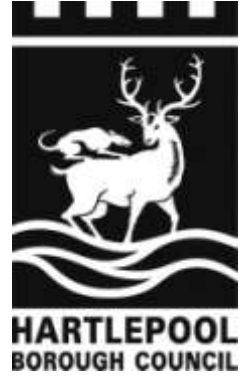


# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

## AGENDA



**Tuesday 16 January 2018**

**at 4.30pm**

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

**MEMBERS:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Clark, Harrison, James, Lauderdale, Moore, Morris, 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), Alan Chapman (Special).

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 12 December 2017 (*previously circulated and published*).

**4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS**

No items.

**5. KEY DECISIONS**

- 5.1 Dedicated Schools Grant – Schools Formula 2018/19 – *Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*



- 5.2 Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Formula 2018/19 – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

**6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 6.1 School Attendance Code of Conduct Update – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

**7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Adoption Service Six Month Update April 2017- September 2017 – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.2 Fostering Service Interim Report 1 July 2017 – 31 September 2017 – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.3 Centre for Excellence in Creative Arts (formerly Northern Lights Academy) Update – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.4 Safeguarding Committee Report Six Monthly Update – *Director of Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

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

**FOR INFORMATION**

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 20 February at 4.30pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director for Children's & Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – SCHOOLS FORMULA 2018/19

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

- 1.1 This report is for key decisions – test (i) and (ii) applies.
- 1.2 The forward plan reference is **CAS 071/17**.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide an indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation in relation to the Schools Block Funding for 2018/19 and propose the local school formula for 2018/19.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) announced the schools and high needs funding arrangements for 2018 to 2019, confirming an additional £1.3billion over the next two years for schools and high needs to support the transition to the new formula.
- 3.2 Under the proposed arrangements, the guidance states “all schools will be allocated an increase of at least 0.5% per pupil in 2018/19 and at least 1% per pupil by 2019/20 compared to their 2017/18 baselines”.
- 3.3 Although it had been the Government's intention to set schools budgets on the basis of a single national funding formula (NFF) in 2018/19 and 2019/20, local authorities still have the option to determine final funding allocations through a local formula for these two financial years. This is known as a 'soft' formula.
- 3.4 The Government has protected school funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20, but has not indicated if there is any protection beyond this period. This would mean that

Hartlepool schools may lose total funding of £1.5m in 2020/21, which would be a reduction in the overall schools budget of 2.3%.

- 3.5 At the Council meeting on the 14 December members approved the proposal: *“That the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Education requesting the Government, as a matter of urgency, confirms that transitional arrangements for implementing the national Schools Funding Formula will continue in 2020/21 and beyond to avoid Hartlepool facing a financial cliff edge and a reduction in the overall schools budget of 2.3%.”*
- 3.6 Final funding allocations to each authority will be made in late December 2017, in line with the latest pupil data.
- 3.7 As part of the transition to a NFF from 2018/19 the ESFA has established a Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) to fund local authorities for the statutory duties and other commitments they hold for maintained and academy schools.
- 3.8 Funding of £0.915m has been transferred from the Schools Block for these services. Schools Forum are required to agree annually each element of this spend. At a meeting of schools Forum on 17 November 2017 Schools Forum agreed to fund £0.600m and the balance of £0.315m to be transferred to the Schools block for 2018/19. Current regulations indicate that the Government have not decided what will happen to this uncommitted funding in future years. The table below outlines the agreed funding:

<b>Historic Commitments</b>	<b>Approved £m</b>
Space to Learn	0.042
Licenses	0.077
Termination of Employment costs	0.031
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.150</b>
<b>Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	<b>£m</b>
Retained Duties	0.216
Admissions	0.132
Copyright licenses	0.067
Servicing Schools Forum	0.035
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.450</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0.600</b>

#### 4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Details of the NFF were presented at a meeting of all headteachers on 13th October 2017. A copy of the slides presented are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 Further discussions were held at the headteachers update meeting at the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

- 4.3 Headteachers were reminded that the ESFA published baselines are illustrative only. These figures will be subject to pupil number changes, pupil characteristic changes and National Non Domestic Rate (NNDR) variations.
- 4.4 In addition, any agreed movement between blocks will affect individual school budgets. With agreement from the Schools Forum the Council has applied to the Secretary of State to transfer £0.550m from the Schools Block to the High Needs block to support the funding pressures.
- 4.5 Following consultation with all Schools, Schools Forum agreed to adopt the formula factors and values of the NFF as far as possible, subject to adjustments relating to the transfer of funding between blocks and other technical adjustments. The proposed formula outlined in this report reflects their recommendation.

## 5. 2018/19 SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING

- 5.1 As part of the 2018/19 allocation the ESFA have re-baselined the funding allocation for 2017/18 and provided an indicative allocation for 2018/19. The Block funding will be recalculated using the October 2017 census and the final allocation is due from the ESFA in late December.

Baseline Funding	2018/19 Indicative Funding (£)
2017/18 Schools Block	61,898,525
Technical movement of the ARP place funding	422,904
Revised 2017/18 Schools Block	62,321,429
<b>Indicative Schools Block 2018/19</b>	<b>62,723,207</b>
<b>Percentage increase in funding</b>	<b>+0.64%</b>

- 5.2 The Government funding arrangements only provide an increase for 2018/19 of at least 0.5% and a total increase for 2018/19 and 2019/20 of at least 1%, Hartlepool will gain 0.64% in 2018/19. This minimal increase of 0.5% affects 29 out of the 35 mainstream schools, the remaining six schools will gain funding of between 0.95% and 2.9%.
- 5.3 As outlined in para 4.4, and subject to approval from the Secretary of State, a transfer of £0.550m will be deducted from the baseline funding. The remaining balance of £0.315m (see para 3.8) will be transferred from the CSSB to the Schools Block. This net deduction will be adjusted in the formula via the Average Weighted Pupil Unit funding (AWPU).
- 5.4 The transition to the NFF sees a number of changes to the formula characteristics and values. Using the NFF values school budgets are protected compared to their 2017/18 baselines, however, this protection does not extend to transfers between blocks and one off adjustments. The factor values are detailed in **Appendix 2** and the key changes are outlined below. The percentage indicates the proportion of funding allocated to Hartlepool for each factor:

5.5 Basic Entitlement (AWPU) – 71%

The NFF assigns a single rate for primary schools £2,747, a reduction of £169 per pupil and establishes rates for KS3 £3,863 and KS4 £4,386, a reduction of £471 KS3 and an increase of £51 for KS4 pupils.

5.6 Deprivation – 14.5%

The NFF adopts the use of three indicators relating to the allocation of deprivation funding, Free School Meals (FSM), Free School Meal 6 (FSM6) and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), ranges A-F, A, being the most deprived. Deprivation funding in Hartlepool will rise under the new formula, even though the national average funding is estimated to be 9%.

5.7 Prior Attainment – 7%

The prior attainment factors acts as a proxy for low level, high incidence, special educational needs. Funding allocated through the local formula equates to £1.3m under the NFF the weighting of this factor has increased from 2.27% to 7.06%, passporting an estimated £2.9m to schools.

5.8 Lumpsum – 6%

The lumpsum will reduce from £0.175m to £0.110m, this equates to a reduction in funding of £2.275m.

## 5.9 Factors removed from the NFF are;

- pupil mobility which the Council previously used in the local formula. this factor passported £0.030m to eligible schools who received pupils outside of the October census count
- looked after children (LAC) schools were allocated funding of £777 for each eligible pupil in the 2017/18 formula
- The ESFA have announced that LAC Pupil Premium will increase by £400 to £2,300 from 2018/19.

## 5.10 Until the Government impose the NFF, school budgets will be protected, subject to pupil number changes and other adjustments as described above. If the NFF was implemented in 2018/19 Hartlepool schools would be subject to a 2.3% reduction in funding. School budgets will be protected for 2018/19 and 2019/20 from the real impact of the NFF.

**6. RISK IMPLICATIONS**6.1 If a revised funding formula is not approved the LA may not meet its statutory requirement to notify the ESFA of the individual school budgets by 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

## **7. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 As outlined in this report although school funding is protected over the next two financial years as schools will receive at least a 1% increase in funding, there is uncertainty regarding this protection if the Government impose the hard formula from 2020/21. The Council is writing to the Secretary of State to seek clarification of funding from 2020/21.

## **8. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The local authority is required to consult all schools on annual changes to their formula. Schools Forum must also be consulted and agree the Central Services Schools Block funding.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The consultation considerations are detailed in section 4.

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

- 10.1 There are no specific child and family poverty considerations.

## **11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no specific equality and diversity considerations.

## **12. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no specific considerations.

## **13. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 13.1 There are no asset management considerations.

## **14. CONCLUSIONS**

- 14.1 The Government funding arrangements only provide an increase for 2018/19 of at least 0.5% and a total increase for 2018/19 and 2019/20 of at least 1%. Hartlepool will gain 0.64% in 2018/19. This minimal increase of 0.5% affects 29 out of the 35 mainstream schools; the remaining six schools will gain funding of between 0.95% and 2.9%.

- 14.2 Following consultation, Schools Forum recommended the adoption of the NFF from 2018/19. The 2018/19 formula will include minimum funding of +0.5% for all schools, compared to the 2017/18 baseline. Funding is subject to variations in pupil numbers and the transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block and adjustments relating to NNDR.

**15. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a) note the contents of this report and the recommendation from Schools Forum
- b) note the agreement by Schools Forum to centrally retain funding of £0.600m, as detailed in paragraph 3.8
- c) approve the funding formula for 2018/19 as detailed in section 5 of the report.

**16. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 16.1 It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to consult and agree the Schools Formula.

**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Report of the Children's Services 14 November 2017 – 6.5 Transfer of Schools Budget.

**18. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Mark Patton  
Assistant Director: Education  
Children's & Joint Commissioning Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 523 736  
Email: [mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk)



# NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA

# Changes for 2018

- New NFF - additional investment of £1.3bn
- LAC provided through pupil premium plus of £2,300 which means a loss of £377pp
- Option to have 'soft' formulae for 2018/19 and 2019/20
- Schools Block ring-fenced but can move by up to 0.5% - subject to agreement of Schools Forum
- No limits on other block transfers – subject to consultation, further clarification is being sought
- Change to funding of High Needs places

# Hartlepool's Baseline

	£
2017/18 Schools Block	61,898,525
Technical movement of the ARP place funding	422,904
Revised 2017/18 Schools Block	62,321,429
<b>Indicative Schools Block</b>	
£4,248 * 8161 plus £5,372 * 5122	62,183,312
Growth, Premises & Mobility	539,153
Roundings	742
ESFA - Sept 2017	62,723,207
Percentage Increase	0.64%

Calculated by aggregating individual schools allocations

# Schools Block

- At least a 0.5% per pupil increase in 2018/19 and at least 1% per pupil increase by 2019/20 to the 2017/18 baseline
- Funding at LA level for Premises and Mobility, no Growth Funding
- New factor – transitional amount per pupil Primary - £3,300 and Secondary - £ £4,600
- MFG will continue but flexibility to set between 0% and minus 1.5% per pupil – higher level of protection
- Can transfer up to 0.5% with Schools Forum agreement

# Schools Block

- Above limit / no Schools Forum agreement – SoS approval
- School budget share calculated on roll including ARP
- Funding moved between HNB and Schools Block to reflect change
- Place funding £6,000 – pupil on October Census
- Place Funding £10,000 – vacant places

# Central School Services Block

- Funds ongoing responsibilities and historic commitments
- Line by line agreement required by Schools Forum
- Historic Commitments
  - Space to learn
  - Licences
  - Vulnerable Pupils
  - School Meals
- Ongoing Commitments
  - Admissions
  - Pension
  - Schools Forum
  - Copyright Licences
- Includes Retained ESG

# Hard or Soft Formula

- Do we want a Soft formula or a Hard formula i.e. NFF?

# Basic Entitlement

## Compulsory Factor

- Primary age pupils at least £2,000
- Can be different rates for KS3 and KS4, with a minimum of £3,000 for each

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>KS3</b>	<b>KS4</b>
Hartlepool	£2,916.99	£4,334.64	£4,334.64
NFF	£2,747.00	£3,863.00	£4,386.00



# Deprivation

## Compulsory factor

Hartlepool	
Primary	Secondary
£1,161.62	£1,742.42

NFF		
Indicator	Primary	Secondary
FSM6	£540.00	£785.00
FSM	£440.00	£440.00
IDACI A	£575.00	£810.00
IDACI B	£420.00	£600.00
IDACI C	£390.00	£560.00
IDACI D	£360.00	£515.00
IDACI E	£240.00	£390.00
IDACI F	£200.00	£290.00

# Prior Attainment

- Funding for pupils not achieving expected level in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile on entry to Primary School
- Funding for pupils not achieving expected level at KS2

	Primary	Secondary
Hartlepool	£399.02	£366.42
NFF	£1,050.00	£1,550.00

# EAL

- Pupils identified on October census with a first language other than English

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Hartlepool	£518.00	£518.00
NFF	£515.00	£1,385.00

# Lump Sum

- Contribution to the costs which do not vary with pupil numbers

	£
<b>Hartlepool</b>	175,000
<b>NFF</b>	110,000

# Timescale & Decisions

- Schools Forum – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – discuss modelling proposals
- Schools Forum – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 – agree Central Schools Block, de-delegation including ESG, discuss modelling
- Further Forum meetings as required – agree formula by 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (Committee Paper Deadline)
- Children's Services Committee 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- Submission to EFA 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018

# Decisions

- **Do we want a hard or soft Formula?**
- **If Soft option**
  - Roll forward of current Formula
  - Changes to current formula i.e. lump sum, KS3 & KS4
- **Do you want to transfer 7/12ths of S2L to Schools Block or High Needs Block? (subject to confirmation)**

**NFF FORMULA CHARACTERISTICS 2018/19**

Funding factor	Narrative	Description	HBC local Formula 2017/18		NFF 2018/19	
			Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>1. Basic entitlement</b>	This factor assigns funding on the basis of individual pupils, with the number of pupils for each school or academy based on the October pupil census.		£2,917	-	£2,747	
		<b>KS3</b>	-	£4,335	-	£3,863
		<b>KS4</b>	-	£4,335	-	£4,386
<b>2. Deprivation</b>	Local authorities can use free school meals (FSM), the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI), or both to calculate the deprivation factor. measure eligibility for current FSM using the previous October census, and Ever6 FSM (pupils entitled to free meals at any time in the last 6 years) from the previous January census local authorities using FSM to calculate deprivation can choose to use either current FSM, Ever6 FSM, or both the IDACI measure uses 6 bands, and different values can be attached to each band; different unit values can be used for primary and secondary within each band	<b>FSM6</b>	£1,162	£1,742	£540	£785
		<b>FSM</b>	-	-	£440	£440
		<b>IDACI A</b>	-	-	£575	£810
		<b>IDACI B</b>	-	-	£420	£600
		<b>IDACI C</b>	-	-	£390	£560
		<b>IDACI D</b>	-	-	£360	£515
		<b>IDACI E</b>	-	-	£240	£390
		<b>IDACI F</b>	-	-	£200	£290
<b>3. Prior attainment</b>	The prior attainment factor acts as a proxy indicator for low level, high incidence, special educational needs.		£399	£366	£1,050	£1,550

## 5.1 Appendix 2

<b>4. Looked-after children (LAC)</b>	Local authorities can apply a single unit value for any child who has been looked after for one day or more, as recorded on the LA SSDA903 return at 31 March 2017. Pupil Premium has increased by £400 in 2018/19 to £2,300		<b>£777</b>	<b>£777</b>	<b>Removed</b>	<b>Removed</b>
<b>5. English as an additional language (EAL)</b>	Pupils identified in the October census with a first language other than English may attract funding for up to three years after they enter the statutory school system.		<b>£518</b>	<b>£518</b>	<b>£515</b>	<b>£1,385</b>
<b>6. Pupil mobility</b>	This measure counts pupils who entered a school during the last three academic years, but did not start in August or September (or January for reception pupils).		<b>£642</b>	<b>£642</b>	<b>Removed</b>	<b>Removed</b>
<b>7. Sparsity</b>	Schools that are eligible for sparsity funding must meet two criteria:		<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>8. Lump sum</b>	Local authorities can set a flat lump sum for all phases, or differentiate the sums for primary and secondary.		<b>£175,000</b>	<b>£175,000</b>	<b>£110,000</b>	<b>£110,000</b>
<b>14. Minimum level of per pupil funding for secondary schools</b>	The purpose of this factor is to allow local authorities to provide amounts up to the minimum per pupil funding levels for primary and secondary schools.	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>1:1.26 ratio between Sectors</b>		<b>£3,300</b>	<b>£4,600</b>
	The formula will provide local authorities with per-pupil funding of at least £3,500 for primary schools and £4,800 for secondary schools with pupils in years 10 and 11 in 2019 to 2020	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>Under the NFF the ratio will be calculated at 1:1.29</b>		<b>£3,500</b>	<b>£4,800</b>



# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – EARLY YEARS  
FORMULA 2018/19

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

- 1.1 This report is for key decisions – test (i) and (ii) applies.
- 1.2 The forward plan reference is **CAS 071/17**.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide an indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation in relation to the Early Years Funding for 2018/19 and propose the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) for 2018/19.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since its introduction in April 2017, the EYNFF has set the hourly funding rates that each local authority is paid to deliver the universal and additional entitlements for three- and four-year olds.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to consult providers on annual changes to local early years funding formulas, although the final decision rests with the local authority. The consultation period closed on 30 November 2017 and the outcome was discussed at Schools Forum on 8 December 2017.

#### 4. 2018/19 EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING

- 4.1 The Block funding is calculated based on census dates in January 2017 and January 2018. Therefore, the table below provides indicative funding only, but the hourly/pupil rates will not change.

Early Years Block	Rate	2018/19 Indicative Funding (£)
3/4 Year Old Funding	£4.49 per hour	4,398,413
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£615 per pupil	24,600
Pupil Premium	£0.53 per hour	119,330
Total 3/4 Funding		4,542,343
2 Year Old Funding	£5.20 per pupil	1,390,116
<b>Total Indicative Early Years Block</b>		<b>5,932,459</b>

- 4.2 The proposed local formula has been prepared in accordance with the published Early Years Operational Guide 2018/19. There are two changes to the EYNFF for 2018/19:
- a) the hourly rate received from the Education Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) for 2018/19 has been uncapped and increases to £4.49 per hour (£4.46 per hour 2017/18)
  - b) the pass-through rate paid to providers has increased from 93% to 95%.
- 4.3 The outcome of the changes relating to the three- and four-year old funding is reflected in the tables below:

Proposed three & four year old formula	Hourly Rate (£)	% Allocated	Total Funding (£)
<b>DFE allocation</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,398,413</b>
<b>Allocation of funding for the Formula:</b>			
Base Rate	4.09	91%	4,006,145
Supplements	0.13	2.9%	127,348
Contingency - place funding	0.02	0.5%	20,000
SEN Inclusion Fund	0.03	0.6%	25,000
<b>Pass- through rate to providers</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>4,178,493</b>
<b>Centrally retained funding</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>219,921</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,398,413</b>

#### 4.4 Pass-through rate – 95%

Local authorities are required to passport 95% of funding to providers (referred to as the pass-through rate). The pass-through rate includes the place funding base rate 91%, the funding of supplements 2.9%, contingency 0.5% and an allocation of 0.6% for the SEN inclusion fund. A small contingency fund has been included in the formula to fund any shortfall in funding arising from the implementation of the 30hr per week offer.

4.5 Base rate - 91%

The base rate has been set at £4.09 per hour, an increase of 9p per hour compared to 2017/18. This is as a result of the additional funding from the ESFA of 3p per hour and the additional funding relating to the increase in the required pass-through rate via the reduction in the centrally retained funding of 6p per hour from 97% in 2017/18 to 95% in 2018/19.

4.6 Supplements - 2.9%

Funding allocated for supplements should not equate to more than 10%. Deprivation is the only mandatory supplement. It is proposed to allocate 2.9% £0.127m in the formula for 2018/19 and retain the same supplements and weightings as the 2017/18 formula, the supplements and per hour funding is detailed in the table below.

Ranking	Place Funding £ per hour	Flexibility £ per hour	Quality £ per hour	Deprivation £ per hour
1	4.09	-	0.02	0.02
2	4.09	-	0.01	0.01
3	4.09	0.02	-	-
4	4.09	0.09	-	-

4.7 All Early Years providers will receive at least £4.09 per hour (£4.00 per hour 2017/18) and up to a maximum of £4.22 per hour (£4.13 per hour 2017/18) dependent upon individual providers' eligibility of supplements.

4.8 The SEN Inclusion Fund has been maintained at the 2017/18 level of £0.025m. This fund can be accessed by all providers in accordance with the agreed policy.

4.9 Centrally Retained Funding

In accordance with ESFA guidance, Schools Forum is required to agree the central funding in respect of the Early Years Block. The guidance also requires centrally retained funding not to exceed 5% of the total funding for three and four year olds, £0.220m (£0.309m in 2017/18).

The funding will be used to:

- i. continue to support the costs of existing staff to deliver early years free entitlement, including an Early Years Consultant and Free Nursery Entitlement Officer together with administration support
- ii. contribute to the support costs of specialist SEN services and the development of the SEN inclusion fund. These costs cannot be counted within the pass through rate
- iii. support the implementation of the additional 15 hours for working parents. This includes the purchase and installation of a new IT solution as mandated by DfE
- iv. administration of the DAF funding including advice and support
- v. fund further capacity in the early years team to implement the new early years developments and additional statutory functions placed upon the local authority

- vi. contribute to two year old place funding, where there is a funding pressure between participation and actual funding received based on census returns.
- 4.10 At a meeting of the Schools Forum on 8 December, members approved the recommendation that the local authority retains central funding of £0.220m (5%) in 2018/19.
- 4.11 Other Specific Funding  
The local authority also receives specific funding for eligible three and four year olds relating to the DAF and Pupil Premium; this is passported to eligible providers. The ESFA have maintained the 2017/18 rates per pupil for 2018/19, DAF £615.00 per pupil and pupil premium of £0.53p per hour.
- 4.12 Two Year Old Funding  
The funding for the most disadvantaged two-year-olds is already allocated on a formulaic basis. The rate paid by the ESFA has remained static at a rate of £5.20 per hour for 2018/19. It is proposed that funding is passported directly to providers at a rate of £5.20 per hour.

## 5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The consultation ended on 30 November 2017. The summary of the responses are shown below. The majority of respondents agreed to the proposed formula for 2018/19.

Early Years Consultation 2018/19 - Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	% Agreed
1: Do you agree that the base rate is increased from £4 per hour to £4.09 per hour?	26	0	0	26	100%
2: Do you agree that the mandatory deprivation factor is maintained at 2% of the funding supplements?	24	1	1	26	92%
3: Do you agree that the Flexibility and Quality supplements at their current weightings continue to be included in the local formula?	23	3	0	26	88%
4: Do you agree that the LA allocates £25,000 for the SEN Inclusion Fund?	25	1	0	26	96%
5: Do you agree to the LA retaining 5% £0.220m of the funding	24	1	1	26	92%

**5. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 If a revised funding formula is not approved the LA may not meet the statutory requirement to notify providers with their initial budgets for 2018/19 by 31 March 2018.

**6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 As funding is paid based on two census collection dates of January 2017 and January 2018, the figures provided in the table in paragraph 4.1 are subject to change although the hourly rates should not vary.

**7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The local authority is required to consult providers on annual changes to their formula. Schools Forum must also be consulted and agree the central spend by 28 February 2018.

**8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 All providers have been consulted on the EYNNF for 2018/19 and the results were considered at Schools Forum on 8 December 2017.

**9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no specific child and family poverty considerations.

**10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no specific equality and diversity considerations.

**11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no specific staff considerations.

**12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no asset management considerations.

### **13. CONCLUSIONS**

- 13.1 Local authorities are required to consult providers on annual changes to local early years funding formulas, although the final decision rests with the local authority to agree the EYNFF.
- 13.2. The consultation closed on 30 November 2017 and the outcome was discussed at Schools Forum on 8 December 2017. The Schools Forum unanimously agreed to centrally retain 5%, £0.220m, from the funding and to recommend the proposed formula to Children's Services Committee for approval.

### **14. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- a) note the contents of this report and the outcomes from the consultation response
  - b) note the agreement by Schools Forum to centrally retain funding of 5%, £0.220m, as detailed in paragraphs 4.9 and 4.10
  - c) approve the funding formula for 2018/19 as detailed in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.6.

### **15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to consult and agree the EYNFF annually.

### **16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 16.1 Schools Forum Report 8 December 2017, Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2018/19.

## 17. CONTACT OFFICERS

Danielle Swainston  
Assistant Director: Children's and Families' Services  
Children's & Joint Commissioning Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 284 144  
Email: [danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Mark Patton  
Assistant Director: Education  
Children's & Joint Commissioning Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 523 736  
Email: [mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Non-key decision.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To request approval to update the current Code of Conduct to reflect legal precedent.

## 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 School governing bodies are responsible for producing and agreeing their own policy on attendance. Local authority officers support schools in doing this to try to ensure a consistent approach across the town, and to ensure that schools remain within the law.

3.2 Members approved a local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices on 18 October 2004. The text of this Code is reproduced at **APPENDIX A** of this report for reference.

3.3 More recently, on 16 July 2013, Members received and approved a revised Code which incorporated the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised holidays in term time. The Code indicates that penalty notices can be issued as part of legal responsibilities under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003. The threshold for attendance interventions was also increased to 90% instead of the previous 85%, in line with the government's changes to the threshold defining those pupils with persistent absence from school.

3.4 The Council, on behalf of schools, has issued penalty notices in relation to holidays in term time since September 2013. Schools who wish to issue



notices for holidays in term time have done so in line with the Code of Conduct.

### 3.5 Equality Act 2010

In drawing up the Code of Conduct, the Council's legal team considered any potential issues with regard to discrimination and the Equality Act 2010. In particular, it should be noted that the issuing of Penalty Notices on a 'per parent per child' basis does not contravene Equality Act 2010 as applied to education settings, including the characteristics of marriage and civil partnership as defined in the Act.

### 3.6 The Council has always issued Notices on the basis of 'per parent per child', with the following impact:

- 2014-15 – 91 issued in total, including 51 for holidays in term time;
- 2015-16 – 73 issued in total, including 37 for holidays in term time;
- 2016-17 – 78 issued in total, including 6 for holidays in term time.

### 3.7 This data shows the clear positive impact of the Code and the policies adopted by schools which promote the educational achievement of children and young people.

## 4. PROPOSALS

### 4.1 Updates to the Code

It is proposed that a further amendment be made to the Code of Conduct following the Isle of Wight case in July 2016 which defined what constitutes regular attendance, i.e. an attendance rate of 90%. Given that Hartlepool's bench mark was 90%, following discussions with the Council's legal team, it is suggested that Penalty Notices for holidays in term time should only be considered if a child's attendance is below 90% in the 39 school weeks prior to the holiday period, as this would constitute irregular attendance, rather than a blanket policy of issuing a Notice for any unauthorised holidays in term time.

### 4.2 It is therefore proposed that the highlighted text in the Code (paragraphs 15, 21 and 22 of **APPENDIX A**) be added following the legal precedent set in the Isle of Wight case in 2016.

## 5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 It is essential that schools and parents/carers have clear guidance about what is considered to be good attendance. Without this proposed additional guidance there is a risk that schools will set different thresholds to one another and set thresholds which are not harmonious with the case precedent.

## **6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial considerations in these proposals.

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 Section 4 above provides the legal background to these proposals.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 No consultation was required in compiling this report.

## **9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY**

9.1 There are no child and family poverty implications relevant to these proposals.

## **10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

10.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations relevant to these proposals.

## **11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

11.1 There are no staff considerations relevant to these proposals.

## **12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

12.1 There are no asset management considerations relevant to these proposals.

## **13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 It is recommended that Members

- a) note the background to these proposals provided in this report and at **APPENDIX A**
- b) approve the proposed amendments as described in section 4 above and
- c) highlighted in **APPENDIX A**.

## **14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 Approval of these amendments to the Code of Conduct will ensure consistency of practice across Hartlepool schools, and ensure that when

Penalty Notices are issued they are issued in accordance with legal precedent.

## **15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1 There are no background papers to this report.

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Mark Patton  
Assistant Director: Education  
Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 523 736  
E-mail: [mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk)

**Text from HBC's Code of Conduct**

- 1 Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is both a legal requirement (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and essential for students to maximise the opportunities available to them to reach their full potential. It is parent(s)/carer's responsibility to ensure their child/ren receive(s) efficient full-time education that is suitable to their child's age, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.
- 2 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 made provision for Penalty Notices (Section 23(1)) to be issued in certain cases of unauthorised absence. The Penalty Notice (fine) will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay £60.00 if paid within 21 days or raises to £120.00 if paid within 22 and 28 days.
- 3 The School Attendance Team will continue to investigate causes of irregular absence from school through the Attendance Procedures, instigating statutory action where appropriate.
- 4 Penalty Notices offer a means for swift intervention which the Child and Adult Services Department will use to improve attendance as an early measure to prevent non-attendance becoming entrenched.
- 5 Hartlepool local authority will ensure the smooth administration of the necessary process and in order to fully comply with legislation on Human Rights, will also ensure the consistent, fair and transparent application of Penalty Notices. This Code of Conduct will govern the issuing of Penalty Notices in Hartlepool Borough Council.

**Guidance and Legislation**

- 6 Personnel authorised to operate this Code must have regard to the following legislation and guidance:
  - The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
  - The Race Relations (Statutory Duties) Order 2001
  - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
  - Data Protection Act 1998
  - Children Act 1989
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - Special Needs Code of Practice 2013
  - Ensuring School Attendance: Guidance on the Legal Measures to Secure Regular School Attendance 2013
  - Education Act 1996

## **Section 576 Education Act 1996: Definition of a Parent**

- 7 The education-related provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition set out in this section of the Education Act 1996. This defines 'parent' as:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
  - Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
  - Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person – having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law.
- 8 Throughout this document, references to 'parent' means each and every parent coming within the definition, whether acting jointly or separately, and should not be taken to mean that provisions only apply to 'parent' in the singular.

## **Procedure for the Issue of Penalty Notices**

- 9 Penalty Notices will be issued by the School Attendance Team, with the agreement of the Inclusion Co-ordinator and a completed copy of the Notice will be attached to the file. The service will ensure that the issuing of Penalty Notices is closely monitored and does not have a negative impact on the current case work of the School Attendance Officers.
- 10 No Penalty Notice will be issued without the issue of the relevant warning notice and the pursuance of relevant assessment of the individual case.
- 11 The School Attendance Team will issue Penalty Notices by First Class Post, or hand delivered and complete certificate of service.
- 12 The School Attendance Team will receive referrals for the issuing of Penalty Notices from schools in Hartlepool who purchase the services, and the Police. These requests will be actioned providing:
- The information received meets the criteria for the issue of a Penalty Notice which is specified in the Code of Conduct and;
  - All necessary information is provided to the School Attendance Team in order to establish that an offence under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996 has been committed.
- 13 The School Attendance Team will ensure that duplicate Penalty Notices are not issued and that any action taken is compliant with the relevant legislation and that no conflict arises with other statutory interventions.
- 14 Each parent will receive a separate Penalty Notice for each child. No parent will receive more than two penalty notices per child in an academic year.

## **Criteria for Issuing a Penalty Notice**

- 15 The response to a first offence should be a warning letter rather than a Penalty Notice. However, a Penalty Notice can be issued, for example where a parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without the authorisation of the Headteacher. Attendance in the previous 39 school weeks will be taken into account when considering issuing a Penalty Notice for unauthorised holidays if attendance is 90% or above then a Penalty Notice will not be issued. (Schools need to be able to evidence that parents were informed, in advance, that a particular holiday absence would not be authorised and that it may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.
- 16 Where a child's attendance is of concern over a given period which is not authorised by the Headteacher.
- 17 The School Attendance Officer believes issuing a Penalty Notice would be more appropriate than casework intervention. For example, where a parent has continually failed to provide valid reasons for absence to the Headteacher over a given period.
- 18 That the issuing of the Penalty Notice would be effective in getting the pupil back into education.
- 19 When a 'Fast Track to prosecution' system fails to achieve the required improvement in attendance.
- 20 Where a Parenting Contract has been unsuccessful in improving attendance.
- 21 In cases of parents condoning absence identified through a truancy patrol. The parent will be advised, in writing, of their liability under this Code of Practice. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis and full account will be taken of the pupil's levels of unauthorised absence during the previous 39 school weeks.
- 22 Following a referral from The Police, depending upon the individual's levels of unauthorised absence during the previous 39 school weeks, the referrer will be informed as to whether a Penalty Notice was issued.
- 23 That no previous conviction for Section 444 (1) or (1A) has been received by the parent for the non-attendance of that particular child.

## **Withdrawal of a Penalty Notice**

- 24 The Local Education Authority may withdraw a Penalty Notice in any case which the Authority determines:
  - (i) An offence has not been committed
  - (ii) It was issued outside the terms of the Code of Practice
  - (iii) It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
  - (iv) If the parent can prove it was issued to the wrong address

**Where a Penalty Notice has been withdrawn in accordance with the above**

- 25 A notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the recipient. Any amount paid by way of penalty in pursuance of that notice shall be repaid to the person who paid it.

No proceedings shall be continued or instituted against the recipient for the offence in connection with which the withdrawn notice was issued or for an offence under Section 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 arising out of the same circumstances.

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** ADOPTION SERVICE SIX MONTH UPDATE  
APRIL 2017 – SEPT 2017

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Children Service's Committee with information relating to the activity of the Adoption Service for the first six months of 2017/2018. The Adoption Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the executive side of the Council with performance information on a quarterly basis.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The 2011 Statutory Adoption Guidance and Adoption National Minimum Standards places a requirement upon Local Authority adoption services to ensure that the Executive side of the Council receive 6 monthly reports on the management and outcomes of the agency.
- 3.2 Hartlepool Adoption Service is managed in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2004. The Adoption National Minimum Standards and the Regulations 2011 form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of adoption agencies and adoption support agencies.
- 3.3 The aim of the Adoption Service is to recruit, train and support adopters to provide high quality adoptive placements for the children. This is achieved through the following objectives:



- Ensuring that where children cannot remain in the care of their birth parent/s, they are placed with appropriate adoptive parent/s at the earliest opportunity;
- Providing robust assessment of and support to adoptive carers and children to meet identified needs;
- Providing advice and support to birth families;
- Managing and facilitating Post Box contact arrangements that support the exchange of information which meets the needs of the children, adoptive parent/s and birth parent/s;
- Fulfil statutory requirements in relation to the Adoption & Children Act 2004 for the adoption of a child by a step parent;
- Providing advice, support and guidance in relation to permanence planning and facilitate family finding for children;
- Ensure the Adoption Panel is supported to provide robust consideration and recommendations relating to the approval of adopters, and matching of children with their adoptive families;
- Providing support to the Agency Decision Maker in relation to consideration and decision making regarding plans for the adoption of children.

#### **4. PERFORMANCE**

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

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

## 5. FAMILY PLACEMENT PANEL

- 5.1 Hartlepool Borough Council's Family Placement Panel is appropriately constituted with an Independent Chair Person and a number of Panel Members with the appropriate qualifications and/or experience to consider the cases submitted to the Panel for consideration.
- 5.2 Panel Members are fully trained and join a central list of people who can be called on to attend Panel, this includes an Independent Chair, one Vice Chair, seven Agency Social Workers, an Elected Member, five Independent Members, 1 of which is a foster carer for another authority. Panel membership also includes three members who have direct experience of adoption. Panel also benefits from a Medical Advisor. The Panel also receives advice from the local authority Legal Advisor and Panel Advisor.
- 5.3 The Panel meets fortnightly and makes recommendations on the suitability of prospective adopters and the matching of children with adoptive families to the Agency Decision Maker.
- 5.4 The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services is the Adoption Agency Decision Maker and as such makes the final decision in relation to approval of prospective adopters, children's adoption plans and adoption matches. The Agency Decision Maker is robust in their quality assurance and decision making ensuring that the best interest of children is always at the heart of what we do.
- 5.5 Panel has continued on a fortnightly basis and agenda items include both fostering and adoption matters. Since 1 April and 30 September 2017, 12 Panel Meetings have taken place.
- 5.6 Panel membership has remained relatively stable and during the course of the period of April – September, two panel members have resigned, three new members have been recruited.
- 5.7 We recruit a newly elected member from April 2017, and they have remained on panel. We are optimistic that the newly elected member will continue to give this role the sustained level of importance it requires.
- 5.8 We have a mixture of panel members from Social Workers, Managers and Heads of Service, Virtual Head Teacher, 6 independent members including foster carers, Independent Reviewing Officer, members have an adopted child in the family, adopted person, and a previous Looked After Children Nurse. We are currently recruiting young people who have previously been looked after who will hopefully start by the end of 2017. These additions would enhance the cohort of panel and expand the variation of panel members to call upon.

- 5.9 Panel members have attended Foetal alcohol training . This was delivered by an external provider. The training was well received and extremely positive.
- 5.10 Matters considered and recommended by Panel in relation to adoption include:
- The approval of adopters;
  - The match of approved carers with children whose plan is for adoption;
  - Reviews of adopters who have been approved for more than 6 months.
- 5.11 Between 1 April and 30 September 2017, Panel has considered the following business:
- 4 approval of adoption
  - The matches of 6 children
  - 0 reviews
- 5.12 There are effective processes in place for the recommendations made by panel to be considered by the Agency Decision Maker and the timescale for this is within 10 working days of the Panel meeting taking place. This timescale is adhered to robustly.

## 6. RECRUITMENT AND APPROVALS

- 6.1 Recruitment and approvals for the six monthly period April 2017 – Sept 2017

Number of Approved Adopters as at 30.09.17	10
Number of Adopters currently being assessed 30.09.17	5
Number of Adopters waiting to complete training 30.09.17	1
Number of Adopters with children in placement but not yet adopted	8
Number of Initial Visits undertaken April – Sept2017	3
Number of applications received April- Sep 2017	3

- 6.2 The Adoption Service recruitment strategy is updated on an annual basis and a range of methods are used to attract prospective adopters to Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Agency. We continue to be particularly successful in achieving personal recommendations from Hartlepool's approved adopters and their families. Advertisements are placed in the Primary Times and regional publications, alongside a particular focus this year on digital advertising through Facebook. We continue to have

a need for placements for siblings groups and older children and this will be the priority of the recruitment strategy for 2017-18.

## **7. STAFFING**

- 7.1 In the last 6 months the complement of the Adoption team has remained stable. The Family Finder role has remained with one worker allowing us to continue our focus on finding adoptive families for those children who have complex needs, sibling groups and have historically found difficult to place.
- 7.2 The adoption team consists of a Team Manager who has responsibility for the fostering and adoption service. The Assistant Team Manager left the post in April 2017 and this post was held to allow the department to consider the role and the work around the Regional Adoption Agency. This was in respect of the financial contribution the Council need to make in the development of the Regional Adoption Agency. It was decided that the salary should be used as part of the department's contribution.
- 7.3 The workers have experienced change in their roles, in that they have been doing connected care assessments, this is taking into account the decrease in adoption work. On review this has equated to ½ post dedicated to fostering work spread amongst the workers during the year 2017. The Family Finding Post also covers fostering too, and there is a 0.7 Team Clerk support.

## **8. REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY**

- 8.1 As reported to Children's Services Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 the five Local Authorities made a successful bid to the DfE for funding to develop the Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency and commissioned IMPOWER to support in the strategic development of the RAA. A second bid for interim funding was successful in April 2016 to finance the continuation of this project. A project manager has now been appointed and Hartlepool are currently leading on this project on behalf of the Tees Valley Authorities. A Head of Service post is to be appointed to. Registration of the Tees Valley Adoption Agency will be linked at Stockton's family placement service to ensure that Foster to Adopt placements can be made.
- 8.2 It is anticipated that the project will be live from April 2018. The aims of the RAA will help:
- Speed up matching and markedly improve the life chances of children in care.
  - Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support.
  - Support best proactive and support reduced costs for adoptive placements.

- 8.3 Human Resources, ICT, Practice, Policy/Procedure, Panel and Training work streams have been identified and are currently being worked through to ensure a smooth transition. From March 2018 the service will be part of a soft launch meaning that the workers will begin to use the Adoption Tees Valley Agency brand and be virtual part of the service. The hope is that workers will physically move and the Adoption Tees Valley Agency will go live April 2018.
- 8.4 Two full time Adoption Social Workers and one full time administration worker, from Hartlepool family placement team will join the RAA from April 2018.
- 8.5 Family finding and matching will move to the RAA but go back to the individual local authority for the Agency Decision Making regarding children's decisions regarding adoption.
- 8.6 The Post Box service will temporarily remain with each individual local authority and the plan is this will eventually transfer over once the Adoption Tees Valley Service is ready to meet this task or it decisions to commission a service to run this.

## **9. PROGRESS APRIL 2017 – SEPT 2017**

- 9.1 The adoption team continue to carry out the two Stage assessment process. One worker within the team is dedicated to monitoring recruitment activity up until the point of allocation to a worker for assessment. This sharing of tasks and responsibilities enables us ensure that assessments are completed within the required timescale.
- 9.2 The adoption team benefits from having a named Family Finder who attends Permanency Planning Meetings and, where there is a need, initiates the Family Finding process for those children requiring permanency via adoption. Her role allows us to family find from the earliest stages and has reduced delay in the adoption process.
- 9.3 Hartlepool Borough Council continues to be an active member of the Northern Consortium and have membership of the Adoption Register and Adoption Link, over the past year we successfully matched children needing adoptive placements with in-house approved adopters and also adopters from independent agencies.
- 9.4 All workers have been actively involved in the preparation work for the regional adoption agency.
- 9.5 Matches continue to be proactively pursued and there have been several matches made within the past six months for harder to place children such as sibling groups, including matching a sibling group of four.

## **10. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There is a risk with the development of the Regional Adoption Agency that the service focuses on this transition instead of the continuous improvement of the service. This report sets out the clear focus of the service to ensure that this does not happen.

## **11. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no specific financial considerations within this report.

## **12. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 There is no specific legal considerations within this report.

## **13. CONSULTATION**

- 13.1 Foster carers are supported by their supervising social worker and the social workers regularly meet with them to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon as appropriate.

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

- 14.1 All families and children that need support from this service are supported.

## **15. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 15.1 The adoption service ensures that it supports all those people that want to adopt and children who need to be adopted.

## **16. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 16.1 Staffing has been discussed in section 7.

## **17. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 17.1 There are no asset management considerations.

## **18. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 18.1 The Children's Service Committee is asked to note the six month report in relation to the work of the Adoption Service April 2017 – Sept 2017.

## **19. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 19.1 The Adoption Service is required to fulfill its statutory responsibilities and provide regular reports to the Children Services Committee to enable the Committee to satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of the registration.
- 19.2 Children's Services Committee has an important role in scrutinising the activities of the fostering services to ensure that performance in this area is robust.

## **20. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Adoption regulations and minimum standards 2011.

## **21. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 21.1 Karen Douglas-Weir  
Head of Services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers  
[Karen.douglas-weir@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.douglas-weir@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
(01429) 405584 (Direct) / (01429) 405588 (Reception)
- 21.2 Alison McCadle  
Team Manager (Family Placement)  
[alison.McArdle@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:alison.McArdle@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
01429 287216

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** FOSTERING SERVICE INTERIM REPORT  
1 July 2017 – 31 September 2017

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

For information.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Children Service's Committee with information relating to the activity of the Fostering Service for the second quarter of 2017. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the executive side of the Council with performance information on a quarterly basis.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The work of the Fostering Service is subject to National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of Foster Care for children looked after. The National Minimum Standards, together with regulations for fostering and the placement of children looked after, form the basis of the regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Fostering Agencies.
- 3.2 The report provides details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff and Foster Carers, the constitution of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective Foster Carers and progress in relation to the priorities set out in the Fostering Annual Report.
- 3.3 The Fostering Services Minimum Standard 25.7 requires Fostering Services to ensure the executive side of the Local Authority:



- Receives a written report on the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency once every 3 months;
- Monitors the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and achieving good outcomes for children;
- Satisfies themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of the registration.

#### **4. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION (as of November 2017)**

- 4.1 The fostering team continue to recruit and assess prospective foster carers to minimise the dependency and need to source costly external placements for children.
- 4.2 There are currently 120 foster carers (including 23 of those approved as Connected Persons and 1 approved as Foster to Adopt). These carers provided placements for 166 children and young people and 33 children/young people in Connected Care foster placements. There are 13 young people in Staying Put placements, which is for post 18 care leavers.
- 4.3 Of the 120 approved fostering households, there are currently 3 foster carers who are currently on hold due to the individual circumstances of the carer, equating to 2 placements. There are a small number of placements that cannot be used due to the specific matching needs of the children/young people already in that foster placement.
- 4.4 The fostering team has continued the recruitment collaboration with the four neighbouring local authorities within the Tees Valley, Tees Valley Fostering, the initiative shares resources and strategies to enable increased recruitment activities to take place across the sub region. We continue to focus this recruitment on specifically recruiting more foster carers for sibling groups and teenagers. A radio campaign and a television advertisement have been aired recently however the success of this was limited. For the next 12 months we are focusing on refreshing the Tees Valley website and more locally we will continue with our quarterly publications in both Hartbeat and the Primary Times. The former being distributed to every household in Hartlepool.
- 4.5 The table below provides details of the recruitment activity which has taken place in the second quarter of 2017.

Initial Enquiries – including survey of where did people hear about the service	Initial Enquiries 11  <b>Source</b> HBC Website 2 Own volition 8 Hartbeat 0 Facebook 0 Friend recommendation 1 TV/Radio advert 0
Information packs sent out between 1/07/17 and 30/09/17	8
Initial Visits How many proceeded	8 7
Preparation Group	A preparation group was not held in this time period.
How many prospective Carers are in the assessment process?	There are currently 2 prospective fostering households in stage 1 of assessment. There are 2 prospective fostering households in stage 2 of the assessment.

## 5. FAMILY PLACEMENT PANEL

- 5.1 The Family Placement Panel continues to be held on a twice monthly basis and agenda items currently include both fostering and adoption matters. Between 1 July and 30 September 2017, six panel meetings have taken place.

The panel has a full cohort of members now available. Any new appointments continue to receive induction training and ongoing training throughout the year. Yearly appraisals of panel members are also undertaken.

- 5.2 From 1 July and 30 September 2017 the Panel has made recommendation to the Agency Decision Maker on the following fostering matters:

- Four approvals all which are Connected Foster Carers;
- The matches of two children with a long term Foster Carers;
- Two foster care reviews
- Two foster carer resignations, one of which were a Connected Carer
- The best interest decision for four children for Long Term Foster care.

- 5.3 There are effective processes in place for the recommendations made by Panel to be considered by the Agency Decision Maker and the timescale for this is within 10 working days of the Panel meeting taking place.

## **6. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Fostering Team consists of a Team Manager who has management responsibility for the Fostering and Adoption Service. Since July 2017 the post of Assistant Team Manager has become vacant and this post is currently frozen due to awaiting the outcome of the Regional Adoption agency. Due to this the team has an agency member of staff covering this post. There are a further seven social work posts, 4 of which are full time posts and three of part time hours.
- 6.2 The Fostering Team continues to benefit greatly from the support of a team clerk. The role of this worker is to continue to offer admin support to the Fostering Team and she is responsible for the planning, preparation and smooth running of Fostering and Adoption Panel.
- 6.3 In addition the Fostering Team continues to benefit from the ongoing role of Family Finder who continues to be instrumental in family finding for those children and young people in need of permanency via long term fostering. This role is currently being undertaken by a Social Worker from the Adoption Team on a temporary basis until the fostering team is at full capacity.
- 6.4 The Family Finder has been instrumental in developing links with independent agencies and ensuring processes work efficiently between the local authority and the independent agencies.
- 6.5 The Family Finder worker has ensured that plans for permanence are identified as early as possible and that a Permanency Planning meeting is closely followed by a process meeting to minimise delay for children and ensure that social workers are supported in producing quality timely matching reports. We have recently introduced a Permanency Tracker process chaired by the relevant Head of Service and attended by Team Managers to ensure that plans for children are monitored and permanency is considered at the earliest opportunity.

## **7. DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE SERVICE**

- 7.1 The number of children becoming looked after in the second quarter has again increased, this continues to be in line with an increase in referrals for connected carer assessments. We are continuing to recruit, assess and approve new carers consistent with an aim to be able to offer placement choice to placing social workers. We continue to need placements for sibling groups of 3 or more and older teenagers which will be the focus of ongoing targeted recruitment campaigns.
- 7.2 As part of their development and progression, all new foster carers are encouraged to complete the Training Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers Portfolio within a 12 months post approval timescale. All approved Connected Person's Carers have an increased timescale of two years to complete the portfolio. Support in completing the portfolio is

available from both supervising Social Workers and existing approved carers wishing to reach progression level Band 4 where there is a requirement to provide mentoring and support. We continue to have a high proportion of our carers who achieve their TSDS workbook within the required timescale.

- 7.3 All foster carers are required to complete a record of the training they have attended for the year of their approval. The four mandatory courses are child protection, first aid, attachment and E-Safety. There is a requirement that these courses are completed within one year of approval and updated every three years.
- 7.4 Foster carers are provided with bespoke training specific to their needs whilst caring for looked after children. The bespoke training is reviewed annually and reflected on during the foster carers annual reviews.
- 7.5 Foster carers attended the Participation Group Summer Barbeque. Foster carers also attended, as part of Care Leaver Week, the Nothing About You – Without You consultation event, which was held to inform the Children and Young People's Strategy. It focused upon The Pledge and Care Leavers Charter.
- 7.6 Foster carer support groups have continued to take place bi-monthly. Groups are usually attended by 20+ foster carers and offer an element of training, usually provided by a guest speaker delivering information which is of interest to carers and an informal Support Group Session towards the end of the evening.
- 7.7 The Support Groups are arranged and facilitated by at least two members of the Fostering Team who are available to discuss any issues raised by individual carers or the group as a whole.
- 7.8 The fostering team also facilitate a bi- monthly coffee morning for foster carers, which is an informal support meeting.
- 7.9 Foster Carer retention is an essential part of the Fostering service and as such a great emphasis is placed upon this. There are plans to hold a Tees Valley event to promote fostering in September and this is highly likely to be an afternoon tea.
- 7.10 The fostering action plan is attached as **Appendix A**.

## 8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There has recently been an increase in the numbers of looked after children and therefore this places pressure on our placements. It is important that we work to recruit new carers to meet the needs of our looked after children.

**9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 There is a no specific financial considerations within this report.

**10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 There is no specific legal considerations within this report.

**11. CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 Foster carers are supported by their supervising social worker and the social workers regularly meet with them to ensure that their voice is heard and acted upon as appropriate.

**12. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 The Fostering service ensures that it supports all foster carers to enable them to support our children and young people.

**13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 13.1 The service continues to recruit and assess prospective Foster Carers to provide placement choice. The fostering service will continue to work in collaboration with the Tees Valley local authorities in respect of fostering recruitment. In addition to this the team will continue to respond to requests for Connected Person's assessments.

**14. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no staff considerations for Hartlepool Borough Council employees. However there may be TUPE considerations for staff currently providing these services. These will be highlighted within the commissioning process.

**15. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 15.1 There are no asset management considerations.

**16. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 16.1 The Children's Service Committee is asked to note the report in relation to the work of the Fostering Service in the second quarter of 2017.

## **17. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 17.1 The Fostering Service is required to fulfill its statutory responsibilities to children looked after by the local authority and provide regular reports to the Children Services Committee to enable the Committee to satisfy themselves that the agency is complying with the conditions of the registration.
- 17.2 Children's Services Committee has an important role in scrutinising the activities of the fostering services to ensure that performance in this area is robust.

## **18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Fostering National Minimum Standards Services 2011;
- Fostering Regulations 2011;
- Fostering Annual Report 2016/17.

## **19. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 19.1 Karen Douglas-Weir  
Head of Services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers  
[Karen.douglas-weir@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.douglas-weir@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
(01429) 405584 (Direct) / (01429) 405588 (Reception)
- 19.2 Alison McCadle  
Team Manager (Family Placement)  
[Christine.croft@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.croft@hartlepool.gov.uk) 01429 287216



## Fostering Services Action Plan April 2017 - April 2018

Priority	Progress Achieved Quarter 1	Lead Officer	Target Date
Target recruitment to attract foster carers for older children and sibling groups and those with more challenging behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment strategy in place</li> <li>Facebook advertising focussing on teenagers</li> <li>TV advert planned to be reconsidered</li> <li>Leaflets redesigned to feature teenagers</li> <li>Refresh of existing Tees Valley website working in partnership with the Tees Valley Regional Forum in respect of Marketing and Recruitment</li> </ul>	Christine Croft	Dec 2017, then review  Completed Dec 2017 Completed September 2017
To continue to offer and deliver an extensive training programme to our carers to ensure that all of our fostering households have achieved the Training Support and Development Standards workbook within the allocated timescales and can demonstrate continued professional development as foster carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All foster carers who have been approved for more than a year have completed the standards, those recently approved are working towards.</li> <li>A support group will take place where experienced carers support new carers to complete the standards</li> </ul>	Christine Croft	April 2018  To take place monthly and will be facilitated by Band 4 carers

## 7.2 Appendix A

To continue with family finding post enabling children and young people to have 'permanency' in their lives as early as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Family finding post has been temporarily reallocated within the team. This will be re-established, permanently to a team member, once the current staff member moves to the RAA.</li> <li>The current Permanency Tracking in place for children with a plan for adoption will be extended to incorporate all LAC children needing permanency via long term fostering.</li> </ul>	<p>Angi Simmonds</p> <p>Christine Croft</p>	<p>September 2017</p> <p>September 2017</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>To review every 6 months</p>
To hold life appreciation events for all children where permanency is the option.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some Life appreciation events have taken place.</li> <li>Once the permanent Family Finder is in post they will work with the placing Social Worker to support them in completing this.</li> </ul>	Angi Simmonds	<p>We expect to hold no less than 6 LA days</p> <p>October 2017</p>
To continue to demonstrate our appreciation of the commitment provided by our foster carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual celebration event has taken place in March 2017</li> <li>A further event will be planned for 2018.</li> <li>Fostering families activities and events held jointly with Tees Valley fostering households .</li> <li>Fostering Christmas party planned for Dec 2017</li> <li>Pantomime event planned for Dec 2017</li> </ul>	<p>Jacqui Dixon/</p> <p>Christine Croft</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>September 2017</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
To continue to strive to support our carers to engender stability within placements for our looked after children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bi Monthly evening support groups held alongside informal coffee mornings</li> <li>Supervising social workers provide regular</li> </ul>	Supervising social workers	Dates in place for 2017/18 from





## 7.2 Appendix A

	alongside carers who have staying put arrangements in place		
To consult foster carers in relation to the performance of the Local Authority in relation to support, training and retention of foster carers and to use this information to develop future priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HBC Annual consultation survey sent to carers</li> <li>• Feedback forms reviewed during annual foster care reviews. These indicate that carers are happy with payments and the level of care they receive from their Supervising Social Workers</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Case file Audits took place in October 2017 – Feedback was received from carers. Review of the audit will take place in December 2018 – Team completed a Team Development day to look at recommendations</li> </ul>	Christine Croft	<p>This has been delayed</p> <p>To send out by the end of Dec 2017</p> <p>To be distributed again in October 2017</p> <p>To be rolled out again in 2018</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>To develop an action plan Dec 2017</p>

## 7.2

### Appendix A

To annually review the Staying Put policy and guidelines to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meets the needs of the Young People of Hartlepool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stating Put Policy to be reviewed</li> <li>Training around Staying Put to take place annually ensuring that all carers with young people in place reaching this stage in their lives are suitably prepared To ensure that all young people have a Living Together License and Agreement in place before reaching 18 years of age.</li> </ul>	Christine Croft/Suzanne Brennan  Through care and fostering team	Completed  Completed  Annual plan March 2018
Continue to facilitate sons and daughters group for children of foster carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings and activities have taken place</li> <li>Specific training around sharing their experiences with the children of prospective foster carers is planned for children and young people</li> <li>Sons and daughters of Foster Carers to be invited to attend preparatory training. Unfortunately no engagement of Sons and Daughters took place in 2016-7 and this is an area which must be improved on.</li> <li>Sons and Daughters group to attend events held via Tees Valley group to increase numbers and support available In 2016-7 they have enjoyed Ice Skating and Jump 360 and an evening meal. These events take place over the school holiday periods.</li> </ul>	Placement Support team  Christine Croft/Placement Support Team	To be reviewed Dec 2017  Not completed
To further improve the quality of the care provided to children and young people to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carers have attended the Foster Carers Annual Conference June 2017</li> </ul>	Christine	Completed

## 7.2

### Appendix A

ensure better outcomes are achieved for children and young people in all aspects of their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All carers have a personal development plan highlighting training requirements. This to be reviewed annually via the IRO at Foster Carer Reviews. All foster carer reviews are held within timescale with actions evidenced in the IRO's report.</li> </ul>	Croft/Fostering Team  IRO's	Completed
To review the approval ages and status of the more experienced carers with a view to encouraging them to provide placements for older children with more complex needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation with carers has taken place at a support group meeting. On average 20-15 carers attend. Topics/speakers have included NEPACS, CSE worker, Fostering Network, Prevent training etc.</li> <li>We are currently developing the programme for next year.</li> </ul>	Christine Croft	Review 6 monthly
To continue to work within the the BAAF 2 stage assessment process providing timely assessments, recruitment and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The BAAF 2 stage process is proving effective</li> <li>Work has been undertaken with ICT staff to ensure that the current ICS system is updated to reflect this change and enable foster carer recruitment and training to be recorded appropriately.</li> <li>This role to be reallocated to a member of the fostering team once Regionalisation of the Adoption Team takes place</li> </ul>	Christine Croft  Fostering Team	To be reviewed October 2017  Completed
To continue to work collaboratively with the neighbouring authorities to share resources and expertise in foster carer recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tees Valley Fostering holds regular meetings attended by Hartlepool (These are held bi-monthly and have been attended by the ATM or</li> </ul>	Christine Croft	To be reviewed Dec 17

## 7.2

### Appendix A

	<p>TM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint recruitment activities planned for 2017/18 (In 2016/17 this primarily focused upon the intensive Radio campaign) 2017 will look towards social media activities)</li> <li>To attend the bi-monthly Regional Fostering Managers Forums where good practice can be shared</li> </ul>		Bi-monthly
To look at developing the Supported Lodgings Scheme to offer greater choice of placement s for young people requiring some level of independence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worker identified to champion this scheme and gain information and good practice from neighbouring authorities in an aim to build up this service.</li> <li>Alison Bousfield to lead</li> </ul>	<p>Christine Croft</p> <p>Alison B</p>	Completed

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN CREATIVE ARTS  
(FORMERLY NORTHERN LIGHTS ACADEMY)  
UPDATE

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

This report is for information only.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the developments relating to the Centre for Excellence in Creative Arts (CECA).

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council agreed to acquire the building formally known as Northern Lights Academy in March 2017. It was later agreed in June 2017 that the building would be used as a technical training centre for creative industries and it would be re-opened as the Centre for Excellence in Creative Arts from September 2017.
- 3.2 In November 2017 Children's Services Committee endorsed a decision to transfer parts for the Space to Learn offer out of its current building into CECA. This decision was made as the lease of the current building has expired and there was no financial support from Schools Forum to continue operating Space to Learn in its current format.

## 4. UPDATES

- 4.1 Cleveland College of Arts & Design (CCAD) have been running a successful Saturday Club from the CECA since October 2017. The young people attending these sessions have given positive feedback. A new cohort of young people will attend Saturday Club from January 2018.

- 4.2 Staff from Space to Learn will be moving appropriate resources into CECA from February 2018. Where appropriate some Space to Learn sessions will also be delivered from CECA; this will give schools and children access to the centre so they can see what it has to offer.
- 4.3 A working party has been set-up to plan and deliver a public event from CECA in early 2018. This event will be aimed at opening the centre to the local community so they can see what is planned for its future use and how it could benefit young people in the area.
- 4.4 New branding for CECA has been agreed. This branding will be applied to the exterior of the building in early 2018.
- 4.5 Artwork produced by young people in Hartlepool looking at mental health issues experienced by children and young people will go on permanent display in the centre in early 2018.
- 4.6 Work is continuing to secure education partners to deliver a curriculum offer from CECA. Taster sessions will be offered to the current Year 9 cohort during February 2018. These sessions will advertise to young people the options they will have to study at CECA in the 2018-19 academic year. Officers will be working with schools to ensure that the timetabling arrangements will have minimal effect on young people's schooling.
- 4.7 A strategic Coordination Group will have its first meeting in January 2018. The purpose of this governance group is to have strategic oversight of the centre and will comprise stakeholder representatives.
- 4.8 The application for funding from Tees Valley Combined Authority (see paragraph 6.1 below) is in the final stages of due diligence. Officers are very hopeful that the application will be signed off before the Christmas break and a further verbal update about this will be given in Committee.

## **5. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 If funding applications are not successful alternative funding streams would need to be utilised to support the delivery of the agreed business plan.

## **6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 A funding bid has been submitted to Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) for capital investment and revenue underwriting support for three years. This bid has been successful to 'outline stage' of TVCA's bidding process, a final decision should be received by the end of December 2017.
- 6.2 Funding applications are being submitted to support the delivery of a creative arts programme that will support the emotional development of children and young people. This project is part of the wider review into how the Council

and Hartlepool & Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group commission mental health services for children and young people.

- 6.3 A funding application has been submitted to Youth Music by Hartlepool Youth Services to work with 14-16 year olds on music projects to be delivered in CECA. If successful these projects would begin in August 2018.

## **7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The acquisition of the building and land has now been successfully completed with the Diocese of Durham and Department for Education.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Consultation will begin in early 2018 in relation to the installation of external branding on the building. This consultation will be in line with the Council's planning policy.

## **9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY**

- 9.1 Child and family poverty issues have been considered in the production of this report and there are none to report.

## **10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 Equality and diversity issues have been considered in the production of this report and there are none to report.

## **11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 11.1 A job description and person specification have been assessed for a Business Manager post. Recruitment to this can begin following confirmation for a successful funding allocation.
- 11.2 Other staffing roles will be recruited following the appointment of a Business Manager.

## **12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 12.1 Work has been carried out in the building to make improvements to the building's heating system.



### **13. RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 It is recommended that Committee

- a) note the contents of this report
- b) note the decision by schools to begin an early transfer for elements of the Space to Learn offer from February 2018.

### **14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 Moving relevant parts of the internal assets from Space to Learn to CECA will further enhance the offer from that centre, thus supporting the offer to Hartlepool pupils and the communities in which they live. This asset transfer will also ensure that the valuable resources continue to be used as effectively as possible.

### **15. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 15.1 Joint Finance & Policy Committee and Children's Services Committee – Proposals Relating to the Acquisition of Northern Lights Academy, 27 March 2017
- 15.2 Joint Finance & Policy Committee and Children's Services Committee – Business Plan for the Future Use of the Centre Formally Known as Northern Lights Academy, 12 June 2017
- 15.3 Children's Services Committee – Future of Space 2 Learn, 14 November 2017

### **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Mark Patton  
Assistant Director: Education  
Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: (01429) 523 736  
E-mail: [mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:mark.patton@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 January 2018



**Report of:** Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

**Subject:** SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE REPORT 6 MONTHLY UPDATE

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## 1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 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. This report is one of a suite of reports that members receive to review and scrutinise work within Children's Services. This includes SEND performance, fostering and adoption updates.

The purpose of this report is to provide Children's Services Committee with information relating to safeguarding performance in Hartlepool during the first six months of 2017/18 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. However a revised Working Together which addresses the changes set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 is currently being consulted upon with Working Together 2018 coming into effect in April 2018.
- 3.5 This report covers safeguarding performance from April 2017 to Sept 2017.

#### **4. EARLY HELP**

- 4.1 An Early Help performance group has been set up to review the information available to understand the impact of Early Help services. The group is looking at the following:
- Focus on reducing the number of children entering the school system with additional needs that have not been picked up elsewhere;
  - Developing a local performance framework that focuses on impact;
  - Development of performance clinics that will help manage performance and quality issues;
  - Introduction of practice weeks for Early Help which will undertake audits across the service (the first one will take place January 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>)
  - Encouraging the whole family approach further.
- 4.2 Currently the information available is taken from the Early Help Module (EHM) within our Integrated Children's System. However this is only currently used by our internal Early Help teams therefore this does not fully cover all Early Help activity within Hartlepool. A pilot is taking place with schools for them to use the EHM to capture assessment and planning for their Early Help work. Two schools currently have full access and we are working with seven other schools in the North Locality to implement. In addition a local voluntary organisation (Changing Futures North East) is implementing this system with their staff.
- 4.3 The Health Visiting, School Nursing and Family Nurse Partnership transferred to the local authority in June 2017. These teams work within integrated teams within four localities across the borough. The work carried out by health workers is currently recorded within the SystmOne health system. SystmOne interacts with other health systems and work is currently underway to understand this system and how it can be used alongside the local authorities Integrated Children's System and Early Help Module.

- 4.4 The four Tees Local Children's Safeguarding Boards have recently introduced a Tees Performance Management Framework which includes Early Help data. Discussions have taken place across the boards due to each area collecting different information therefore it is difficult to compare. It has been agreed that an Early Help deep dive will take place early in the New Year to explore what is being measured and what should be measured to understand impact. The current information available through the PMF shows:

The percentage of children who are subject of a Child Protection Plan during the period without a history of assessment under Early Help assessment is 52%.

The deep dive that will take place in the new year is going to look at the indicators in more detail to understand whether these figures are accurate and whether comparisons across Tees are appropriate.

- 4.5 The current available data within the Local Authorities EHM system shows:

	Episodes Opened	Episodes Closed	
2014/15	650	681	
2015/16	757	681	
2016/17	698	810	483 open 31 March 2017
2017/18 (Apr – Sep)	454	293	609 open at 30 Sept 2017

Up to the end of quarter 2 in 2017/18 there were 293 Early Help cases closed of which, 54 were closed to early help due to escalation for a social care intervention.

- 4.6 In addition to the performance group there is a workstream taking place to look at:
- Improving the number of early help assessments being undertaken and reviewing the continuing barriers to this;
  - Improving the number of assessments that consider relationships;
  - Practitioner confidence;
  - Quality assurance.

A recent Early Help questionnaire has been circulated which includes a mapping exercise of the numbers of Early Help assessments being carried out by other organisations such as schools to try and capture the full breadth of the full Early Help offer.

## 5. CHILDREN'S HUB

- 5.1 Hartlepool Borough Council operates The Children's Hub on behalf of Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees Borough Councils. It provides an integrated single point of access across North Tees offering multi agency triage and assessment of enquiries about children. The Children's Hub shares information, risk assesses and makes decisions to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families with the aim of providing the right support at the right time.
- 5.2 The Children's Hub is a partnership and the team comprises of professionals from 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. A strategic management board comprising of partners meets monthly to oversee progress.
- 5.3 Members approved the creation of The Children's Hub at the Finance and Policy Committee meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016. It went 'live' on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.
- 5.4 The following table sets out the number of contacts received by the Hub and the number of these that resulted in a referral for a Child and Family Assessment. The percentage of contacts resulting in a referral for assessment is slightly lower for the first six months than the total for 2016/17 however this can only be properly compared at the end of the year.

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%)
2017/18 (Apr–Sep)	2869	521 (18.6%)

## 5.5 RE – REFERRALS

Year	Number of re-referrals in 12 months	Number of re-referrals ever
2014/15	162 (13.5%)	753 (62.5%)
2015/16	97 (10.5%)	518 (56.2%)
2016/17	140 (10.9%)	675 (52.7%)
2017/18 (Apr–Sep)	32 (19%)	408 (56.0%)

The re-referral rate for the first six months is slightly higher than previous 12 months and although this cannot be properly compared until the end of the full year the Head of Service for Safeguarding has raised this with managers within Performance Clinics to ensure that this is being closely monitored.

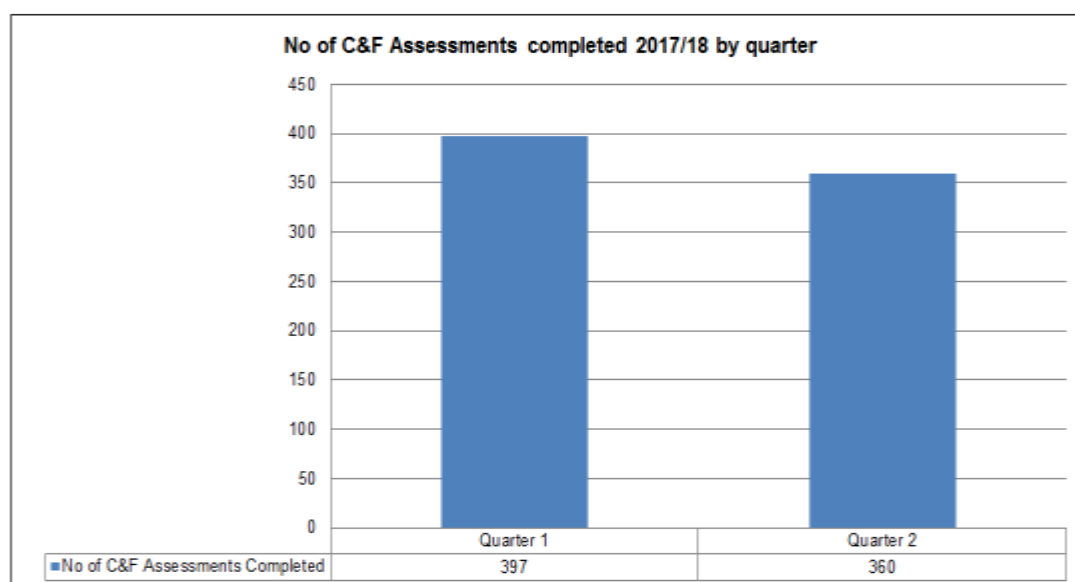
- 5.6 At the end of quarter two in 2017/18, the police were the highest referring agency with 160 referrals; the second highest was Early Help with 60 referrals closely followed by relatives (52 referrals) and EDT (47 referrals).

## 6. CHILDREN AND FAMILY ASSESSMENTS

- 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
2017/18 (as at 30 Sept)	757

If the rate for the number of children and families assessments continues at the rate indicated above for the forthcoming six months the number of assessments will be above the number for the last three years. Heads of Service review this data monthly to identify trends in demand. The two quarter's data has been broken down in the table below to start to understand any emerging trend. The current quarterly data indicates a decrease in Q2 however this will be monitored to understand if current resources can meet need.



- 6.2 The outcomes of children and family assessments completed during the first six months of 2017/18 are:

Outcome of C&F Assessment	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
Child in Need	23.9%	26.0%
Legal Action	2.9%	4.1%
No Further Action	29.5%	29.8%
Not Recorded	5.6%	2.5%
Other Actions	38.0%	37.7%

The percentage of assessments resulting in No Further Action has considerably decreased from the figure in 2016/17 which was raised as a concern as being too high. The Hub continue to ensure that they rigorously review all referrals and capture as much information as possible so all referrals are appropriate. This was also raised with managers at performance clinics and Business Unit meetings and work was undertaken to ensure that the work carried out by the social worker within the assessment period was captured.

	% No Further Action
2016/17	41.5%
2017/18 (Apr - Sept)	29.6%

6.3 The following table shows the factors highlighted within assessments.

	2014/15			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18 (Apr - Sept)
	Hartlepool	North East	England	Hartlepool	North East	England	Hartlepool	North East	England	Hartlepool
Domestic Violence	50.2%	42.8%	48.2%	48.7%	43.5%	49.6%	44.3%	41.1%	49.9%	46.8%
Mental Health	38.0%	35.1%	32.5%	40.2%	35.4%	36.6%	42.0%	38.1%	39.7%	46.8%
Drug Misuse	29.5%	19.1%	17.7%	29.3%	17.9%	19.3%	30.1%	18.8%	19.7%	31.9%
Alcohol Misuse	23.3%	20.6%	17.8%	20.6%	17.9%	18.4%	22.1%	17.5%	18.0%	22.3%
Neglect	19.6%	18.0%	16.5%	19.0%	18.3%	17.5%	21.3%	20.3%	17.6%	22.3%
Emotional Abuse	8.9%	13.9%	18.0%	9.3%	13.4%	19.3%	12.0%	14.8%	20.5%	15.6%
Physical Abuse	10.6%	11.3%	13.4%	15.4%	12.2%	14.0%	10.6%	14.7%	14.2%	10.3%
Learning disability/Physical disability	29.1%	19.1%	21.0%	26.0%	19.6%	22.9%	19.6%	19.9%	23.4%	20.6%
Sexual Abuse	8.8%	5.7%	5.8%	4.7%	7.3%	6.4%	6.1%	7.5%	6.3%	4.5%

Parental mental ill health has increased steadily since 2014/15 to nearly half of all assessments identifying this as an issue. Drug misuse has also risen across the last few years. In response to this a revised Drug and Alcohol Delivery Framework (2018-2025) has been developed for Hartlepool which is due for launch in 2018.

Hartlepool's Safeguarding Children's Board has set Parental Mental Health, Substance Misuse and Domestic Violence as its priorities and work has commenced to review how the adult services workforce identifies where children are being impacted on with these issues.

6.4 Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out an expectation that assessments should be completed within 45 days. The timeliness of assessments for the first six months of 2017/2018:

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September
% of assessments within 45 days	69.7	81.5	59.0	48.6	75.2	77.1

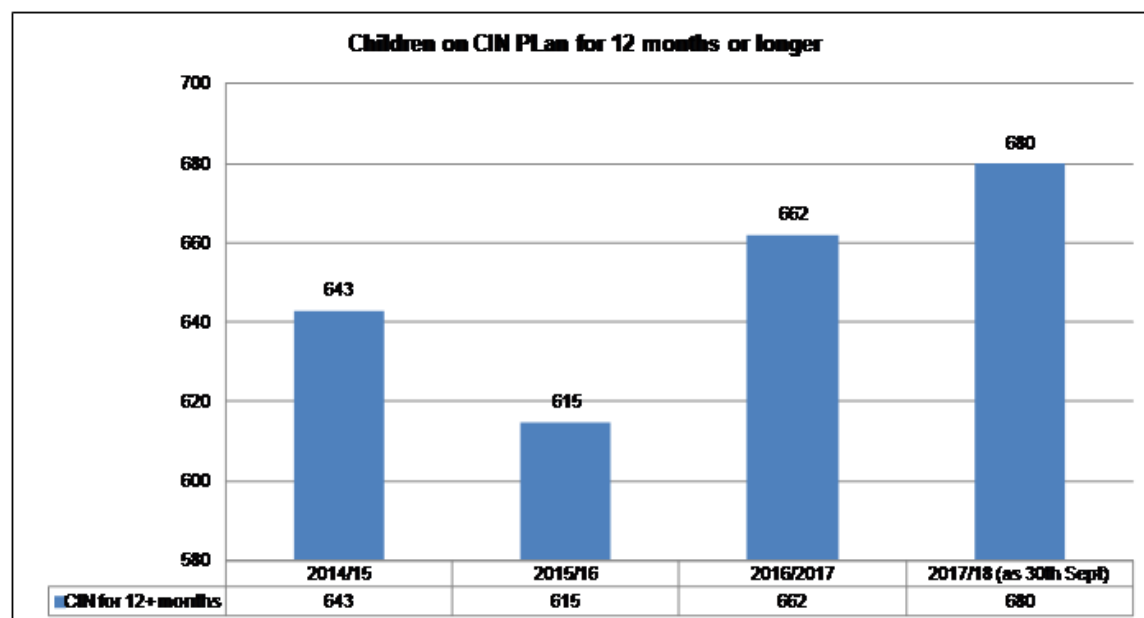
Performance clinics take place bi-monthly/ monthly where the decrease in the number of assessments being undertaken within timescales was highlighted in the clinics in July and August and work was undertaken with the team managers to understand the reasons. A large proportion of these were linked to sickness and this was managed to ensure that timeliness improved as can be seen in August and September.

## 7. CHILDREN IN NEED UNDER SECTION 17

7.1 The numbers of children being supported under Section 17 is as below:

Year	No of CIN
2014/2015	888
2015/2016	715
2016/2017	910
2017/18 (as at 30 Sep)	834

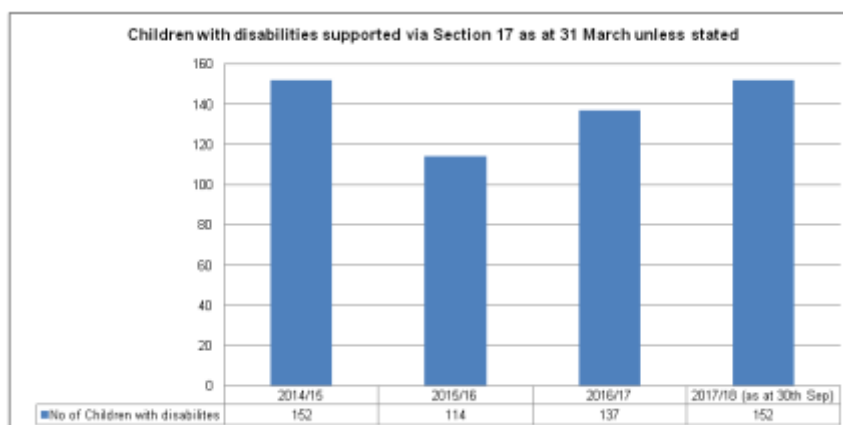
7.2 The number of children who have been on a Child in Need plan for longer than twelve months is:





## 8. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- 8.1 The 0-25 SEND team support children with disabilities who are in need, in need of protection and those who are looked after. The number of children with disabilities being supported under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 has decreased from 2014/15 but has shown a rise in the first two quarters of 2017/18 which is set out below:



- 8.2 The figure for 2016/17 does not reflect other information that we are collating in relation to Education, Health and Care Plans. The number of EHC plans has increased over the last few years as below:

2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018 (Predicted based on current numbers)
380	434	486	549	623

- 8.3 It was highlighted in the 2016/17 end of year safeguarding report that the numbers of children with SEND subject to a Child Protection Plan was low (under 5 and was therefore suppressed). This raised questions as to whether the vulnerabilities of children with SEND were being considered and therefore a recent review of the cases has been undertaken with the following findings:

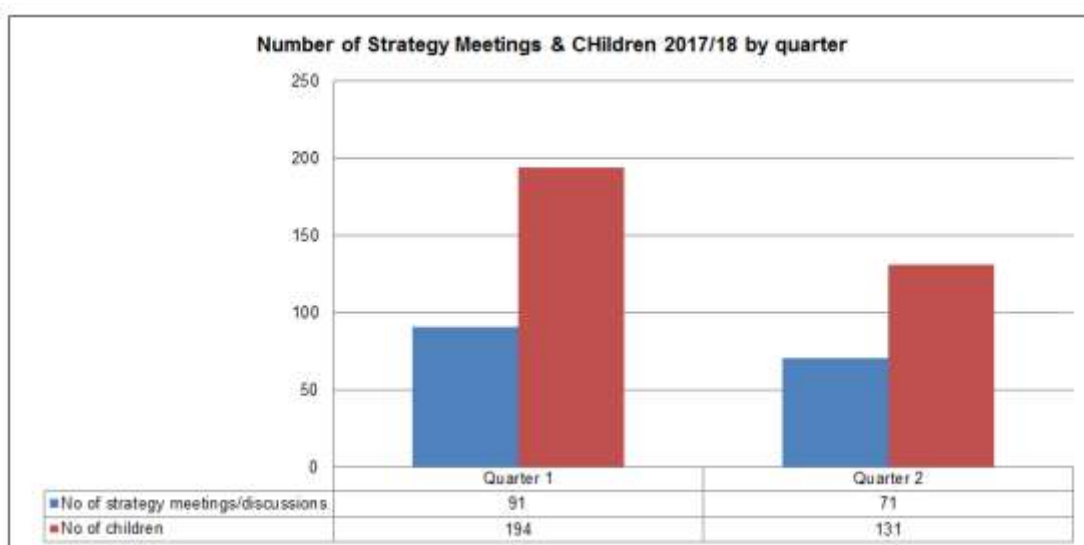
In the period April 2017 – Sept 2017 there were strategy meetings held on 23 children. This resulted in 20 children being discussed within an Initial Child Protection Conference. 14 children were subject to a child protection plan within this period of time.

## 9. CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION

- 9.1 The Children's Hub undertake strategy meetings for all new cases referred. Strategy meetings on open cases are undertaken by the SAS (Safeguarding and Support) teams. The numbers of strategies over the last three years is below:

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
2017/18 (Apr – Sep)	162 relating to 314 children

The number of strategy meetings in the first six months indicates that the number of strategies is likely to be similar figures to the 2016/2017 number; however figures for quarter 1 and 2 (below) indicate that the number is decreasing. This will continue to be monitored monthly and quarterly as set out below.



- 9.2 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.

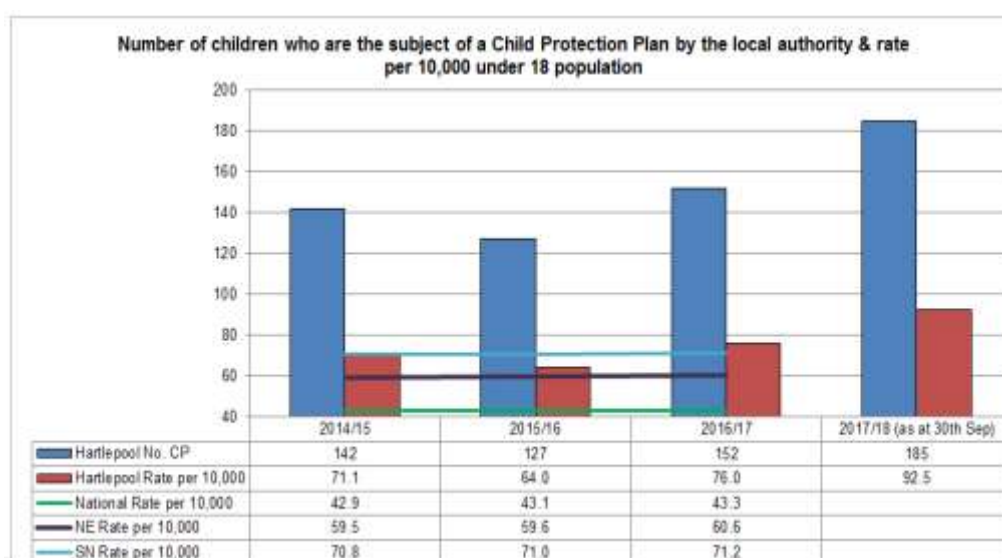
The graph below shows that in the six months from April 2017 – Sept 2017 the number of strategies that resulted in Section 47 enquiries was 71.1%



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

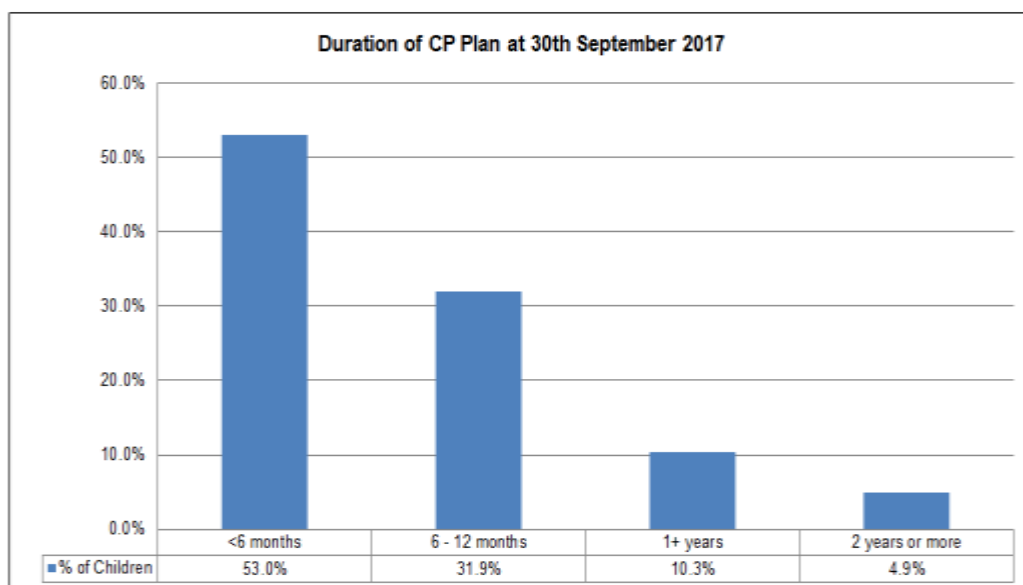
2014/2015	86.9%
2015/2016	94.5%
2016/2017	81.1%
2017/2018	80.6%

9.4 The number of children who are currently subject to a plan at 30<sup>th</sup> September is 185 with the rate per 10,000 being 92.5. There are no six monthly comparisons available with national or regional comparators however the 2106/2017 showed that Hartlepool was well above the national rate and just slightly higher than Statistical neighbours.



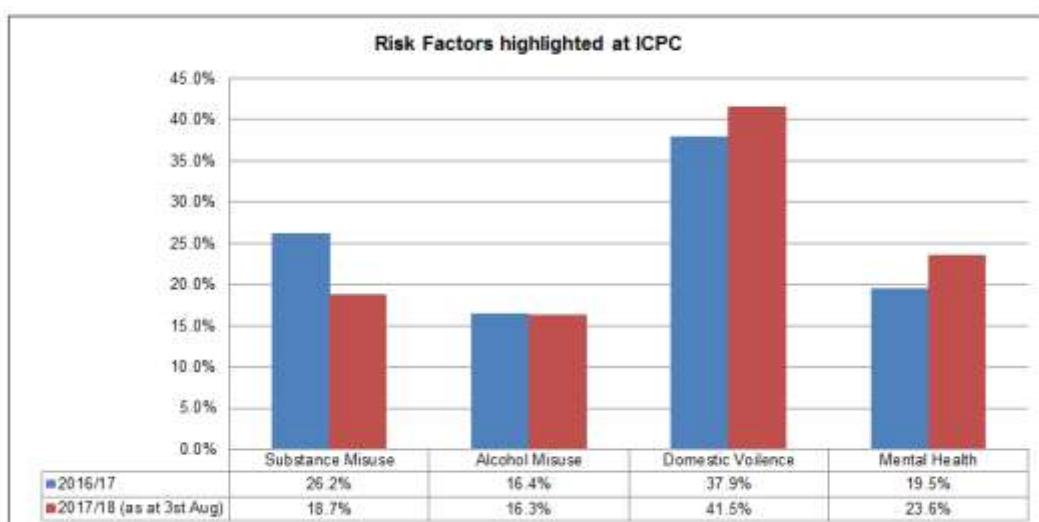
9.5 Heads of Service and managers review the length of time that children are subject to child protection plans to ensure that plans are rigorous and reviewed in a timely manner. Plans that are in place longer than 12 months are discussed in performance clinic and supervision. IROs have oversight of

these plans and scrutinise the progress of the plans to ensure that children's are being met.



The number of children subject to a child protection plan for longer than one year at the end of March 2017 was 17.9%. The current position shows an improving picture however there are nine children that have been subject to a CP plan for longer than two years which needs to be reviewed.

- 9.6 The risk factors identified at Initial Child Protection Conference reflect the factors identified in assessment as indicated in section 6.3. As discussed above these areas continue to be priorities for the HSCB.



- 9.7 It is important that we review the number of children who become subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time to review these cases to understand if the work undertaken within the first plan was successful. The percentage of children who became subject to a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time within two years for the first

two quarters of 2017/18 is 2.9%. This figure is low and indicates that the authority is performing well in this area.

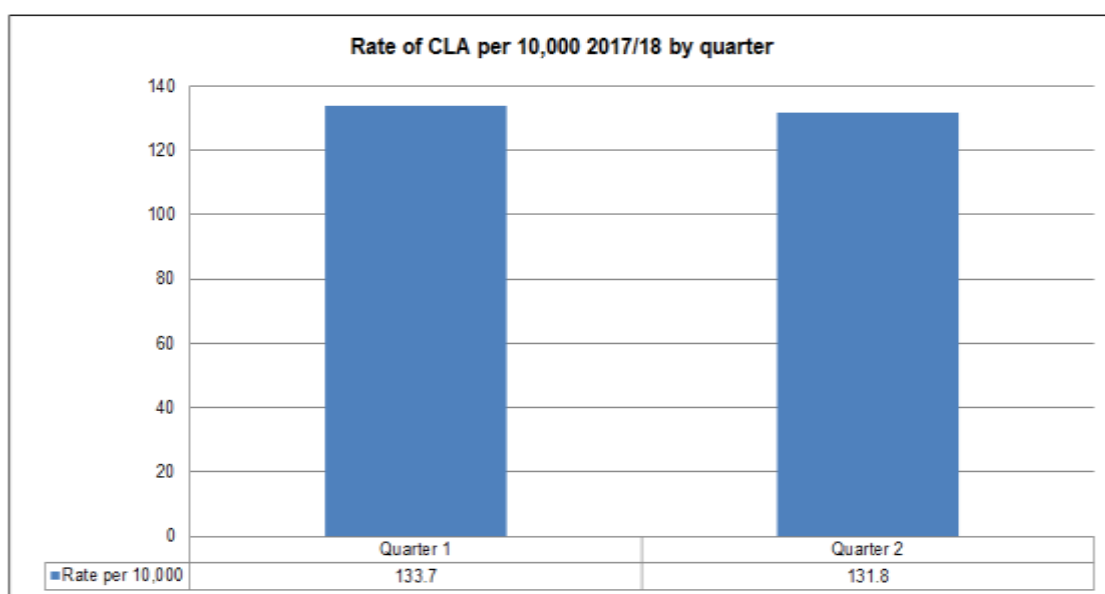
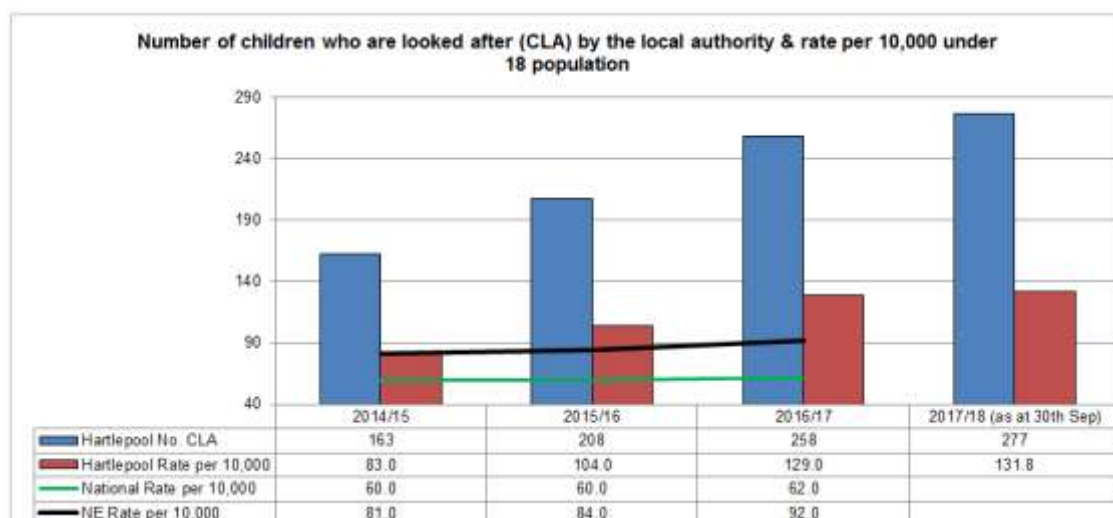
## 10. VEMT (VULNERABLE, EXPLOITED, MISSING, TRAFFICKED)

- 10.1 There are robust processes in place across Tees to support, risk assess and review children and young people being exploited or at risk of being exploited. Hartlepool is part of the Strategic VEMT group and there is a local sub group and also VPG (VEMT practitioners group). The Tees Strategic VEMT group sets the strategy and the local group implements this locally. The VPG consists of all key agencies (LA, health, police, schools, Barnardos and other voluntary groups). Workers refer to this group via a VEMT screening tool and this group reviews all the referrals to ensure that those at risk are supported appropriately. Hotspots and perpetrators are also discussed at this group to support the sharing of intelligence which allows disruption activity to take place. The following information shows the number of children that are being supported. Work is ongoing to ensure that workers capture as much information as possible in return interviews to share with the police so they gain a full intelligence picture.

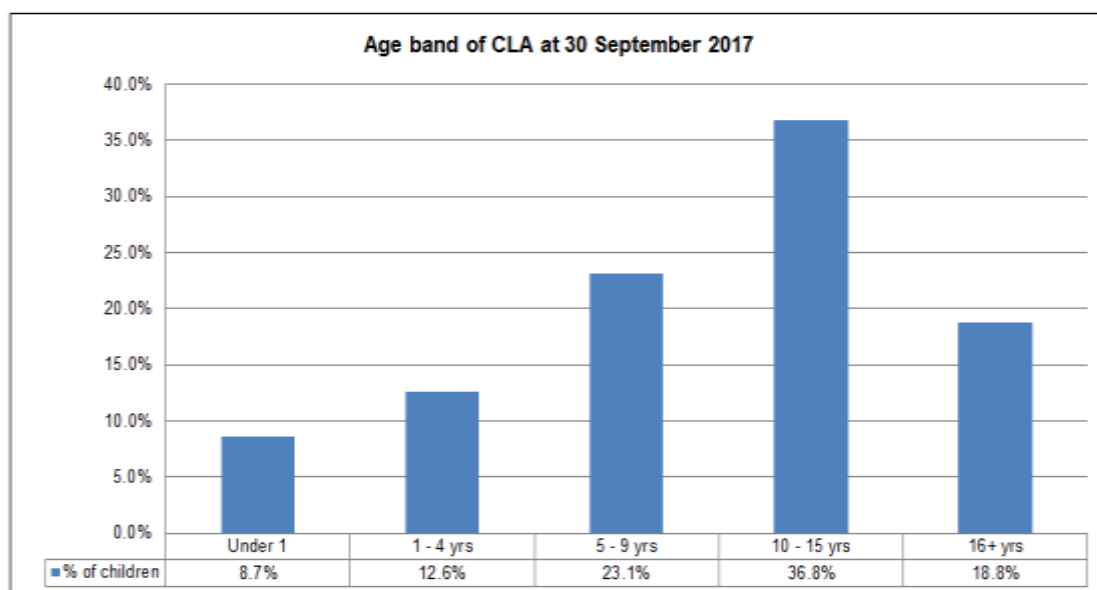
VEMT	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Number of children being discussed at VEMT	28 (16)	23 (12)	36 (10)	35 (12)	35 (13)	37 (12)
Number of missing episodes	55	87	58	76	49	58
Number of children going missing	23	52	36	39	35	38
Number of LAC going missing	10	13	8	14	10	10
% of return interviews completed	83.60%	88.40%	89.70%	84.70%		

## 11. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- 11.1 The number of children becoming looked after continues to increase into the first six months of 2017/2018 although the second quarter indicates a slowdown of this increase. Hartlepool's rate per 10,000 continues to be well above the national and regional rate however national regional figures do also show an increase over the last three years.

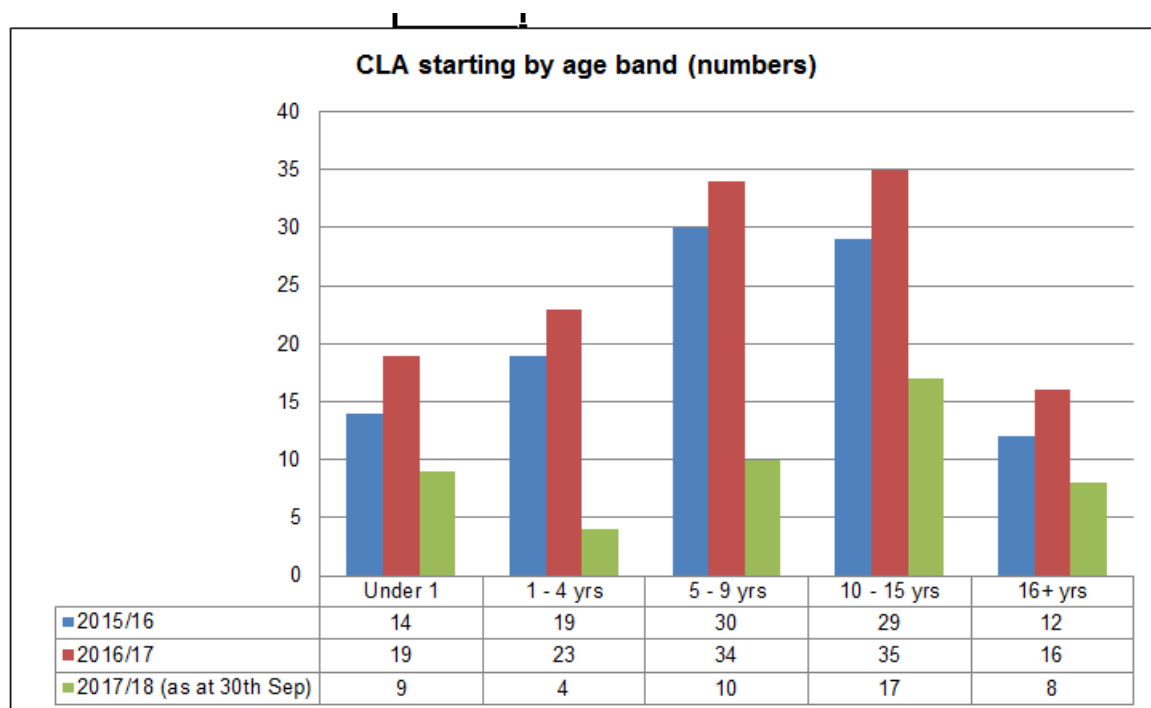


- 11.2 A breakdown of the age profile of the current children looked after cohort at end of quarter 2 was:



The above the graph shows the ages of children who were looked after at 30<sup>th</sup> September 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.

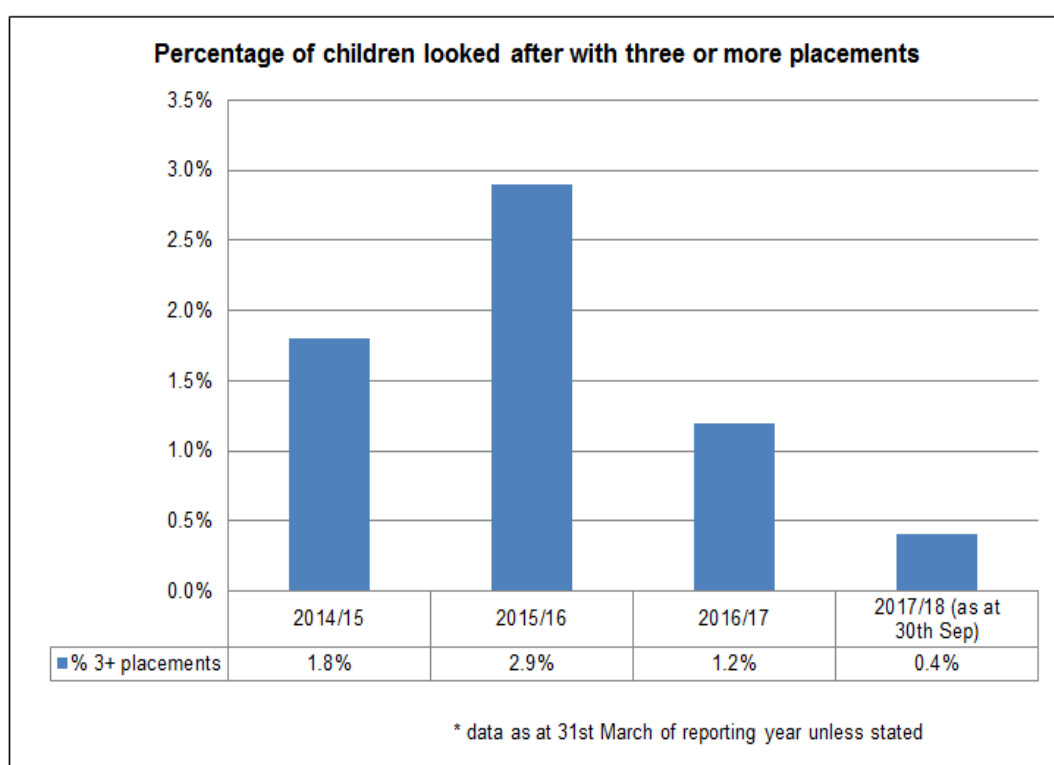
40 children became Looked After during the first two quarters of 2017/18 with 25 of them being 10 years and above. This is a large proportion of the total cohort and mirrors the findings from the review which reinforces the need to promote healthy relationships within families as set out in A Better Childhood in Hartlepool (graph below shows age breakdown)



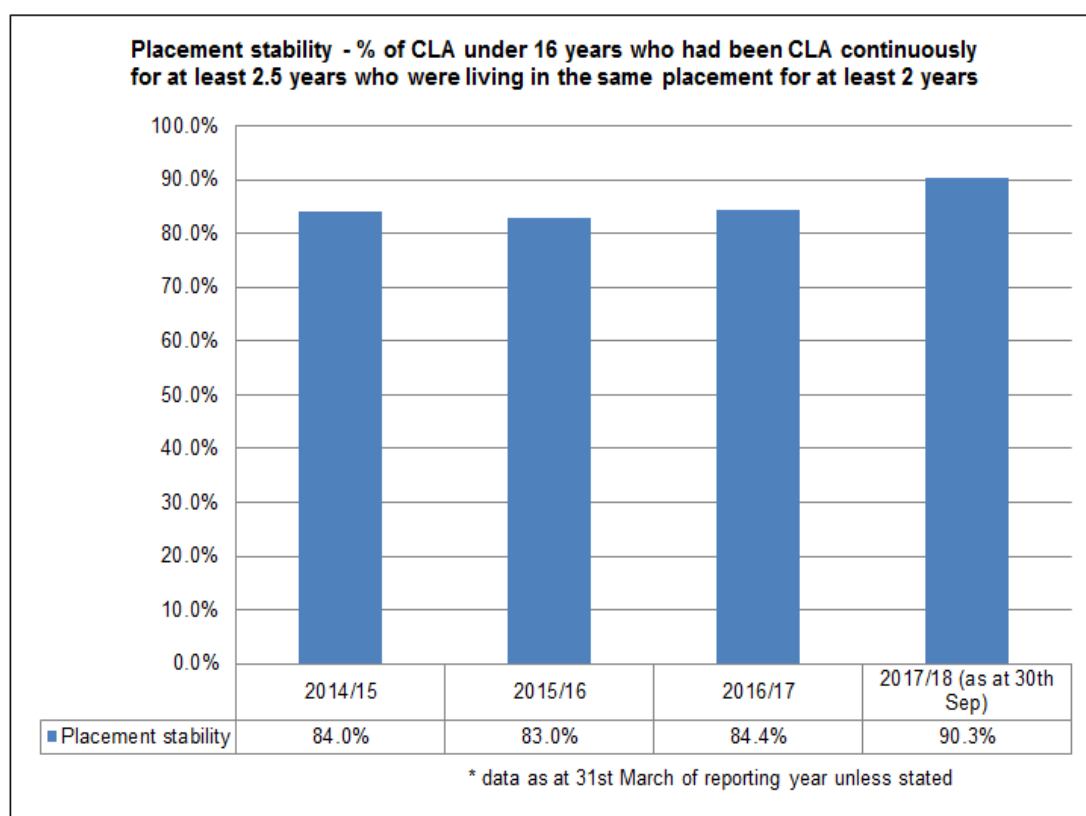
- 11.3 The table below shows the number of children/ young people ceasing to be looked after. The reasons for ceasing were as follows:

CLA End Reason	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18			
	No of Children	% of children	No of Children	% of children	Quarter1		Quarter 2	
					No of Children	% of children	No of Children	% of children
SGO	2	3.0%	14	17.7%	0	0.0%	4	36.4%
Adoption	10	15.2%	10	12.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Returned home to parents, relative or other person	30	45.5%	31	39.2%	6	54.5%	1	9.1%
Child arrangement order	1	1.5%	11	13.9%	0	0.0%	5	45.5%
Other	23	34.8%	13	16.5%	5	45.5%	1	9.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 11.4 Stability is paramount for all children in order for them to reach their true potential and this is especially important for our looked after children. At the end of quarter two in 2017/18, there were 62 children looked after for at least two and a half years of whom, 56 had been living in the same placement for at least two years. The two following indicators show a positive picture for stability for our looked after children.







## 12. WORKFORCE

12.1 Our framework for Children and Family Social Work (*attached as **Appendix A***) sets out our approach to working with children and families and is based on developing effective relationships with families. In order to achieve this we must invest in the workforce ranging from the support for students, recruitment, retention and workforce development at all levels of the organisation. The following sets out the work being undertaken to invest in our staff.

### 12.2 Recruitment

We believe that it is important to support the development of high quality social workers and we support students through a number of different pathways:

- Frontline – we supported four students in 2016/17 with three of the students staying in Hartlepool to complete their ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment). We are currently supporting three Frontline students in our second phase of this programme;
- Teesside University student placements;
- Open University student placements – a number of family support workers have been supported to undertake the OU degree and have been successful in completing this and being appointed to social worker posts within the authority;

12.3 Hartlepool has taken part in regional recruitment work including our principal social worker attending recruitment fairs nationally to raise the profile of the North East and Hartlepool.

12.4 We have developed our Hartlepool Framework for Children and Family Social Work (**Appendix A**) and also produced a film with our social workers to show what Hartlepool can offer. We have also reviewed our website to ensure that our offer is readily available.

#### 12.5 Retention

12.5.1 There are number of retention strategies to ensure that we retain our workforce to ensure consistency of worker for our children and families.

- ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) is a 12 month programme for assessing newly qualified social workers (NQSWs). It supports the NQSW during their first year in employment, helping them to develop their skills, knowledge and professional confidence. Committed to protecting caseloads;
- Offering flexible working to support home life balance;
- Investing in the workforce by creating Assistant Team Managers within each Safeguarding team;
- Creation of Assistant Director, Social Care (Practice Leader role) – to lead social work practice. Previously shared Principal Social Worker across Adults and Children however recently agreed to have a PSW separately for children and adults to make sure that focus is clearly on children's services;
- Workforce Development – implementation of Signs of Safety. All social workers being supported to undertake five days intensive week long training. All Heads of Service have attended the national SoS five day training;
- Supporting managers to access Firstline management development;
- Supporting the whole social work workforce with a focus on emotional wellbeing of individuals and teams. The Head of Service has worked closely with the councils Health Improvement Practitioner (Workplace) to start to pilot a new approach to supporting our workers emotional health and wellbeing. This has included a review of the office accommodation to ensure there is break out space for workers.

#### 12.6 Staff Wellbeing

12.6.1 We recognise that children's social work can be very rewarding however we know that it can be demanding and challenging and we feel it is important to focus on our staff emotional wellbeing. The Head of Service for Safeguarding has worked with the Council's Health Improvement Practitioner to develop a plan to improve the team's health and wellbeing. Work has initially focused on our frontline safeguarding and support teams and questionnaires were circulated to understand whether our teams were looking after their own health and wellbeing. These questionnaires indicated that social workers were not focusing on their own wellbeing therefore it was felt that in order to support our workers to manage the stress of the work that

a number of strategies would be put in place. Team away days were implemented. These away days consisted of:

- Mental health awareness;
- Sleep, relaxation & mindfulness – identifying causes of sleep deprivation and offering solutions to assist restful sleep and recharging of the body & brain;
- Nutrition with a focus on eating/hydrating to fuel the body & brain. Identification of food groups which are slow release energy foods to improve alertness and to prevent fatigue. Questionnaire completed which also identified key areas to focus on during the working day i.e. all staff stated that between 2pm – 5pm their energy levels dropped significantly which affected concentration and productivity;
- Realistic and achievable activities & exercise – Sports & Recreation team are tailoring activities to individual teams and the wider service. Programmes to be developed in early December.
- Inspirational talk focusing on the importance of supporting each other, team resilience and identifying stressful situations earlier and dealing with them before it escalates.

12.6.2 From the 1<sup>st</sup> December there have been environmental changes to the building where the SAS teams are based, Bevan House. The conference room has been re-modelled into a bistro style setting. Breakfast & lunch club will be implemented and staff will also have the option of using the Bistro as a break out room. Staff are being encouraged to take time away from their desks for breakfast and lunch to ensure they get at least 30 mins break. Activities will be offered over lunch as described above. Meetings will not take place over lunchtime unless absolutely necessary i.e. Strategy meetings/attendance in court. Initial feedback from the staff has been excellent with them reporting that they feel more supported.

### **13. AUDIT**

13.1 As explained in the previous committee report Children's Services have introduced a new approach to audit with the introduction of practice weeks. Audit groups are established for each practice week consisting of Heads of Service and team managers. An audit tool has been developed and case files are audited alongside the social worker, in addition the audit group undertake observations of meetings and home visits and contact families and foster carers for feedback.

13.2 Over the last six months a practice weeks took place reviewing Children with Disabilities (SEND) and Through Care. The findings from this week have been discussed within the divisional management team and a social workers group. The following are being implemented following the audits:

- Stop the clock days to ensure that all cases have chronologies;
- Further awareness raised in team meeting to ensure that workers are recording their direct work with children and that this is attached to the files;
- Task and finish group to look at improving plans;

- Include planning in mandatory training.

#### 14. UPDATE FROM RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REPORT

- 14.1 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;

*The North Locality Cluster have agreed to pilot locality working and an initial meeting to discuss issues took place in July 2017. A further meeting took place in September 2017 which identified some specific pieces of work: data matching to understand multiple issues children in the area are facing, community development work and the schools to start to work with educational psychology team to develop emotional wellbeing work.*

- 14.2 A review of the effectiveness of Early Help to understand its impact on the demand for social care services;

*Work is underway to develop an Early Help performance scorecard. This has taken slightly longer than expected due to reporting issues within the Early Help Module. There is also a planned Deep Dive of Early Help through the Tees Safeguarding Boards PMF.*

- 14.3 Implement Healthy Relationships approach across all services to support improved family relationships;

*The Local Authority continue to be a key partner within the Healthy Relationships partnership which is led by Changing Futures North East (CFNE), Relationship Training has taken place with the Early Help teams, the Early Help Assessment has been reviewed to ensure that relationships are explored at this point, Relationships Matter conference is planned for 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018.*

- 14.4 Introduction of Signs of Safety Framework (SoS) across Local Authority Children's Services to ensure that families understand concerns and are enabled and empowered to positively change;

*A significant amount of work has taken place over the last six months to begin implementation of the SoS Framework, Heads of Service have undertaken the five days week national training, local two day introduction training and five day intensive training has taken place with more planned in 2018. A social worker has used the SoS framework to work with a family from end to end (this has been overseen by the regional SoS consultant and highlighted as an excellent piece of work), practice leads sessions are in place to practice the framework in a safe space, group supervision has been introduced with Heads of Service leading.*

- 14.5 Review of how substance misuse services/ domestic violence services and mental health services are supporting families to positively change; *These have been identified as priorities for Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board and sub groups for each of these areas are reviewing current effectiveness.*

- 14.6 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;

*A review has been undertaken of children with disabilities and has been included within section 8 of this report.*

*A review was undertaken of the children that had more than three placements and this showed that there were four children who had had three or more placements. On review all four cases were known by Heads of Service and Assistant Director and the reasons for changes in placements were for two of the children a move to adoption after two placements, the other two were for older children who struggled to develop relationships with foster carers within a family setting due to significant previous trauma and as a result are now placed in residential settings.*

- 14.7 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. *Practice weeks have been held and are planned as follows:*
- *30<sup>th</sup> January to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 – SAS Teams*
  - *24<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 – SEND Team and Through Care Teams*
  - *16<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Fostering and Adoption Teams*
  - *27<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017 – SAS Teams, SEND Teams, Through Care Teams*
  - *22<sup>nd</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018 – Early Help*

## **15. FURTHER REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 15.1 The above recommendations will continue to be implemented and reported to committee every six months.
- 15.2 Additional recommendations for this period of reporting include:
- A review of the number of children subject to a CP plan for longer than 2 years (as set out in section 9.5)
  - The implementation of a performance reporting process for Early Help.

## **16. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **17. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 17.1 There are no specific financial considerations within this report however it needs noting that the demand for children's social care continues at similar rates as last year. This needs to be closely monitored to understand if the current resource can meet this demand.

## **18. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 18.1 There are no legal considerations within this report.

## **19. CONSULTATION**

- 19.1 The performance within this report is discussed internally within performance clinics, Business Unit meetings and Departmental Management meetings.

## **20. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)**

- 20.1 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.

## **21. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)**

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

## **22. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS**

- 22.1 There are no specific staff considerations within this report. Staff wellbeing is discussed in section 11.

## **23. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 23.1 There are no asset management considerations.

**24. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 24.1 For members to note the report.

**25. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 25.1 To ensure that members of the committee are kept up to date with the position for children's safeguarding which enables them to review current performance and challenge as appropriate.

**26. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 26.1 Children's Services Committee Safeguarding report 13<sup>th</sup> June 2017

**27. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Danielle Swainston  
Assistant Director, Children and Families Services  
Level 4, Civic Centre  
01429 523732  
[danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# Better Childhood in Hartlepool: Hartlepool's Framework for Children and Family Social Work





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## Background

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We are focused on practice that supports our vision for a Better Childhood in Hartlepool

Mission statement:

**“To enable all children and families<sup>1</sup> in Hartlepool to have opportunities to make the most of their life chances and be supported to be safe in their homes and communities.”**

The Vision is underpinned by our Obsessions:

- Life Chances (Stability, Health, Wellbeing, Education)
- Being and Feeling Safe
- Relationships and Resilience

Our Vision and Obsessions are rooted in our values:

- We will work to protect children from significant harm;
- We will keep children and their families at the heart of everything we do; we are child-focused/person-centred.
- We will promote individual human rights.
- We recognise and promote diversity.
- We understand that every child and every family is different. We will assess each child and their family so that we can offer services to suit their needs. We will do this using an approach called the ‘team around the child’ model;
- We will respect each child and their family and always treat them with dignity. We will not make changes to the services we provide without good reason;
- We promote choice.
- We will always try and maintain positive relationships through not changing social workers and promoting choice through service provision.
- We will listen to children, young people and their families and always try and understand what our services feel like to them.
- We believe we can make the biggest difference to a child’s quality of life by providing a service as soon as we find out that the child needs support from us; However, we will only intervene when appropriate.
- We will check our services often to make sure they are as good as they can be. We will make changes to our services if we need to;
- Our workers will be skilled and will do their jobs well. Managers will give support and guidance to the staff in their teams. All workers will get high-quality training as part of their job;
- Our services will work together to make sure we make each child’s quality of life better.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Families’ includes wider family members and carers including foster carers.

We will support the workforce to:

- Have an approach based on intervention based practice.
- Own, intervene and take action to meet the needs of children and families and assumes their responsibilities as agents of change.
- Be reflective workers who are skilled and knowledgeable and draw on the latest research and evidence based practice.
- Build effective relationships with the families we work with to ensure they receive the help and support they need.
- Support families to develop their own plans making sure that all support networks available to them are used. This includes wider family networks and also workers from other organisations.

## Summary of our approach

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- We will honour and respect families regardless of their circumstances using our statutory powers judiciously and with empathy.
- We value the importance of direct social work and family support work with families as a means of enabling change. Our workforce will be skilled in intervention based practice.
- We believe families are where children thrive and we support children to remain within their family wherever possible.
- We are focused on the absolute priority to make it a safe journey for the children and families we work with.
- We work openly with families and children to bring about change, building on strengths and solutions, so that parents and carers are able to provide good parenting, consistent boundaries and emotional warmth, allowing children to develop life skills and resilience.
- We know that this work requires the right conditions and culture for social workers to practice well. We aim for our teams to be small with manageable caseloads and made up of staff supported by a team manager and assistant team manager.
- We will balance the need for evidence based practice with promoting time and space for direct work with families.
- We consider and respond to the diverse emotional, cultural and material needs of each child and their family. We promote the appropriate use of advocacy and accessible information to help people understand the work we are doing.
- We understand that building resilience and bringing about change in families who face disadvantage can be difficult and challenging. This requires skilled, confident and resilient social workers and the right environment that allows best practice to flourish. To achieve this we will provide good leadership, good management oversight, good supervision and good learning and development opportunities.
- We are led by an inspirational and experienced leadership team including the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, Assistant Director Children's Services, Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Chair of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board.
- We are committed to regular and effective supervision on a one to one basis as well as regular group supervision in each team.

- We use feedback gathered from children, young people and families to learn lessons, understand issues and inform practice and workforce development. Feedback is gathered as part of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) process for newly qualified social workers, service user engagement in Practice Week, Family Leadership courses and complaints and compliments.
- We have in place dedicated administrative support for each of the teams to free up social workers to spend more time with children and their families and advanced practitioners to co-work our most complex cases.

While we feel that our vision is clear and we have made progress, we do not take that for granted and know that our continuous improvement journey will be hard work, challenging and sometimes frustrating. We want our social workers to feel supported in their development to provide an excellent service for the families they are working with and want to carry on working for Hartlepool Borough Council.

## A Better Childhood in Hartlepool - Child focused practice

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A Better Childhood in Hartlepool sets out the vision and values that guide social work practice in Hartlepool. Our framework is designed to be flexible so that it can work to support every family and their different needs. We know what might be right for one family or child may not be right for another. It has been developed to support social workers to use their professional judgement and to spend their time undertaking relationship-based social work with children and families that truly transform lives.

The role of a social worker is an incredibly difficult one, requiring a range of skills and a firm knowledge base. For us, child focused practice is about ensuring our social workers are compassionate and “tread lightly” with families regardless of the outcome of our involvement. We want our social workers to:

- Look at the bigger picture; understand the impact of social problems on families and the root causes of those issues.
- Take responsibility for families. Get to know the child and the family.
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with families and other professionals.
- Work purposefully so not allowing drift, with a clear and constant focus on children’s need and experiences.
- Understand the physical, social and emotional development of children and young people, and the context and circumstances of their lives (the wider system).
- Provide evidence-based interventions with families that improve children’s lives in a timely and compassionate way.
- Have the skills and knowledge to complete high quality and effective assessments and plans. This includes having strong report writing skills and good analytical and communication skills. It requires an ability to reflect and make good use of supervision.
- Develop bespoke packages of care dependant on individual need. Be led by the needs of the individual child and outcomes we hope to achieve, not service plans.
- Encourage children, young people and families to own their plans.
- Ensure plans are outcome focused with the social worker being confident and understanding their key role in making the plan work.
- Spend time helping families to identify or develop natural networks in order to effect sustainable change which does not purely rely on the local authority services.

- Use a strengths based solution focused approach without losing sight of valid concerns and areas requiring change for better outcomes for the child.

### Hartlepool Social Workers

- Are HCPC registered and take responsibility for their own conduct, practice and learning.
- Are knowledgeable and use relevant research and tools to promote good outcomes.
- Are curious, sensitive, and reflective as well as being authoritative, professional and tenacious in improving life outcomes for children.
- Approach families with empathy, compassion and creativity developing relationships for positive change.
- Work purposefully, openly and compassionately with the whole family system.
- Use reflective critical thinking and analysis to evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence to create meaningful assessments and plans which promote good outcomes.
- Separate complicating factors from 'harm'.
- Build skilful and influential working relationships with other professionals and agencies for the benefit of the family to provide a co-ordinated approach.
- Have high quality, child focused, person-centred planning and decision making skills.
- Draw on a range of approaches, used proportionately and regularly reviewed. We are conscious that one 'size' does not fit all and promote strengths based solution focused systemic approach hence skilling staff up in Signs of Safety, solution focused practice and person-centred planning.
- Make good and emotionally intelligent use of supervision.
- Demonstrate understanding and skill in working as a member of a team and organisation.
- Understand their legal and statutory responsibilities and execute these in children's best interests.
- Use administrative support appropriately to create space for direct work.
- Take time out, consider their own wellbeing, eat lunch and put their pen down
- Take time in each day to reflect on their work and the difference it is making to the lives of the children and young people.
- Attend Practice Lead sessions which create a safe place to celebrate achievements and discuss worries and concerns.
- Use peer support when trying out new innovative ways of working.
- Showcase work to others.
- Use impact assessments and follow up with reflective supervision following training.



## What methodologies do we use in our Better Childhood in Hartlepool framework?

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- Our practice is solution focused. We collaborate with families assuming they want to do well, have or can develop a goal or goals and have the capacity and personal resources to move towards them, even in small steps.
- We are child focused/person-centred and take for granted that families are the experts in their own lives and learning.
- We are curious, ask appropriate questions and assist progress, while being clear about professional boundaries.
- We work directly with families drawing on the skills our workforce have but commission specialist services where necessary.
- We use Signs of Safety to organise, articulate and structure our work with children and families.

## How are social workers supported to work within our Better Childhood in Hartlepool child focused practice framework?

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- We expect our social workers to have the practice expertise to be able to assess and identify what needs to change and offer supportive, creative and effective interventions that help families solve their problems, enabling children to live safely at home. When this is not possible, our social workers take timely and appropriate decisions to ensure children are safe and there is permanence in alternative care arrangements; to plan and pursue the best possible options for children and young people, including returning home where possible.
- We expect our social workers to provide a proportionate level of assessment and use specialist assessments when relevant.
- We expect our social workers to understand what produces good outcomes and use their imagination to develop bespoke interventions that make a difference to families.
- We expect our social workers to have the confidence and skill to judge when and how to apply different approaches and interventions; and when it is more appropriate to draw on the families own natural resources and Hartlepool's wealth of community based support services as opposed to a social work intervention.
- We expect our social workers to understand pathways or services and know when to escalate whilst not creating dependency.
- We expect our social workers to challenge families and have difficult conversations with them whilst advocating for families with other professionals.
- We expect social workers to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and safety and to mentor and support other workers in their teams and the wider department.
- In Hartlepool we support our social workers to both understand the methods (described above) and have the confidence and skills to know when to apply them in a range of ways:
  - Social workers are trained and supported in Signs of Safety, Solution Focused Practice, Person Centred Planning, Listening to Children and in specific areas of specialist practice as required.
  - We are aware that training alone will not create the environment and confidence in skills and are therefore working hard to create this by allowing staff to practice elements of this work in a safe way via group supervision.

- Our advanced practitioners provide hands-on support and guidance to help social workers reflect on the most appropriate interventions;
- There is regular team-based group supervision as well as individual supervision which allows social workers the time and space to reflect on their work;
- Case load size and complexity is managed to allow workers to work with the tools/training we have provided.
- Six monthly practice weeks are designed to give senior managers the opportunity to spend time on 'hands-on' reviews and support development. Practice Weeks include: direct observations of practice, and one to one time with social workers to discuss case work strengths, areas for development and outcomes achieved via our involvement. Senior Managers also have conversations with children and young people and parents/carers to understand their perspective on the work and relationships. Learning from practice week is used to improve our practice and the quality of services.
- Regular performance clinics and an ongoing audit programme are in place through an enhanced Quality Assurance Framework to ensure we remain focused on practice quality.
- All workers are familiar with the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) and their evidence to support progression focuses on this.

## How have we structured our service?

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- Our social work teams are small to enable regular individual and group supervision, manageable caseloads and hands-on support and guidance.
- The social work teams have Assistant Team Managers who provide reflective supervision, support and modelling for social worker. They also have a lead role in mentoring and developing newly qualified social workers as part of the ASYE programme.
- The social work teams have Team Managers to provide management oversight and quality assure social work practice providing reflective supervision, challenge and direction.
- Service Managers are located with teams providing leadership, direction and support to Team Managers and Assistant Team Managers.
- Each team is supported by a business support officer to ensure social workers are spending their time on things that only a qualified social worker can do.
- We have experienced advanced practitioners throughout the service who co-work our most complex cases and provide hands-on support and guidance to others.

## What about career development?

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We are committed to developing our staff and ensuring Hartlepool is a great place to work. There are staff in Hartlepool who have worked their way up from social workers to advanced practitioners, team managers and service managers. However, for us, career progression is not just about 'moving up' and into management but also continuous development to improve and develop better practice skills with families.

In addition to the training in the social work methods outlined in this document, we have joined Firstline, the new national management support programme for first line social work managers.

There are structured opportunities for career progression in place. We have a robust Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme with regular mentoring and portfolio building meetings. Newly qualified social workers automatically progress after concluding their ASYE. There is then a programme of support in place to help social workers progress to Experienced Social Work level which focuses around showing how they have met the KSS/PCF at the appropriate level.

We are promoting social work and constantly seeking models of best practice via local, regional and national networks.

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## Learning Resources

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We have in place a wide range of learning resources to support social workers.

- A comprehensive training programme designed to respond to individual and departmental needs.
- Access to high level legal training.
- Access to the Hartlepool Children's Safeguarding Board multi agency training programme.
- Regular staff briefing sessions that keep staff informed of Corporate and departmental developments.
- A programme to support the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment social workers and onward progression.
- Training courses are regularly evaluated and impact assessments completed by participants.

We know however, that training only contributes towards just 10% of learning so have in place other resources to support the programmes.

- An online Practice Manual providing up to date policies and procedures and a wealth of resources to support social work practice.
- An Effective Intervention Toolkit that provides a wealth of resources to support everyday practice.
- Children's practice toolkits in every team to support direct work with children.
- A range of person-centred planning tools that can be used to help facilitate child-focused work.
- Community Care Inform licences that allow social workers to remain up to date in national policy developments and research.
- Reflective supervision and annual appraisals giving social workers the opportunities to reflect on their own performance and identify training needs.
- Practice lead sessions with the Assistant Director where worries and achievements can be shared.
- Membership of the ASYE regional partnership where good practice is shared.
- Presentations from family leadership programmes to social workers.