

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

## AGENDA



**Tuesday 13 June 2017**

**at 4.00 pm**

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

**MEMBERS:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Clark, Harrison, Lauderdale, Moore, Morris, Robinson and Sirs.

Co-opted Members: Jo Heaton, C of E Diocese and Stephen Hammond, RC Diocese representatives.

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

Six Young Peoples 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 date 21 March 2017 (*previously circulated and published*).

**4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS**

No items.

**5. KEY DECISIONS**

No items.



**6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

6.1 Short Breaks Services Statement – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

**7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

7.1 Safeguarding Activity Report – *Director of Child and Adult Services*

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

**FOR INFORMATION**

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 4 July 2017 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool



# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

21 MARCH 2017

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Alan Clark (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Beck, Brenda Harrison and Marjorie James (Vice-Chair).

Co-opted members:

Jo Heaton, C of E Diocesan Representative  
Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative

Young people's representative: Callum Reed

Officers: Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 0-19  
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services  
Zoe McKenna, One Stop Shop Coordinator, Integrated Youth Support Service  
Craig Taylor, Principal Officer – Operations, Hartlepool Adult Education  
Juliette Ward, Young Inspectors Co-ordinator  
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chair welcomed Jo Heaton to her first meeting as a Co-opted Member of the Committee.

### **76. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Lauderdale.  
Stephen Hammond, RC Diocesan Representative  
David Turner, Primary Head Representative  
Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services  
Ruby Marshall, Healthwatch  
Observer: Councillor Thomas, Chair of Adult Services Committee

### **77. Declarations of Interest**

Mr Tilling and Councillor Harrison.  
Additional interests were declared later in the meeting.

## **78. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017**

Confirmed.

It was highlighted that an item had been raised at the meeting, under 'Any Other Business' which had not been noted in the minutes as follows:-

A Healthwatch representative had asked if the Council could work again with young carers. The suggestion was agreed.

## **79. Update of Young Inspectors** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

The report set out details of the inspection and consultation reports produced by the young inspectors requested by Children's Services Committee in April 2013.

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

The following inspection reports and consultation reports had been circulated as appendices to the report:-

- Exmoor Grove Review
- Waverly Terrace Allotments Review
- Pathways to Independence
- Youth Offending Service Consultation 2016
- Safeguarding Board Section 11 Consultation 2016

Summaries of the inspection reports were set out in the Committee report. Young Inspectors were in attendance at the meeting and provided an insight into services and organisations that had been scrutinised by young people and had been given feedback and recommendations for improvement.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the Young Inspectors, paid tribute to the role of young people on Committees and sought clarification regarding whether the recommendations were universally accepted. In response, it was highlighted that 6 monthly reviews were undertaken to determine if recommendations were in place. It was suggested that a reporting mechanism be introduced to monitor those recommendations that had not been implemented.

During the discussion, Committee Members sought clarification regarding recruitment of Young Inspectors and the selection of projects to be undertaken. It was noted that it was anticipated that it would be necessary to recruit more young people if additional work was commissioned. It was suggested that, in terms of recruitment, consideration be given to generating interest in schools with consideration being given to the geographical spread across the town schools.

The recommendations were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the findings and recommendations of the Inspection reports undertaken by the Young Inspectors.

## **80. Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016 – 2026** (Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)

### **Type of decision**

Non-Key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

The report informed the Committee of the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026.

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

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Regeneration Services Committee had endorsed the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026. At that meeting, the Chair had requested that the Strategy be referred to the Children's Services Committee for information.

The Mission Statement, Aim and Objectives of the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026 were included in the report. The Strategy had been designed to ensure optimum benefits for the community, employers and the wider economy and had been split according to a number of key priority themes which were listed in the report. The complete Strategy had been subject to the full involvement of the staff from Adult Education along with consultation with key stakeholders and was appended to the report.

The Committee discussed issues arising from the report. Whilst supporting the aims of adult education, Committee Members highlighted also the benefits of community learning. In response, the Committee received an explanation of associated funding aims and noted the potential benefits of current Officer representation on the Combined Authority Adult Steering Group. It was noted also that there was

recognition of the 'soft outcomes' and the position of the service in complementing services provided by schools and colleges. The Principal Officer (Operations), who was representing Hartlepool Adult Education at the meeting, agreed to a suggestion made by the Secondary Head representative that arrangements be made for a meeting involving the Principal Officer, Mr Tilling and Mr Hammond to consider issues associated with community support.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report and refer the report to the Schools Forum.

## **81. Young People Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Update** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

The report was for information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on how the areas for improvement highlighted in the annual NEET report 2016 were being moved forward and how the risks identified in the 2016 report were being mitigated.

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

In July 2016 the annual NEET report had been submitted to the Committee providing an update in relation young people Not in Education, Employment or Training across Hartlepool. Whilst the report showed some areas of good performance it also highlighted some areas for improvement. The report set out an update on each of those areas.

The Committee debated issues arising from the updates including communication with primary schools, the need to be 'smarter' in terms of sibling link issues and the opening of a number of schools during the 'summer holiday' period. The Committee recognised that the six week holiday period across the summer could be a pivotal point in engaging young people in education, employment or training. It was highlighted that opening schools during the holiday period would assist also in addressing other issues including 'holiday hunger'.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report.

## **82. 2017/18 Schools' Capital Works Programme** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision – test (i) and (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 064/17

### **Purpose of report**

The report sought approval to the 2017/18 Schools' Capital Works Programme, as detailed in confidential Appendix 1 to the report in order to progress the design and detailed costing exercise in time for the majority of projects to be carried out during the summer holiday period. The confidential appendix to the report contained 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 (paragraph 3).

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

The report advised the Committee that each year, during January or early February, the Department for Education announced capital funding allocations, these being School Condition Allocations, for the school estate in Hartlepool both for the Local Authority and the Voluntary Aided sector. At the time of writing the report, capital funding allocations had not been communicated to the Local Authority. However, last year the Department for Education had stated that allocations for 2016/17 would be indicative of the funding that responsible bodies would receive in 2017/18. The Department for Education had further stated that School Condition Allocations would be revised annually to reflect any schools moving to a different responsible body e.g. converting to academy status, opening or closing. During 2016/17 (financial year), two schools had converted to academy status. Therefore the School Conditioning Allocations schemes detailed in the confidential appendix were considered affordable using a forecasted reduced allocation to that made in 2016/17.

In addition to the School Condition Allocation schemes, approval was sought for works and the purchase of equipment to cater for the extra demand in implementing the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative. The details of which were also contained within the confidential Appendix.

In 2014, the Children's Services Committee had approved works to address condition issues at High Tunstall College of Science. However, the majority of these works were subsequently put on hold following an expression of interest to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to request

inclusion in Priority School Building Programme – Phase 2 (PSBP2). The Committee was advised that there was £328,497 still on hold for High Tunstall College to address previous condition issues. It is was therefore proposed to use the remaining funding, plus some of the 2017/18 School Conditioning Allocation to address the condition issues required for 'D' block (previously known as Thornhill) and also fund the demolition of two mobile class units which had come the end of their useful life and were no longer required. The details of which are also contained within the confidential Appendix.

The Committee was advised that schools would be expected to contribute 10% towards the condition schemes. Detailed in the report was the total funding available and details the total costs of schemes proposed and the funding required. All schemes had a contingency figure built into the costs, therefore officers were confident that the programme was affordable. Liaison with representatives from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and the Church of England Diocese of Durham and Newcastle had taken place. A consistent approach to the development of capital schemes had been agreed. Further liaison would take place to determine which schemes should feature in the final schedule of works for the voluntary-aided sector and would be submitted to the Education Funding Agency.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the schedule of 2017/18 capital works programme as summarised in the confidential appendix to the report (which contained 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).be approved, subject to the LA agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum.
- (ii) That the allocation of funding to meet the requirements of the Universal Free School Meals initiative, as summarised in the Confidential Appendix, be approved.
- (iii) That retrospective approval be given to the scheme which has been funded from contingency, detailed in Appendix 1.
- (iv) That the Director of Child and Adult Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services be delegated appropriate dispensation and discretion to authorise works where an emergency (eg risk of school closure) or a significant health and safety risk is exposed.



Interests were declared by Councillor Beck and Jo Heaton in the following item.

**83. Development Projects Funding** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii) Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 058/16.

**Purpose of report**

The report sought retrospective approval for two school capital suitability schemes and for one Development Project, and to agree how remaining development funding would be allocated. Further details relating to the schemes were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report which **contained 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 (paragraph 3)**

**Issue(s) for consideration**

At the meeting on 12 July 2016, the Committee had agreed a number of schemes that had been selected for progression by School's Capital Sub Group using Suitability Funding. Further schemes had been agreed at the meeting of Children's Services Committee on 13 September 2016. An update on the financial position of these schemes was included in the appendix.

Due to the previous difficulties in the equitable allocation of the available funding, the Schools' Capital Sub Group had agreed to devise a new process to allocate funding. The new criteria and application process had been developed by a task and finish group in November 2016.

The Committee was advised that eight bids had been received from a combination of nine schools. Some bids were collaborative, others were for single schools. Projects put forward were detailed in the report. Of the bids that were received, one bid had been approved which was the Language Lab project at Rift House and St Helen's which received 69/100 points. The bid from Ward Jackson Primary School in relation to early year's development was rejected on the ground that included provision for 2-year-olds which was not in scope for this funding. The joint bid from Grange Primary School, Stranton Academy and Springwell Primary School in relation to social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision had been rejected as it didn't pass the pass/fail requirement in relation to sustainability. The panel felt that all other projects lacked detail in some areas which led them to not being approved.

It was noted that approximately £740,000 of funding was available of which £70,000 had been allocated. Therefore there was approximately £670,000 yet to be allocated. Members of Schools' Capital Sub Group had proposed that the remaining Development Funding should be allocated to the KS2-4 Behaviour Review Group who had been tasked with designing solutions to improve the SEMH provision in Hartlepool schools. This would mean that funding would be readily available when a solution has been agreed. This proposal had been considered for approval by the Schools' Forum on 8 March 2017.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee supported the approval given in January 2017 by Schools' Capital Sub Group and Schools' Forum for the joint bid between Rift House Primary School and St Helen's Primary School to create 'language labs' in each school.
- (ii) The Committee supported the Schools' Forum decision regarding future allocation of Development Funding to improving the provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and requested that regular progress reports be submitted to the Committee.
- (iii) The Committee noted the variation in costs for suitability schemes shown in the confidential appendix.

## **84. Primary School Place Planning / Basic Need Capital Funding** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision test (i) applies. Forward Plan Reference Number: CAS 063/17

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to create additional primary school places by expanding Clavering Primary School, supported by a capital funding allocation from the Basic Need Capital Grant to be received in 2017/18.

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

The Committee was advised that Basic Need funding allocations were made to Local Authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and by establishing new schools. In order to alleviate

some of the demand for primary places in the north of the town, in October 2015, Children's Services Committee had approved works for Hart Primary and Clavering Primary Schools utilising Basic Need allocations. The works approved for Clavering were for the Key Stage 1 area of the school only. Children's Services Committee also noted that further works would be required at Clavering in 2017. This is to accommodate the increased number of pupils currently in KS1.

An initial feasibility study and costing exercise had been carried out for works proposed at Clavering. The works would enable the school to provide accommodation for an additional 5 pupils per year group. This would allow the school to permanently increase their published admission number (PAN) to 60. The school currently has a PAN of 55. Therefore, a total of 35 primary school places would be created across all year groups. The estimated cost for the scheme was detailed in confidential Appendix 1 which contained 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 (paragraph 3)

Following presentation of the report, Committee Members discussed issues associated with Barnard Grove Primary School. Councillor James declared a non prejudicial interest as her partner is Chair of Governors at the School.

Committee Members highlighted capacity issues at Barnard Grove school and highlighted that the school hall appeared to be smaller than that of the sister school which was understood to have been built to the same specification. The implications of the capacity issues on Barnard Grove school and other schools were discussed. The Assistant Director (Education, Learning and Skills 0-19) advised that annual assessments were undertaken and update reports were submitted to the Committee. The Assistant Director was unsure of the detail relating to the schemes under discussion but advised that schools were allocated a total square footage and the decisions in relation to design were the responsibility of the school. The Assistant Director undertook to investigate the issues which had been raised.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee approved the spend of Basic Need funding to increase capacity at Clavering Primary School as detailed in confidential Appendix 1 and agreed that regular update reports be submitted to the Committee.
- (ii) That an update report be submitted on the issues raised in relation to Barnard Grove School.

**85. Supported Accommodation and Outreach Support for Vulnerable Young People – Procurement** *(Director of Child and Adult Services and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

**Type of decision**

Key Decision test (i and ii) applies. Forward Plan Reference Number: CAS 61/16.

**Purpose of report**

The report sought approval of a procurement process to identify the delivery model of supported accommodation services and support for vulnerable young people.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

In October 2016, the Council had received notification from one of its supported accommodation providers announcing that the organisation had taken the decision to focus on specialising in providing support to a smaller number of client groups. This has resulted in the provider not continuing to provide generic Young Peoples support services in Hartlepool. This current service provision would end in October 2017. Current contracts for Floating Support and supported accommodation for teenage parents were due for renewal. The contracts had been extended to fall in line with the procurement time frame so that future provision in this area would be part of this procurement of services. Increased and improved multi agency working in assisting vulnerable young people in finding appropriate support and accommodation would complement the procurement of support services. The Terms of Reference for the Hartlepool Supported Housing Panel had been reviewed and amended to reflect the shared responsibility for these groups of young people and identified clear pathways of support.

The Committee was advised that a review of historical and current provision had been undertaken by Children's Services and Housing. Historical data and service knowledge had been used to forecast potential future needs and any gaps in service provision. The data set out in the report covered the period January 2016 – December 2016 in relation to accommodation services only. A total of 51 young people had been placed with the main commissioned supported accommodation providers detailed in the report. The status of the 51 young people was set out in the report.

It was highlighted that as part of the process, the Council was eager to further develop 'moving on' strategies in partnership with providers to support young people in gaining the skills and confidence to live independently. It was anticipated that through this procurement exercise

demand would be managed down in the future by improved working with key partners to minimise the need for supported accommodation; more robust floating support and mediation to prevent young people entering the supported accommodation system and the proactive management to ensure timely move on of young people aged 18 and over from services. The outcomes that were sought through the procurement of these services were set out in the report.

A provider event had been held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Initial feedback had been very positive, with a focus on collaboration and partnership working to develop solutions that met the needs of young people and support market development in this area. Future provider events were planned for 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017. It was anticipated that the proposed partnership approach would encourage new providers to engage in the process with the possibility of promoting market growth in the town. Three events with young people currently in supported accommodation or receiving supported housing support were scheduled in February and March 2017, with a further event to be organised for those young people who had previously accessed support in this area. Feedback from all the consultation and information events would be addressed and considered as part of the preferred solution.

It was acknowledged that supported housing requirements needed to reflect the requirements of both the Client base and the Council. Listed in the report was a summary of the Council's requirements together with a summary of the provider's requirements. There were several approaches which could be taken to put arrangements in place, some of which satisfy the above requirements better than others. The attributes of the approaches were described in the report. The benefits and disadvantages of each arrangement listed above can be found in Appendix 1. It was envisaged that the preferred solution would be a mixture of the procurement approaches outlined above. Further discussion with providers would form the basis of future events to identify which was the most appropriate and viable option for each of the commissioning service areas.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee approved a procurement process to identify the delivery model of supported accommodation services and support for vulnerable young people.
- (ii) The Committee noted that a further report will be brought to Committee to note the award of contracts once the procurement process has been undertaken.

## **86. Hartlepool Education Commission – Update Report** (Director of Child and Adult Services)

### **Type of decision**

Non key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To update Committee on the progress of implementation of the Education Commission's recommendations, and impact achieved since the previous report to Committee in January 2016.

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

The Committee was advised that the background leading to the Hartlepool Education Commission and the Commission's recommendations were contained in the final Commission report published in September 2015. This is the second update report for consideration by this Committee.

It was highlighted that the governance arrangements supporting the implementation of the Commission's recommendations were appended to the report. A strategic Education Commission Leadership Group meets on a termly basis to oversee the workplan and finances, and received updates from each workstream at these meetings. The terms of reference for the Education Commission Leadership Group were appended to the report.

In September 2016 a stakeholder engagement conference was held. The purpose of the event was to inform all stakeholders of the work undertaken and impact achieved during the first year of implementing the Commission's recommendations. A publication summarising this work was produced for and circulated at this event which was available upon request. A collation of the stakeholder feedback to the event was appended to the report for information together with a collation of the latest workstream update reports. Included in the report was a summary of work done during Year 1. It was highlighted that Year 2 was already beginning to see more impact of the Education Commission's work on young people and practitioners, as illustrated in the update reports appended to the report.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair commended all those involved in Hartlepool Education Commission.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of this report.

- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive further update reports following each Education Commission Leadership Group meeting on a termly basis.

## **87. Children's Social Care Innovation Programme – Targeted Funding Opportunity** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

For members to approve the submission of a full bid to the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme.

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

The Council had been working closely with Changing Futures North East within A Better Childhood in Hartlepool to enable the workforce to focus on developing effective relationships within families. Children's Services, Changing Futures North East and the Tavistock Centre for couple relationships had agreed that it would be beneficial to build on this work and develop an expression of interest to the innovation programme. It was expected that all bids had been focused on a specific cohort in order to understand learning and impact and to understand if it could be replicated across a larger cohort. It was felt that the cohort of children that could benefit from this approach were children who were being supported as a Child In Need. It was proposed to create a small Child In Need team consisting of social workers and psychotherapists that would focus on children who had been identified as in need for longer than a year. Details of the expression of interest were provided in the report.

The partnership (Hartlepool Council, Changing Futures North East and the Tavistock Centre for Couples relationships) had been asked to submit a full proposal following a successful expression of interest. The DfE had not informed the Partnership of the deadline for submission however it was thought that the deadline would be approximately end of April. It was expected that the DfE would make decisions on the submissions by the Summer with successful areas being able to draw down funding by September 2017.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee approved the submission of a full bid to the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme in partnership with

Changing Futures North East.

**88. Dedicated School Grant - High Needs Block 2017/18** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the High Needs Block funding for 2017/18.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The report advised the Committee that the Local Authority (LA) received funding to support children and young people with special educational needs via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This funding was allocated directly to the High Needs Block. The High Needs funding would be subject to national formulae from 2018/19. The second stage of the Department for Education's (DfE) consultation was launched in December 2016.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had issued the funding allocation for 2017/18; funding has remained at 2016/17 levels. The table included in the report detailed how the funding of £10.504m was allocated. It was highlighted that over the last few years the pressure on the High Needs Block had increased significantly owing to a number of reasons which were set out in the report. The ongoing pressures had been funded using a combination of earmarked reserves and savings owing to the reduction in the hourly rates paid to providers for individual pupil support (top up payments). However these reserves would be fully committed in 2017/18. A permanent solution needed to be developed before the start of 2018/19 to address this issue. In consultation with Schools and the Schools Forum the local authority were undertaking a review of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) funding across Hartlepool to help address the increasing overspend of the High Needs Block of funding. The LA is working closely with schools as part of this review and all schools were involved in a process of reviewing current levels of need and support.

It was noted that the review was anticipated to be complete by Autumn 2017. The outcome and recommendations from this review along with an update on the projected 2017/18 outturn would be brought back to the Children's Services Committee for consideration.

Following presentation of the report, the Committee discussed the financial implications of in year pupil transfers with particular reference to those transfers arising from parental preference, as opposed to being part of a managed process. Concerns were expressed that, on those



occasions when moves occurred due to parental preference, there was no requirement for a transfer of pupil funding. It was noted that both secondary and primary head teacher groups were reviewing protocols relating to children moving between schools in the town.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee:-

- i) Noted this update of the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- ii) Agreed to receive an update on the national funding formula when the EFA publish the results from the second stage consultation for 2018/19;
- iii) Noted that further updates will be provided following the conclusion of the SEND review which will include funding and implementation proposals.

## **89. Kick The Dust – Heritage Lottery Fund** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform members of an application to Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick The Dust' Youth Programme of £644,970.

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

The report advised the Board that in 2016 The Heritage Lottery Fund had announced the 'Kick The Dust' programme; a £10 million grants programme for ambitious youth-focused projects that aimed to transform how heritage organisations engaged young people. In December 2016 Youth Services had submitted an expression of interest in partnership with Cultural Services, The Museum of The Royal Navy Hartlepool, The Heugh Gun Battery and voluntary sector partners to develop the heritage sector in Hartlepool alongside young people. The bid was for £644,970 in total with £59,070 secured from in kind support from partners and the Local Authority over a four year programme. This was accepted to be developed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (one of four regionally) into a first round submission that was submitted in February 2017. Decisions would be made in June as to the successful applicants. If successful, the project

would be developed into a second round submission with further detail and project delivery would start in January 2018. The project would be funded for four years and details of what the project would provide young people and the heritage sector with were set out in the report.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the application to Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick The Dust' Youth Programme.

## **90. Quarter 3 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2016/17** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Committee of the progress made against the relevant areas of the 2016/17 Council Plan at the end of quarter 3.

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

The Council Plan included a number of key actions, performance indicators and risks which set out how the Council intended to deliver on its priority outcomes. The Council Plan 2016/17 had been agreed by Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016. At the end of each quarter officers provided an assessment of progress against the actions, performance indicators and risks in the Plan. At the beginning of the municipal year each Policy Committee had identified 4 key areas of activity that they would like to receive updates on through these quarterly performance reports (i.e. one for each quarter). Children's Services Committee agreed that their 4 topics for 2016/17 would be as follows:-

- Fostering and Adoption
- Safeguarding
- Education Commission Review
- Education Improvement Strategy

The appendix to the report set out overall progress against actions, performance indicators and risks that are relevant to this committee are identified in the performance report.

The Assistant Director (Education, Learning and Skills 0-19) highlighted that two out of 19 risks had had their risk ratings within the Children's Services element of the Council Plan changed. The Assistant Director explained the rationale for the changes and referred to the inconsistent nature of primary and secondary school performance data and how this could influence future OFSTED inspections.

The Committee discussed changes to the GCSE exam system which included a new 'grading system' which would replace the A\* to G grading system to instead use numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance. Grave concerns were expressed at the implications of the changes and the uncertainty for students at the move from a fair and transparent criterion-referenced assessment system to a 'norm' reference system, particularly for progress measures. It was recognised that support would be required for students and parents/carers. It was highlighted also that the changes would make it very difficult for employers and universities to compare candidates in the next few years.

The Assistant Director advised that arrangements were to be made for a Members' Seminar to be held to brief Members on the changes to the exam system and Committee Members were urged to encourage their colleagues to attend. The Chair of the Committee suggested that a 'glossary of terms' be provided to Members' also.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the progress made on the specific areas, as set out in the appendix.

## **91. Fostering Service Interim Report - 1 October 2016 – 31 December 2016** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

The report provided the Committee with information relating to the activity of the Fostering Service for the third quarter of 2016/17. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the Council with performance information on a quarterly basis.

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

In accordance with the Fostering Services Minimum Standard 25.7, the report provided the background to the inspection regime for the provision of foster care for children looked after. The report provided 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 progress in relation to the priorities set out in the Fostering Annual Report.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair requested that it be placed on record the appreciation of the Committee to all those involved in the

Fostering Service.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report in relation to the work of the Fostering Service in the third quarter of 2016/17.

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

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

## **93. Standards, Engagement and Development Team**

Further to minute 56 of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the young people's representative raised further concerns, expressed by the Youth Council, in relation to the service cuts that would affect the Standards, Engagement and Development Team.

The Committee was advised that in January, the Leader of the Council had met with the Youth Council and had since spoken to the Chair of this Committee. Concerns were expressed that despite being assured that the Youth Council would be involved in budget discussions, proposals only became known to the Youth Council by reading the Finance and Policy Committee's agenda.

Whilst recognising the issues which had been raised, it was highlighted that some very difficult decisions had to be made across all Council services. There were reducing resources and increased demand on frontline services.

The Committee was advised that the Youth Council appreciated cuts had to be made but had expressed concerns in relation to how the changes had been communicated.

The Chair responded to the issues which had been raised and expressed his commitment, together with the commitment of Officers, to continue to support the Youth Council. Assurances were provided regarding the future of the Youth Service and Young Inspectors and an undertaking was given to explore how proposals had been communicated.

The Secondary School Heads representative suggested that proposals be shared with secondary head teachers to determine if any support could be provided from that sector.

In conclusion, the Chair advised that the message from the Committee

was that the Youth Council was safe and there would continue to be a role for young people in democracy.

#### **94. Co-Opted Member**

The Chair sought the approval of the Committee to Alan Chapman, headteacher of Catcote Academy, to be appointed as an additional co-opted member on the Committee.

##### **Decision**

That Alan Chapman be appointed as a co-opted member on the Committee to represent the SEND sector.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair highlighted that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Committee in the municipal year and extended his thanks to Members, officers and all those that had been involved in the Committee during his time as Chair for their support and contribution to some excellent meetings.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 p.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 28 MARCH 2017**

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

13 June 2017



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

**Subject:** SHORT BREAKS SERVICES STATEMENT

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non key.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the reviewed Short Breaks Services Statement and seek approval for the 2017/18 reviewed statement to be published in accordance with the regulations.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Paragraph 6 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide a short break service designed to assist individuals who provide care for disabled children. This duty and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010 came into force on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The regulations require each local authority to produce a short breaks services statement so that families know what services are available, the eligibility criteria for those services, and how the range of short breaks is designed to meet local needs of families with disabled children. It is a requirement that the Statement be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.2 Short Breaks provides disabled children and young people with the opportunity to spend time away from their parents, relaxing and having fun with their friends. They provide families with a break from their caring responsibilities.

## 4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 In Hartlepool the review of the Statement was undertaken in collaboration with the Parent Led Forum: 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future and officers within the

Local Authority Child & Adult Services Department. The reviewed Statement was subject to wider consultation during January and February 2017. The draft of the reviewed statement was circulated to the members of the Parent Led Forum, Specialist Providers of services to share with their members, officers within the local authority, Health and Voluntary and Community Sector. All comments received have been incorporated into the final version.

- 4.2 The revised Short Breaks Services Statement is attached as **Appendix 1** and the Regulations of Short Break Care are included within the statement as an appendix, providing more in depth detail of the short break offer and requirements.
- 4.3 The statement forms the foundation of short breaks services for disabled children and their families and the commissioning of services for 2017/18. It will continue to be reviewed on a bi annual basis ensuring that any provision is reflective of local need. Parents, Disabled Children and Young People will continue to be involved in the process and the Parent Led Forum (1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future) will continue to be the driving force behind the shaping of short break services.
- 4.4 The Short Breaks Services Statement needs to be published and made available to the general public. Once approved, the Statement will be published on the Local Authority's website and Local Offer of Services web page, together with the parent's website (1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future). The Statement will also be made available in paper copy.
- 4.5 The statement will continue to be reviewed annually in consultation with parents and monitored through the Parent Led Forum (1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future).

## **5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial considerations within this report however the Short Breaks Service Statement will be used when reviewing and commissioning services.

## **6. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no risk implications within this report.

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications.

**8. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Options have been considered and there are no child and family poverty impact issues.

**9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The Short Break Service supports children with disabilities.

**10. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no staffing considerations.

**11. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no asset management implications.

**12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 For Members to approve the Short Breaks Services Statement and seek approval for the 2017/18 reviewed statement to be published in accordance with the regulations.

**13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13.1 The annual review and publication of the Short Breaks Services Statement is a requirement of the local authority to produce as part of the duty and the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010.

**14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**15. CONTACT OFFICER**

Tracy Liveras, Short Break & Parent Participation Officer, Civic Centre,  
[tracy.liveras@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.liveras@hartlepool.gov.uk)



## HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL SHORT BREAK SERVICES STATEMENT



**April 2017 to March 2018**



## **Contents**

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## **Foreword**

The information in this statement has been gathered by consulting parents and carers directly; asking them what services they would like and what would make a difference. This has been done mainly through Short Breaks for Families of Disabled Children, through Specialist schools and groups, together with the Parent Led Forum that were held by parents, carers and involving professionals to work closely together to help change and shape the future of Short Breaks.

Christine Fewster - Chair of 1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future

### **Hartlepool's Vision**

*'Our vision is that we are committed to ensuring that all disabled children and young people and their families in Hartlepool should have equal access to a range of flexible services that support their ambition to live ordinary lives, enjoy a happy and fulfilling childhood and grow up to achieve their full potential.'*

1 Hart 1 Mind 1 Future

## **What are Short Breaks?**

Short Breaks provide disabled children and young people with the opportunity to spend time away either with or without their parents to be able to relax and have fun, positive experiences with their friends and peers. They also provide families with a break from their caring responsibilities; giving parents a chance to unwind rest and spend time with their other children.

Our aim is to ensure that families of disabled children have the support they need to live 'ordinary lives' as a matter of course. Disabled children and their families have the same human rights as others, including the right to the same quality of life as those who do not have a disability. However we recognise that all families are different, so they need different levels of support and different types of short breaks depending on the age of the child; families may need more support because of their family circumstances, this may be a short period of time or it may be for longer.

**How does the council know what type of short breaks are needed**

The council does not presume to know what short break support parents and carers of disabled children require. Our role is to facilitate what parents tell us they want so that children, their parents/carers and their families get the breaks they need.

Hartlepool began its consultation process in September 2008 as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Transformation Programme launched by the government to transform services for disabled children and their families. An integral part of the transformation programme was to work in partnership with families to understand their needs and design services to meet those needs. Regular engagement and participation continues to drive the development and shaping of services for the future through its short breaks programme.

Feedback is sought through a number of ways, including: Parent led Conferences, Parent Led Forum Meetings, Focus Groups, feedback and evaluation of services. The most recent consultation took place in the early part of 2017, via survey monkey and questionnaires distributed via schools and the parent led forum facebook page. The council identified priorities and designed service specifications to deliver a short break offer. The offer currently includes:

- Holiday Play schemes
- Breakfast, After School & Holiday Clubs
- Extended Activities Provision
- Sport & Physical Activities
- Access to training for both parents and practitioners
- Overnight Stays, including local residential or foster care provision
- Weekend Clubs
- Social groups
- Parent led activities
- Formal childcare placements
- Specialist Toy Loan Service (including Stay & Play)

- Family based short break activities

We continue to work with our families and providers collating feedback to ensure that the short breaks offer is still relevant to their needs.

There is a variety of data available to us about children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. This ranges from the number of children whose family is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance/Personal Independent Payment, Direct Payments, and Disability Prevalence Rates and numbers of children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs and or an Education, Health and Care Plan. However this data can only tell us how many children and young people may have a disability in Hartlepool. We understand that every family is different and it is therefore quite difficult to predict exactly how many short breaks will be needed year on year.

We know how many families currently access short breaks, how often and the type of short breaks they use. We use this information and anticipate how many more children are likely to use short breaks within each year and how many young people will move on to adult services, no longer requiring short breaks within children's services. This gives a figure that helps us to commission sufficient short breaks throughout the year. These figures are reviewed quarterly which enables us to assess the demand for services and plan accordingly.

## Quotes from children & young people about short break services;

*'I like coming here because I like having a go at MC-ing. The staff are fantastic. I also like going on the computers and doing a bit of socialising'.  
(Dom)*

*'I come to ONE77 to have fun with my mates. I come to play on the computers and pool. This is all that I look forward to in the week' (Daniel)*

*'I like coming here for a break from home.....'*

*'I like coming here because I have no other social life' (Michael)*

*'I come to ONE 77 to spend time with my friends. Should this not exist, I would not have many great memories to share between me and my friends'  
(Callum)*

This is a poem that one of the young people wrote who attends ONE 77

**Enjoy One 77 - I do,  
 Come here Thursday with my crew,  
 Come in all like Cattles we do,  
 Close your ears before we moo,  
 Sit down messing with cardboard we do,  
 Turning in like screws we play,  
 Sitting down writing this I do, needing the loo.....**

*'The Multi Skills on a Saturday is the best place to come in the world' - Young Person:*

*'I like taking part and having a laugh' - Saturday morning session - Young Person*

**This is what parents said about the services accessed via the Short Break Funding Programme.**

*'Ben really enjoys this and looks forward to it every week. Scott is great at engaging with them and getting them to interact'*

*Parent - Junior Fun ability*

*'Fun ability is an excellent programme, great for inclusion, fitness and social interaction - much needed group' - Parent – Junior Fun ability*

*'Good session, Scott is really good with the children'- Parent - Junior Fun ability*

*'Staff and volunteers are great, my child loves coming to the club every Thursday' – Parent - Junior Fun ability*



## Holiday Play schemes





## Extended Activities



## **Family Based Activities**

1Hart 1 Mind 1 Future has continued to work with families in Hartlepool to develop family led activities. Through consulting with families we have delivered many after school and holiday programmes for families to enjoy together. Families have told us they want to participate in social, educational and short break activities as a family, including siblings and wider family members. The impact this has had on families has been extremely positive. It has increased families' resilience, reduced isolation and increased social opportunities for the whole family.

Through the support of short breaks, we have had the resources to offer families:

### **Summer Programme**

Included bus trips to Adventure Valley, Inclusive Ice skating, Cinema Trips, Alan Shearer Centre, Stay & Play Sessions, Animal Antics and Circus Skills

The Parent Forum also offers regular cake & coffee 'get togethers' to help shape services that are meaningful to Hartlepool Parents.

#### ***Animal Antics***



#### ***Circus Skills***



Additional funding was also secured which enable Parent Forum to deliver half term activities, weekly term time Splash Sessions in the Hydro Pool and a Short Break for families to have a weekend at Haven.



**This is what families said:**

*‘Being part of the Parent Forum gives me confidence in supporting my family well. Knowing other families are local to me who have similar issues raising a child with a disability allows us to share information and ensure we are aware of local services.’*

*‘The opportunities we have had being part of this group has been incredible, wish we knew about it sooner!’*

*‘The work the Forum does is incredible, family to family support is essential. Knowing they totally understand what you’re talking about and we can all support each other at activities is something you can’t get anywhere else’*

*‘Being able to do things as a family is great, no one is excluded and to have the support from other families is amazing’*

## **How have families of disabled children participated in the development of short break services?**

In Hartlepool we have a very proactive Parent Led Forum that works in partnership with the Local Authority Short Breaks Lead Officer, other relevant agencies and groups to ensure that service delivery meets the need of families of disabled children.

There is also parent representation on a number of other strategic and operational groups, including the SEND Strategy Group, which provide a platform for parents to contribute and influence change, the Learning, Disability Partnership Board and the Tees Autism Strategy Working Group.

Parents have been actively involved in the commissioning of short break provision and have played a very active role in the development of the Local Offer of Services as part of the SEND reforms

Children and young people are actively engaged in having their say about the things they like to do. This has been and is still carried out in a number of ways, including: questionnaires, face to face discussion, and group work within short break sessions. This information is collated to plan for future delivery.

All of our commissioned services are required as part of their terms and Conditions of grant to engage service users in evaluating services on a Quarterly basis, so that services are designed to meet needs at an individual level.

During the early part of 2017, a survey was circulated to parents and carers in relation short breaks in Hartlepool. The survey questionnaire could be completed either by using the on- line Survey Monkey or by completing a paper version of the questionnaire.



The questionnaire was circulated to both special schools, to groups delivering services, via the parent led forum facebook, direct link to the survey monkey on the local offer of services webpage and through practitioners

Here are some of the findings which have supported the types of services families like to access going forward and shape the delivery of services for 2017/2018.

In total we received 74 responses from parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disability.

In the main respondents were from families between the ages of 5 – 15 years of age.

The three highest description of need where: Autistic Spectrum, Speech and language needs and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

52% of the respondents stated they accessed some form of short break.

When asked about the type of support they received or accessed, the following came out as the most accessed:

Direct payments

Extended Activities

Fun ability

Holiday Playschemes

Parent Forum led activities

85% of families who responded preferred to access short breaks that were 10 mile or under, therefore preferring more localised provision

80% of respondents were satisfied with the short breaks accessed, however 40% didn't know about all of the services on offer.

60% of respondents said they weren't aware of the Local Offer of Services. However those that were aware, 55% said they have used it.

Families were asked about the type of short breaks their children accessed. Nearly 40% said they accessed services delivered by Hartlepool Families First and 37% stated they used Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group. 20% stated they accessed activities delivered at Brierton Sports Centre and other accessed services such as Exmoor Grove, Granville Lodge, cubs and church groups, along with Parents in the pool with the Small Steps Team.

100% response of parents felt their child had benefited from the sessions and activities provided.

**These are some of the things families are saying are working well:**

***‘Providing transport to and from activities is good. It can be really stressful in and out of the car with a heavy wheelchair and teenager’***

***‘Direct Payments taking my child to what he enjoys. Hartlepool Special Needs Support Group is amazing. My child loves the club and holiday playscheme so he can socialise’***

***‘My child enjoys going to Exmoor, as I don’t drive and find it very challenging taking him out on my own. He goes all over with Exmoor staff’***

***‘My child is always keen to go to ONE 77. He is happy when he goes and happy when I pick him up’***

***‘Sports sessions are really good and the things the parent led forum put on are excellent and value for money’***

***‘The flexibility having own support workers allows my son to participate in new activities and access mainstream community activities where possible. He can also travel out of area to play sports not available locally. This allows him to maintain peer relationships with the support we as a family trust given through his workers’***

### **This is what isn't working so well**

*'Limited places on half term and summer holiday playschemes'*

*'Having to find these sources myself'*

*'My child finds it very hard to deal with changes, so if for any reason this has happened he can be quite challenging'*

### **What else you have told us!**

Nearly 80% of families rate the care their child receives as high quality and over 80% feel they receive enough feedback on how their child has been whilst in their care.

77% rate that staff are very helpful and supportive and 84% feel that they have received the service that suits the family needs

We asked families what type of short breaks they would like to use, this is what they said:

*'Activities on a working farm'*

*'Very happy with short breaks accessed, such as Summer Playschemes, after school and holiday activities that include siblings'*

*'Breaks that bring all children together, regardless of the need'*

*'A few days away with transport for a wheelchair'*

*'Something that is flexible'*

*'Continue the family based activities through the parent led forum and to continue the flexible approach to my child's budget being used to access after school activities to increase his social opportunities and wellbeing'*

## **What do the council offer to families that need a Short Break?**

Hartlepool Borough Council offer a range of short breaks for all families who care for a disabled child. Families may be eligible for more specialist short breaks if their child has a substantial and/or permanent impairment, which may have a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

The range of short breaks available is meant to meet the needs of a broad range of need and family circumstances.

### **Universal Short Breaks**

All families can access a number of short breaks for their child. These breaks are short, regular sessions that provide the carer with the opportunity after school, at weekends, school-holidays, to relax have time to themselves or spend time with other family members. These take the form of clubs that offer a wide range of activities for children such as art and crafts, sport and physical activity, or simply a place to meet with friends and chat.

### **Targeted Short Breaks**

Carers may need support and services individually tailored to their child's needs. This level of support is available to families following an initial assessment of the child by a social worker. Any family that feels their disabled child's needs cannot be met using universal services can ask for this assessment. Following the assessment the social worker will work with the family to identify support which may include short breaks. If the child requires support that cannot be met by universal services, the family and the social worker discuss which services are available and which of those services work best for the family. The options are considered through the relevant personnel/panels who will respond to the request and its suitability, ensuring that the family get a package of support that works for them and meets the assessed need. This may include a Family Resource Worker, Day Care or a Direct Payment for the family to arrange support themselves. The support package is reviewed regularly by a social worker to ensure that



services continue to meet the changing needs of the child as he or she grows and matures and those of his/her family.

### **Specialist Short Breaks**

Sometimes a child or a family have more significant or complex needs due to their child's disability and/or family circumstances, and need additional support and interventions. The specialist short break package may include universal provision and targeted short breaks, and could include overnight stays within a residential or foster placement or breaks commissioned specifically for the child's needs. The authority is currently exploring the use of individual budgets which will enable families to arrange services themselves. They may also receive help from a short break unit with nursing care. These arrangements are discussed by the Hartlepool multi agency Commissioning Panel. Health-commissioned breaks are paid for by the Clinical Commissioning Group and will follow a specialist health assessment which is not arranged by the Council but can be discussed with the health professional and social worker involved with the family. Complex and high need cases such as this may require the continued support of a social worker to ensure that the child and carer's needs continue to be met.

### **Who can access short breaks?**

Short breaks are available for children and young people from birth to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday who are disabled and/or those with complex health needs where their disability has a significant impact on them and family life. Each case is considered on its own merit, but as a guide it is anticipated that additional support will be available to children who currently have a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health or Care Plan and/or are eligible for a service from the SEND Service 0 – 25 years;

This also includes children and young people with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, sensory impairments and physical impairments.

Not all children and families will need the same level of support and short breaks; some will need more than others because of the nature of the disability and impact on the family. Some families may need more support because of their individual family

circumstances. This is why we may need to assess your child and family to ensure we provide the right level of support and short breaks at the right time.

### **Where can families get more information about Short Breaks?**

Currently information on short break activities can be accessed by contacting the Childrens Hub in Hartlepool, a practitioner working with the family, or a family can simply contact the provider and refer themselves. The Children's Hub is a universal service providing advice and signposting to **all** families in Hartlepool looking for services for their children. Parents can also access short break provision by accessing the local offer of services via the direct link: <http://www.hartlepool.fsd.org/send>. Parents can subscribe to a free texting service that informs them of the opportunities to access various short breaks, meetings and events. As well as this service, The Children's Hub maintains a website of activities/events available to families across the borough called Family Service Directory, the direct link to access this service is: <http://www.hartlepool.fsd.org.uk> The Parent Forum also have their own website and the link is: [www.onefuture.org.uk](http://www.onefuture.org.uk). The parent led forum also has a group face book page where they promote lots of services relating to short break provision. Parents also produce a variety of leaflets promoting their services and activities..

### **How is the council developing the workforce?**

The vision in Hartlepool is for all children and young people to be supported to develop their speech, language, communication and social skills in order to ensure that they can access learning develop social networks and attend activities and local groups, including childcare provision to make positive contribution to the wider community.

The short break training requirements have been agreed and developed alongside parents and are incorporated in the wider Hartlepool Children's Workforce Plan and can be accessed by any provider working with children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities.

Training delivered specifically through Short Breaks and to be delivered in the coming year:

- Key Working towards a Single Education, Health & Care Plan
- Moving & Handling (children), including use of hoists
- Autism Awareness
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- Sensory Needs
- Managing Anger
- All you wanted to know about Autism, but daren't ask!
- National Autistic Society Early Bird Plus Programme

The council will continue to offer development opportunities to maintain the quality and capacity of short break workers in the future and this will feature within the authority's children's workforce plan.

This is what parents/practitioners have told us about some of the training they attended over the last 15 months:

### **Key Working towards a Single Education, Health & Care Plan**

*'The service user experience tested my practice and how we need to thoroughly explain and explore needs/service plans to be readable for families' Practitioner'*

*'The voice of the parent made situations more real, gave me an insight of what the service users could be feeling. Enjoyable tasks, well organised day throughout' - (Practitioner)*

*'Good explanation of legislation. Excellent facilitation from all 3 facilitators' - (Practitioner)*

*'Excellent, best training I've been on for a very long time' (Practitioner)*

**SEND Key Working - Tasks & Approaches**

*'Most powerful part of the training was hearing the voice of the parent'*

*'All very informative'*

*'The role of the parent trainer was key in this. It allowed me to gain understanding of the impact of professionals. It was forceful, honest and eye opening'*

*'Remember to let the family take the lead - my role is to support/inform/challenge/advocate'*

**National Autistic Society Early Bird plus Programme**

*'The different strategies available to prevent upset for the child'*

*'To look at behaviour and the reasons behind it and a better understanding of sensory needs'*

*'Giving extra time for my child to respond and reminding myself all of my other children do and need time with parents. Most of all I'm not alone. Using Iceberg'*

*'Worth attending this course as you are not alone'*

*'A fab course for learning about coping strategies and making life easier supporting children with autism'*

*'That you feel empowered with the knowledge you gain on understanding your child'*

*'It's informative, practical "can do" really helps understanding'*

### **Autism all you want to know but never dare ask!**

*'I enjoyed this course and would highly recommend to my work colleagues'-  
(Practitioner)*

*'Truly eye opening and interesting training by a very passionate, knowledgeable  
trainer' – (Foster Carer)*

*'Very useful training. I have more explanation of why my son is behaving like this. It  
have opened up my eyes and I have a better understanding' - (Parent)*

*'Enjoyed Steve's perception of life, I feel I understand behaviours now and I am  
able to inform and educate others from what Steve has advised today' –  
(Practitioner)*

*'Excellent training with a great insight into Autism' - (Practitioner)*

### **Moving & Handling Disabled Children**

Knowledge and skills have been increased in the following:

*'Moving and Handling of a wheelchair'*

*'How to transfer more effectively and easily'*

*'Different laws surrounding moving and handling'*

The Parent led Forum also directly delivered training to families which included:

Positive Behaviour Therapy training

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Sensory Workshops

Attachment Training

**How does the council support transitions to adult services?**

In Hartlepool we want to support all young people with a disability into adulthood successfully. Becoming an adult is about developing independence, enjoying a social life and getting a job. This means that a young person with a disability may need support to access further education, training and employment, social opportunities and housing advice. The young person's family may continue to need short breaks, so, young people approaching adulthood and their families should be involved in planning their adult lives in order to ensure that support and services are genuinely responsive to their needs.

Child & Adult Services Department in Hartlepool have the SEND Service (0 – 25), which includes the Disability Team. This was established to reduce transitions for young people and their families and this prevents the need for a young person to have to develop new relationships with a Social Worker at 16+ who would guide them into adulthood.

For those disabled children, young people, adults and their families who require it this will be a consistent throughout the important transitions in their lives.

The local Authority will ensure it meets the needs of the new approaches to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and any changes to policy or legislation arising from the Legislation on Reform of Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs.

**How accessible are universal Council services?**

Across the Council, there is a strategy to ensure that our public buildings and services are accessible to all. A programme of development has taken place to ensure that buildings can be accessed by wheelchair users, induction loops systems are installed and that there are accessible toilets. In addition, every reasonable effort is made to ensure there is access to all areas in public buildings, and where this is not possible, alternative arrangements are put in place to ensure that people with disabilities are not prevented from accessing services and support. Other developments include: additional disabled parking bays, drop off zones and drop kerbs installed at bus stops to make public transport more accessible.

Fully equipped accessible changing places are available in 3 venues across the Borough, located at: Mill House Leisure Centre, National Museum of the Royal Navy (formerly Hartlepool's Maritime Experience) and Coronation Drive, Seaton Carew. In addition to the above accessible changing places are also located within a number of settings, for example: The One Life Centre and Central Library.

**What is the council doing to help families with transport?**

The Council is committed to encouraging access to facilities in the town via a range of transport options and the Council's Integrated Transport Unit, in partnership with the Child and Adult Services, developed a Hartlepool Community Travel Support Network.

The Council has already introduced an Independent Travel Training Scheme (Safe on the Move in Hartlepool) which encourages young people and adults to access Hartlepool facilities using different modes of transport. As part of the roll out of the scheme anyone who felt they required support to travel independently are encouraged to sign up to assist in their safe travel around Hartlepool. As the scheme developed the remit expanded to include engaging employers and businesses to sign up and offer assistance to people in areas such as support to read a bus timetable, directing people to bus stops or helping to make a call to a parent or carer. The network now has a number of volunteers and volunteer organisations trained to assist people to travel safely and independently.

In addition to the Safe on the Move in Hartlepool scheme, the Council in partnership with Cleveland Police and the National Autistic Society has supported the roll out of the NAS National Autism Alert Card in 2009. The Alert Card can be held by people with a diagnosis of autism and presented to the police in the event they are approached in public. The card was launched locally in 2009 and linked to autism awareness training for the police.

In the summer of 2013 the four Tees Valley local authorities received funding to support the development of a Tees Place of Safety scheme and build on the work already produced within Hartlepool.

Some short break providers as part of their service provide transport services to and from home to enable children and young people to access services for a nominal charge and this service also offer the carer with additional hours of a short break.



**What are the council's priorities to develop services for disabled children, and how are they being tackled?**

During the development of this Statement and through a number of delivered short break services, parents and young people told us what their priorities are for the development of short break provision. An extensive survey also took place to ascertain the views and concerns raised by parents and carers to assist in the shaping of services across this financial year. The table below shows how these issues and the actions being taken to improve or develop them:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Holiday Play schemes</b>	Maintain holiday playscheme provision for 2017/18, to include 11 weeks of holiday playscheme provision. To draw up new commissioning arrangements for April 2017 based on formal consultation with families of disabled children
<b>Extended Activities out of school hours (Term Time)</b>	Continue to maintain the delivery of extended activity provision cover term time out of school hours provision across 50 weeks of the year for 2017/2018 To draw up new commissioning arrangements for April 2017 based on formal consultation with families of disabled children
<b>Family Based short breaks/ Parent led Activities</b>	Continue to support over night family based activity provision across the year and parent led activity programme to engage with new families accessing short break services, increasing parent participation, with regards to increasing/maintaining provision

## 6.1 Appendix 1

<b>Specialist Toy Loan Service, including ( Stay &amp; Play)</b>	Continue to maintain the service, to include stay and play sessions, available to both parents and providers for 2017/18. To draw up new commissioning arrangements for March 2017 based on formal consultation with families of disabled children
<b>Sport/Physical Activities</b>	To increase the number of sessions across the year to include school holidays a range of sport and physical activity across to meet the needs of families to enable and encourage access to club based activity for 2017/18 and to draw up new arrangements for March 2017 based on formal consultation with families of disabled children
<b>Increase access to information</b>	<p>Maintain the provision of the free texting service facility.</p> <p>To support parents to update the parent led forum website accessibility and information to reach a wider audience of parents and carers.</p> <p>Work with The Childrens Hub to support the delivery of the local offer for parents, children and young people with additional needs as part of the new SEND Reforms and</p> <p>Produce easy to read format literature on services and products available through the local authority</p> <p>The Parent Forum to continue the use of their own face book group to reach a wider audience to disseminate information.</p>

	<p>Inform and make available information in relation to changes and updates around the Children &amp; Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice January 2015 and the Care Act 2014</p>
<p><b>Continue to support Parent Participation to influence the development of services</b></p>	<p>Continue to support the parent led forum in the delivery of their work to enable them to apply for funding and become sustainable in the future.</p> <p>Continue to raise awareness and increase the membership base of the group to ensure a broader range of parents are involved in the development of services, in turn increasing their skills and knowledge base and ensuring continued effective partnership working</p>
<p><b>Increasing the capacity of the workforce to support children and young people in a broader range of settings regardless of their disability</b></p>	<p>Continue to offer training for staff working across all sectors, including parents to ensure they have the right skills and knowledge for working with children with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disability (0–25), including Disability Social Work Services</b></p>	<p>Continue to support the SEND Reforms, Support the development/delivery of the local offer of services working with parents, Health, Schools and other agencies to ensure that information is accessible in a format that is understandable and all related information can be found in one place.</p> <p>Support parents with new Education Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) and Support the delivery of key working approaches.</p>

**6.1**  
**Appendix 1**

	Support parents, children and young people with Independent Support to provide information and support through the transfer of a statement of educational need and the production of a new education, health and care plan and reviews of these plans
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**Better Outcomes for Families of Disabled Children**

The delivery of the above short break priorities are designed to improve the outcomes for disabled children and their families. As part of our service delivery the outcomes detailed below are designed to make a difference to families of disabled children.

- Short Breaks aim to support parents and carers in their caring role and reduce levels of stress and anxiety due to the demands of caring
- They will aim to support disabled children and young people to access activities whereby they can make friends, have fun and support the development of their social, communication and independence skills
- When disabled young people are leaving school and making the transition to adulthood that they will be supported and are able to express their wishes and make appropriate choices
- Short Breaks will provide opportunities to enable families to spend time, relax together and for parents and their children to get to know other families to build up a network of support and develop friendships

**What if I have a problem with a short break activity?**

If you experience any problems in accessing a short break activity, or problems while your child is attending, please discuss this with the activity provider in the first instance and request a copy of their complaints policy if needed. If you remain unhappy, or you need support to address the problem, please contact the Short Break Lead on 01429 284876 or email [tracy.liveras@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.liveras@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Draft Regulations laid before Parliament under section 104(3A) of the Children Act 1989, for approval by resolution of each House of Parliament.

## **The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010**

Made 2010

Coming into force 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011

The Secretary of State for Education makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by paragraph 6(2) of schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989 (1). In accordance with section 104(3A) of that Act, a draft of these regulations was laid before Parliament and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.

### **Citation and commencement**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2010 and come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

### **Interpretation**

2. In these Regulations-

“The 1989 Act” means the Children Act 1989;

“Carer” means a person who provides care for a disabled child and who is-

- (a) The child's parent, or
- (b) A person who is not the child's parent but who has parental responsibility for that child; and “Disabled” has the meaning given in section 17(11) of the 1989 Act (2).

## **Duty to make provision**

3. In performing their duty under paragraph 6 (1)(c) of schedule 2 to the 1989 Act (3), a local authority must-
  - (a) have regard to the needs of those carers who would be unable to continue to provide care unless breaks from caring were given to them; and
  - (b) have regard to the needs of those carers who would be able to provide care for their disabled child more effectively if breaks from caring were given to them to allow them to-
    - (i) Undertake education, training or any regular leisure activity,
    - (ii) Meet the needs of other children in the family more effectively, or
    - (iii) Carry out day to day tasks which they must perform in order to run their household.

## **Types of services which must be provided**

- 4.- (1) In performing their duty under paragraph 6(1)( c) of schedule 2 to the 1989 Act, a local authority must provide, so far is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to continue to provide care or to do so more effectively.
- (2) In particular, the local authority must provide, as appropriate, a range of
  - (a) day-time care in homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
  - (b) Overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere,
  - (c) Educational or leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes, and
  - (d) Services available to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays.

## **Short breaks services statement**

5. (1) A local authority must by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011, prepare a statement for carers in their area (a “short breaks services statement”) setting out details of –
- (a) The range of services provided in accordance with regulation 4,
  - (b) Any criteria by which eligibility for those services will be assessed, and
  - (c) How the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers in their area.
- (2) The local authority must publish their short breaks services statement, including by placing a copy of their statement on their website.
- (3) The local authority must keep their short breaks services statement under review and, where appropriate revise the statement.
- (4) In preparing and revising their statement, the local authority must have regard to the views of carers in their area.



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

13 June 2017



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

**Subject:** SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY REPORT

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 There is an expectation that members receive regular reports on the arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The purpose of this report is to provide Children's Services Committee with information relating to safeguarding performance in Hartlepool during the year 2016/17 to enable Members to scrutinise and challenge practice.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined within "Working Together 2015" as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment;
  - Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
  - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
  - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 3.2 The legislative framework for safeguarding sits within the Children Act 1989 (as amended within Children Act 2004) and Section 47 of this Act details the duties required of local authorities to make decisions to protect children. This includes providing the local authority with the remit for compulsory intervention into family life if a child is felt to be at risk.

- 3.3 Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local agencies to ensure they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions.
- 3.4 Working Together 2015 sets out the requirements for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 3.5 This report covers safeguarding performance from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

#### 4. EARLY HELP

- 4.1 Families and children and young people have access to universal services such as health visiting, GP services, nurseries, schools, youth services and the community sector. The majority of families only need to use universal services, however some families at certain times may need some extra support. Early help is support that all organisations can offer that is targeted dependent on the needs of the family, as a whole and the individual members within it. The best way to understand how to support families is to work with the family and undertake an Early Help Assessment. This assessment should show what the family needs support with. In Hartlepool it is expected that all organisations that identify needs within a family undertake an early help assessment and then supports the family as identified. If a practitioner feels that the family needs support above what they can offer the practitioner can discuss this within the early help localities. The localities are made up of family support workers, social workers, health visitors, community nursery nurses and school nurses. Police Community Support Workers (PCSO) are also based within the localities two days a week.
- 4.2 There were 698 early help episodes opened in 2016/2017. This is a slight decrease on 2015/16 as set out below. An Early Help episode is where an early help intervention has taken place. These may not have had an Early Help Assessment undertaken as a number of them already had a Children & Families assessment in place within Children's Social Care and due to the success of this intervention is now being supported within the Early Help teams.

	Episodes Opened	Episodes Closed
2014/15	650	681
2015/16	757	681
2017/18	698	810

In 2016/17 there were 810 cases closed, of which 98 were closed to early help due to escalation for a social care intervention. There were 99 cases stepped down from Child in Need to early help during this period, this means that following a social care intervention, the identified need reduced and support could be continued through targeted services.

- 4.3 An analysis of the reason for commencing an early help assessment shows that the main issues for families needing support in 2016/17 were:

Parent/ carer coping strategies	182/698 = 26%
Behaviour management	57/698 = 8%
Child/ family/ wider relationships	64/698 = 9%

The issues highlighted above indicate that relationships within families need to be at the forefront of the design of services. In order to address these issues, work has already started to improve the children's workforce understanding of the impact of relationships within families on children and young people. The Children's Strategic Partnership has recognised this as a priority and has agreed that *"Improving family relationships, strengths, skills and ability to cope"* is one of their 'obsessions'. Changing Futures North East (CFNE) was recently successful in bidding for funding to support the improvement of relationships within families through their "Healthy Relationships" project. The council is working closely with CFNE to improve the skills within the workforce to support healthy relationships within families.

- 4.4 The highest referring organisation to early help localities for additional support for children, young people and families continues to be schools with 177 referrals in 2016/17; self referral are the second highest with 126 requests for support and social care requests for continuing support after case closure are the third highest referrer at 102. Work is ongoing to further develop and strengthen relationships between schools and the locality teams to ensure that children and families are being supported at the earliest opportunity.

## 5. CHILDREN'S HUB REFERRALS

- 5.1 In Hartlepool the Children's Hub provides the "front door" to children's services. It provides an integrated single point of access across North Tees offering multi agency triage and assessment of referrals about children. The Children's Hub shares information, evaluates risk and makes multi agency decisions to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families through providing the right support at the right time.
- 5.2 The Children's Hub is a partnership and the team comprises of professionals from Hartlepool Borough Council, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, Cleveland Police, Operation Encompass and Harbour. In addition, there are 'virtual' partners which include Thirteen, National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company.

- 5.3 Referrals to children's social care are expected to be completed on a SAFER referral form. This allows the referrer to set out their concerns which can then be further explored within the Hub to understand the type of intervention needed to support the family and/or to protect the child/ren. The pathways to support can be the provision of advice and guidance, early help services or children's social care dependent upon the presenting needs.
- 5.4 The Children's Hub uses the access to services document "Right Service at the Right Time" to guide decision making. However decisions are not always straight forward and therefore the discussions between multi agency practitioners in the Hub is critical to ensuring children and young people get the support they need.
- 5.5 The number of contacts received by the hub is as follows with the number of referrals for a Children and Families Assessment (C&F):

Year	Number of contacts	Number of referrals for C&F assessment (% of contacts that result in referral)
2014/15	6083	1198 (19.7%)
2015/16	4811	922 (19.2%)
2016/17	5490	1291 (23.5%)

The number of referrals has significantly increased from 922 to 1291 from 2015/16 to 2016/17 which is an increase of 40%. This increase is being reviewed to understand whether there are certain reasons for the increase. Anecdotal information indicates that some families are presenting under more stress in relation to changes to the Welfare System changes. There has been a significant increase in the demand for crisis funding and foodbanks, however it is unknown at this stage whether these are related. This increase in referrals is being closely monitored to ensure that the number of social workers needed to carry out the assessments and intervention match the needs.

- 5.6 The number of re-referrals to social care that occurred within 12 months of the previous referral closing continues to be approximately 10%, however due to the increased number of cases open within the teams this has increased from 97 children to 140 children.

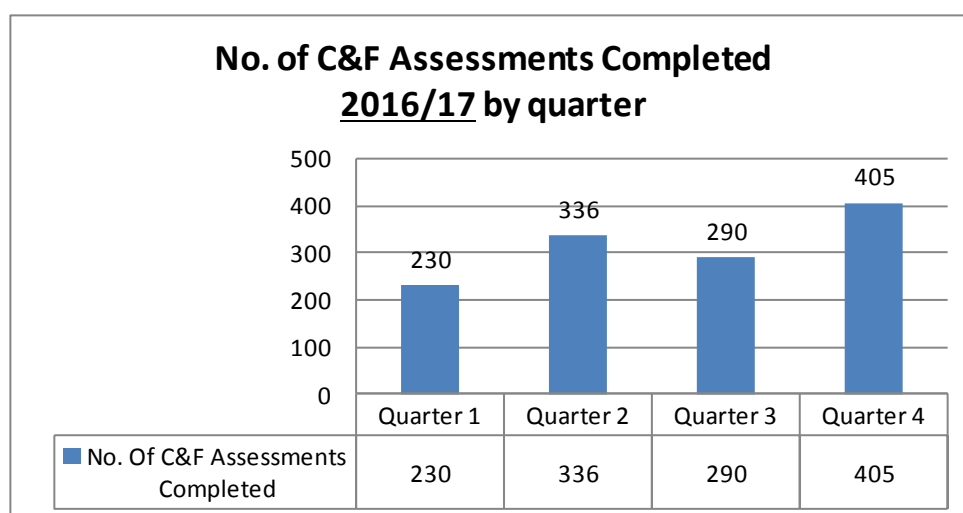
Year	Number of re-referrals in 12 months
2014/15	162 (13.5%)
2015/16	97 (10.5%)
2016/17	140 (10.9%)

## 6. CHILDREN AND FAMILY ASSESSMENTS (SOCIAL CARE)

- 6.1 The number of Children and Families Assessments completed over the last three years are:

2014/15	1444
2015/16	1172
2016/17	1261

The data in 2016/17 shows an increase on the previous year, however not at the levels seen in 2014/15. Discussions that have recently taken place with social workers indicate that although the number of assessments has not reached 2014/15 figures, the level of complexity within these assessments has significantly increased. This is also evident through the increasing number of children subject to care proceedings.



It is worth noting that the number of assessments completed within quarter four is significantly higher than the previous quarter. This increase has placed a significant amount of pressure on the social work teams and consequent capacity within the service. This demand is being regularly monitored to see if the trend continues into quarter one of 2017/18.

- 6.2 The outcomes of children and family assessments completed during 2016/17 are:

Outcome of C&F Assessment	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Child in Need	26%	26%	22%	29%
Legal Action	2%	1%	4%	2%
No Further Action	47%	39%	45%	38%
Not Recorded	2%	5%	3%	5%
Other Actions	24%	29%	26%	26%

(\* The ICS system generates "Other actions" which includes those cases that are passed to early help. Work is underway to refine the system to identify "other actions". "Not recorded" denotes that the social worker has not completed this section and each individual case is followed up as all cases require an outcome for the statutory return.)

There are a large number of assessments that indicate no further action is required at the end of the assessment which implies that the referral may have been inappropriate to be passed for assessment. However, initial indications show that, in the majority of these assessments, work has been undertaken with the family concurrently with the assessment which has led to identified needs being met by the conclusion of the assessment and consequently no further work is required and the case can be closed. Work is being undertaken to review how workers are recording this information in the system to ensure that the work undertaken is captured.

- 6.3 In order to understand if referrals have been evaluated appropriately within the Children's Hub, quarterly audits have been undertaken to inform the development of the Hub in its first year of operation. These audits show that decision making was appropriate.
- 6.4 The main factors of need identified at assessment (2016-17 data is 'provisional') are set out below. This reflects previous year's information which has been used to inform Hartlepool's "A Better Childhood Strategy". The Local Safeguarding Children's Board is also using this information to inform their priorities and sub groups of the board are focusing on the top five factors.

	The percentage of all the assessments that identified these factors
Domestic Violence	27%
Mental Health	27%
Drug Misuse	19%
Alcohol Misuse	14%
Neglect	13%
Emotional Abuse	8%
Physical Abuse	7%
Learning Disability/ Physical Disability (Adult)	5%
Learning Disability/ Physical Disability (Child)	4%
Sexual Abuse	3%

## 7. CHILDREN IN NEED

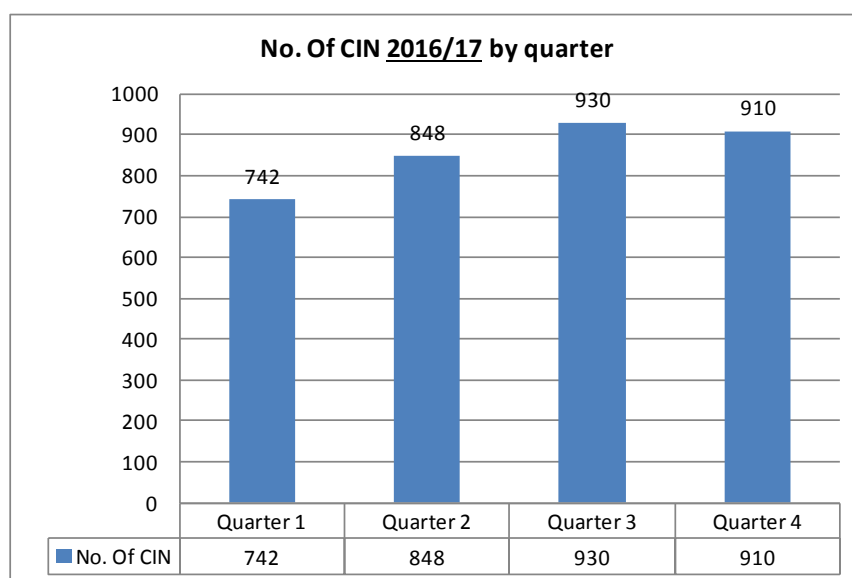
- 7.1 The Department for Education define children in need as all those children receiving a social care service including those in need of protection. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines children in need as follows:

*(a) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority;*  
*(b) his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or*  
*He is disabled.*

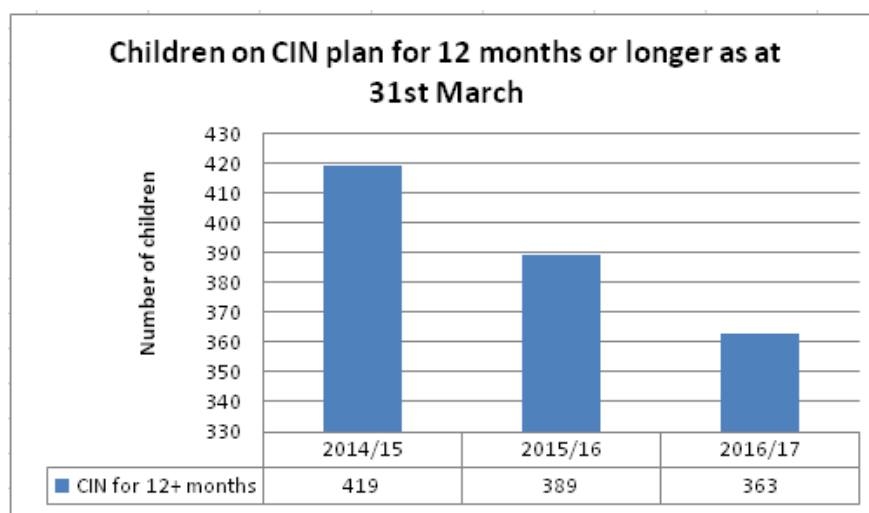
Parent/s need to consent to receive support under section 17 arrangements. The number of children receiving support who are defined as children in need at the end of the reporting period is shown in the table below.

2014/2015	888
2015/2016	715
2016/2017	910

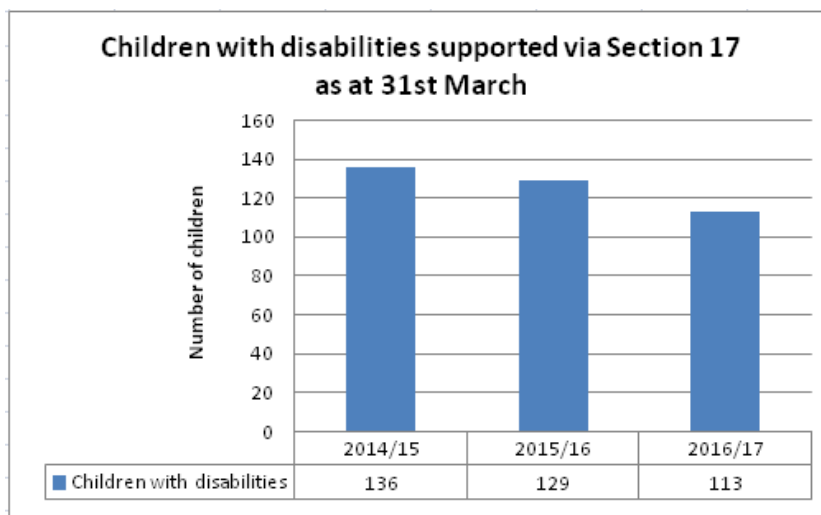
The table shows an increase in the number of children in need with a significant increase of 27% from the previous year. This data mirrors the current trend of increasing demand across all of social care services which is set out in the remainder of this report.



- 7.2 The number of children receiving support under child in need arrangements for 12 months or more has decreased year on year since 2014/15. Heads of Service and managers have worked hard over the last few years to ensure that plans are regularly reviewed and that any drift or delay in providing support for children is reduced.



- 7.3 The number of children with disabilities being supported under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 has decreased as shown in the table below. The figure for 2016/17 does not reflect anecdotal evidence of demand within the specialist team which suggests that the number of children with additional needs is increasing therefore a review is being carried out to better understand the data.



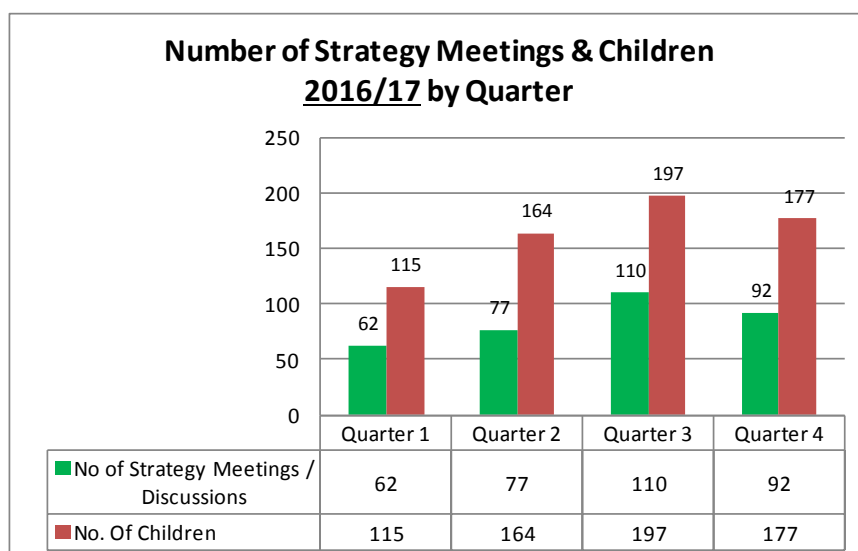
## 8. CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION

- 8.1 Local authorities, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, have a duty to make enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- 8.2 The decision to make enquiries under section 47 is taken through multi agency strategy discussions held in accordance with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015 where there are concerns about a child/ children being at risk of significant harm.

Under the arrangements that came into place when the Children's Hub went live, strategy discussions on new referrals take place in the Children's Hub; for children who already have an allocated social worker, strategy discussions are held in the Safeguarding and Support Teams. The table below provides data on the number of strategy discussions that have taken place in 2016/17 with comparison data from the previous two years:

Year	Number of Strategy Meetings
2014/2015	257 relating to 427 children
2015/2016	252 relating to 369 children
2016/2017	341 relating to 653 children





8.3 The tables show a significant increase in the number of strategy discussions held from 2015/2016 to 2016/2017. This is mirroring the increase in the number of referrals and overall demand across children's social care services.

8.4 There are a range of outcome options from a strategy discussion including:

- No further action;
- Section 47 inquiry which can be single agency or in partnership with the police (which is undertaken through a Children and Families assessment);
- Support through a child and family Assessment as a child in need.

The quarterly data for 2016/17 indicates that the number of strategy discussions that resulted in a Section 47 enquiry range between 60% and 72%.

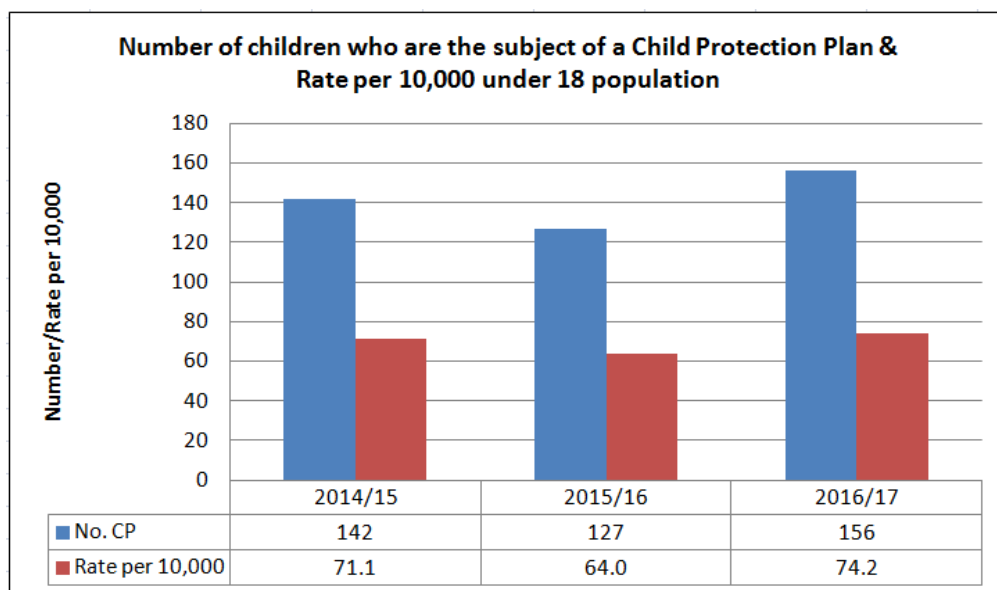
8.5 Work has commenced through the Children's Hub to audit decision making pathways from strategy discussions to understand if strategy discussions were appropriate on all these cases. Colleagues from North Yorkshire County Council have recently undertaken a peer challenge of activity and decision making within the Hub and findings were presented to the Children's Hub Strategic Management Board at the end of May.

8.6 The table below captures the percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) held that result in a Child Protection Plan being required:

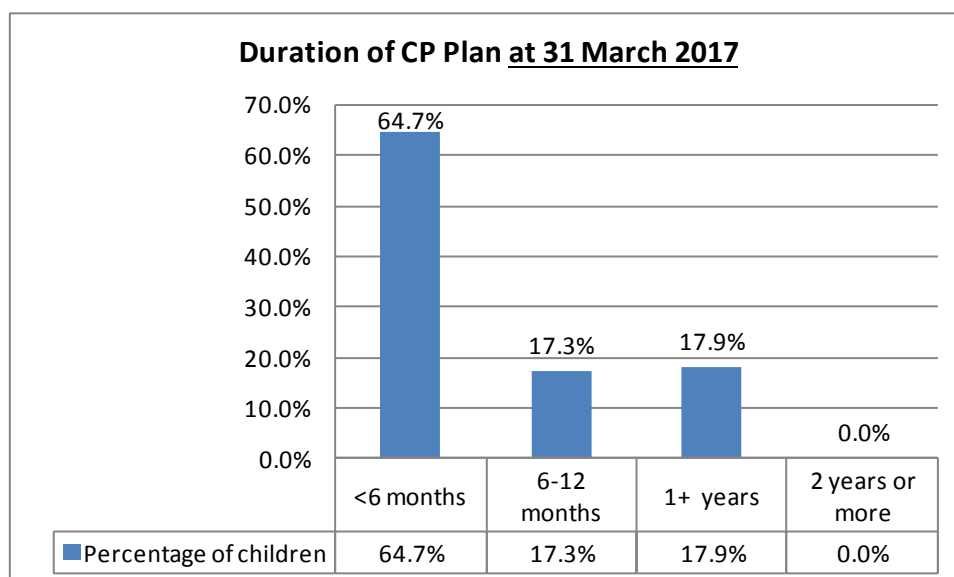
2014/2015	86.9%
2015/2016	94.5%
2016/2017	81.5%

The percentage of ICPCs that resulted in a plan being required is significantly lower than in 2015/16 however it is more in line with 2014/15 data. A review is being carried out to understand the story behind this data.

- 8.7 The number of children subject to a child protection plan, including rate per 10,000 children is shown below. There is an increase when compared with previous years in line with the increase in need highlighted across all areas of children's social care services.

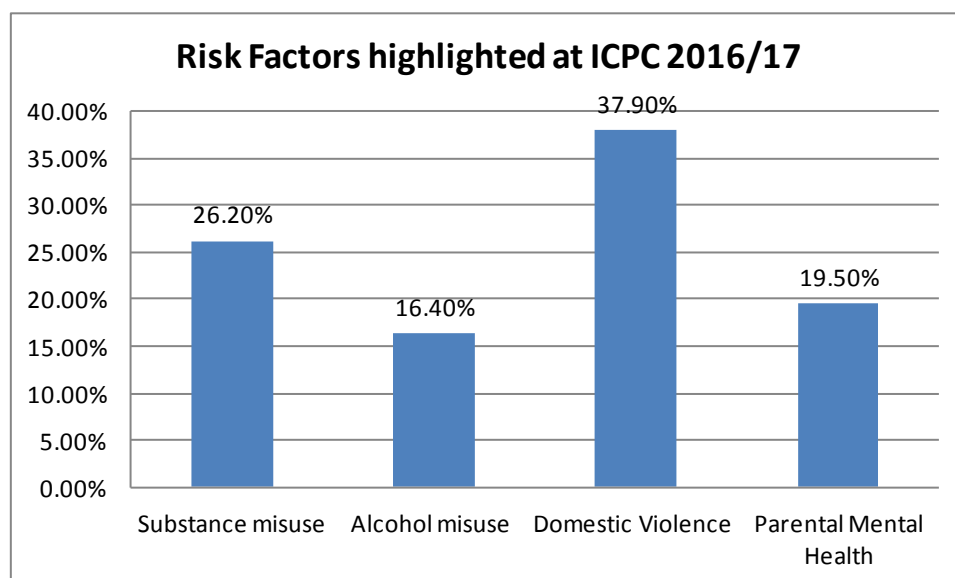


- 8.8 The number of children with disabilities subject to a child protection plan has been less than 5 for the last three years and therefore this information has been suppressed.
- 8.9 At the end of quarter four there were 156 children subject to a Child Protection Plan, the duration of their plans is broken down in the table below:



- 8.10 The risk factors identified at Initial Child Protection Conference during 2016/17 are shown in the table and reflect the main issues highlighted as factors in assessment (paragraph 6.4). Tackling these risk factors has been

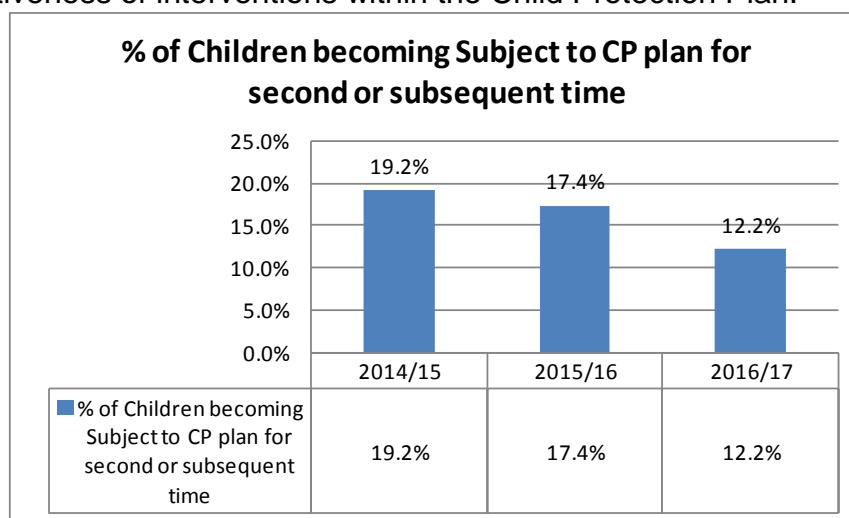
highlighted as a priority for the Children's Strategic Partnership through the Better Childhood in Hartlepool and continue to be priorities for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.



8.11 124 children and young people ceased to be subject to a child protection plan during 2016/17. Of these:

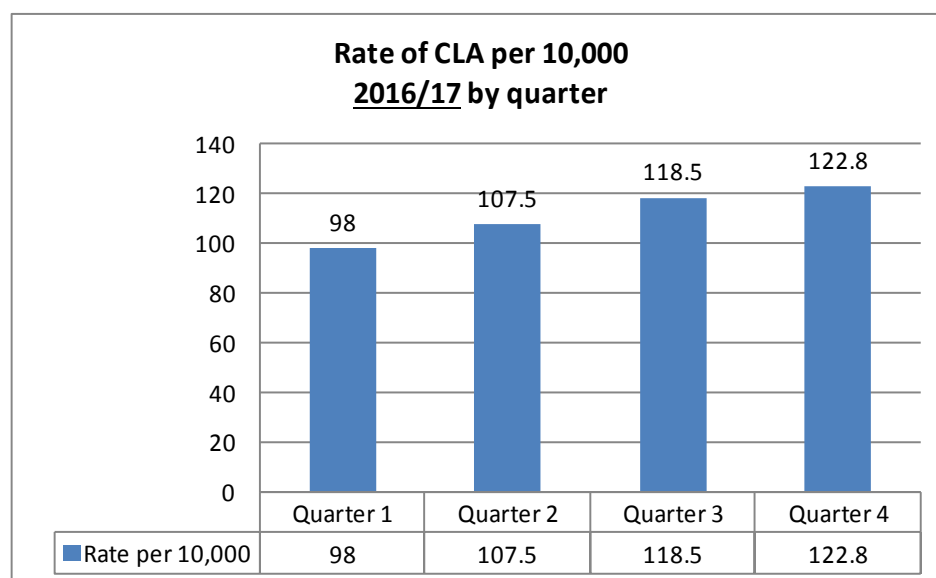
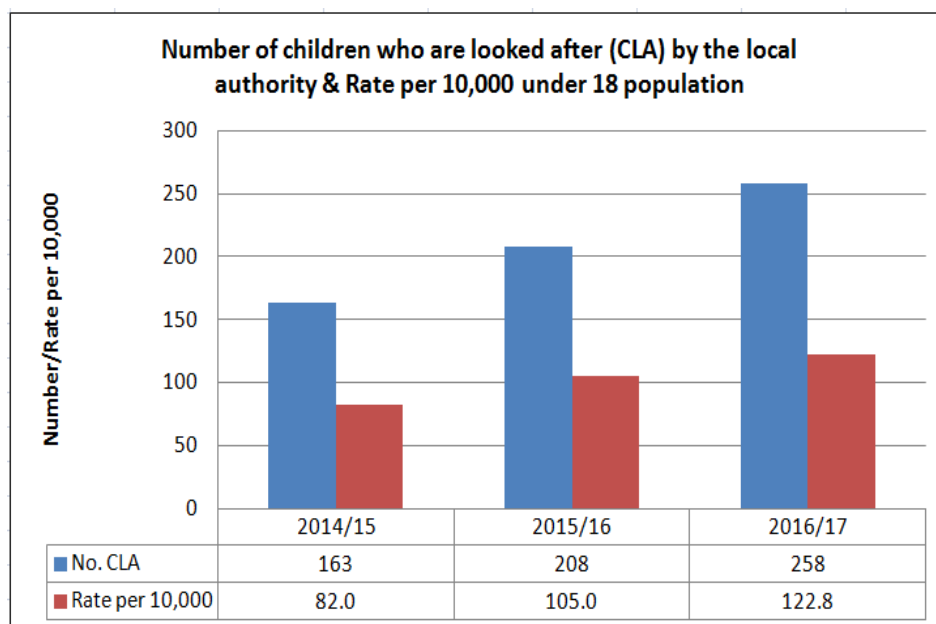
- 74.2% stepped down to child in need
- 24.2% became looked after
- 1.6% moved out of the area

8.12 The percentage of children who became subject to a CP Plan for a second or subsequent time, regardless how long ago the first plan ceased is 12.2% for 2016/17. This shows a decrease from 2014/15 and 2015/16 which is pleasing to note as this is an important indicator to understand the effectiveness of interventions within the Child Protection Plan.



## 9. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- 9.1 The number of looked after children (LAC), including rate per 10,000, aged under 18 over has increased significantly over the last three years as demonstrated by the two tables below:



- 9.2 This increase in the number of looked after children reflects the greater demand for assessments set out earlier in this report, attributable to an emerging increase in the level of need and vulnerabilities within families in Hartlepool. A review of the children becoming looked after between Feb 2015 and Nov 2016 indicates that the decisions made to bring children into care were appropriate. An audit was carried out within the development of A Better Childhood in 2015 and this indicated that there were approximately 25% of the cases where it may not have been necessary for a child to come into care if agencies had responded differently in the child's early life. It is felt

that this is still the case and the ongoing implementation of A Better Childhood continues to be focus for all agencies to identify and respond to need earlier.

- 9.3 In order to better understand the significant increase in the number of children looked after, a review has been undertaken of those children that became looked after between Feb 2015 and November 2016 to identify any drivers or trends contributing to this increase. The total cohort of this review was 181 children. The review found that 61 of the children who became looked after were part of a large sibling group coming from 13 families as shown below:

Number of children in family	Number of families
Four children	8
Five children	3
Six children	1
Seven children	0
Eight children	1

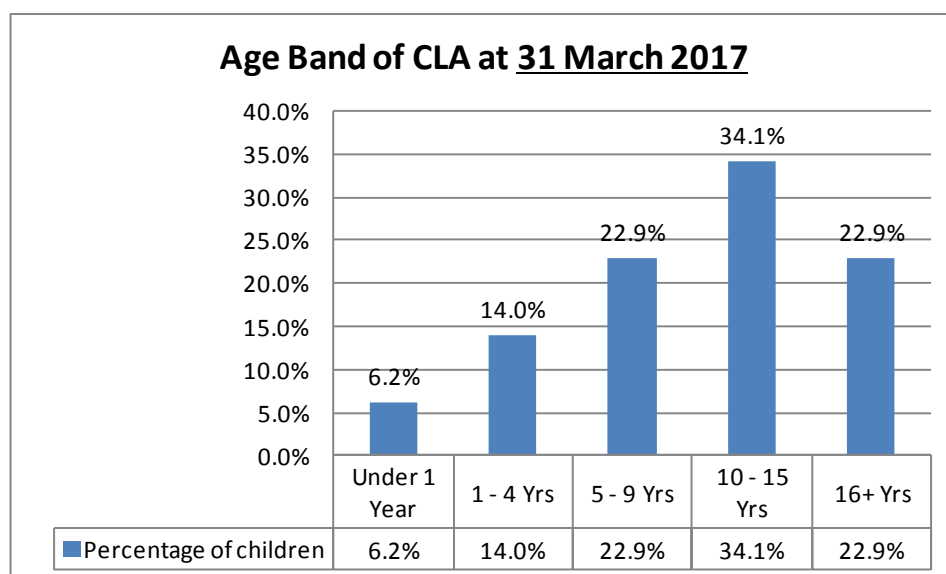
It has been apparent over the last few years that there are a number of families in Hartlepool with four or more children. For some families where the number of children increases vulnerability in the parents' capacity to cope with and meet the differing needs of their children, the local authority has provided high levels of support and intensive packages of intervention to prevent family breakdown; these families frequently fall within the troubled families cohort. Despite the level of support provided, some families have been unable to sustain the changes achieved during periods of intensive support resulting in continued high levels of vulnerability for the children necessitating their admission to care. Once in care, these children have made significant progress in all aspects of their health and development. These challenges are being responded to through the Better Childhood strategy.

- 9.4 The review of children becoming looked after also considered the precipitating incident or concern leading to the child becoming looked after and identified the six main reasons included:

Neglectful parenting (build up of concerns) - majority of these children became looked after at the point of a legal order being made	34
Parental issues resulting in a precipitating event e.g. domestic violence incident	28
Non Accidental Injury/ Assault	23
Alcohol/ substance misuse	21
Parents unable to manage behaviour/ breakdown in relationship	17
Mental Health (parental)	14

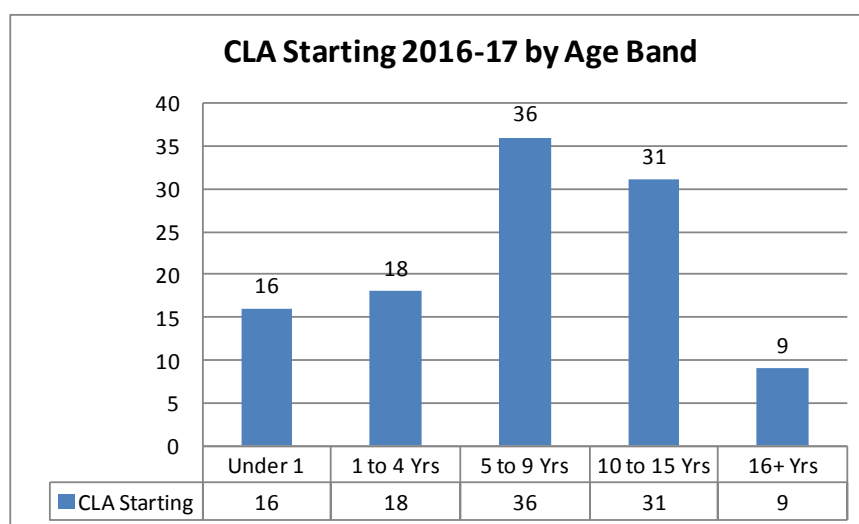
- 9.5 Further analysis of the information showed:

- The percentage of children on a child protection plan prior to becoming looked after was 61% therefore 39% of children who became looked after in this time period were not subject to a child protection plan, of those, 47% were aged 11 years and over upon becoming looked after. This needs further exploration to understand the support and intervention offered to adolescents and the effectiveness of this. A large proportion of these cases show a breakdown in the relationship between the child and his/her parents which highlights the need for further work to promote healthy relationships.
  - The number of children who had support via Early Help at some point before coming into care is 41%
  - There were 11 children out of 181 (6%) who had no previous involvements with children's services.
  - There were 13 children who became looked after in the review period whose parents had previous children removed from their care, which equates to 7% of the whole cohort.
  - 75 children (41%) had significant historical involvement with local authority services, this included long periods of time in receipt of child in need support and a number of step up/step down episodes between early help and social care. This has highlighted a need to understand the effectiveness of the early help and child in need interventions. This is being addressed through the implementation of Signs of Safety and Healthy Relationships programme.
- 9.6 The deep dive case analysis shows that the precipitating incident for children becoming looked after mirrors the factors identified within assessment and reinforces the priorities of the Better Childhood in Hartlepool strategy. It has been further identified that work is needed to understand the impact of early help and whether families that access these services are effectively supported to prevent them from requiring a statutory social care service.
- 9.7 A breakdown of the age profile of the current children looked after cohort at end of quarter 4 was:



- 9.8 The above the graph shows the ages of children who were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, however this includes long term looked after children so doesn't explain the story for the ages of children that became looked after within the last year.

110 children became Looked After during 2016/17 with 40 of them being 10 years and above. This is a large proportion of the total cohort and mirrors the findings from the review as set out in 9.5 which reinforces the need to promote healthy relationships within families (graph below shows age breakdown)



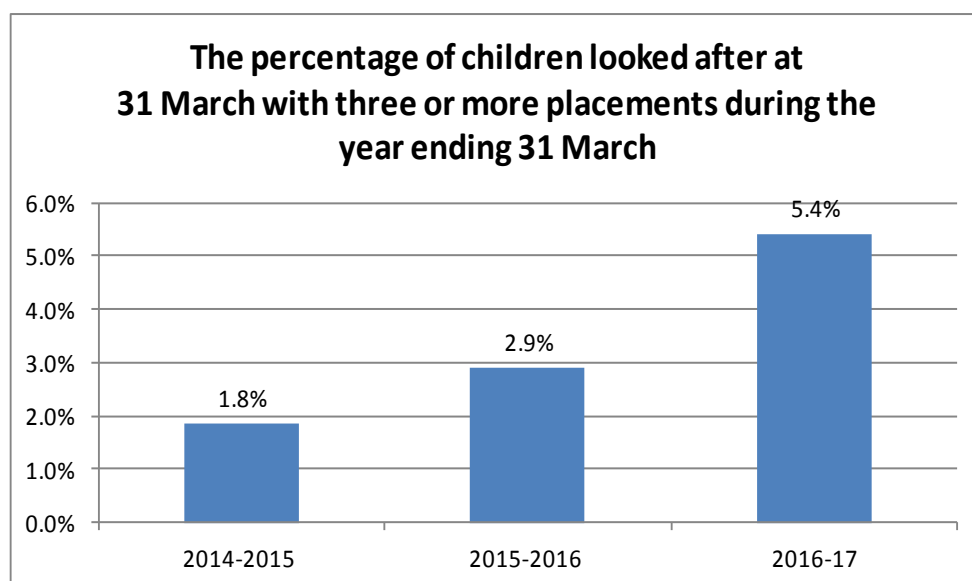
- 9.9 During the 2016/17 reporting period 82 children/ young people ceased to be looked after. The reasons for ceasing were as follows:

CLA End Reason (2016/17)	Number of children	Percentage of children
SGO	14	17.1%
Adoption	12	14.6%
Returned Home to Parents, Relative or other person	32	39.0%
Child Arrangements Order	11	13.4%
Other	13	15.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

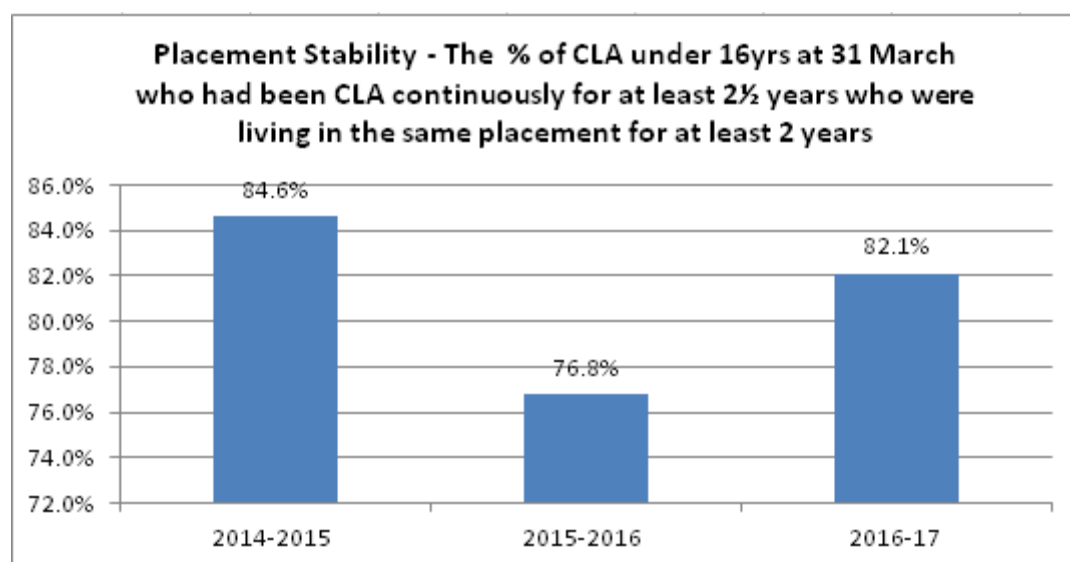
(\*Other can include: Independent arrangements with formalised support, transfer to Adult Social Services, sentenced to custody, child moved abroad(including deportation) or any other reason.)

- 9.10 It is critical for children who become looked after that they have safe and stable placements which support all other aspects of their health and development. It is therefore very important for all workers to work towards a permanent plan for these children as quickly as possible.
- 9.11 The indicators that measure the stability of placements are set out below. The number of children who have had three or more placements within a 12 month period has increased from the 2015/16 rate and is deterioration in performance. For 2016/17, the actual number of children with 3 or more placements during the year was 14, compared to 6 children in 2015/16. Further working is being undertaken to understand the reasons for placement changes to see what action can be taken to improve performance in line with previous rates. It may be that the significant increase in the number of children looked after has impacted upon this performance as the capacity of social workers within the teams that support children in care and foster carers has been stretched.
- 9.12 It is however pleasing to note that the long term stability indicator measuring the percentage of children who have been in same placement for more than two years has improved on the 2015/16 performance. In 2016/17, there were 67 children looked after for at least two and a half years of whom, 55 had been living in the same placement for at least two years. In the previous year, out of 69 children 53 were in the same placement for two or more years. Placement stability continues to be a high priority for the service and performance against these two indicators will be closely monitored in 2017/18 with action taken to address any emerging issues that impact upon placement stability.





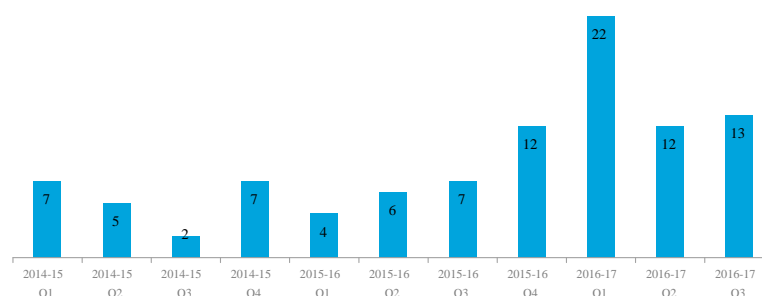
**(Note: 2016-17 data is not yet validated)**



**(Note: 2016-17 data is not yet validated,** Placement Stability (82.1%) due to the time that detailed checks take, this figure is likely to be higher in statutory return outturn, as it does not at present account for those children placed for Adoption who have not actually moved, but their placement type has changed)

## 10. CARE PROCEEDINGS

- 10.1 The number of care proceedings issued in the last 12 months have significantly increased compared to the numbers in previous years as the table below shows. There were 62 care applications (s31 Children Act 1989) made between April 2016 and March 2017. This represents a 114% increase from the previous year (33 cases).



- 10.2 Arrangements are in place to track the number of care applications each quarter to understand if this trend continues in 2017/18. There were a number of large sibling groups within the data for 2016/17 which may account for some of the increase. It needs to be noted that the work required for proceedings is significant for both the social care and legal services and the increase in the number of proceedings has placed significant pressure on the teams. In order to respond to this increased pressure on the teams five Assistant Team Manager posts have been created. These posts will provide more experience within the Safeguarding and Support Teams to support this increase in complexity of cases.

## 11. WORKFORCE

- 11.1 The council service that support children and families within early help and children's social is made up of:
- Four Early Help Integrated Locality Teams;
  - A multi agency Children's Hub consisting of Children's Hub Officers and Social Workers as well as officers from partner agencies;
  - Five Safeguarding and Support (SAS) Social Work Teams which are based at Bevan House;
  - An Intensive Response Team and Contact Team that supports families alongside the social workers to carry out specific interventions and contact;
  - The SEND team is an integrated team of social workers and SEN officers. It supports children with disabilities to keep them safe and develop Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP);
  - The Safeguarding and Review Unit which is made up of Independent Reviewing Officers who chair child protection conferences and Looked After Children Reviews;
  - The Through Care Social Work Team made up of two teams supporting children and young people in and leaving care.
  - Fostering and Adoption teams to recruit and support adopters and foster carers and to support social workers to find appropriate placements for children.
- 11.2 It is difficult to set out an average caseload for the social work teams as newly qualified social workers require a protected caseload. Currently caseloads for full time staff range from 24 to 34 for the most experienced

staff. This excludes the newly qualified social workers who have lower caseloads. The higher caseloads are currently held by 2/3 staff and these are being reviewed with managers and workers to ensure that the caseload can be reduced and manageable for staff. The average caseload for newly qualified social workers is 18, these workers are now approaching the end of their Assessed and Supported Year in practice and their caseloads are gradually being increased as they become more experienced. It needs to be noted that the percentage of newly qualified social workers within the safeguarding and support teams is 47%. This is placing significant pressure on the more experienced members of the team as they have to carry out all the functions associated with child protection and care proceedings work. This then has an impact social worker retention rates. As previously noted the creation of Assistant Team Managers within each of the Safeguarding and Support Teams will offer increased experience and capacity within the teams.

- 11.3 Work has taken place with social workers to understand how we can retain our best most experienced staff and provide a workforce offer that encourages them to stay with the Council and provides professional development opportunities. As a result of this work, a restructure has taken place to create Assistant Team Manager posts within the safeguarding and support teams which increases the social work capacity by an additional four social workers which will increase the capacity of the social workers and reduce the higher caseloads. It is also anticipated that this will add further experienced workers to the teams to manage the increase in demand.

## **12. AUDIT ACTIVITY**

- 12.1 The information above sets out the data for safeguarding activity providing an overview of performance. However performance data only provides a window on quantitative activity therefore it is important to review practice through audit activity and service user feedback. In order to capture an understanding of practice, Heads of Service and managers have previously undertaken monthly audits. The monthly audits have been useful but managers felt that these were not always sufficiently prioritised therefore it was decided to pilot a practice week in February. This gave the management team and managers the opportunity to focus solely on practice audit for a full week. The pilot included case file audits, service user feedback and observed practice within the Safeguarding and Assessment (SAS) teams. In May 2017 a further practice week was undertaken focusing on Looked After Children and SEND. The information from this practice week is currently being collated.
- 12.2 During practice week, case audits and observations were completed by the Director, Assistant Director, Heads of Service and Team Managers reviewing practice alongside the allocated social worker. A total of 57 cases were audited by nine auditors. There were observations of social work interaction with other relevant professionals as well as the family and young people (where achievable). The practice week model allows for any

concerns about individual practice to be followed up with team managers. Similarly, comments about good practice are passed on to team managers and examples of excellent practice shared across the teams.

- 12.3 There is a dual purpose to the practice week, the intention being both to assure the quality of work and also to influence front line practice by facilitating reflection on case direction, work undertaken and case recording. Comments and feedback have been provided to practitioners on an individual basis (copied to team managers) to encourage learning.
- 12.4 The overall findings from this pilot practice week which included case file audits with the social worker, observations of visits and meetings and service user feedback were:

#### 12.4.1 CASE FILE AUDITS:

##### **Strengths:**

- Social workers knew their cases well;
- The quality of assessment was good;
- There was evidence of good rapport, trust and openness between the worker and child/family;
- There was evidence of significant change for some families;
- Social workers felt supported in their work;
- There had been some good work with children and a range of tools used to gain insight in to the child's wishes;

##### **Areas for development:**

- The language in plans can make them inaccessible to families;
- There is not always evidence of analysis and links to actions;
- There was considerable evidence regarding parents' wishes and actions and in some cases, it was clear how this linked to decision-making. However, the direct work with the child was not always evidenced and demonstrating how it informs planning and decision-making;
- There were concerns around the lack of insight of parents, their motivation to engage and patterns/circles of behaviours. There was limited evidence of social workers ability to deal with these presenting issues;
- Plans can be generic and reasons for direct work with children is not always clear.

#### 12.4.2 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON MULTI AGENCY MEETINGS

- Social workers and Independent Chairs (at relevant meetings) communicated well and were clear;
- Social workers were observed advocating for their families whilst being honest about risks and concerns;
- Where present, the Independent Chair treated family members respectfully and made sure they were involved in the process and were given time to have their say;

- Generally meetings were observed as being child focused. However, a number of auditors did note that the meeting did become very parent focused;
- There was some evidence of social workers emphasising positives but other agencies tending to be deficit focused;
- The number of reports tabled at meetings was identified by auditors and questions raised as to the ability for some parents to be able to digest and understand reports generally and most specifically in that setting.

#### 12.4.3 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON HOME VISITS

- Social workers were open and honest and pursued issues appropriately;
- Social workers provided positive praise when things were going well;
- Social workers remained child focused. Auditors talked about social workers getting down on their knees to children, playing with them, holding babies and watching the child and their interaction with the carer;
- There was evidence of good relationships between social workers and children and parents/foster carers;
- Social workers were able to reflect on the visits with auditors and were clear on how the visit fitted in with future work.

#### 12.4.4 SERVICE USER FEEDBACK

There was a mix of comments from people interviewed but the majority of the negative comments were aimed more at previous experiences of social workers, for example:

*“We have had lots of experience with social workers and they haven’t all been as reliable as [current social worker]”*

There were some excellent examples of where the social worker has obviously developed good relationships with the family:

*“Mother believed she was supportive to her. Mother believes she can tell social worker anything and will not be judged and is supportive. Mother thinks that children would say she is the best social worker they have ever had.”*

Work is ongoing to embed service user feedback within all work and future practice weeks. Although there is evidence of children’s wishes and views within cases the voice of children is not as evident within audit processes therefore this will be continued to be reviewed as the practice week process is refined.

### 13. COMPLAINTS

- 13.1 There were a total of nineteen children’s social care complaints received within 2016/17.

- 13.2 A total of fifteen complaints were investigated. Of the fifteen investigations thirteen have been concluded and two remain ongoing. Twelve of the complaints were resolved at Stage 1 with two progressing to Stage 2. One of these Stage 2 investigations has been concluded and the other one is ongoing. A further complaint was not considered at Stage 1 however it was agreed to be investigated at Stage 2 and is ongoing.
- 13.3 Four complaints have not been investigated due to: One of them was withdrawn by the complainant, two complainants, despite being contacted on numerous occasions to discuss their complaints failed to engage with the process and one complaint was significantly out of statutory timescale.
- 13.4 In addition to the 15 complaints investigated by the Council, the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) decided to use their discretionary power to investigate the one complaint which the Council refused to accept outside of statutory time limits. The outcome of the LGO's investigation was: There was no evidence of fault on the part of the Council. The complaint was 'not upheld'

## 14. REFLECTIONS

- 14.1 The information provided within this report indicates an increase in demand for social care services. Interestingly the number of early help episodes has decreased from the year before yet demand for social care support is increasing significantly. This is currently being reviewed within the Children's Strategic Partnership sub groups to understand the reasons for this shift. The focus of A Better Childhood is to increase the access to and engagement in early help support and yet this is not being seen in the information detailed above. Work is planned with schools over this next term and into the new school year from September 2017 to develop locality partnerships to understand the issues and needs in communities and to collectively address these issues on a collaborative locality model.
- 14.2 There has been a significant increase in the needs of families which has led to an increase in demand for social care services and children becoming looked after. The reasons for this continue to be in relation to substance misuse/ domestic violence/ parental mental health and a breakdown in relationships within families. These areas are being reviewed by Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board and will need continued scrutiny.
- 14.3 In order to address the issues and challenges set out in this report the following actions are being implemented:
- Development of "A Better Childhood Locality Partnerships" to ensure that all partners, particularly schools and local community organisations are involved in the development and design of services and to ensure a collective approach to working with our families;
  - A review of the effectiveness of Early Help to understand its impact on the demand for social care services;

- Implement Healthy Relationships approach across all services to support improved family relationships;
- Introduction of Signs of Safety Framework across Local Authority Children's Services to ensure that families understand concerns and are enabled and empowered to positively change;
- Review of how substance misuse services/ domestic violence services and mental health services are supporting families to positively change;
- Carry out reviews of children with disabilities support and stability of placements to identify if there are any specific areas of practice that need further development;
- To implement practice week across all Children's Services on a tri annual basis and to further embed children's and young people's voice within the process.

## **15. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 The information within this report sets out how the council is responding to its statutory duty to safeguard children.

## **16. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 16.1 There are specific financial considerations within this report however it needs noting that the demand for children's social care has increased significantly. There has been a 40% increase in referrals (from 2015/16 to 2016/17) and a 24% increase in the number of looked after children. This needs to be closely monitored to understand if the current resource can meet this demand.

## **17. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 17.1 There are no legal considerations within this report.

## **18. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 18.1 Children's Services continues to support families in need and are always mindful of families in poverty to ensure they receive the right support at the right time.

## **19. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 19.1 Children's Services supports all children and families that need help and protection and always consider equality and diversity issues to ensure that services are fully accessible.

## **20. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 20.1 There are no specific staff considerations within this report. However it needs noting that children's social care teams are under increasing pressure with a 40% increase in referrals (from 2015/16 to 2016/17) and a 24% increase in the number of looked after children (from 2015/16 to 2016/17). This is being monitored to understand the affect of this increased demand on the teams.

## **21. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 21.1 There are no asset management implications.

## **22. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 22.1 For members to note this report to ensure they are fully aware of the safeguarding activity across the council.

## **23. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 23.1 It is important that members of the committee are aware and understand the demands for the service to ensure that the council is meeting its statutory duties.

## **24. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

HM Government Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015

## **25. CONTACT OFFICER**

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