment advisory services to ensure young people receive appropriate information, advice and guidance • Ensure Adult Education and other training providers are linked up with schools to ensure seamless transition for young people into other areas of training and learning • Develop Family Learning and Employability programmes 	<p>Adults, skills and work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Hartlepool's 'vision' for growth creates job opportunities for working age adults in Hartlepool • Ensure adults are offered the training opportunities to fill identified skills gap areas ensuring local people are able to access local jobs • Promote self-employment, enterprise and commerce as a means to self-sufficiency and full employment • Ensure adults have appropriate skills and easy access to digital services allowing them to engage with public sector agencies (e.g. DWP) to claim benefits they are entitled to and to search and apply for jobs
<p>Employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with employers to implement The Living Wage and encourage them to move away from zero hour contracts ensuring low skilled workers are paid a fair and regular wage • Work directly with employers to construct bespoke employability programmes that lead to work trials, work placements, volunteering and ultimately employment • Effective engagement with employers to understand future skill needs and to support with Workforce Development 	<p>Supporting people in employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure transport in the town meets the needs of those that work both in and out of the borough; ensure transport is affordable, flexible and able to meet diverse working patterns • Work with childcare providers to ensure childcare is available, flexible and suitable to meet the needs of a diverse employment sector • Support those that are working part time to gain 'full employment' where appropriate • Challenge public perception that there are 'no jobs for people'

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship campaigns direct with employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure intensive support is available to adults with eg mental health problems and substance use issues who are struggling
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13. Food Poverty and Holiday Hunger

In 2014/15, approximately 2100 Primary and 300 Secondary school children in Hartlepool received free school meals. There is growing concern that some children who would normally receive a free school meal during term time do not have access to this provision during school holidays and may be under-nourished. This concern is corroborated with national information from The Trussell Trust which has seen an increase in the use of foodbanks when schools are closed together with information from the voluntary sector which indicates that children and young people accessing holiday scheme activities do so in order to get free packed lunches and snacks.

Research shows that children living in poverty dropped further behind their better off peers when schools were closed and they did not have access to free school meals. They were often physically and mentally unprepared for learning when they returned to school⁷. We need to –

<p>Workforce skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure workers across town know what provision is available for hungry residents and their families Remove any stigma attached to Free School Meals and accessing foodbanks Ensure crisis payments for Local Welfare Support are fair and consistent and that vouchers are available for a wide selection of supermarkets and stores 	<p>Nutrition and health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote breast feeding as an important start in life and a low cost way of feeding a young child Support parents and carers to develop cooking skills and how to buy and prepare food on a budget
<p>Food via the VCS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Fare Share as an option for free/ low cost food and encourage voluntary sector agencies to access the scheme Ensure breakfast clubs operating across the town are accessing free cereal from Kelloggs Work with Greggs and encourage partners to register to collect and distribute free food at the end of the working day Continue to support the local Trussell Trust foodbank through Local Welfare Support and refer 	<p>VCS support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the voluntary sector to identify funding opportunities for out of school provision targeting summer holidays and those in greatest need

⁷ Food Poverty: School Holidays and Wider Impact, Northern Housing Association, 2015.

those that are most in need to the service	
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14. Monitoring progress and success

Moving forward the government must now report annually on progress towards full employment; this includes an apprenticeships target. In addition the government must report on –

- Children who live in households whose equivalised net income for the relevant financial year is less than 60% of median equivalised net income for that financial year ('relative poverty')
- Children living in workless households in England
- Children living in long-term workless households in England
- The educational attainment of children in England at the end of Key Stage 4
- The educational attainment of disadvantaged children in England at the end of Key Stage 4.

In order to show impact on child and family poverty, Hartlepool will need to see an improvement in the following key areas -

Measurement	Definition and source	Hartlepool's position in 2016
Number of children living in relative poverty	Relative poverty is measured using the DWPs 'Households Below Average Income' survey and is produced using a three year average. Most up to date figures are for the period 2011/12 – 2013/14.	31%
Number of children living in workless households claiming JSA	Number of children living in workless households is derived from Office for National Statistics data and includes households claiming JSA with children aged 16 years and under (or 18 years and under if in education). .	23.28%
Number of children living in long term workless households	Long term worklessness has been defined in the Act as children who live in households whose equivalised net income has been less than 60% of the median equivalised net household income in at least 3 of the last 4 'survey periods'.	New measurement - not yet known
Attainment of children at end of Key Stage 4	% of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths (level 2 equivalent): Source 2015 GCSE pupil file	53.40%
Gap between children eligible for FSM and the rest at end of KS4	Source 2015 GCSE pupil file	30.9%

Locally we can expect to see demonstrable impact on child and family poverty in the next 12 months in the following key areas –

Appendix A

A Better Childhood Programme which will see integrated teams focused on improving relationships across families, strengthening their resilience so they are more equipped to deal with crisis

A public and voluntary sector workforce that is equipped with basic practical knowledge on welfare, benefits, income maximisation and money management with a clear understanding of where families need to go for help

Responsive council services that meet the needs of local residents and react real time to welfare reform – eg Discretionary Housing Payments, Local Welfare Support, Housing advice and early action on rent arrears and potential evictions

100% take up of early years entitlement by eligible children with children taking their placements in Good or Outstanding settings.

15. Tackling child poverty – actions for 2016 to 2020

We need to take a long term look at child and family poverty reduction with an understanding that strategic change will take time to have an impact. As part of this Hartlepool Borough Council and partners need to share ownership of the problem and work together to achieve tangible and sustainable impact.

The key priorities remain -

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families
- Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people
- Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.

We will ensure that no Hartlepool child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not eligible for a Free School Meal.

The plan in Appendix C sets out broad actions for the period 2016-20.

16. What are the resource implications for tackling child poverty in Hartlepool?

Resources are tight however there is an understanding and an appetite from all partners to make a difference to children's lives. The need to work together has been agreed by all the key service providers and agencies and partners are linked in to collaborative projects with families at their heart.

17. Conclusion

Hartlepool continues to face a challenging time with continued national austerity measures in place to tackle the budget deficit. This has seen an overall reduction in the Local Authority's budget and this together with new legislation such as the Welfare Reform Act and the Welfare and Work Bill have impacted on funding for residents. Welfare Reform in a town with already high levels of disadvantage has a particularly severe 'bite'. Whilst welfare reform is not the sole driver of child and family poverty it is an exacerbating factor. Collaborative work between partners is the only way to tackle child and family poverty and to see an improvement on those measures outlined above.

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Appendix A - what are young people telling us?

Youth Workers from Hartlepool's One Stop Shop spent time with their service users talking about poverty. 11 young people aged 16-17 years were involved.

What is poverty -

- Not being able to afford the basic things in life: food, water, clothes, shelter and medicine.
- Having nothing to call your own.
- Having nowhere to live.
- Having no money.
- Poverty is having nothing to help you have a good start in life –so things get worse.
- Poverty is not just about being unable to afford things, it's about not being able to live or cope with life and things get worse and worse.

What causes poverty?

- Poverty can be caused by lots of things.
- You can be born into poverty – parents are poor so you are poor.
- It can happen because your parents split up.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- People who live in violent relationships.
- End of work due to companies going bust or courses coming to an end.
- No jobs for young people to help themselves.
- Young people who didn't get good results at school.
- "Not all people in poverty are bad people!"

How does poverty affect you?

- It can be scary.
- Can cause people to change from lovely human beings to someone who doesn't care about anything or anyone.
- Young people do what they need to survive.
- It can make you feel angry and get really mad – sometimes violent.
- It can take away confidence – and you think things will never get any better.
- You feel stuck in hole that you can't see a way out of.
- People in poverty can turn to drugs and alcohol as a way to escape.
- Things can wind up worse and debts can mount up.
- People turn to crime to feed themselves or get money for other things like alcohol or drugs.
- Can't go to interviews for a job or course because of the cost of clothes and travel.
- Makes you hungry.

What can young people do to help themselves out of poverty?

- Go to college or do training to get qualifications and do things with your life.
- Try and get a job.
- Listen to workers as they are only trying to help.
- Self-refer to services such as "Know Your Money".
- Don't waste money on things like drugs, alcohol and gambling.

Appendix A

- Set a budget and plan ahead. Make sure bills are paid and then plan meals and shopping.
- Stay at home with parents if possible.
- Don't 'kick off' and get angry it makes things worse.
- GET HELP!!!

What can services do to improve the way they help young people in poverty?

- Have a central place we can go to take time out or get support.
- Talk to us like young adults rather than children. Stop patronising us.
- Help with confidence.
- Meet appointments on time, don't keep people waiting.
- Help with finding work or training so we can get ourselves out of poverty.
- Teach us how to budget in school.
- Don't pass us about to different services.
- Have more jobs available.
- Help parents get jobs.

Appendix B – Local Needs Assessment

Data	Source	Burn Valley	De Bruce	Fens & Rossmere	Foggy Furze	Hart	Headland & Harbour	Jesmond	Manor House	Rural West	Seaton	Victoria
Total Population Estimates (2013)	NOMIS	9320	8651	7887	9311	8165	6527	9295	9904	8685	8269	6576
Population 0-15 Year Olds Estimate (2013)	NOMIS	1814	1790	1269	1757	1726	1222	1973	2300	1290	1450	1058
Population of 16-19 year olds Estimate	NCCIS	554	434	359	475	443	311	441	567	420	372	292
Unemployment Claimant Rate (2015)	TVU	5.6%	5.2%	2.3%	3.8%	1.1%	6.2%	4.9%	7.3%	1.1%	1.9%	8.1%
Pupils Receiving Free School Meals (Jan 2015)	January 2015 School Census	300	504	89	336	73	327	426	651	37	186	419
% 16 17 18 19 year olds NEET (Jan 2016)	NCCIS	4.79%	4.6%	1.7%	4.79%	2.1%	6.41%	3.35%	6.63%	0%	1.89%	7.64%
Qualifications 5+ GCSE's A-C Including English and Maths (2014)	2015 GCSE pupil file	51.7%	48.3%	67.0%	56.8%	66.0%	24.1%	44.7%	49.3%	56.3%	66.1%	48.9%
Gap between FSM children and the rest at KS4	2015 GCSE pupil file	27.0%	24.8%	24.4%	42.1%	5.1%	10.04%	29.8%	23.5%	46.0%	28.6%	37.1%

Appendix C - Child and Family Poverty Action Plan

Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Mitigate the impact of poverty on children and families	<u>Skills, work and employment –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage those that can to work Support those at risk of 'in work' poverty to access benefits and entitlements Improve adult skills increasing their work opportunities 	March 2017	PT/PW
	<u>Money, budgeting and debt –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a close eye on the cost of living and use this information to inform what financial support is offered to families Closely monitor the impact of Universal Credit on families as they move to monthly payments and take responsibility for paying their own rent Help people access affordable essential services (e.g. food, energy, childcare) and make good use of the income they receive Take an active approach to money management, savings, planning for crisis and saving for the future Know where to get low cost credit and where to get money advice if needed 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Benefits and entitlements -</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure people are getting the benefits they are entitled to Ensure children that are entitled to a Free School Meal are identified automatically by the council and an award is made 	March 2017	PT
	<u>Education –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure eligible children are taking up their free early education and childcare entitlement enabling the parent to train or work and the child to reach important early learning goals 	March 2017	PT

16.07.12 - CSC - 4.1 - Hartlepool Child and Poverty Strategy 2016-2020 - App A

Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Build pathways out of poverty for children and young people	<u>Education –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support eligible children to take up their free early education and childcare place with a high quality early years provider • Ensure our schools are at least Good and preferably Outstanding offering education that meets the needs of a child growing up in the 21st century • Ensure our post-16 education providers offer education that meets the needs of young people enabling them to acquire the skills necessary to join the workforce • Support education providers to make effective use of Pupil Premium narrowing the gap in attainment where appropriate • Ensure pathways for SEND children are clear and that learning and work expectations of children and young people with SEND are high • Encourage an appetite and love for learning that supports children and young people to continue to learn throughout their adult life 	March 2017	MP
	<u>Transition –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our secondary school and post 16 learning providers offer information, advice and guidance to young people helping them make informed choices about their future • Improve transition arrangements from formal education providers to service providers such as Adult Education and other Training Providers ensuring young people are clear on training pathways available to them • Ensure Apprenticeships are available, offer excellent work based learning opportunities and include high quality accredited training that will help meet future work needs 	March 2017	MP/ PW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure advice on self-employment, enterprise and commerce is available across all age groups and abilities • Identify skill shortages across employment sectors and share this information with young people enabling them to make informed choices about their future career opportunities <p><u>Skills, work and employment –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children are taught about money, money management, savings, credit and debt. Support them to develop practical skills that will go on to help them in adult working life <p><u>Community ethos and citizenship –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children and young people to participate in organisations and activities that support them to develop skills and acquire experiences that will go on to help them in adult life • Encourage volunteering to develop skills and experience and help them take ownership within their community • Ensure adults that engage with children and young are of a high quality, are well trained, motivated and enthusiastic role models • Support parents to display positive attitudes to education and to share this with their child/ren 	March 2017	MP
		March 2017	DS/MP

Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Create new opportunities for adults to reduce child and family poverty.	<u>Skills, work and employment –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Hartlepool's 'vision' for growth creates job opportunities for working age adults in Hartlepool • Ensure young people leaving education are ready and able to work • Ensure adults are offered training opportunities to fill identified skills gap areas ensuring local people are able to access local jobs • Promote self-employment, enterprise and commerce as a means to self-sufficiency and full employment • Ensure adults have appropriate skills and easy access to digital services allowing them to engage with public sector agencies (e.g. DWP) to claim benefits they are entitled to and to search and apply for jobs 	June 2017	PW/ MP
	<u>Partnerships –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strong links between education providers and employment advisory services to ensure young people receive appropriate information, advice and guidance • Ensure Adult Education and other training providers are linked up with schools to ensure seamless transition for young people into other areas of training and learning • Work directly with employers to construct bespoke employability programmes that lead to work trials, work placements, volunteering and ultimately employment • Effective engagement with employers to understand future skill needs and to support with Workforce Development 	June 2017	PW

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship campaigns direct with employers <p><u>Transport –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with providers to ensure transport in the town meets the needs of those that work both in and out of the borough Ensure transport is affordable, flexible and able to meet diverse working patterns 	September 2017	
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Objective	Key actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/ department/ team / service provider
Ensure no child goes hungry, particularly during school holidays when they are not able to access a Free School Meal.	<p><u>Workforce –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure workers across town know what provision is available for hungry residents and their families <p><u>Poverty proofing –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any stigma attached to Free School Meals and accessing foodbanks Ensure crisis payments for Local Welfare Support are fair and consistent and are made available to the public as sensitively as possible <p><u>Partnerships –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the voluntary sector to identify funding opportunities for out of school provision specifically targeting summer holidays and those in greatest need Continue to support the local Trussell Trust foodbank through Local Welfare Support and refer those that are most in need to the service 	<p>March 2017</p> <p>March 2017</p> <p>March 2017</p>	<p>PT</p> <p>PT</p> <p>PT</p>

	<u>Health –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote breast feeding as an important start in life and a low cost way of feeding a young child Support parents and carers to develop cooking skills and how to buy and prepare food on a budget 	September 2017	CJ
	<u>Food –</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Fare Share as an option for free/ low cost food and encourage voluntary sector agencies to access the scheme Ensure breakfast clubs operating across the town are accessing free cereal from Kelloggs Work with Greggs and encourage partners to register to collect and distribute free food at the end of the working day 	March 2017	SC

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2016/ 2017

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Budget and Policy Framework

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To consult with members of the Children's Services Committee on the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2016-2017 (**Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 Finance and Policy Committee will receive a final draft of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan that will include any recommendations from the Children's Services Committee on 5 September 2016. Full Council will be asked to ratify the plan on October 2016.
- 2.3 The Strategic Plan will also be submitted to the National Youth Justice Board.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The national Youth Justice System primarily exists to ensure that children and young people between the age of 10 and 17 do not engage in offending or re-offending behaviour. It also ensures that where a young person is arrested and charged with a criminal offence, they are dealt with differently to adult offenders to reflect their particular welfare needs as children.
- 3.2 Local Youth Offending Services were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop, deliver, commission and coordinate the provision of youth justice services within each Local Authority.
- 3.3 Hartlepool Youth Offending Service was established in April 2000 and is responsible for youth justice services locally. It is a multi-agency service and is made up of representatives from the Council's Children's Services, Police,

Probation, Health, Education, Community Safety and the voluntary /community sector.

- 3.4 There is a statutory requirement for all Youth Offending Services to annually prepare a local Youth Justice Plan for submission to the national Youth Justice Board.
- 3.5 The annual Youth Justice Plan provides an overview of how the Youth Offending Service, the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board and wider partnership ensure that the service has sufficient resources and infrastructure to deliver youth justice services in its area in line with the requirements of the *National Standards for Youth Justice Services* to:
- promote performance improvement;
 - shape youth justice system improvement;
 - improve outcomes for young people, victims and the broader community.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership focus on the following key strategic objectives during 2016-17:
- **Early Intervention and Prevention** - Sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that there remain strategies and services in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - **Re-offending** - Reducing further offending by young people who have committed crime with a particular emphasis on the development of activities to address the offending behaviour of young women.
 - **Remand and Custody** - Demonstrate that there are robust alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands to custody whilst awaiting trial/sentencing.
 - **Voice of the Young Person** - ensure that all young people are actively involved in developing their own plans and interventions and have the opportunity to develop and inform current and future service delivery.
 - **Effective Governance** - ensure that the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board is a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The strategic plan identifies key risk to future delivery as detailed in Section 8 of the plan these are:

- The unpredictability associate with secure remand episodes and secure remand length has the potential to place significant financial pressure on the Youth Justice Service and the broader Local Authority
- There is a national review of Youth Justice Service commissioned by the Secretary of State for Justice Sir Michael Gove being undertaken by Mr Charlie Taylor the outcomes of which is expected within the next month, it is however anticipated that there will be for reaching reforms that will be introduced within this financial year.
- Implementation of Asset Plus is a significant practice change in relation to the core business within the team, it is important that the service continues to support staff through training, coaching and oversight to ensure high standard of assessment and planning.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 In considering the issues outlined in this report Members are reminded that significant additional Government Grant cuts will be made over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. As a result the Council faces a budget deficit for the next three years of between £16.3m and £18.3m, depending on the level of Council Tax increases approved by Members over this period. The recommended strategy for managing the 2016/17 budget position is predicated on the use of significant one-off resources to provide a longer lead time to make permanent budget reductions and the following table summarises the annual budget deficits. Detailed proposals for achieving 2017/18 and 2018/19 budget reductions will need to be developed. Any additional budget pressures will increase the budget cuts which will need to be made and will need to be referred to the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration.

	Revised Forecast based on actual grant cut and 1.9% Council Tax increase £'m	Revised Forecast based on actual grant cut and 1.9% Council Tax increase and 2% Social Care Precept £'m
2016/17	4.749	4.179
2017/18	9.638	8.663
2018/19	3.945	3.443
Total	18.332	16.285
Cut as %age 15/16 budget	21%	19%

- 6.2 There has been a significant reduction in grant from the Youth Justice Board and from partner agencies for 16/17. The settlement notification was not confirmed until April 2016 consequently it was difficult to plan for 2016/17. However provision has been made to balance the budget for 2016/17 in anticipation of a reduction in funding pending a service review. It is expected that further budget reductions will take place over the next few years.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal considerations in relation to this report.

8. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Please see attached pro-forma

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The service ensures that they support all children and young people that are at risk of offending or have offended.

10. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no specific staffing considerations in relation to this report however a review will need to be carried out when the National Taylor Review is published.

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no asset management considerations in relation to this report.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 For members of the committee to consider the Youth Justice Plan 2016-2017 and make any recommendations to be presented to Finance and Policy Committee in September.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The development of the Youth Justice plan for 2016-2017 will provide the Youth Justice Service with a clear steer to enable further reductions in youth offending and contribute to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families alongside the broader community.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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

15. CONTACT OFFICER

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POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**1. Is this decision a Budget & Policy Framework or Key Decision? YES / NO****If YES please answer question 2 below****2. Will there be an impact of the decision requested in respect of Child and Family Poverty? YES / NO****If YES please complete the matrix below**

GROUP	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
Young working people aged 18 - 21	Yes			Youth Justice Service is focused on supporting young people.
Those who are disabled or suffer from illness / mental illness	Yes			Research shows that people with mental illness are represented within offending cohort. Youth Justice Service focuses on supporting these young people.
Those with low educational attainment	Yes			Research shows that young people with low educational attainment are over represented within the youth offending cohort. Youth Justice Service focuses on supporting these young people
Those who are unemployed	Yes			A number of young people who offend are unemployed therefore work would be undertaken with this group of young people. Youth Justice Service focuses on supporting these young people
Those who are underemployed				
Children born into families in poverty	Yes			Research shows that young people born into families in poverty are represented within this cohort. Youth Justice Service focuses on supporting these young people
Those who find difficulty in managing their finances				
Lone parents				
Those from minority ethnic backgrounds				

POVERTY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Poverty is measured in different ways. Will the policy / decision have an impact on child and family poverty and in what way?				
Poverty Measure (examples of poverty measures appended overleaf)	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
Proportion of young people who are NEET	Yes			Support offered by the Youth Justice Service should support young people not to offend or stop reoffending and therefore support them to access training or employment.
Overall impact of Policy / Decision				
NO IMPACT / NO CHANGE	Yes	ADJUST / CHANGE POLICY / SERVICE		
ADVERSE IMPACT BUT CONTINUE		STOP / REMOVE POLICY / SERVICE		
Examples of Indicators that impact of Child and Family Poverty.				
Economic				
Children in Low Income Families (%)				
Children in Working Households (%)				
Overall employment rate (%)				
Proportion of young people who are NEET				
Adults with Learning difficulties in employment				
Education				
Free School meals attainment gap (key stage 2 and key stage 4)				
Gap in progression to higher education FSM / Non FSM				
Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils (key stage 2 and key stage 4)				
Housing				
Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council tax benefit claims				
Number of affordable homes built				
Health				
Prevalence of underweight children in reception year				
Prevalence of obese children in reception year				
Prevalence of underweight children in year 6				
Prevalence of obese children in reception year 6				
Life expectancy				



HARTLEPOOL

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016 - 2017

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1. FOREWORD

Welcome to the 2016 - 2017 Hartlepool Youth Justice Strategic Plan. This plan sets out our ambitions and priorities for Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and the broader local Youth Justice Partnership for the coming year.

Hartlepool's Community Strategy 2008-20 establishes a vision for the town:

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

The Youth Justice Service and broader partnership has a key role in contributing to this vision by building upon our historical delivery of high quality, effective and safe youth justice services that prevent crime and the fear of crime, whilst ensuring that young people who do offend are identified, managed and supported appropriately and without delay.

In recent years Hartlepool has witnessed a significant reduction in youth crime. The local youth justice partnership has been particularly effective in reducing the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time; but there remains a need to drive down incidents of re-offending by young people who have previously offended through a combination of robust interventions designed to manage and reduce risk and vulnerability, restore relationships, promote whole family engagement and positive outcomes.

This plan builds upon our progress to date whilst acknowledging that the enduring economic climate, welfare reform and the introduction of new legislation and reforms relating to how we respond to children, young people, families and communities will inevitably present new challenges in the coming year.

Despite these challenges I am confident that Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and the broader Youth Justice Partnership will continue to help make Hartlepool a safer place to live, work, learn and play.

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

On behalf of the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board I am pleased to endorse the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2016 -2017.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Beeston', written in a cursive style.

Lynn Beeston Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board Chair

2. INTRODUCTION

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

- Dealt with by youth courts
- Given different sentences in comparison to adults
- And when necessary, detained in special secure centres for young people as opposed to adult prisons.

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

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

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

- All children and young people entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and protective factors associated with offending behaviour to inform effective intervention.
- Courts and youth offender panels are provided with high quality reports that enable sentencers to make informed decisions regarding sentencing.
- Court orders are managed in such a way that they support the primary aim of the youth justice system, which is to prevent offending, and that they have regard to the welfare of the child or young person.

- Services provided to courts are of a high quality and that magistrates and the judiciary have confidence in the supervision of children and young people who are subject to orders.
- Comprehensive bail and remand management services are in place locally for children and young person's remanded or committed to custody, or on bail while awaiting trial or sentence.
- The needs and risks of young people sentenced to custodial orders (including long-term custodial orders) are addressed effectively to enable effective resettlement and management of risk.
- Those receiving youth justice services are treated fairly regardless of race, language, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor, and actions are put in place to address unfairness where it is identified

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

- Strategies and services are in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Assistance is provided to the Police when determining whether Cautions should be given.
- Out-of-court disposals deliver targeted interventions for those at risk of further offending.
- Restorative justice approaches are used, where appropriate, with victims of crime and that restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.

The Hartlepool Youth Justice Plan for 2016-2017 sets out how youth justice services will be delivered, funded and governed in response to both local need and the changing landscape and how the Hartlepool Youth Justice Service will work in partnership to prevent offending and re-offending by Children & Young People and reduce the use of custody.

3. WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN 2015/2016

A review of progress made against last year's plan highlights that the service has made progress across the majority of the year's priorities; but there remains key areas for improvement that will need to be driven forward in the coming year:

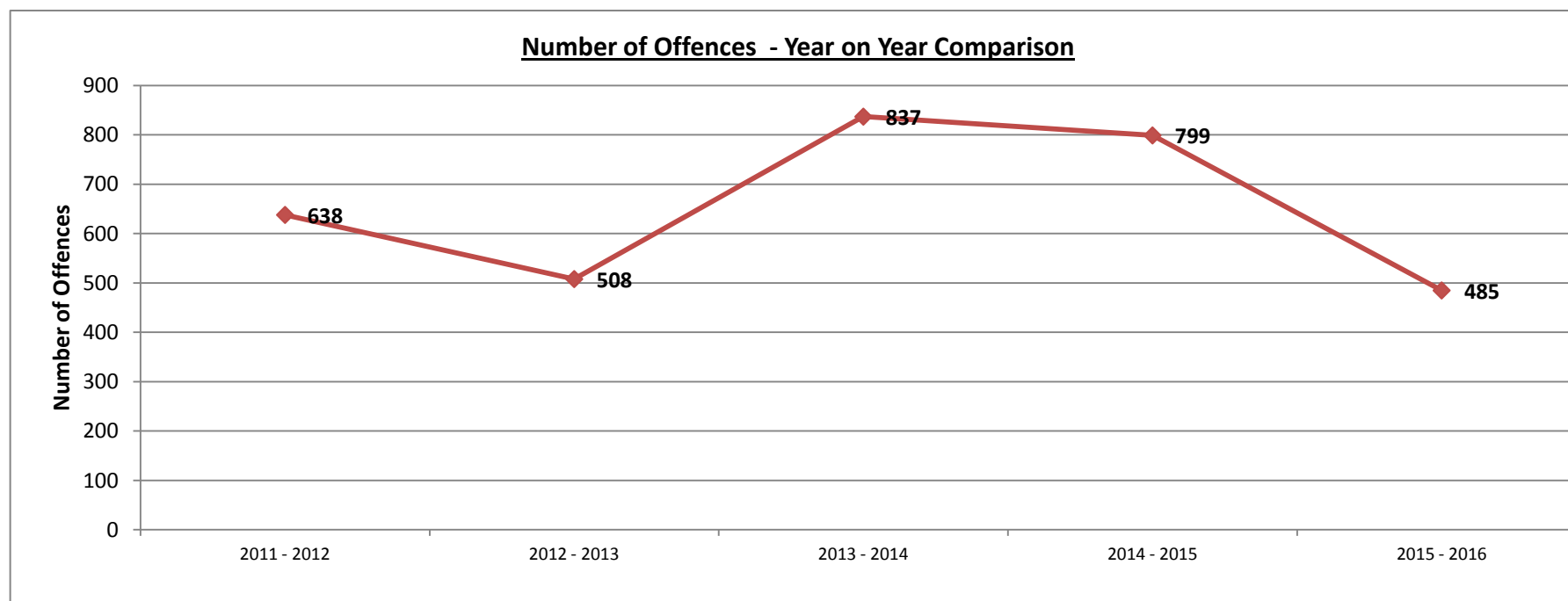
	Comments
Early Intervention and Prevention – sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that their remain strategies and services in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour	<p>The number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System did not increase from the figure in 2014 – 2015, remaining constant at 35 in 2015-16.</p> <p>Partnership arrangements with Cleveland Police remain established and effective in relation to the diversion of young people from the Youth Justice System, through the delivery of Out Of Court Disposals.</p>
Re-offending - reduce further offending by young people who have committed crime	<p>The way this performance indicator is measured has been changed nationally which has made direct comparisons with historical performance difficult.</p> <p>This said, although Hartlepool is still above the national and regional average, the YJMIS reoffending data provides an encouraging picture, in that a reduction of 4.6% has been achieved. Alongside this, the number of re-offenders has reduced from 65 in 2014/15, to 54 in 2015/16 and also the number of re-offences has dropped from 182 in 2014/15 to 136 in 2015/16.</p>
Remand and Custody – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody.	<p>The number of remand episodes has decreased from 5 in 2014-2015 to just 2 in 2015/16.</p> <p>Bail Supervision and Support/ISS packages are available and offered (where necessary or appropriate) as an alternative to custody.</p> <p>The number of custodial sentences has remained constant for both</p>

	<p>2014-2015 and 2015/16 at 4 young people.</p> <p>The number of breaches of Bail conditions and community based orders has decreased from 45 in 2014-2015 to 36 in 2015/16.</p> <p>Compliance panels are now established within YOS practice, as a means by which barriers to engagement and reasons for lack of engagement are discussed and addressed between the case manager, the young person and their family and chaired by a member of YOS management.</p>
<p>Restorative Justice – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.</p>	<p>All victims of youth crime continue to be provided with the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice remains central to work undertaken with young people who offend.</p> <p>82% of contactable victims in 2015-2016 chose to engage in a restorative process, in comparison to 63% in 2014-2015. This represents an increase of 19%.</p> <p>During 2015/16 there was a demonstrable increase in the numbers of victims opting to participate in direct restorative processes. In all, 13 victims participated, which is a marked increase on the 2014/15 figure of 3.</p>
<p>Risk and Vulnerability – ensure all children and young people entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and vulnerability to inform effective intervention and risk management.</p>	<p>Risk and vulnerability arrangements continue to benefit from regular audit activity to ensure that all young people entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk and vulnerability to inform effective intervention and risk management.</p>
<p>Think Family – embed a whole family approach to better understand the true impact of families in our communities and improve our understanding of the difficulties faced by all members of the family and how this can contribute to anti-</p>	<p>Think Family approach is successfully embedded within the service and will continue to be monitored through established quality assurance and performance measures.</p>

social and offending behaviour.	
<p>Maintain Standards – work undertaken by the YOS remains effective and achieves individual, team, service, community and national aims and objectives.</p>	<p>audit activity (based on the YJB Thematic of 'Reducing FTEs' and verified by the national Youth Justice Board) in 2015-2016 indicates that Hartlepool YOS is meeting national standards relating to:</p> <p>NS1 - Prevention NS2 – Out of Court Disposals NS7 – Work with Victims of Crime</p> <p>The YJB confirmed that no validation visit was required in relation to the successful performance of Hartlepool YOS against these standards.</p>
<p>Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board remains a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.</p>	<p>The Youth Offending Strategic Management Board continues to be a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.</p> <p>It is prudent that the board's membership and activity is reviewed to reflect the reorganisation that has, and is, taking place internally and across partner organisations.</p>

Young Offenders

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



Given the decision in 2014 to transfer Youth Court listings to Teesside Magistrates, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in Breach of Bail as young people and their broader families struggle to undertake the journey from Hartlepool to Teesside. Figures suggest that this decision has not had the anticipated impact which can be attributed to the broader reductions in overall court appearances and the services efforts to secure transport for young people and families who have barriers to accessing transport. In addition, the rise in Restorative Interventions (for which responsibility lies with the Police) has also helped to restrict the number of Young People entering the Criminal justice system and the Court system.

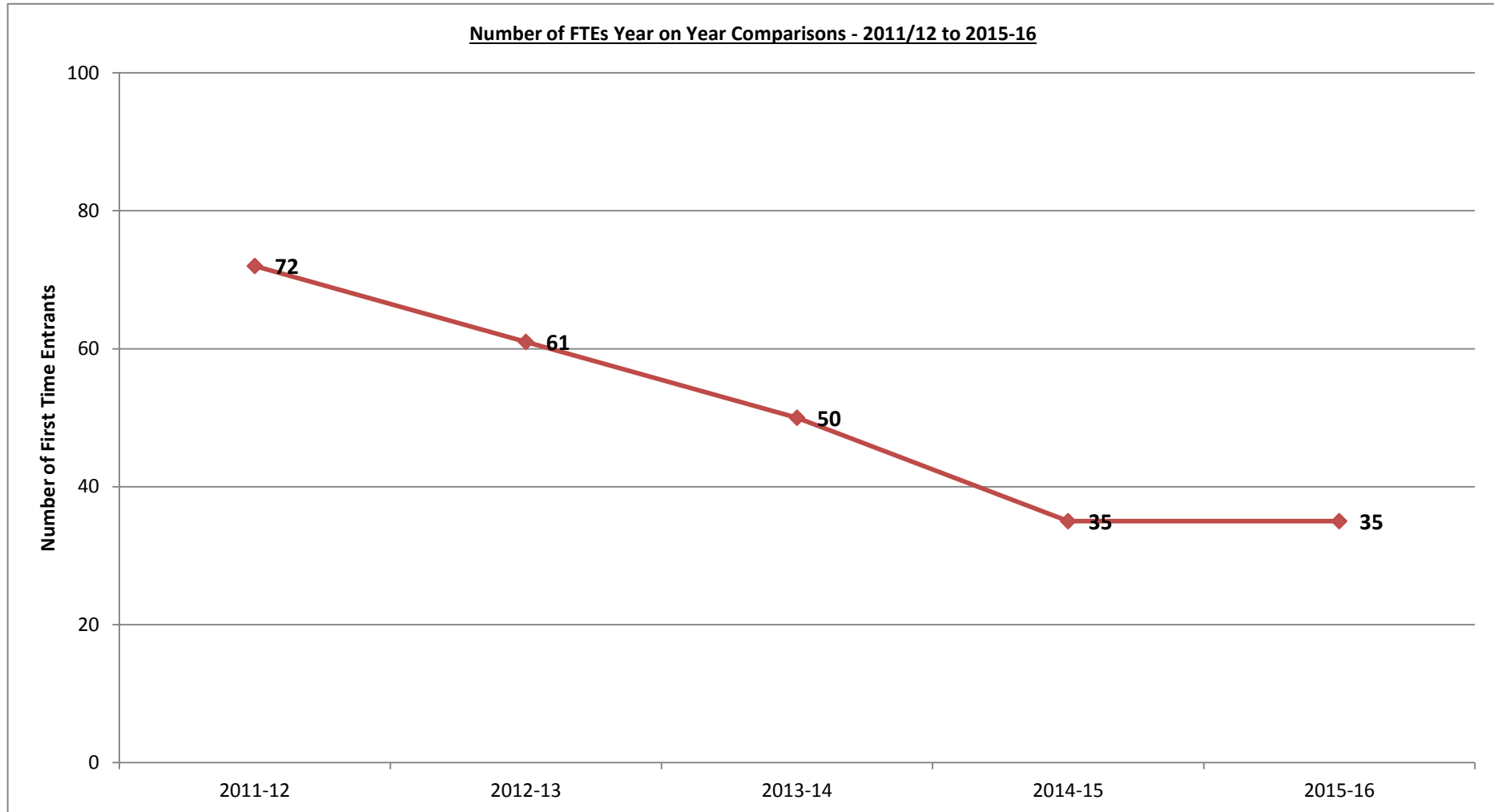
Prevention and Diversion

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

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

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

For young people whose behaviour has become more problematic robust out of court interventions have proven to be highly successful in diverting young people away from further involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour. The use of out of court interventions are able to impress upon the young people the seriousness and potentially damaging effect of their actions however they do not criminalise the young people in the way that statutory court orders inevitably do. Performance in the area has remained static in 2015/16 and will continue to be a priority for the 2016/17.

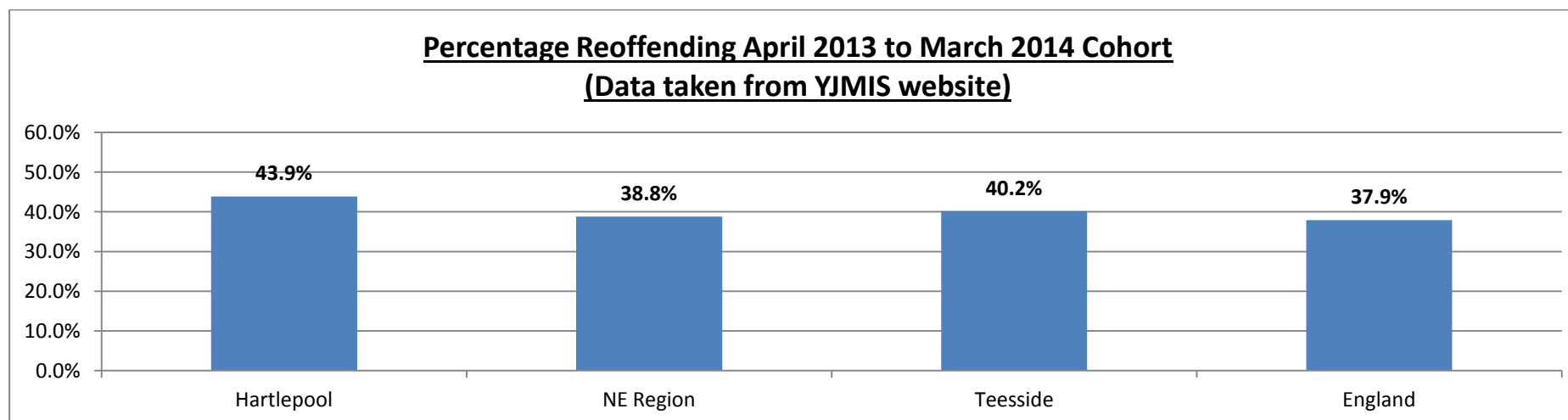
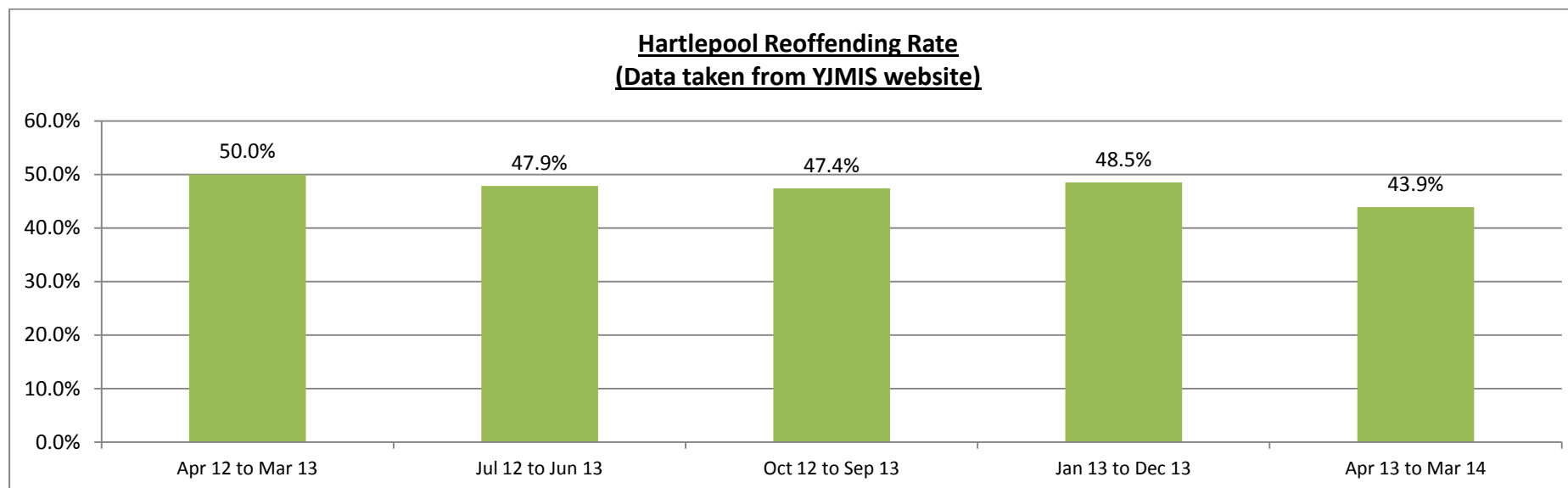


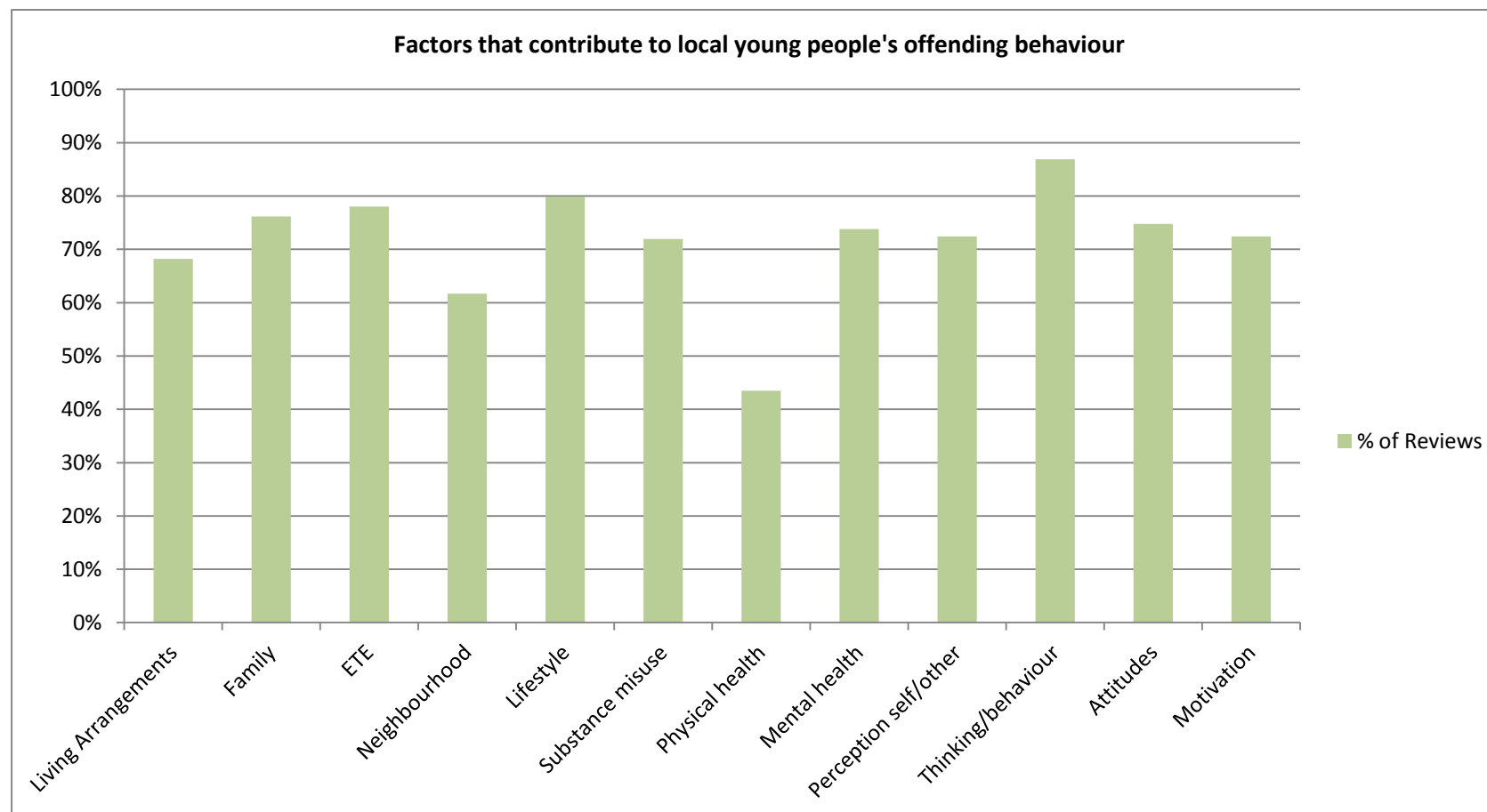
Re-offending

On top of the continuing reductions in the numbers of young people entering the youth justice system for the first time, we are now starting to see a reduction in the numbers of young people going onto re-offend. However, the rate of reoffending remains above the national and regional average and this needs to be addressed in the coming year. This will be primarily through improvements in assessments and in the structure of the interventions 'offer' to young people under YJS supervision and using feedback from young people to inform service delivery.

Cohort	Number in cohort	No of Reoffenders	No of Reoffences	Re-offences / Re-offenders	% Reoffending
Apr 12 to Mar 13	142	71	197	2.77	50.0%
Jul 12 to Jun 13	140	67	189	2.82	47.9%
Oct 12 to Sep 13	135	64	175	2.73	47.4%
Jan 13 to Dec 13	134	65	182	2.80	48.5%
Apr 13 to Mar 14	123	54	136	2.52	43.9%

Note: The cohort is tracked for a period of 12 months plus another further waiting period of six months. April 2013 to March 2014 tracked, and reporting for the quarter ending-December 2015.





Analysis highlights that the service is dealing with smaller caseloads which consist of much more complex individuals with multiple risks and vulnerabilities. Within the overall caseload, an analysis of the 'Top Ten' repeat offenders during 2015/16, reveals a cohort which display broader lifestyle choices relating to substance misuse and the need to generate income to maintain substance misuse levels. This also reflects the national and regional picture in terms of caseload composition.

Furthermore, this cohort of repeat offenders are predominantly young males who are aged between 15 and 17 and who reside within Hartlepool's most deprived neighbourhoods. Although not mutually exclusive, the common criminogenic and welfare issues prevalent amongst this cohort are identified as:

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

Alongside this cohort of young males, there is another cohort of young females aged 16-17, whom although perhaps not as prolific in terms of reoffending they are of significant concern due to multiple complex issues which are more welfare-orientated. These include: Substance misuse, chaotic lifestyles, sexual exploitation, missing from home and family breakdown. Again, as with the male cohort, young females who are offending are noted to have a higher prevalence of poor emotional well-being. Analysis shows that this arises from loss, bereavement and domestic or sexual abuse.

Working in partnership will be the key to supporting a greater understanding these underlying issues and addressing them in a holistic and co-ordinated way to provide "pathways out of offending", reduce crime and break the cycle of offending behaviour across generations. This partnership, collaborative work is achieved through:

- Better Childhood In Hartlepool,
- Think Families, Think Communities,
- Education Leadership Commission and;
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation

It is also important to adopt an 'intelligence-led' targeted approach (particularly around prevention) and service-wide staff training to improve assessment and responses to Speech, Language, & Communication, Emotional Health and Wellbeing. An important element to the reduction of reoffending and reduction is entering the youth justice system is the development of the YJS 'offer'. This is structured and bespoke quality interventions (both by the YJS staff and partner agencies and organisations) based on high quality, integrated assessments and plans.

Victims of Youth Crime

Whilst crime rates in Hartlepool have fallen, the likelihood of being a victim of crime still remains a reality, especially in our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. The Youth Justice Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership are working hard to reduce the numbers of victims of crime, including the successful use of restorative justice to achieve this objective. Restorative justice provides opportunities for those directly affected by an offence (victim, offender and members of the community) to communicate and agree how to deal with the offence and its consequences.

Restorative justice is an important underlying principle of all disposals for young offenders from Triage to Detention & Training Orders. Whilst restorative processes typically result in practical reparation, for example participating in a task that benefits the community, the communication between victim and offender as part of this process can also produce powerful emotional responses leading to mutual satisfaction and socially inclusive outcomes.

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

The Restorative Justice Service (RJ) and victim contacts continue to be delivered by the Children's Society under a commissioned arrangement. Following a contract review by HBC's Commissioning team and YJS management, the contract was extended for 2016/17, at a reduced cost. Alongside this, the YJS Manager has completed work around a revised process map and performance management framework, with particular focus on the evidencing of positive outcomes within YJS case recording systems.

During 2015/16 there was a demonstrable increase in the numbers of victims opting to participate in direct restorative processes.

	2015-16			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
No. of court cases on which restorative process delivered	14	14	15	6
No. of Identified victims of the offences leading to the disposal	49	18	22	4
No. of 'Direct' restorative process that victims participated in	2	1	1	2
No of 'Indirect' restorative processes victims participated in	13	8	8	9
No of Pre-Court disposals given in the period and court disposals closing in the period	1	49	43	1
No of identified victims of the offences leading to the disposal	4	45	57	1
No of victims offered the opportunity to participate in the restorative process	4	27	51	1
Number of 'Direct' restorative processes that the victims participated in	0	4	3	0
Number of 'Indirect' restorative processes that the victims participated in	2	19	34	3

Note: The above Table includes all restorative justice cases and not just those using YJB counting rules.

Quality of Services

The National Standards for Youth Justice Services are set by the Secretary of State for Justice on advice from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB). The standards apply to those organisations providing statutory youth justice services.

Self audit activity (based on the YJB Thematic of 'Reducing FTEs' and verified by the national Youth Justice Board) in 2015-2016 indicates that Hartlepool YOS is meeting national standards relating to:

- NS1 - Prevention
- NS2 – Out of Court Disposals
- NS7 – Work with Victims of Crime

The YJB confirmed that no validation visit was required in relation to the successful performance of Hartlepool YOS against these standards.

Throughout 2015/16, the YJS Head Of Service has overseen an appropriate focus on the quality of assessments and subsequent managerial oversight and quality assurance. This has been sustained by the current management team, through regular supervision, audit, staff training and policy development.

In October 2015, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and Children's Services were visited by HMIP and Ofsted, as one of seven areas chosen for a Thematic Inspection around Accommodation for 16/17 year olds. Although the final report is not due for completion until summer 2016, indicative feedback from Inspectors was generally positive.

Over the coming 12 months, the Youth Justice Service will continue to manage the challenge of the transition from ASSET to ASSETplus. This national implementation of a new assessment tool is required by all YJS' across England and Wales, and represents a significant business, practice and technological change. Hartlepool Youth Justice Service will maintain close working with the YJB Business Change Lead and the YJB Regional Advisor to adhere to the current plan of post-implementation (having successfully achieved all planned objectives to date).

The quality of ASSETplus practice will need to be a focus throughout 2016/17, with audit oversight via YJB-monitored quarterly 'baseline surveys' and via internal quality assurance, staff supervision and ongoing training. The introduction of ASSET plus is a significant change for staff therefore the priority for workforce development will be embedding ASSETplus and the ongoing practice issues arising.

Service User Feedback

During 2015-2016, twenty young people who were subject to statutory pre and post court orders participated in a 'Viewpoint' eSurvey questionnaire (overseen and administered by HMIP and YOS). This was to determine what they thought about the services they had received from Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and whether these services had been effective in terms of reducing their likelihood of re-offending and securing the help that they needed.

Overwhelmingly, the service users were positive about the services they had received from Hartlepool Youth Justice Service,

- 68% of respondents reporting that they thought the service provided was very good (an increase on last year's 53%) and a further 21% reporting that it was good most of the time.
- 84% of respondents reported that they are less likely to offend as a result of the work they have undertaken with the Youth Justice Service.
- 94% of these stated that they had been asked to explain why they had offended by a member of the service. 100% of these young people also stated that they were asked to explain what would help them stop offending. This is an improvement on the statistics from 2014/15.

The survey has also identified areas for further exploration. The young people were asked if there were things that made it harder for them to take part in the sessions. The two young people stated highlighted the following issues as barriers: learning needs, young people finding it difficult to understand things; sexuality.

When the young people were asked if things had got better for them in school, college or in getting a job, eight participants (80% of those who identified ETE as an issue) reported that things had got better. In relation to substance use, four out of twenty young people acknowledged they needed help to cut down their drug use. Three of these young people (75%) said they got the help they needed, with two of them reporting that things have got better.

Interestingly within the sample of twenty young people none of them identified or disclosed an issue in relation to alcohol use.

When asked about their health one young person stated they got the help in terms of improving their health or things about their body, although to date their health hadn't got any better whilst being supervised by the service. The other respondents did not identify health as a significant issue.

In relation to young people dealing with strange and upsetting thoughts, three out of the twenty (100% of those who identified emotional well-being as an issue) stated they received enough help with this and the young people stated that things had got better whilst being supervised by the service.

Alongside the annual Viewpoint survey, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service re-commissioned a piece of consultation work from the Young Inspectors in February 2016. This was to enable young people subject to current or previous YJS supervision an opportunity to offer feedback on the service received. The responses from the consultation were very informative and the Young Inspectors had a much better response than the previous year's consultation in 2015. The findings revealed that locally, many of the young people seem very happy and supported and that their needs were met during the process. In summary, the majority of young people who access the service are satisfied with the process and also recognise that something must be in place if they offend. Key areas for development to consider would be the worker / young person relationship, and the impact that has on the work undertaken with young people and whether this produces positive outcomes. It is clear some workers have got the right balance and have an effective way of building relationships with the young people and families they work with. This is a key strength of the service and one which could be built upon and shared to ensure all workers have a similar and consistent approach. Moreover, these findings will inform service development activities in the coming year, with the same consultation exercise repeated throughout the year to determine progress in terms of service user experience.

The voice of the young person is identified as a key strategic objective for 2016/17 and in line with the proposed work outlined above, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service will commission specialist training via collaborative work with Durham YOS, around Speech, Language and Communication Need. It is envisaged this will assist staff in improved assessment, plans and interventions and further serve to minimise some of the barriers to engagement outlined within the Viewpoint feedback highlighted above.

4. STRATEGIC VISION AND PRIORITIES - A BETTER CHILDHOOD IN HARTLEPOOL

Hartlepool's Children Strategic Partnership has set out its vision for children and young people within the town as follows:

Vision:

Our ambition as a children's partnership is to enable all children and families in Hartlepool to have opportunities to make the most of their life chances and be supported to be safe in their homes and communities.

Obsessions:

- Children and young people have opportunities to make the most of their life chances and are safe
- Improving family relationships, strengths, skills and ability to cope
- Reducing the impact of domestic violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol misuse on children and families
- Helping parents, carers and young people to gain skills and get jobs

The Youth Justice Service, as part of the wider services for children, seeks to deliver on the vision and obsessions through the following Youth Justice Service Strategic Priorities for 2016/17.

In order for the Youth Justice Service to contribute to the vision above it will focus on the following strategic objectives and priorities.

PROPOSED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

It is proposed that the Youth Justice Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership focuses on the following key strategic objectives during 2016-17:

Youth Justice Strategic Priorities
Re-offending - reduce further offending by young people who have committed crime with a particular emphasis in the development of Service interventions that are structured, responsive, tailored to meet identified individual need and evaluated. (Both within Youth Justice Service and provided by external agencies).
Early Intervention and Prevention – sustain the reduction of first time entrants to the youth justice system by ensuring that strategies and services remain in place locally to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.
Remand and Custody – demonstrate that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody.
Risk and Vulnerability (ASSETplus) – ensure all children and young people entering or at risk of entering the youth justice system benefit from a structured needs assessment to identify risk of harm and safety and well being concerns, to inform effective intervention and risk management.
Restorative Justice – ensure all victims of youth crime have the opportunity to participate in restorative justice approaches and restorative justice is central to work undertaken with young people who offend.
Effective Governance – ensure that the Youth Offending Strategic Management Board is a well constituted, committed and knowledgeable Board which scrutinises Youth Offending Service performance.
Voice of the Young People – ensure that all service users have the opportunity to give feedback and use this to inform future/ongoing service delivery.

Proposed Key Actions to meet strategic objectives

- Introduction of Assetplus
- Continued development of A Better Childhood in Hartlepool
- Review of restorative justice approach including review of current service
- Carry out full review of the Youth Justice Service based on findings from the Taylor Review
- Continue to work to ensure effective integration of pathways across Youth Justice Service and Social care
- Contribute to national process reviewing the secure estate for young people
- Work with young people in the justice system for them to contribute to service review and redesign.

5. RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The Youth Offending budget is mainly funded by a combination of Council funding and Youth Justice Board grant, although historically there have been financial contributions from the Police, Probation and Health (CCG and Public Health). The Council contribution to the service has remained protected however there have been significant reductions in the other areas of funding.

The Youth Justice Board grant was reduced ahead of the 2015/16 budget by 5.7%. During 2015/16 the YJB announced an in-year grant cut of an additional 10%. For 2016/17 the YJB have announced a further reduction of 11.75% and the cessation/amalgamation of the separate Unpaid Work Order and Restorative Justice Maintenance Grants. The combined impact of these cuts over the last two years is a reduction in total YJB funding of £140k (27%) when comparing 2016/17 to 2014/15.

In addition, the health contribution (£25k) previously funded by the PCT (now CCG) was funded by Public Health in 2014/15 but then ceased ahead of 2015/16. The National Probation Service have announced a reduction in their funding for 2016/17 onwards of 58% (£7k) in cash terms as well as reducing their staffing secondment from 1 FTE to 0.5 FTE.

Cleveland Police ceased their cash contribution in 2013/14 however additional funding was secured towards the YOT Triage Model as part of a two year joint-funding application between Stockton, Hartlepool and South Tees. This funding (£40k pa) ends in 2016/17 and no notification has yet been received about funding in future years.

2016/2017 Youth Offending Budget

Organisation	Financial Contribution	'In-Kind' Staffing Contribution	Total Contribution
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Hartlepool Borough Council	431	16	447
Youth Justice Board	372	0	372
National Probation Service	5	18	23
Police and Crime Commissioner	40	0	40
Health Service	0	42	42
Cleveland Police	0	45	45
Clinical Commissioning Group	0	0	0
	848	121	969

6. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Service Structure

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

Despite the positive performance outlined throughout this plan, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service has experienced a challenging year both internally and externally.

Internally, there have been changes in terms of staffing and management, with the current Youth Justice Service Team Manager taking up the post in October 2015.

Externally, the national implementation of ASSET Plus has resulted in the most significant practice, business and technological change experienced by all Youth Justice Service since the establishment of YOT's in 1998/9. The ongoing austerity measures have impacted massively, in terms of large reductions in YJB and partnership funding and resources allocation. A consequence of these cuts has seen Hartlepool YJS' staff team reduced by over 10% in the last year.

Finally, the Youth Justice Review, commissioned by Justice Minister, Michael Gove and undertaken by Charlie Taylor, already sees the interim report (published February 2016) alluding to far-reaching changes to Youth Justice Service delivery models. Confirmation of such proposals will be received in July 2016 upon publication of Charlie Taylor's final report.

In view of the above, during 2016/17, Hartlepool Youth Justice Service will need to undertake a service review in response to the all of the areas set out above. Such a review is necessary to ensure the service is able to meet its statutory requirements and obligations, whilst also sustaining high performance and achieving positive outcomes for young people, victims and the wider community.

The review will need to consider: alignment of staffing and resource; data collection, performance management and reporting mechanisms; the potential for collaborative working with neighbouring YOS'; a more targeted and multi-agency intelligence-led approach to elements of the work (particularly prevention) and more structure and quality to the interventions delivered with young people subject to Youth Justice Service involvement.

Governance

The Youth Justice Service is located within the Children's Services Division of Child and Adult Services. The Management Board is chaired by a local Police Area Commander and is made up of representatives from Child and Adult Services, Police, Probation, Health, Courts, Housing, Youth Support Services, Community Safety and the local Voluntary and Community Sector. Effective integrated strategic partnership working and clear oversight by the Management Board are critical to the success and effective delivery of youth justice services in Hartlepool. The board is directly responsible for:

- Determining how appropriate youth justice services are to be provided and funded;
- Overseeing the formulation each year of the youth justice plan;
- Agreeing measurable objectives linked to key performance indicators as part of the youth justice plan;
- Ensuring delivery of the statutory aim to prevent offending by children and young people;
- Giving strategic direction to Youth Justice Service Manager and Youth Justice Service Team;
- Providing performance management of the prevention of youth crime and periodically report this to the Safer Hartlepool Executive Group;
- Promoting the key role played by the Youth Justice Service within local integrated offender management arrangements.

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

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

Lynn Beeston Chair	Local Police Area Commander
Mike Lane Jane Young	YJS Team Manager HBC YJS Head of Service
Danielle Swainston	Assistant Director - Children's Services HBC
Emma Rutherford	Head of Virtual School HBC
Julie Allan	Head of Cleveland NPS – National Probation Service (NE)
Janet Seddon	SCN Child & Young People Out of Hospital Care Services NHS
Claire Clark	Neighbourhood Manager Community Safety HBC
Dave Wise	Chair of the West View Project (Voluntary/Community Sector representative).
Deborah Clark	Health Improvement Practitioner HBC
Lynda Igoe	Principal Housing Officer HBC
Karen Turner	Hartlepool Magistrates

7. PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

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

- Criminal justice services.
- Services for children and young people and their families.

The Youth Justice Service contributes both to improving community safety and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and in particular protecting them from significant harm. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) highlights the need for Youth Justice Services to work jointly with other agencies and professionals to ensure that young people are protected from harm and to ensure that outcomes for local children, young people and their families are improved.

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

8. RISKS TO FUTURE DELIVERY

The key risks that have the capacity to have an adverse impact on the Youth Justice Service in the coming twelve months and potentially beyond are detailed below:

Risks	Potential Impact	Control Measures
Secure Remand Costs	The unpredictability associated with remand episodes and remand length has the potential to place significant financial pressure on the YJS and broader Local Authority.	It remains essential that the service can demonstrate to magistrates that there are robust and comprehensive alternatives in place to support reductions in the use of remands and custody. Coordinated multi-agency responses to young people at risk of remand where safe and secure accommodation is the precipitating factor to be further developed. Remand budget is incorporated within Wider Children's Services placement costs.
Managing the reduction in YJB grant and contributions for 16/17 and managing further cuts in 17/18.	Consequential impact on performance. Capacity to meet strategic and operational obligations. Capacity to continue to focus on early intervention and identification	Targeted resources to address need. Review of Service. Regional collaboration with neighbouring YOS' such as coverage of TYC. Robust financial management. Robust quality assurance.
Post – Implementation of ASSETPlus – (National Youth Justice Assessment tool)	There is the potential for significant ongoing service disruption as the staff team and management implement ASSETplus. Impact on performance (timeliness) capacity and staff confidence whilst they adjust to this different assessment and acquire the familiarity to complete,	AssetPlus was adopted by Hartlepool in April 2016, therefore is able to learn from other YOT's in the first two tranches re lessons learned. Ongoing dialogue between the local change lead who has ownership for the implementation of AssetPlus, alongside

	<p>interrogate and locate the information in the assessment.</p> <p>Lack of understanding amongst partner professionals as to the increased complexity and demand place on Youth Justice Service staff. Impact on information sharing given the difference between a full ASSETplus and previous ASSET and ROSH documentation.</p>	<p>the Hartlepool YJS AssetPlus project team and Youth Justice Board.</p> <p>Ensure that Hartlepool Youth Justice Service remain involved in all planning activities to secure smooth post implementation of ASSET Plus.</p> <p>Post implementation:</p> <p>Undertake Assessment and Planning Foundation training with all new staff.</p> <p>Implement AssetPlus ongoing Practice changes.</p> <p>Hold refresher AssetPlus staff briefings and development days on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Standing agenda on Board Meetings, Team Meetings and staff supervisions.</p> <p>Collaborative and reciprocal work/problem solving with neighbouring YOS' in the region. (Eg. EP Group).</p> <p>Identified staff to undertake ASSETPlus baseline assessment 3,6,9,12 months after implementation.</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue between HBC I.T. and Careworks to address and remedy any identified issues.</p> <p>Development and implementing of QA tool to keep standards.</p>
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9. STRATEGIC SUMMARY

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

An emphasis on prevention and diversion needs to be maintained however this presents significant challenge in light of continued cuts in staffing and resources. In spite of recent reductions in re-offending, the rate of re-offending in Hartlepool continues to be an area of concern. The Youth Justice Service will work with partner agencies particularly Locality Teams, Schools and CAMHS to identify and support children and young people at risk of offending as part of the wider programme "A Better Childhood in Hartlepool", Education Leadership Commission and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Transformation Programme

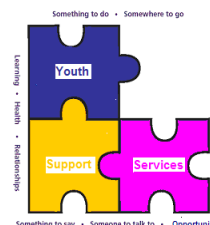
Evidence highlights that it is often the complex interplay of multiple deprivation factors and difficulties that makes problems in some households insurmountable and places the children at significant risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour. As a result there is a need to place an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

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

Alongside the above, there have been further policy developments at a national level alongside operational risks which the service will need to respond to and manage in the coming year. In particular, the interim report (published February 2016) by Charlie Taylor, which reviews the Youth Justice System. The final report (due July 2016) is expected to highlight a number of proposed changes to YOS delivery models – which will impact on partners locally and nationally. Some of this initial thinking makes reference to regional collaboration, changes to the secure estate, legislative amendments and devolved budget and commissioning responsibility.

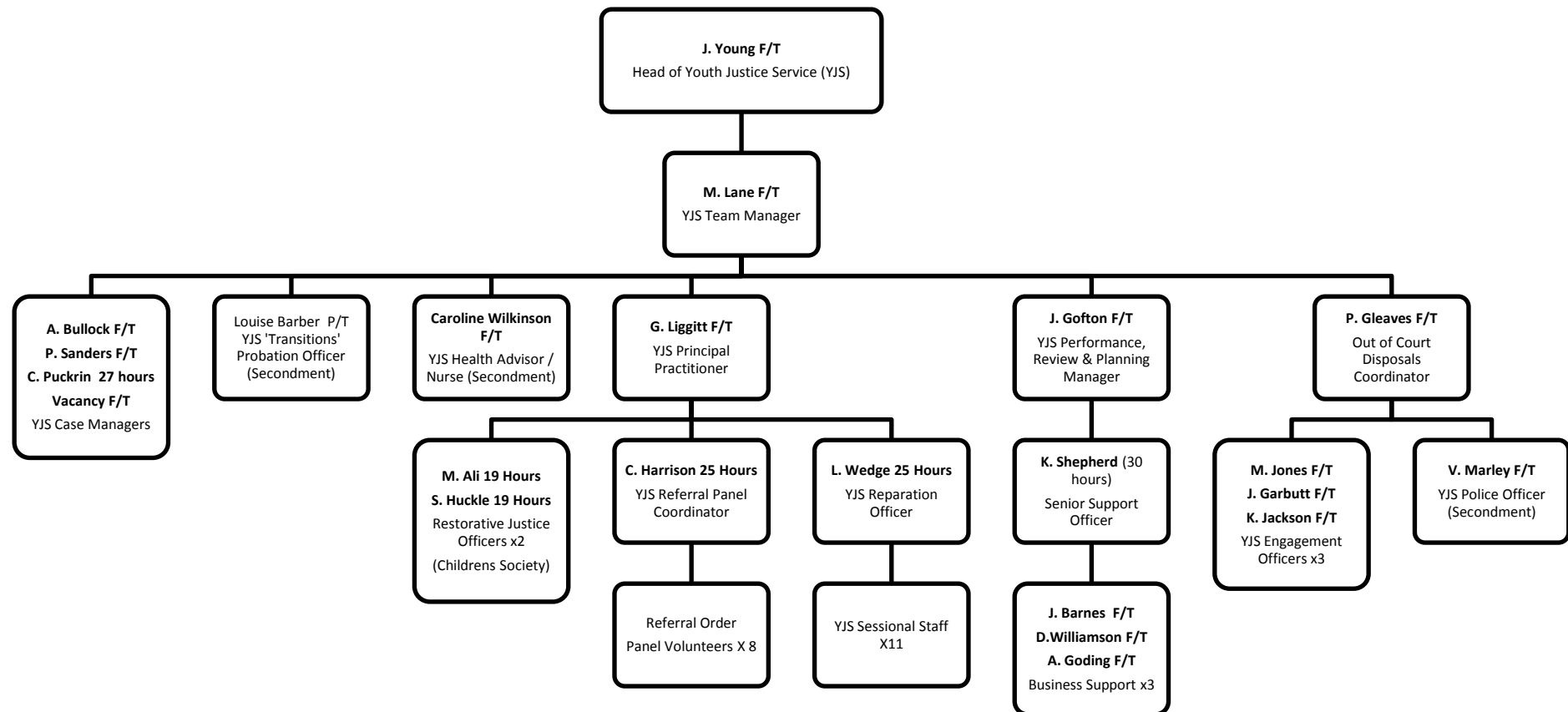
Hartlepool Youth Justice Service and broader Youth Justice Partnership will be proactive in addressing the above challenges to secure further reductions in offending and re-offending by young people.

Hartlepool Youth Justice Partnership



Appendix 1

Youth Justice Service Structure



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th July 2016



Report of: Director of Child & Adult Services

Subject: REVISED DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS – EARLY YEARS AND SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Key Decision – test (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 048/16

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the revised costs for Section 106 education developer contributions and to inform Members of the revised formula for primary pupil yields.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Early Years and Schools Infrastructure Plan (EYSIP) was approved by Children's Services Committee in February 2015. Within the plan there is a section which stipulates the level of Section 106 contributions housing developers will be expected to provide for education provision. The current calculation is based on baseline design standards for schools and costs are derived from the Education Funding Agency's contractors' framework rates, as set out within cost guidance published by the Department for Education on 1 October 2012.

PRIMARY	£9,165
SECONDARY	£12,205

4. SECTION 106 EDUCATION CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Section 106 contributions allow planning authorities to enter into a legally-binding agreement with a landowner in association with the granting of a planning application. Developments that are likely to generate an increased demand for school places will need to contribute towards expanding existing

education infrastructure where the development is not of a sufficient size to require a new school. Section 106 agreements will also include contributions and/or the allocation of land and sufficient funding to enable schools to be built or extended.

- 4.2 Contributions are sought from developments where the Council has identified that there is pressure on school places. These contributions may be discounted if sufficient places are available when the trigger points are reached. When looking at spare capacity the Local Authority also takes into account other developments in the vicinity, and information on projected future pupil numbers.

5. NATIONAL SCHOOL DELIVERY COST BENCHMARKS

- 5.1 The Local Authority has recently received up to date National School Delivery Cost Benchmarking information. This information has been compiled in conjunction with the Local Government Association (LGA), Education Funding Agency (EFA), and National Association of Construction Frameworks (NACF) and formally supported and approved by the Infrastructure & Projects Authority, part of the Cabinet Office. It is proposed that this information be used in future to calculate the Section 106 contributions for education provision. Members should note that any secured S.106 education contributions are only to be used to create additional school places. Members should also note that the EYSIP states that primary schools should be no more than two form of entry (420 pupils) and secondary schools no more than 1250 pupils. The updated costs per pupil place are detailed below:

PRIMARY	£13,755
SECONDARY	£14,102

- 5.2 The cost factor will be published annually by the Council to reflect the average capital cost of creating an additional school place. The most up to date published cost at the point of an application's determination will be used for the purpose of calculating the financial requirement.
- 5.3 The Local Authority will pursue additional funding support for any new schools required due to housing developments within the town through the Education Funding Agency's national programme.

6. Pupil Yields

- 6.1 When a planning application is received an expected pupil yield from the development is calculated, taking consideration of the size of development (number of properties).
- 6.2 Given the recent increases in birth rates and the subsequent reductions in surplus places, it is generally presumed that all developments will be required to contribute towards additional capacity.

- 6.3 A local formula was developed, reflecting the number of pupils expected to reside in the dwellings during and beyond completion of the development. This is currently calculated as:

15 community primary school pupils per 100 houses built

3.6 Roman Catholic primary pupils per 100 houses built

18.6 primary pupils in total per 100 houses built

- 6.4 The methodology used to calculate the pupil yields has been revised so that it closely matches current trends. This has therefore increased the projected pupil yields. Tees Valley Unlimited has projected the new figures as outlined below:

17.6 community primary school pupils per 100 houses built

3.9 Roman Catholic primary pupils per 100 houses built

21.5 primary pupils per 100 houses built

- 6.5 The secondary figures are yet to be received.
- 6.6 Members are asked to note the revised pupil yield figures. The Early Years and School Infrastructure Plan will be updated to reflect the amendments.

7. FORWARD FUNDING PROJECTS

- 7.1 In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to deliver infrastructure projects ahead of the related development trigger points to ensure that schools are able to manage the impact or to take advantage of other funding opportunities which may be time limited. Such circumstances are only likely to occur where the infrastructure is intended to manage the cumulative impact of a number of sites.
- 7.2 The forward funding of projects does not remove the obligation from developers to fund the infrastructure that is shown to be necessary to mitigate the impact of their development. The Council will endeavour to make clear the intention to forward fund a project at the point of completion of the legal agreement but reserves the right to adjust the timing of delivery of an agreed education infrastructure project as necessary during the lifetime of the related development.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS/FINANCIAL CONSIDERTIONS

- 8.1 The report is concerned with securing funding to create new pupil places as a result of new housing developments. Should contributions not be secured or there is a shortfall in funding, the Council would be obliged to fund new pupil places as required in the future.

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 A section 106 legal agreement will be completed for each planning application where education planning obligations are to be made.

10. CHILD AND POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no child and poverty considerations.

11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations.

12. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no staff considerations.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- Approve the revised costs for Section 106 developer contributions as detailed in paragraph 5.1 above.
- Note the revised primary pupil yield figures as detailed in paragraph 6.4 above.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children's Services Committee Report entitled Early Years & School Infrastructure Plan – February 2015.

15. CONTACT OFFICER

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 July 2016



Report of: Director of Child & Adult Services

Subject: SUITABILITY PROJECTS - UPDATE

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Key Decision (test (i)/(ii) Forward Plan Reference No. CAS050/16

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Children's Services Committee on a scheme which was approved by Children's Service Committee on 08 March 2016 but now requires further funding to realise better solutions for the school involved. The purpose is also to seek approval for an additional scheme. Further details relating to these schemes are outlines in **Appendix 1** of this report. **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At the meeting of 08 March 2016 Children's Services Committee (Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 048/16) agreed a number of schemes that had been selected for progression by School's Capital Sub Group using Suitability Funding.

3.2 One of the schemes approved was for the demolition of mobile classrooms at Rift House Primary School to be replaced by an extension to the main building. The cost approved was based on estimated costs prior to feasibility work being carried out.

3.3 Since the submission of the 08 March 2016 Children's Services Committee report required urgent works at Springwell School have been raised which

will allow the school to better manage the intake of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in September 2016.

4. PROPOSALS

RIFT HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

- 4.1 Rift House Primary School have worked with the HBC Building, Design and Management Team to design a building scheme that not only replaces the space currently provided by the mobile classroom which is due for demolition but, also allows the schools to positively redesign how they deliver KS1 education.
- 4.2 The preferred design scheme chosen by the school has been quoted is significantly over the originally allocated budget. The school believe that this increased investment will positively influence teaching and transition within the school as well improving safeguarding issues around managing social work visits to school.
- 4.3 Senior Leadership and Governors at Rift House Primary School recognised that part of the increased costs is due to operational changes that the school would like to make whilst they have the advantage of the available Suitability Funding. In order to achieve their preferred design they are willing to make a contribution in addition to the required 10%.
- 4.4 The Headteacher of the school presented the plans to School's Capital Sub Group on 14 April 2016; the group were happy to accept the proposal on the understanding that the school make a contribution in addition to the required 10%.
- 4.5 Quoted costs and school contributions are detailed in appendix 1.

SPRINGWELL SCHOOL

- 4.5 The Headteacher at Springwell approached School's Capital Sub Group to request financial support to convert the current conservatory space into a classroom for children with ASD. Following feasibility work a quote of has been provided, as detailed in appendix 1.
- 4.6 Schools Capital Sub Group and School's Forum are happy for this work to be funded through Suitability Funding, on the understanding that the school contribute the standard 10%.
- 4.7 Further work will need to be carried out in the future to look at how Springwell School can be further developed to accommodate the rising number of children in Hartlepool being diagnosed with ASD.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The scheme at Rift House Primary Schools was highlighted because the current mobile classroom has identified health and safety risks.
- 5.2 The work at Springwell Primary School is allowing an expansion of classroom space which can accommodate their intake of children with ASD in September 2016. Without this work being completed the school will not be able to accommodate these children and they may need to be placed out of area.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The current budgetary position is detailed in **Appendix 1** of this report.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Nothing to consider.

8. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Nothing to consider.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There maybe some equality and diversity issues to consider if the work at Springwell School is not carried out and there is a need to place children with ASD out of area.

10. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Nothing to consider.

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 Asset management is critical for each school to deliver educational activities to children.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 It is recommended that Members approve the additional funding for Rift House Primary School.
- 12.2 It is recommended that Members approve the funding request for Springwell School
- 12.3 Members note that further work will be carried out around ASD provision in Hartlepool and how Springwell School can be developed to accommodate future needs.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The scheme at Rift House Primary School has been designed in consultation with school senior leaders and will allow them to create a new and improved way of working with children in KS1.
- 13.2 The scheme at Springwell School will allow for children with ASD starting school in September 2016 to remain in Hartlepool rather than the prospect of having to place them out of area.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children Services Committee – 08 March 2016

15. CONTACT OFFICER

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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 AND
ADOPTION AGENCY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
2016/17

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 For Children's Services Committee to note the Annual Report of the Adoption Agency 2015/16 (**Appendix 1**)

2.2 For Children's Services Committee to approve the Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose for 2016/17 (**Appendix 2**).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The work of the Adoption Services is subject to National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of adoption services. The National Minimum Standards together with regulations for adoption and the placement of children looked after form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of adoption agencies.

3.2 It is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards that the service produces a Statement of Purpose for adoption services and reviews these at least annually. It is also a requirement that the executive side of the local authority receive six monthly reports detailing the management, outcomes and functioning of the Adoption services. This information is provided within the Annual Report, attached as **Appendix 1**. The Statement of Purpose for 2016/17 is attached in **Appendix 2**.

- 3.3 The Annual Report provides details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff, and adopters, the constitution of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective adopters, the achievements of the service during the year and the priorities for further service development in 2016/17.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial considerations needed for this report. However it is important to note that this is a statutory function for the council and therefore resources need providing to ensure this function is fulfilled.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

6. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Options have been considered and there are no child and family poverty impact issues. All families and children that need support from this service are supported.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The adoption service ensures that they support all those people that want to adopt and children who need to be adopted.

8. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no staff implications in relation to this report.

9. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There are no asset management implications in relation to this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The Adoption Agency is a statutory service of the Council and as such Children's Services Committee, having the responsibility for Children's Services, require information to be able to provide scrutiny and oversight in relation to how services are delivered and their effectiveness.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Adoption Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011

13. CONTACT OFFICER

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Adoption Annual Report 2015/16

Together we will build better futures



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Some quotes from Hartlepool adopters



Foreword

Welcome to the Adoption Services Annual Report of 2015-16. In Hartlepool we have set out our overarching ambition and aspiration in our Children Looked After Strategy stating that:

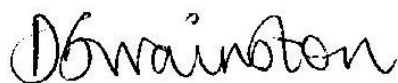
“Hartlepool Council will provide children and young people with permanence and stability to enable them to thrive, enjoy a happy and secure childhood and become confident adults who achieve their aspirations”.

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

The service continues to perform effectively against national and regional indicators. The service has a clear focus on continuous improvement and works hard to ensure that children, potential adopters and adopters are able to contribute to the ongoing development of the service.

The service is part of the Regional Adoption Leadership Board to ensure that best practice is understood, shared and implemented across the service.

There are some challenging times ahead with the potential development of a Regional Adoption Agency. It is unknown at this stage what this will look like however Hartlepool will continue to ensure that whatever model of delivery is agreed for the future that children’s stability and permanence is at the heart of this service.



Danielle Swainston
Assistant Director, Children’s Services
June 2016

Introduction




The annual Adoption Agency report provides information about the activity of and outcomes achieved by the service during 2015-16 and outlines plans and strategic priorities for 2016-17.

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

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

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

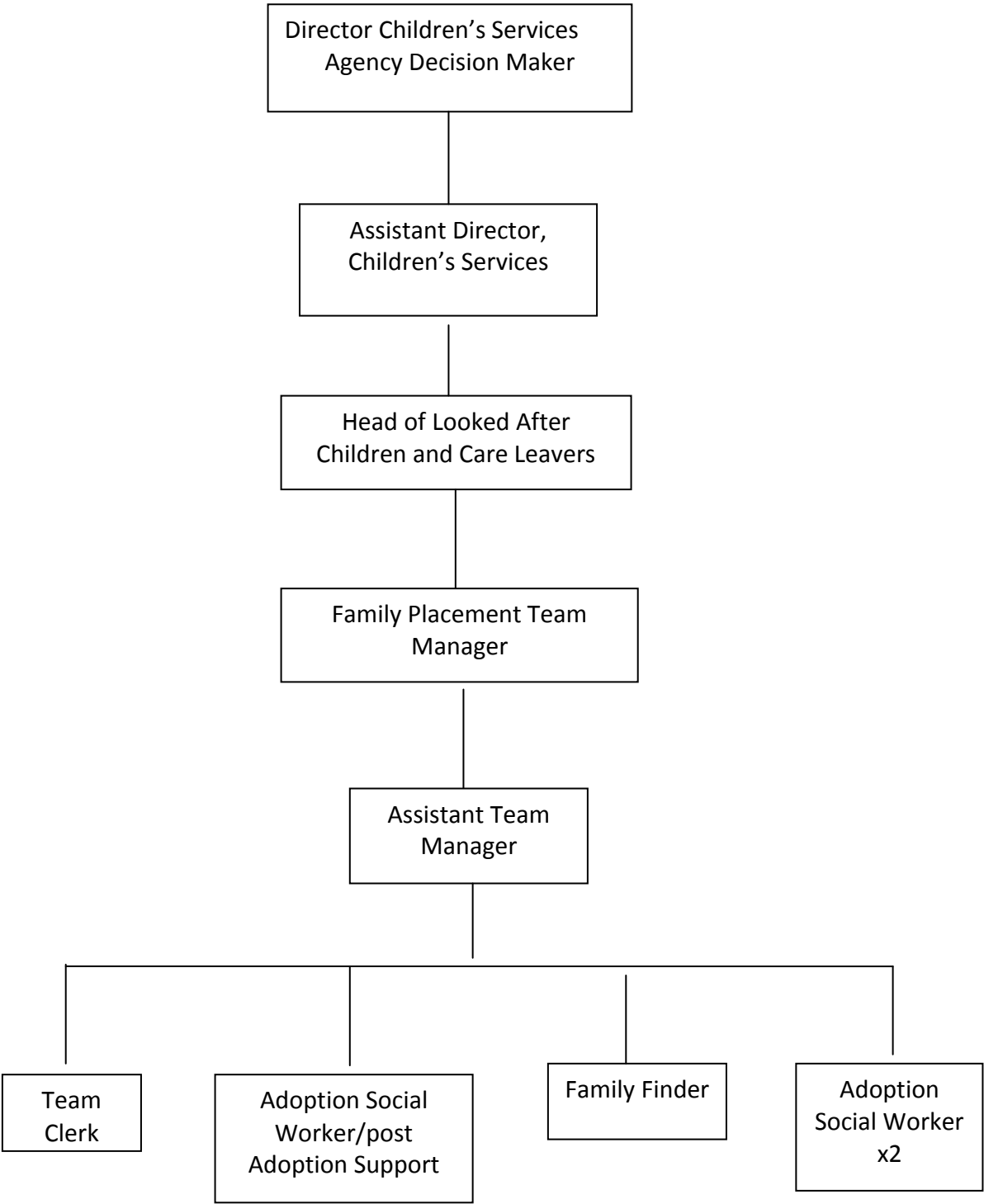
- Ensuring that where children cannot remain in the care of their birth parent/s, they are placed with appropriate adoptive parent/s at the earliest opportunity;
 - Providing robust assessment of and support to adoptive carers and children to meet identified needs;
 - Providing advice and support to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

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



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

Adoption Team Structure



Governance and Oversight of Adoption

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

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

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

- For children who are placed for adoption in Hartlepool, the length of time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family is shorter than the national average. (507 days in Hartlepool compared with 593 days nationally.)
- For children in Hartlepool the timescale between the local authority being granted a placement order and the local authority deciding on a match with an adoptive family is significantly lower than the national average. (204 days in Hartlepool compared with 223 days nationally).
- In Hartlepool 56% of children wait less than 16 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family compared to 47% nationally.

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

Panel Members are fully trained and join a central list of people who can be called on to attend Panel, this includes an Independent Chair, one Vice Chair, seven Agency Social Workers, an Elected Member), five Independent Members, 1 of which is a foster carer for another authority. Panel membership also includes three members who have direct experience of adoption. Panel also benefits from a Medical Advisor.

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

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

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



Recruitment and Assessment of Adopters

Number of Approved Adopters as at 31.03.16	5
Number of Adopters currently being assessed	5
Number of Adopters waiting to complete training	0
Number of Adopters with children in placement but not yet adopted	5
Number of Initial Visits undertaken 2015/16	19
Number of applications received 2015/16	9

The Adoption Service recruitment strategy is updated on an annual basis and a range of methods are used to attract prospective adopters to Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Agency. We are particularly successful in achieving personal recommendations from Hartlepool's approved adopters and their families. There is an advertising campaign for adoption which we are currently updating, advertisements are placed in the Primary Times and regional publications. We have recently held a local recruitment drive delivering leaflets to homes in areas which have previously provided an interest in adoption and following this up with open events to attend. We continue to have a need for placements for siblings groups and older children and this will be the priority of the recruitment strategy for 2016-17.

Adopters attend four days of modularised training which has been updated to meet the requirements of the two stage assessment process. This training aims to providing prospective adopters with information and covers the adoption process, legal procedures, child development, attachment and resilience, child abuse and safeguarding and looks at adoption from the perspective of the birth family and the child. Feedback from prospective adopters who attend the preparation training is positive however we continually strive to add new dimensions to the training. The Panel Chair and Panel Advisor have recently become involved with the preparation training and meet with prospective

adopters to discuss the panel experience and Agency Decision Making process, this session is well received.

In addition to the training, post approval support groups are held 4 times per year. This training is aimed at supporting adopters and continuing their learning. Topics include talking to your child about adoption, understanding difficult behaviour, managing introductions, post adoption support and facing up to Facebook. Alongside this adopters who are waiting to be matched are invited to attend the regional Waiting Adopters Group which takes place quarterly.

Family Finding

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

Number of children awaiting adoptive placement as of 31 March16	6
Number of children matched and placed in an adoptive placement from 2015-16 10	5
Number of children adopted between April 2015 – March 2016	9

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

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

There is a robust matching process which is undertaken in order to identify and prepare a child and prospective adopters for placement. This starts with an exchange of written and verbal information followed by a meeting between foster carer, social worker and adopters. We are now routinely ensuring that prospective adopters meet with the Agency's Medical Advisor to discuss any health related matters for the child.

Preparation for Placement

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

The service has the support of a Play Therapist and Filial Therapist based within the Specialist Services Division who provide advice and where appropriate direct support in the preparation and placement of children within the adoptive family. The potential disruption and impact on

children when moving placement cannot be underestimated and it is crucial that significant planning and support is provided at this time.



Where the Play Therapist is involved or where there is a need they are involved in the Family Finding and Planning and Introductions process for the child. Advice is sought regarding any potential issues that may arise and plans are adjusted to take into consideration any suggestions to ensure that the child has a smooth transition their adoptive placement.

Life Story work is completed by the Social Worker, this should be with a child if he or she is old enough or on behalf of the child if they are very young. The Adoption Team has completed training in Life Story Work and direct work with children for foster carers and social workers. A resource library has been established and the whole service has attended 'direct work with children' seminars where practitioners shared ideas, resources and advice was available from play therapists.

Post Adoption Support

The Adoption Team manage the 'post box system' this is an exchange of information essentially between adopters and adopted children and birth parent/extended family members. There are approximately over 200 different pieces of information exchanged and this continues to grow annually. The authority has an electronic system which has updated and improved the management of these arrangements.

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

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

Following the publication of the report "Further Action on Adoption: Finding more loving homes" (DfE January 2013) and the introduction of the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) 1st May 2015 the Adoption service has written to all adopters approved by Hartlepool and has contacted teams working across the authority to inform them of the remit of the ASF. Requests for assessments for therapeutic support from the fund are increasing steadily with successful applications to the fund growing.

The Adoption service continues to commission a service from After Adoption to provide independent advice and support to birth parents, adopters and adoptees. To increase the numbers of people accessing this valuable service we are (with their permission) currently referring all birth parents to this service. However referrals can still be made by

either the person themselves or by a social worker on their behalf where necessary if there is a need beyond the point of social work involvement. After Adoption also hold events in the region for all adoptive families to attend.

Regional Adoption Agency

In June 2015 the DfE published the paper Regionalising Adoption setting out its proposals to move to regional adoption agencies with an aim to: speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children; improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reduce costs.

Hartlepool Borough Council has for some time been considering the possibility of merging with its neighbouring authorities with whom it has pre-existing positive working relationships with. In 2014 Mott McDonald completed a feasibility study examining the possibility of the then four authorities forming a joint adoption agency.

The probability of this initiative has been further considered in view of the DfE publication (see above). In 2015 a joint bid to form a regional adoption agency was made by the four interested Local Authorities (Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Darlington and Redcar and Cleveland) they were subsequently joined by Stockton who wished to be included.

The five Local Authorities made a successful bid to the DfE for funding to develop the Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency and have commissioned IMPOWER to support in the strategic development of the RAA. A second bid for interim funding has been made (April 2016) to finance the continuation of this project. Hartlepool and its partners are confident that we will be successful in securing further funding perhaps being a pilot scheme for the North East region.

Should funding be agreed it is expected that the project will be live from April 2017. The aims of the RAA will help:

- Speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of children in care.
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support.
- Support best proactive and support reduced costs for adoptive placements.

Achievements in the past year




2013 OFSTED's new approach to inspection is a single inspection of the whole of Children's Services and this includes the Adoption Service. Hartlepool Borough Council was one of the first of the Local Authorities to be inspected by OFSTED under this framework with the inspection taking place in November/December 2013. Overall the Authority was judged as GOOD with a sub judgement of GOOD for adoption. The inspection report highlights a number of strengths of the services and there were no recommended areas for improvement in relation to adoption. It is anticipated that the scheduled return to take place November 2016 will at least maintain if not better the judgement previously made.

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

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

Hartlepool Borough Council continues to be an active member of the Northern Consortium and have membership of the Adoption Register over the past year we successfully match the majority of children needing adoptive placements with in house approved adopters.



Priorities for 2016-2017

Following a successful year of performance in 2015/16, the service strives to deliver continuous improvement and has identified the following priorities for the coming year:

- To respond promptly to any adoptive enquiries including those received via the National Gateway (First 4 Adoption);
- To continue to improve recruitment timescales using the now fully embedded two stage assessment process;
- To deliver the Department's plans for early permanence for very young children with a plan for adoption through foster to adopt and concurrent planning
- To support placing social workers in completing factual, comprehensive and informative Child's Permanency Reports;
- To utilise the existing Family Finding post to identify children needing adoptive placements earlier and using our own resources, established links and new research to positively match with adopters within timescales;
- To work collaboratively with the regional consortium, Adoption Link, Activity Days, and opening minds events to identify placements for children with complex needs and sibling groups;
- To work positively and proactively with the child's social worker to improve the quality of Life Story work;
- To provide those who have adopted with post adoption support;
- To respond swiftly to requests for therapeutic support from the Adoption support Fund to those living in the Hartlepool area who have adopted.
- To utilise and develop the electronic post box system;
- To develop Life Appreciation Days for children whose plan is for adoption;



- Target our current advertising campaign to look specifically at recruiting adopters for older children and siblings group;
- To monitor adoption timescales at least quarterly via Performance Managements Clinics and regular briefings to the Business Unit Managers Meetings identifying trends at the earliest opportunity;
- To take an active role as the lead authority of the Regional Adoption to pursue to look at the feasibility of being part of a regional adoption agency, pooling resources with neighbouring local authorities to recruit, train and assess prospective adopters ultimately increasing choice for social workers when considering permanency via adoption for children.

Some quotes from Hartlepool adopters;




"We can both say that our assessing Social Worker has been amazing; always cheerful and friendly, with a smile. Anytime we have a query she has always had the time to discuss this with us and she fills us with confidence. Our assessment was very thorough and it is clear that she is very passionate about the work that she does."

"Our son has made a very good 'friend' and he looks forward to meeting her every time a visit is due. In regard to the training we feel that this was very detailed and informative".

"The members of the Adoption Team have always been positive and friendly. They have always been there to offer our family any support if needed. We were very nervous when attending panel however were made to feel comfortable and at ease"

"We initially found the assessment process quite daunting however our worker quickly put us at ease and helped us to understand the processes that we had to go through, she remained with us until we were matched with our son via another local authority. She has remained in contact sending messages to see how we are and we know that she will always be there if we needed her"

"From our initial visit right through to the making of the adoption order our Social Worker has been there for us, helping and supporting us through our adoption journey. We would recommend Hartlepool Adoption Team to anyone else who is thinking of adopting"





Hartlepool Borough Council

Child and Adult Services

Adoption Service

Statement of Purpose

April 2016

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADOPTION SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

This document was reviewed and updated in April 2016 and is to be submitted for approval by Elected members in April 2016.

This Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and revised as appropriate by the Team Manager of the Adoption Services no later than April 2017.

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Values, Aims and Objective

Values

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

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

Aims and objectives of the adoption service

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

Adoption affects the following groups of children;

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

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

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

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

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

Objectives

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

Services provided by the adoption agency

The Adoption Service provides the following services and facilities:

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

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

In April 2003, Hartlepool Borough Council entered into a formal contract with “*After Adoption*” an agency specialising in post adoption support to provide services to the following groups in the form of individual work or group support. This contract has been reviewed and renewed annually and offers support to the following individuals and families:

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

Staffing information

Job Title	Qualifications	Experience
Head of Service	Dip Sw PQ 1 BA (hons) in advance SW practice Practice Teacher Award Leadership and management	Residential care, learning disabilities and mental health Children and families Children with disabilities Transitions (14-25 children and adult with disabilities) Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Placement Team Manager	DipSW PQ1 PQCCA Dip ILM (Management)	Qualifieeexperienced in Children and Families Social Work and in establishing and running an Independent Fostering service. Fostering Social Worker
Assistant Manager	Dip Sw PQ1 HCPC Registered	Children & Families Resource Team Manager Nominated Worker
Adoption Social Worker and Post Box Coordinator/Post Adoption Support.	CQSW PQCCA DiPSW	Generic social work Family Placement Adoption work
Adoption Social Worker,	BA (Hons) Social Work	Children & Families. Adoption
Adoption Social Worker	NNEB City and Guilds Adult Teaching cert. NVQ L4 Health and Social Care NCFE Counselling BSC Social Work	Nursery Nurse Domestic Violence Support Family Support Safeguarding Social work/ First Contact Adoption
Family Finder	BSC Child Care	Family Support Safeguarding and Assessment.
Administrative Support	NVQ level 2 and 3 in Business Administration	Child & Adult Services Admin Children and Families Post Box support.
Administrative Support	NVQ level 2 and 3 in Business Administration	Child & Adult Services Admin Children & Families

Adoption agency - organisation and control of operations

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

The Placement Team Manager supervises the Assistant Team Manager who in turn takes responsibility for supervising two full time adoption social workers and the Family Finder.

The Adoption Social Worker and Post Box Coordinator/Post Adoption Support has been strengthened. This post will continue to focus upon maintaining the electronic Post Box System and providing improved Post Adoption Support Services whilst still taking on some assessment work. The Post Adoption Support worker will be responsible for assessing the needs of any adoptive parent/child who has been adopted and if deemed necessary will make the relevant application to the Adoption Support Fund where there is a demonstrated need that therapeutic intervention and support would be beneficial to the child or the family.

The Family Finding role is for both children needing adoptive placements and long term fostering. This post is responsible for supporting and giving advice to the Safeguarding and Assessment Teams in completing a Child's Permanency Report. This role has also been used to be part of the planning around early adoption and to have some scope for developing Life Appreciation Days for children. The current postholder is currently taking maternity leave and in her absence another social worker will temporarily take on the responsibility of Family Finding. In preparation for this the social worker has shadowed the role for some time and is competent to lead on Family Finding meetings.

Alongside undertaking adoption assessments the Adoption social worker has responsibility for undertaking the statutory checks as required in Stage 1 of the two stage assessment process. This has ensured that the service has been able to ensure that all assessment are completed within the timescale recommended by the DoE. In addition to this the social worker monitors the entire assessment process and the statistics gathered are fed into the quarterly returns required by the Adoption Leadership Board.

The Placement Team Manager is also the Agency Panel Advisor.

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

The Adoption and Fostering Panel takes place on a fortnightly basis to consider both fostering and adoption matters, reducing any delay in recommending the approval of any matching consideration. Agency Decision Making meetings take place within 10 working days of the panel meeting taking place allowing us to inform any adopters that have been recommended for approval and any matches that have been agreed that the decision for these has been ratified.

Statutory Requirements

1. Specific requirements govern the composition and terms of reference of Adoption Panels. These are set out in the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005 and the Adoption Agencies and Independent Review of Determinations (Amendments) Regulations 2011.
2. The Adoption Panel established by Hartlepool Borough Council performs an important role in assisting the agency to reach the best possible decision in respect of:
 - The suitability of prospective adopters and foster carers
 - Whether a child should be placed with a specific prospective adopter.
 - Foster Carer Reviews and De-registration/Resignation.
 - Reviews of adopters where they have waited more than 12 months for a child to be placed.
 - Whether a child/ren should be placed with specific foster carers
 - To reach decisions on whether a child's long term interests can be best met via permanency in long term foster care

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

- Contact arrangements
- The number of children the prospective adopter may be suitable to adopt, their age range, sex likely needs and background.
- The panel is also required to feedback to the agency every six months on the quality of reports presented to panel as part of its quality assurance role.

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

Panel Composition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Legal Advice:

Panel are able to call upon the Local Authorities Legal Advisor.

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

Membership of Hartlepool Adoption Panel

- Chairperson – Independent Person
- Vice Chairperson Principal Practitioner – Through Care Team
- Vice Chairperson – vacancy
- Virtual Head Education
- Agency Social Workers
- Head of Business Unit – Safeguarding and Assessment

- Agency Social Workers
- Head of Service SEND
- Team Manager Safeguarding and Assessment
- Team Manager SEND
- Team Manager Through Care Team
- Team Manager Leaving Care Team
- Agency Social Worker – Principal Practitioner, Disability Team
- Agency Worker - IRO
- Elected Member
- Independent member/Adopted Person
- Independent member/IRO for another Local Authority
- Independent member/Foster Carer for another Local Authority
- Independent member/member of family who has adopted
- Independent member/member of family who has used services

Advisors to Panel

- Panel Adviser
- Legal Adviser
- Medical Adviser

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

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

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

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

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

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

Complaints Procedure

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

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

Complaints are dealt with in three stages:

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

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

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

OR

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

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

Useful Contact Numbers and Addresses

Placement Team

8-9 Church Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7DJ
Tel: 01429 405588
E-mail – fosterandadopt@hartlepool.gov.uk

After Adoption

Unit 112
The Design Works
William Street
Felling
Gateshead, NE10 OJP
Tel: 0191 4787980 : Action Line: 0800 056 8578
Website: www.familiesthatlast.org.uk
E-mail – northeast@afteradoption.org.uk

Corum/BAAF

Corum Campus
41 Brunswick Square
London
WC1N 1AZ
Tel: 0207 7520 0300

first4adoption
48 Meckenburgh Square
London
WC1N2QA
Email helpdesk@first4adoption.org.uk
Tel: 0300 222 0022

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

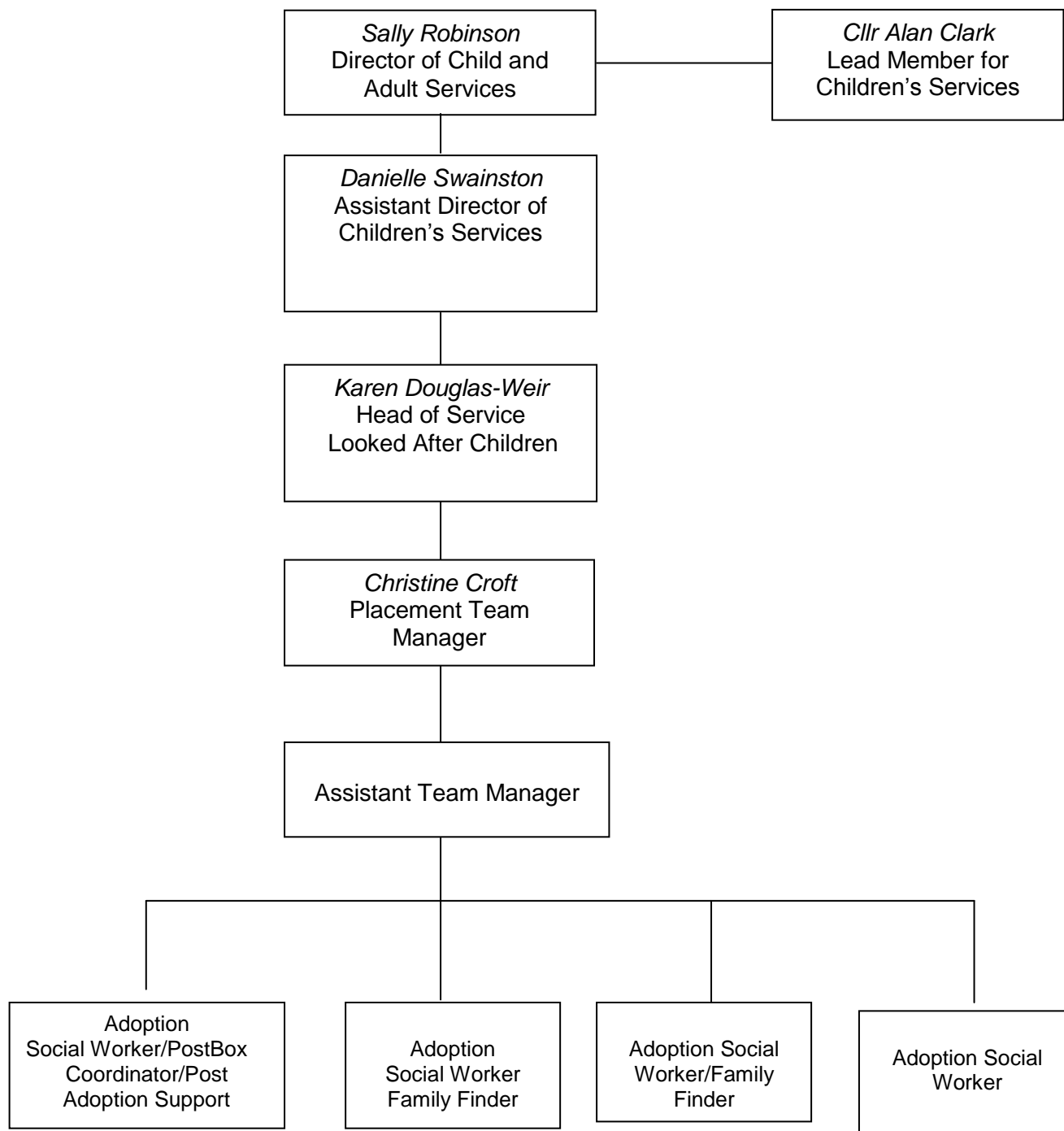
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
www.childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Email adviceteam@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 528 0731

Independent Review Mechanism (IRM)

Pavilion Business Park
Royds Hall Road
Wortley
Leeds
LS12 6 AJ
Tel: 0845 450 3956
Email : irm@baaf.org.uk

APPENDIX 1

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL – ADOPTION SERVICE



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12 July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: FOSTERING SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16
AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2016/17

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non key.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 For Children's Services Committee to note the Annual Report of the Fostering Service 2015/16 (**Appendix 1**).
- 2.2 For Children's Services Committee to approve the Fostering Services Statement of Purpose for 2016/17 (**Appendix 2**).

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.
- 3.2 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**. The Statement of Purpose for 2016/17 is attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 3.3 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 2016/17.
- 3.4 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. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial considerations needed for this report. However it is important to note that this is a statutory function for the council and therefore resources need providing to ensure this function is fulfilled.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

6. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Options have been considered and there are no child and family poverty impact issues. All families and children that need support from this service are supported.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The adoption service ensures that they support all those people that want to adopt and children who need to be adopted.

8. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no staff implications in relation to this report.

9. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There are no asset management implications in relation to this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the Fostering Annual Report and approve the Statement of Purpose with the Fostering National Minimum Standards 2011.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 The Fostering Service is a statutory service of the Council and as such Children's Services Committee, having the responsibility for Children's Services, require information to be able to provide scrutiny and oversight in relation to how services are delivered and their effectiveness.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Fostering Regulations and National Minimum Standards 2011

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

Karen Douglas-Weir, Head of Service, Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Karen.douglas-weir@hartlepool.gov.uk 01429 405584

Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services, Danielle.swainston@hartlepool 01429 523732



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And Young People 22

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.

In Hartlepool we have set out our overarching ambition and aspiration in our Children Looked After Strategy stating that:

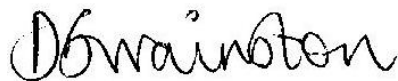
“Hartlepool Council will provide children and young people with permanence and stability to enable them to thrive, enjoy a happy and secure childhood and become confident adults who achieve their aspirations”.

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.

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 stability of care placements continues to be a focus to ensure that children and young people can achieve positive outcomes. Hartlepool continues to perform well 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.



Danielle Swainston

Assistant Director

June 2016

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 2015/16. 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 2015 to 31 March 2016. Finally the report will set out priorities for service development during 2016/17.

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;

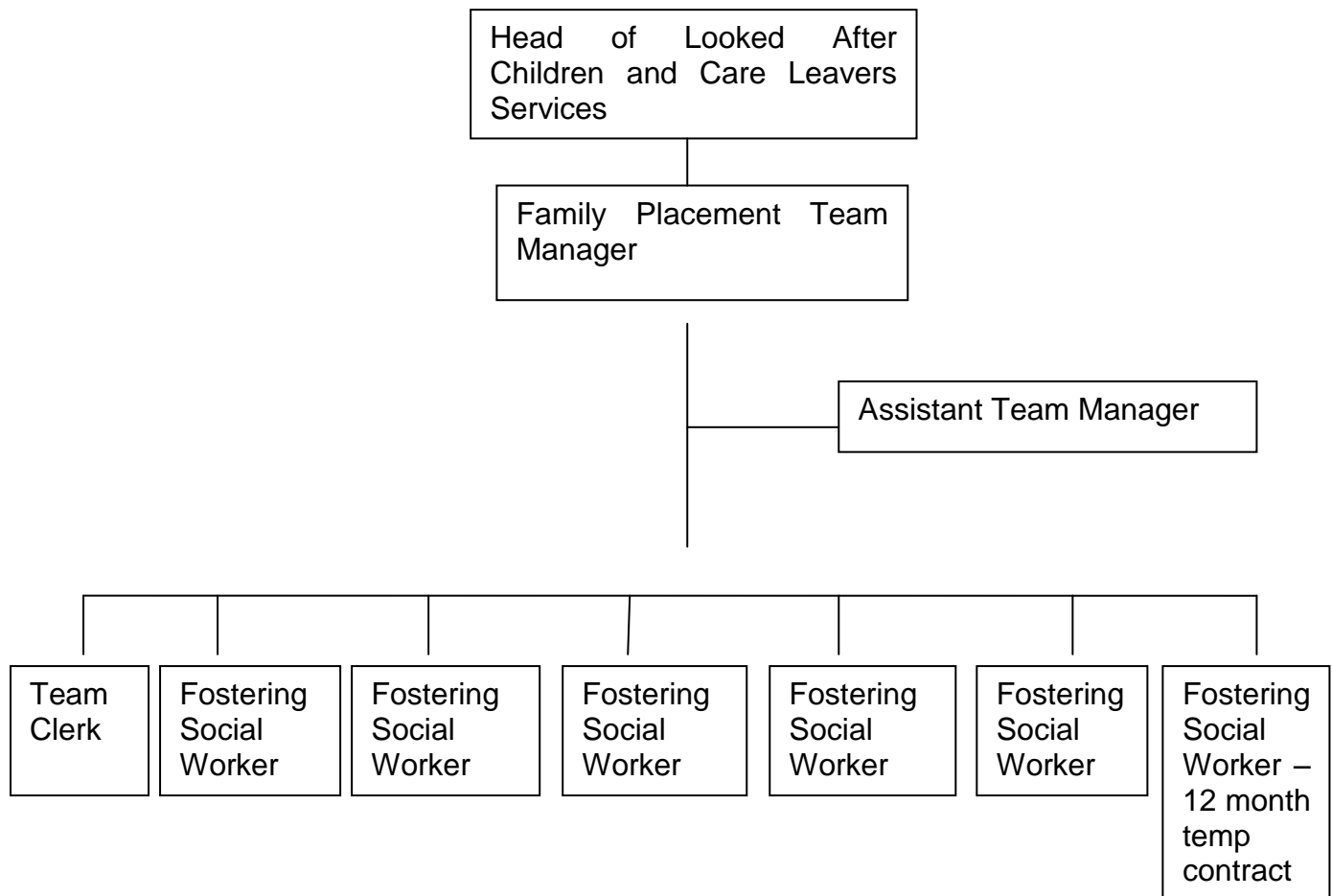
The Fostering team promotes stable placements and continuity of care for children to ensure carers, children and young people receive appropriate support and minimum disruption leading to good outcomes;

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.

Fostering Team Structure

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, Vice Chair, seven Agency Social Workers, an Elected Member, four Independent Members, who are all either foster carers or adopters for other Local Authorities and one member who is an adoptee.

The Panel also receives advice from the Local Authority Legal Advisor, Medical Advisor and Panel Advisor.

The Director of Child and Adult Services, 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. The agency decision maker is robust in their 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 2015/2016.

Recommendation to agree a plan for long term fostering for a child looked after	8
Matches considered by the Panel	19
Number of matches involving foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies.	0
Recommendations for approval of prospective foster carers	5
Resignation of foster carers	8
The Fostering Panel considered and endorsed the recommendations of Foster Carer Reviews	31
The Fostering Panel met in the last year	21 times

Preparation for Placement

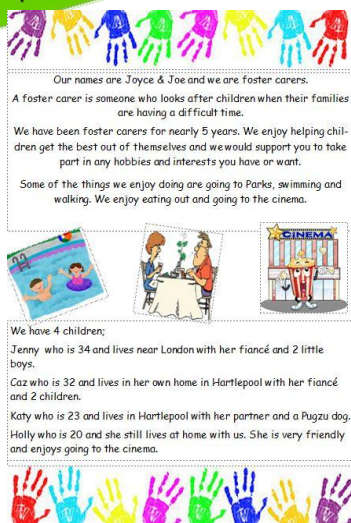
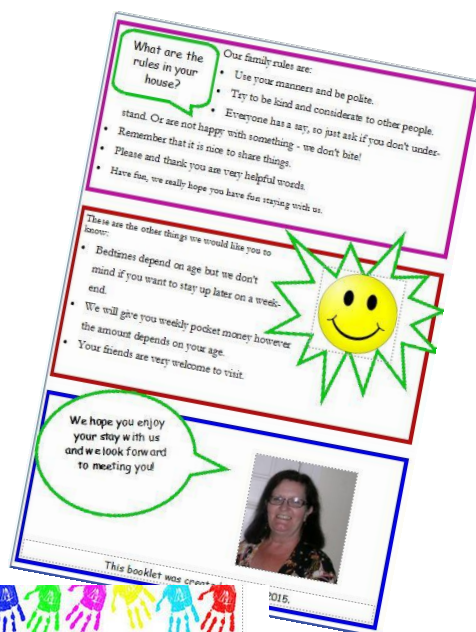
The Fostering Service operates a duty system for responding to placement requests. Supervising Social Workers will liaise with the Social Worker to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the child's needs so that they are able to match him/her to the most appropriate carer.

For permanent fostering placements we 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.

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. The foster carer profiles have recently been updated to make them more relevant to young people.



A current
Foster carer profile



Preparation for Placement

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

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.

The service benefits from a dedicated family finder role who becomes involved with children who have a plan for permanence through long term fostering at the earliest opportunity. The family finder identifies appropriate matches for the children, looking firstly at internal provision before exploring matches with the independent fostering providers. Hartlepool continues to provide good placement choice and stability with our foster carers, with all of the young people matched with foster carers in the period 2015/16 being matched with in-house foster carers.

The Fostering service has a recruitment strategy using a range of mediums to market the service and attract new foster carers. This activity takes place locally within Hartlepool and through collaboration regionally and within the Tees Valley on longer, more extensive campaigns.

Members of the Fostering team attend a quarterly regional Recruitment and Marketing Forum. The aim of Forum is to look at regional trends for recruitment and maximise resources and opportunities for collaboration.

The fostering recruitment has focused on the continuing need to recruit foster carers who can care for older children and sibling groups, which is both a local and regional recruitment target.

The local recruitment activity within the last 12 months has consisted of regular adverts in Hartlepool Mail, Hartbeat magazine and also bus shelter advertising.

An advert also appeared on Argos till receipts during November and December 2015, which unfortunately has not provided any direct enquiries.

The Fostering service has continued to engage in social media and has maintained a facebook page which is used for advertising and recruitment. This has proved to be a successful method of communication and there has been a lot of engagement with the page, resulting in 798 page 'likes' and 10 direct new fostering enquiries.

Hartlepool Facebook page



If you could provide a safe, supportive and caring home for vulnerable children and young people then **YOU could be a foster carer**. Foster carers come from all walks of life, with all kinds of backgrounds and experiences, don't rule yourself out before talking to us! Foster carers are paid an allowance to cover the cost of caring for a young person, as well as a fee to recognise your skills. We provide training and ongoing support. **If you can help act now!** For more information contact **01429 405588** fosterandadopt@hartlepool.gov.uk www.hartlepool.gov.uk Hartlepool Borough Council Child and Adult Services



Bus shelter advertising



Recruitment

The Hartlepool Borough Council Website Fostering pages have been updated and now present a fresh contemporary look with up to date information which is accessible and user friendly. Initial feedback from the public regarding the new web pages has been very positive and engagement has increased.



The new look homepage

Recruitment

The fostering team have continued the recruitment collaboration with the four neighbouring authorities 'Tees Valley Fostering'. This is a collaboration, sharing resources and skills to enable larger recruitment and awareness activities to take place. During this period, the team have been involved in holding information stands at local supermarkets, and have also worked together to produce a television advert featuring Tees Valley Foster Carers, two of which were from Hartlepool. The team held a filming day at Teesside University and the advert aired on Sky TV in January 2016. During the advert period the Tees Valley team received in excess of 20 fostering enquiries.

Filming day at Teesside University



The Finished Advert



Recruitment

A significant challenge each year for the fostering team is the recruitment of new foster carers to offset the foster carers at the end of their fostering career choosing to retire from fostering. In 2014/15 the fostering service accepted the resignation of 8 foster carers and approved five new foster carers.

The final quarter of 2015 saw a significant reduction in the number of children becoming looked after, however this has gradually increased throughout 2015/16 and the fostering service continues to strive to meet the demand for in house provision. In recent months there has been an increase in the need to source costly external placements, mainly for teenagers.

Of the 25 placements available as of the 31st March 2016, there are specific matching considerations with other children in placement, and in some cases limitations as to the carers placement approval which can prevent a placement being a suitable match for a child.

The table below details the foster care capacity as at 31 March 2016

Number of foster carers	107 (of which 17 are connected carers)
Number of placements available	195
How many children in placement?	154 8 Young people in Staying Put placements
How many vacancies?	25
How many not able to use/on hold?	4 carers, 8 placements

The table below details the recruitment activity for 2015/16.

Initial enquiries - where did people hear about the service?	52 Initial enquiries Where stipulated: 1 Hartlepool Mail 4 Internet 6 Recommendation from current carers 2 Tees Valley fostering collaboration 4 Hartbeat 10 Facebook 25 Own Volition
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Information pack sent out between 1.4.13 – 31.3.14	50 packs sent out
Initial visits - How many proceeded	20 10
Preparation Group held:	Feb 2016 8 Fostering households attended, 7 proceeded

Foster Carer Retention

Hartlepool Borough Council recognises the invaluable contribution that Foster Carers make to The Looked After Service, and as such views Foster carer retention as a significant priority.

Foster carers are consulted on all aspects of the service and a member of the Fostering Team meets regularly with the Foster Carers Association. A yearly consultation questionnaire is sent to all foster carers.

This year the dedication of all Hartlepool Foster carers was recognised at the annual Foster Carer celebration event which was attended by over 100 foster carers, Social Workers, Councillors and the Director of Child & Adult Services. Eighteen foster carers received Special Recognition Awards after being nominated by the professionals they work with for making an exceptional contribution to the life of a child they have looked after over the last 12 months.

The other awards were presented for long service - with one receiving a 30 Year Service Award and four receiving 10 Year Service Awards.

Fostering red carpet



Foster Carer Retention

The Tees Valley Fostering group hosted a Fostering Family Funday, bringing together fostering families, looked after children and the fostering teams to celebrate fostering and recognise the importance of family in the fostering role.

The day consisted of fun activities and an inflatable, water team game (it's a knockout) in which the five authorities played against each other to be crowned the Tees Valley Fostering Service of the year. Hartlepool were successful in winning the children's and adults trophies and came away the overall winners for 2015. The event has now become an annual event and as last years winners, Hartlepool will be hosting the event in 2016. This event attracted significant media attention and was a good opportunity to highlight fostering recruitment.



All the Council's experienced 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, a young person from the Children in Care Council also assists with the training. 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 to 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 2015/16 the bespoke training days covered:

Attachment, a rolling 8 week course has been planned to start in April 16 ran by CAMHS.

Prevent;

Managing allegations;

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

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 provides regular activities for the children and run annual trips in the summer holidays.

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 termly basis and providing activities and advice for children and young people who foster.



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 Karen Douglas-Weir, Head of Business Unit (Specialist Services), Jane Young & Christopher Rooney, Head of Business Units (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 Multi Agency Looked After Partnership which takes the lead in the implementation and delivery of the Children Looked After Strategy.

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19

Post Approval Support and Participation

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.



The Fostering Christmas party was attended by over 200 looked after children and fostering families. Our Foster carers helped plan the evening, making gift bags for the children and decorating the room.



Priorities for 2016-2017

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 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 continue to work within the the BAAF 2 stage assessment process providing timely assessments, recruitment and training.

To continue to work collaboratively with the neighbouring authorities to share resources and expertise in foster carer recruitment.

Comments from Social Workers:

“These foster carers have demonstrated a calm, measured approach to looking after 3 children from different families. The girl’s school attendance has improved and they have made significant progress in all areas of their development which has improved their health. They have managed complex contact arrangements with ease”.

“These foster carers have shown great commitment and understanding towards a young person in their care despite very difficult circumstances. They have worked exceptionally well with the young person persevering to build a successful relationship whilst giving her the time and space to feel comfortable with this relationship. The carers are always willing to support young people with emergency placements and always give their all”.

“This foster carer has been truly amazing in her approach to providing a home and caring for a young person. Working with teenagers can bring lots of challenges but this carer has faced each new chapter with an open mind, determination and genuine care. Due to her parenting plus approach she has, without even realising developed a secure base for the young lady she is caring for which has allowed her to make huge personal progress and start to believe in herself. The carer is fully committed to the future of young people and she just doesn’t open her home but her family and her heart to those she is caring for”.

Comments from Children who foster:

“Fostering feels normal, it’s just what we do”

“It makes me happy when I see the children happy”

Comments from children who are fostered:

“I love going to the caravan and walking the dog, I love that they take me places”

“I want to stay with my foster carers until I’m 59”

“They’re like my real dad, only better”



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILD AND ADULT SERVICES

FOSTERING SERVICE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

March 2016

**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 2016 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 2017.

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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 service 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 the Hartlepool Borough Council Website. 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 website.

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, 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 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 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 Virtual Head teacher who has 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.

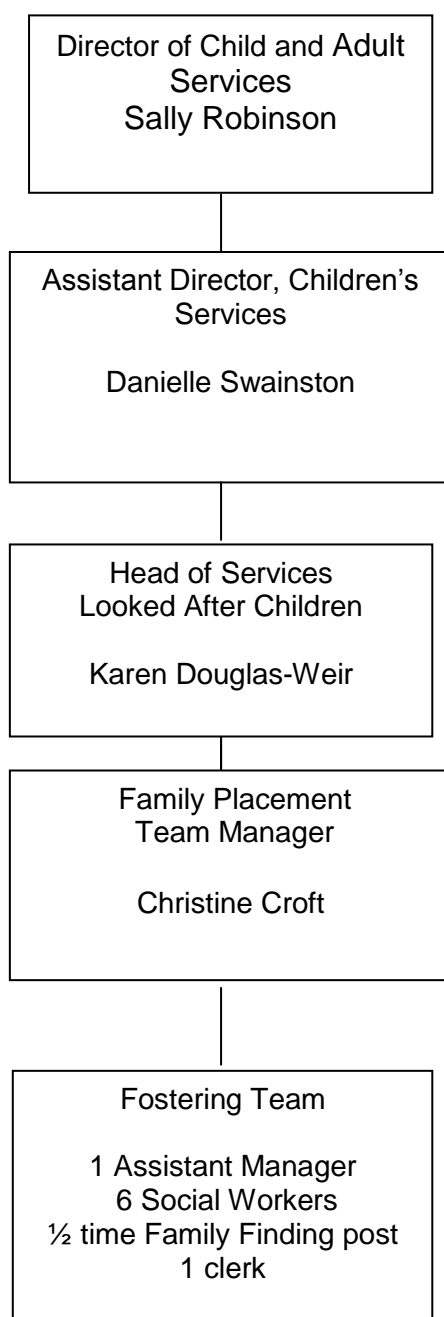
We are committed to directly challenging racism and ensure that all young people who access our services are aware of our policies in relation to anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism. We will ensure that all people are treated equally, regardless of age, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or religion. 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 people's 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 2015 – 31 March 2016 comprised 5 approvals of mainstream carers, and the approval of 2 Connected Person carers. In the period 2015 - 2016 the fostering service accepted the resignation of 5 mainstream carers and 2 connected person carers.

The total number of Foster Carers approved by Hartlepool Borough Council on 31st March 2016 was 107. This number includes 17 connected Foster carers.

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

The total number of Looked After children in foster placements at 31 March 2016 was 154 (prev. 114), in addition to this 8 young people were in Straying Put Placements.

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 107 carers approved, the Fostering Service had, as of 31 March 2016, 12 foster carers who were designated Specialist Carers due to the complex needs of the children placed.

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 2015 to 31ST March 2016 there was 1 complaint 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 2015 to 31st March 2016 there were 3 Section 47 investigations made in respect of allegations by looked after children against their carers. The foster carers 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.

The Department for Education made amendments to the assessment and approval processes of foster carers in July 2013. A two stage assessment process was introduced. Hartlepool have implemented the two stage process as detailed below

RECRUITMENT:**Publicity**

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 appears to be greatest response to adverts on social media and from people known to current carers.

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. The service now has a thriving Facebook page with significant engagement from the public. The publicity materials reflect the brand which we hope will assist in our efforts to attract new carers.

There are also regional efforts orchestrated through the Tees Valley recruitment forum to attract new foster carers such as a regional radio advertising campaign and television advertising. Advertisements for carers for specific children can be placed in the local media.

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.

Response to Enquiries

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 to stage 1 of the assessment process. 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.

ASSESSMENT:**Stage One**

Stage 1 of the process to become an approved foster carer will last 8 weeks. The registration of interest form is signed to give consent to proceed and for statutory checks to be completed for all relevant people in the household. Once the form has been completed and returned, 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.

If an applicant has been a foster carer in the previous 12 months, a written reference from their previous fostering service is obtained.

A Medical examination is 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.

All applicants are required to attend a 3 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.

If it is decided not to continue with an assessment because of information collected as part of stage 1, the applicant must be informed that they can complain via the fostering service's complaints process. Once all statutory checks and references are completed and no issues have arisen stage two will begin. Stage 2 of the process to become approved foster carers last 4 months.

Stage Two

Stage two assessment is using the BAAF Form F. The topics covered include personal background/history/experiences, parenting experiences, birth children's views, the home environment, including dog/pet safety and the applicant's own contributions. In addition to the assessment sessions with the applicants and their family, at least 2 personal referees are interviewed, as are the ex partners of the applicants where it has been agreed that there was a 'significant' relationship. Children of the applicants living elsewhere will also be interviewed, with the agreement of their carer or their agreement if adults.

When all the necessary material is available, the Form F is completed by the social worker using contributions from the prospective foster carer. The Form F is read and signed by the prospective foster carer and is presented to the

Family Placement Panel which meets every 2 weeks. Prospective foster carers are encouraged to attend the panel meeting when the application is discussed. The Family Placement Panel considers the Form F and makes a recommendation regarding the application. This recommendation is then approved (or not) by the Agency Decision Maker. Prospective foster carers are then notified in writing of the outcome of their application

If an application is not recommended by Panel and the prospective foster carer/s do not accept this, they can choose either to make further representations to the Family Placement Panel or to have their application referred to an independent body known as the Independent Review Mechanism. The IRM will review the recommendation made by the Family Placement Panel and make its own recommendation about the prospective foster carer/s suitability, which the agency must then take into account when making the decision about the application

SUPPORT:

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.

Foster carers are provided with equipment to enable them to care for a child in placement.

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.

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 Child and Adult Services.

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.

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

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.

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.

TRAINING:

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.

All foster carers will attend a preparation training course incorporating the Skills to Foster materials during their preparation and assessment.

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.

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.

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.

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.

REVIEW:

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

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.

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.

DE-REGISTRATION:

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.

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 or 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.

THE ADOPTION AND FOSTERING PANEL:

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.

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.

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.

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 Coram BAAF.

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 2016**

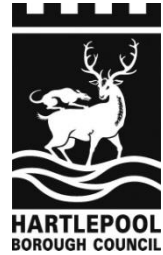
The staff of Hartlepool Borough Council's Fostering Service consists of:

NAME & STATUS	QUALIFICATIONS	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE
Head of Business Unit Resources and Specialist Services	Dip Sw PQ 1 BA (hons) in advance SW practice Practice Teacher Award Leadership and management HCPC registered	Residential care, learning disabilities and mental health Children and families Children with disabilities Looked after and Care leavers Transitions
Team Manager	DIPSW PQ1 CCA HCPC Registered ILM Diploma in Management	Nominated Worker Children & Families Independent Fostering Agency Team Manager
Assistant Team Manager	DIPSW PQ1 HCPC Registered	Children & Families Resource Team Manager Nominated Worker
Social Worker	CQSW PQ1 CCA HCPC Registered	Children & Families Family Placement Training
Social Worker	DIPSW HCPC Registered	Children & Families Youth Offending
Social Worker	BA Science of Social Work	Children & Families Permanence Team

Social Worker	BA Hons Social Studies DIPSW 1992 HCPC registered	Children & Families Connexions Children's Society Research and Policy
Social Worker	BA (Hons) in Social Worker July 2011	Children's Safeguarding Drug and alcohol practitioner Family Placement Social Worker
Social Worker	BA (Hons) in Social Work	Family Placement Social Worker
Administrative Staff		Child & Adult Services Admin Children & Families

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: TO NOMINATE LOCAL AUTHORITY
REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON SCHOOL
GOVERNING BODIES

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-key.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To update members of the Children's Services Committee in respect of vacancies that currently exist for local authority representative governors, and to request that members recommend nominees to the governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reports have previously been presented to the Children's Services Committee in February and July 2015 alerting members to the requirement that local authority governors are now nominated by the local authority but appointed by the governing body on the basis that the nominee has the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school, and meets any other eligibility criteria they may have set.

3.2 A schedule (**Appendix 1**) is attached setting out details of vacancies which currently exist. **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).**

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Local authority officers have carried out an application analysis against the specified needs of the schools listed. Officers have indicated in **Appendix 1** those applicants that very closely match the needs that the school has specified.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Non applicable

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Non applicable

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Non applicable.

8. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Non applicable.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Non applicable

10. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 Non applicable

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 Non applicable.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 The committee gives consideration to applicants as set out in **Appendix 1** in respect of local authority nominations for consideration by governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 To ensure that the nomination of local authority governors will contribute to improve the effectiveness of the governing body to which they are appointed.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 Children's Services Committee reports and decisions of February 2016 and July 2016.

15. CONTACT OFFICER

Ann Turner
Governors Support Manager
Child and Adult Services
Civic Centre
Hartlepool
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CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

12th July 2016



Report of: Director of Child and Adult Services

Subject: PROPORTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET)

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information and update.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide a context in terms of the local authority's responsibilities to support young people as they reach the end of statutory secondary education, ie the end of Year 11.
- 2.2 To provide an update on progress in relation to reducing the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) compared to regional and national performance. In addition, commentary regarding a number of related other key measures is included.
- 2.3 To provide an update on service delivery and capacity in Hartlepool.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Increasing the participation of young people in learning beyond statutory school age has been seen by successive governments as a key mechanism for reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and ensuring that all young people gain the skills and qualifications they will need to build their own future and compete in a global economy. Participation in learning beyond statutory school age is seen by the current government as central to improving the social mobility of young people and in particular young people from less affluent backgrounds.

- 3.2 In line with the Education and Skills Act 2008, all young people in this country who left Year 11 in the summer of 2013 were required by law to continue in education or training until at least the end of the academic year in which they turn 17 years old.
- 3.3 From 2015 young people have been required to continue in education or training until at least the end of the academic year in which they turn 18 years old. Therefore pupils who started Year 11 or below in September 2015 will now need to continue in learning until at least their 18th birthday.
- 3.4 This does not necessarily mean staying in school; young people have a choice about how they continue in education or training post-16, which could be through:
- full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider
 - full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training
 - an apprenticeship.
- 3.5 It is worth noting that the Education and Skills Act 2008 placed the following additional duties on local authorities in relation to the Raising of the Participation Age:
- promoting the effective participation of all 16- and 17-year-old residents in their authority, and
 - making arrangements to identify young people resident in their area who are not participating.
- The Act also transferred the statutory responsibility for securing access to independent and impartial advice and guidance for all students in Years 7-13 from local authorities to schools and colleges.
- 3.6 The changes summarised above were designed to complement the existing duties and arrangements local authorities and their partners have in relation to:
- securing sufficient suitable education and training provision for all 16-19 year olds
 - having a range of support in place to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate
 - having processes in place to deliver the 'September Guarantee', and to track young people's participation post-16. [The 'September Guarantee' requires local authorities to find education and training places for 16- and 17-year-olds.]
- 3.7 Historically local authorities' performance in relation to NEET was measured as an average of November, December and January's data submission to the Department of Education (DfE) and was reported by actual age (16, 17 and 18 years). We continue to compare performance against these three

months for consistency. Overall performance is therefore an average of the three months above and not an average of the 4 quarters data. Additionally, DfE changed the requirements for reporting from actual age to academic age. This extended the age of the cohort to include some young people aged 19 years and to avoid a reduction in the cohort as the year progressed

- 3.8 In 2014 there were further changes to the way NEET is calculated. In previous years, NEETs had a currency applied which would report a young person as Not Known if contact had not been made within 3 months. An adjusted formula was added which would then report some of those Not Known as NEET, but others as being in a positive destination. From April 2014, a young person who is Not Known (cannot be contacted) and will always be counted as NEET. This makes historical comparisons complicated.

4. COMPARTIVE PERFORMANCE IN HARTLEPOOL

- 4.1 **The percentage of young people (academic years 12, 13 & 14) not in education, employment or training and whose activity is not known in Hartlepool compared to the sub regional, regional and national picture.**

NEET Comparison		Hartlepool	Tees Valley	North East	England
2015/16	Nov	4.7%	6.4%	5.7%	4.2%
	Dec	4.7%	6.5%	5.8%	4.2%
	Jan	4.1%	5.9%	5.7%	4.2%
	Average	4.5%	6.3%	5.7%	4.2%
2014/15	Nov	5.6%	7.3%	6.9%	4.6%
	Dec	5.7%	7.7%	7.1%	4.7%
	Jan	5.4%	7.4%	6.9%	4.7%
	Average	5.6%	7.5%	7.0%	4.7%
2013/14	Nov	8.6%	8.3%	7.4%	5.2%
	Dec	8%	8.3%	7.6%	5.3%
	Jan	6.8%	7.8%	7.7%	5.3%
	Average	7.8%	8.1%	7.6%	5.3%
Change in Average from 2014/15 to 2015/16		-3.3 pts	-1.8 pts	-1.9 pts	-1.1 pts

Note that Hartlepool has rapidly closed the gap with the England average, and has reduced its NEET figures three times faster than nationally over the last three year period.

- 4.2 Performance in relation to NEET reduction can only truly be evidenced by taking into consideration the percentage of the cohort that is not known to the local authority. High levels of Not Known are likely to hold 'hidden' NEETs, thus giving a false picture of the actual number of NEETs within an areas cohort. The table below shows the comparison for Not Knowns.

Not Known Comparison		Hartlepool	Tees Valley	North East	England
2015/16	Nov	1.9%	2.9%	4.8%	10.6%
	Dec	1.8%	2.3%	3.4%	8.3%
	Jan	1.7%	1.7%	2.5%	6.4%
	Average	1.8%	2.3%	3.6%	8.4%
2014/15	Nov	1.9%	4.0%	6.1%	11%
	Dec	2.1%	2.5%	4.8%	8.8%
	Jan	1.9%	1.9%	4.1%	7.2%
	Average	2.0%	2.8%	5.0%	9.0%
2013/14	Nov	4.5%	5.9%	8.4%	11.1%
	Dec	4.5%	4.2%	6.0%	9.0%
	Jan	3.2%	3.7%	4.7%	7.5%
	Average	4.1%	4.6%	6.4%	9.2%
Change in Average from 2014/15 to 2015/16		-2.3 pts	-2.3 pts	-2.8 pts	-0.8 pts

Note that Hartlepool's Not Knowns have been significantly lower than national figures for the last three years, and that the rate at which Hartlepool's closing of this figure to 0% (meaning that the destination of every young person is known) is almost three times the national rate.

- 4.3 The tables above show that Hartlepool has made substantial progress in reducing NEET whilst also reducing the numbers of young people Not Known to the service. This reduction has led to Hartlepool having the lowest NEET figures for Tees Valley and the North East Region.
- 4.4 Despite this, Hartlepool continues to have slightly higher rates of NEET compared to the national average. However, Hartlepool's level of Not Known young people are substantially less than the national average. It is likely that if the national Not Known rate decreased, the national NEET rate would increase once the destinations of more young people were discovered.
- 4.5 **The numbers of Hartlepool young people Not in Education, Employment or Training and Not Known by academic age.**

Status	Month	Year 12			Year 13			Year 14		
		13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16
NEET	Nov	21	19	21	90	52	44	191	126	95
	Dec	16	19	22	81	57	44	184	124	95
	Jan	15	21	19	65	53	43	158	116	80
Not Known	Nov	11	7	9	33	18	16	119	43	41
	Dec	8	9	11	34	23	17	123	42	37
	Jan	7	5	10	22	18	18	88	41	33

The table above shows the local picture in terms of actual numbers of NEET and Not Known young people as a comparison against 2013/14. It also illustrates the areas which have contributed to Hartlepool's lowest ever reported NEET figures. It is clear to see that significant progress has been made in the Year 13 and 14 cohorts both in terms of reducing NEET, but also Not Knowns.

- 4.6 The NEET data can be analysed by school. The table below shows the number of NEETs at the end of January based on the Hartlepool school the young people attended. Therefore, young people who have moved into Hartlepool or who have attended education in another area are included in the **Other** row of the table below. Also, those who attended school in Hartlepool, but lived outside of the borough and are now NEET will not be included in Hartlepool's NEET figures.

The number of young people NEET by academic age and Hartlepool school attended

School attended	Year 12			Year 13			Year 14			Total (post-16)		
	13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16
Catcote	2	3	1	0	1	5	1	7	5	3	11	11
Dyke House	3	1	5	13	16	2	37	19	19	53	36	26
English Martyrs	0	4	1	3	4	7	16	17	6	19	25	14
High Tunstall	4	2	3	6	10	8	21	17	15	31	29	26
Manor College	3	7	6	16	13	9	40	27	15	59	47	30
St Hild's	2	3	1	16	5	8	34	17	14	52	25	23
Total	14	20	17	54	49	39	149	104	74	238	173	130
Other	1	1	2	11	4	4	9	12	6	21	17	12

Causes of NEET

- 4.7 Being NEET cannot be solely attributed to academic performance and is often a result of other significant issues faced by young people and their families. In some situations, these issues result in the young person not being available to undertake employment, education or training (EET). The table below shows a comparison for the number of young people not available for EET for the past three years. It should be noted that young people in custody are classed as Other (not EET or NEET).

The number of young people NEET analysed by cause

	Year Group	Young Carer	Teen Parent	Illness	Pregnant	Other	Unlikely to be economically active	Custody
January 16	Yr 12	0	3	0	1	0	0	1
	Yr 13	0	7	6	2	0	1	3
	Yr 14	3	16	16	9	0	1	4
	Total	3	26	22	12	0	2	8
January 15	Yr 12	0	0	4	1	0	0	1
	Yr 13	2	12	6	4	1	2	1
	Yr 14	2	15	21	18	0	1	3
	Total	4	27	31	23	1	3	5
January 14	Yr 12	0	1	6	0	0	0	2
	Yr 13	0	8	8	6	1	0	1
	Yr 14	2	24	13	2	0	0	2
	Total	2	33	27	8	1	0	5

The table above illustrates that young people who become unavailable to the labour market due to illness, increases with age. The definition of illness is 'a serious or on-going health problem which prevents a young person from taking up education, employment or training at this time'. An analysis of this cohort reveals that that 18 out of the 22 young people had a recorded mental health issue. The remaining young people had various other conditions which accounted for their 'ill' status.

- 4.8 Young people with a learning difficulty often make successful transitions into post-16 and post-19 provision because of the support they receive. However, as with other cohorts of young people, some will become NEET and Not Known. The table below shows the number of young people aged 19 and under, who have been assessed as having a learning difficulty and/or disability and who were NEET or Not Known at the end of January over the last three years.

The number of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities that were recorded as NEET or Not Known

	2014	2015	2016
NEET	12	13	21
Not known	13	13	12

Destination Measures

- 4.9 Destination measures provide clear and comparable information on the success of schools and colleges in helping young people to take qualifications that offer them the best opportunity to continue in education, employment or training. To be included in the measure, young people have to show sustained participation in an education or employment destination in all of the first two terms of the year after they completed Key Stage 4. Whilst the Key Stage 5 cohort is based on activity in the year after the young person took a level 3 qualification. It should also be noted that the measure includes all young people who attended Hartlepool establishments regardless of residency.
- 4.10 Hartlepool has 89% of its KS4 cohort in a sustained education, employment or training destination. This is above the 89% for the region and slightly lower than the 90% for England.
- 4.11 An analysis of the young people who were eligible for free school meals or the pupil premium compared against other pupils reveals the following:
- there are lower levels of sustained participation for those eligible for free school meals compared to those who were not (77% compared to 92%)
 - there are lower levels of sustained participation for those who are Pupil Premium young people compared with all other pupils (77% compared with 95%); this gap has widened on the previous year
 - both Pupil Premium and those eligible for free school meals continue to be less likely to attend a sixth form college compared to other children
 - there continues to be higher levels of Pupil Premium and those eligible for free school meals in Further Education establishments
 - those not included in the measure due to a destination not being sustained continues to be higher in those eligible for free school meals or Pupil Premium than other young people
 - there continues to be higher levels of NEET in those eligible for free school meals and Pupil Premium than other young people.
- 4.12 Hartlepool's level of sustained participation at KS5 (77%) compares favorably to both the regional (76%) and national picture (73%). This picture is repeated when we look at those in a sustained education destination, an apprenticeship or in Higher Education. Unfortunately, Hartlepool has lower levels of employment with training compared to both regional and national figures.
- 4.13 Whilst Hartlepool had higher levels of sustained participation in Higher Education, it should be noted that the participation at a top third university by young people in Hartlepool was 12% which was the same for the region, but lower than the 17% for England. Looking at Russell Group University participation, Hartlepool had 10% compared with 10% for the region and 11% for England. It should be noted that this year has seen a reduction in the gap between Hartlepool and the regional and national figures.

4.14 A comparison of those young people who had been eligible for free school meals against those not reveals the following:

- lower levels of sustained participation in education for those eligible for free school meals
- lower levels of sustained participation in apprenticeships for those eligible for free school meals
- lower levels of sustained participation in higher education, including at a top third university and Russell Group for those eligible for free school meals
- higher levels of NEET for those who had been eligible for free school meals.

Raising of the participation age (RPA)

4.15 The duty to participate in learning until the age of 17 only applies to young people who have left compulsory education from September 2013. From September 2015, this duty was extended to require young people to remain in learning until they reach the age of 18.

4.16 In terms of 16-year-olds, Hartlepool reported a participation figure of 97.5% which is second only to North Tyneside in the region, and is above the national RPA figure of 94.8%. This is the joint 11th highest rate out of 158 LAs. The table below shows the comparison against 2013 and 2014 data.

Hartlepool's RPA data over the last three years

	Full Time Education or training	Apprenticeship	Employment combined with training	Working towards	Total	Part Time education	Employment with non-accredited training	Temporary break from learning
Dec 2013	95.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.5%	97.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.6%
Dec 2014	94.8%	1.3%	0.5%	0.3%	96.9%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
Dec 2015	92.3%	3.9%	0.7%	0.5%	97.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%

- Hartlepool continues to have the highest rate of 16-year-olds in full time education or training in the region, and above the rate of 90.9% for England.
- The proportion of 16-year-olds in an apprenticeship remains low compared to the rest of the region. However, it should be noted that last year, only 23

other local authorities had a lower rate than Hartlepool. This year has seen this increase to 90.

- There has been an increase in the proportion of those in employment combined with training. At 0.7% this is above the regional and national average of 0.3%.
- The rate for those taking a temporary break from learning remains the same as last year. This covers young people who may have children or those who are very ill.

4.17 When the data for 16- and 17-year-olds is combined to measure progress against the measure which came into place from September 2015, then the following is revealed:

- at 94.2%, our RPA figure for 16- and 17-year-olds is up 1.3 percentage points on the previous year. This is the second highest participation rate in the region (out of 12 LAs) and above the national rate of 91%. This places us 17th out of 158 LAs for participation for both age groups.

5. LOCAL POST-16 PROVISION

5.1 The provision for post-16 education in Hartlepool is good with two school sixth form colleges, one sixth form college and a college of further education. Additionally, there is Catcote School which caters for post-16 and post-19 provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). Although in previous years the work based learning provision has decreased, it has recently seen an increase because of an additional provider within Hartlepool. The local authority's One Stop Shop team has also been instrumental in creating links with other out-of-area learning providers, increasing opportunities available for NEET young people in Hartlepool.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The data contained in this report clearly shows that the Hartlepool has made significant progress in reducing young people who are NEET and Not Known across all cohorts with the exception of the Year 12 Not Known cohort, which is the only area to show an increase.
- 6.2 Hartlepool's rate of reduction in NEET and Not known is significantly greater than both the national and regional average.
- 6.3 Hartlepool performs well in terms of Raising the Participation Age for 16- and 17-year-olds. This year has seen an increase in participation rates for both 16- and 17-year-olds. This places Hartlepool as the 17th highest performing authority in the country in this measure. This improvement could be attributed the focus of the local authority's One Stop Shop team being on those aged 17+ as opposed to those aged 16 who are more likely to make a successful transition after leaving Year 11.

- 6.4 There has also been a significant increase in the number of young people accessing apprenticeships this year.
- 6.5 In terms of mainstream schools the data shows that Manor Community Academy has the highest percentage of young people who become NEET. When compared with the other schools in Hartlepool, the gap between Manor and the other schools has decreased markedly over the last three years.
- 6.6 Draft destination measure data shows that those young people eligible for free school meals or identified as pupil premium, have poorer progression outcomes compared with other children when it comes to Key Stage 4 and 5. Fewer of these children sustain participation in a 6th form college, rather choosing to attend Further Education provision and are less likely to progress to a top third university or Russell Group university compared to other children.
- 6.7 As a town, we have higher levels of sustained participation in Higher Education than the national and regional average. However, we have fewer young people from the town sustaining participation at a top third or Russell Group university compared to national and regional figures.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 7.1 There has been a substantial decline in the guidance skills held by the FSW team. This is attributed to a low priority being given historically to workforce development in these areas and to losing staff with guidance qualifications. The outcome of this is that the service is now one of a placement service which simply matches young people to opportunities rather than exploring wider options and raising aspirations. Consideration should therefore be given to producing a workforce development programme which equips the team with these skills.
- 7.2 Consideration should be given to how young people eligible for free school meals and those identified as pupil premium are supported through to their post-16 transitions and beyond. The draft destination measures data clearly show poorer outcomes for these cohorts of young people.
- 7.3 Links with schools have been very useful in the identification of Year 11 young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. This needs to be maintained and more work needs to be done to support this cohort earlier than Year 11. Strong links to the newly established 11-25 Forum will be essential in maintaining a strategic focus on the issues outlined in this report. Robust partnership working between all schools, colleges and work-based learning providers will be required if Hartlepool is to meet its ambitious education, employment and skills targets.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Although Hartlepool's performance in some key measures contained within this report has improved sustainably over the past three years, performance in some other key measures has not been as good. In particular, the performance of those young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in a range of measures, and the proportion of Hartlepool young people successfully engaged in apprenticeships. As key success measures in Hartlepool's education improvement strategy and in the town's economic regeneration strategy, there is a risk that without further sustained effort and focus Hartlepool's ambitious targets will not be achieved in the allotted timescale.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial considerations.

10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal considerations.

11. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no child and family poverty considerations.

12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations.

13. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 There are no staffing considerations at this moment in time.

14. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 14.1 There are no asset management considerations.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 That committee note Hartlepool's strong performance in many of these measures in relation to regional and national benchmarks.
- 15.2 That committee receives a report early in the autumn term of 2016 outlining how the areas for improvement at section 7 will be moved forwards, and how the risks indicated at paragraph 8.1 will be mitigated.
- 15.3 That committee receives to an annual performance summary once regional and national comparators are available.

16. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 16.1 A report outlining how the areas for improvement at section 7 and how the potential risks noted above at paragraph 8.1 are to be mitigated will enable committee members to offer robust challenge and support in order to ensure that Hartlepool's ambitious targets are achieved on time.
- 16.2 An annual report will enable committee members to track Hartlepool's performance in the areas covered by this report, and to consider relevant interventions if performance declines.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 There are no background papers.

18. CONTACT OFFICERS

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