

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Tuesday 15 March 2022

at 4.00 pm

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

A limited number of members of the public will be able to attend the meeting with spaces being available on a first come, first served basis. Those wishing to attend the meeting should phone (01429) 523568 or (01429) 523019 by midday on Monday 14 March and name and address details will be taken for NHS Test and Trace purposes.

You should not attend the meeting if you are required to self-isolate or are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms such as (a high temperature, new and persistent cough, or a loss of/change in sense of taste or smell), even if these symptoms are mild. If you, or anyone you live with, have one or more of these symptoms you should follow the [NHS guidance on testing](#).

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Boddy, Cassidy, Fleming, Groves, Harrison, Lindridge and Moore.

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

School Heads Representatives: Mark Tilling (Secondary), David Turner (Primary), Zoe Westley (Special).

Six Young Peoples Representatives

Observer: Councillor Fleming, Chair of Adult and Community Based Services Committee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone. The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on date 15 February 2022 (*previously circulated and published*).

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

No items.

5. KEY DECISIONS

- 5.1 Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2022/23 – *Director for Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 5.2 2022/23 Schools’ Capital Works Programme – *Director for Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 6.1 To Nominate a Local Authority Representative to Serve On the Governing Body Of Fens Primary Schools – *Director for Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- 7.1 Holiday Activities and Food Programme – *Director for Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.2 OFSTED Focused Visit – Care Leavers – *Director for Children’s and Joint Commissioning Services*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 March 2022



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

Subject: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – EARLY YEARS
BLOCK 2022/23

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

- 1.1 This report contains key decisions - test (i) and (ii) apply.
- 1.2 The forward plan reference is **CJCS 118/21**.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To present the indicative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding allocation in relation to the Early Years Funding for 2022/23 and propose the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) that sets hourly rates for providers for 2022/23.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The EYNFF sets the hourly funding rates for each local authority to deliver the universal and additional entitlements for three and four year olds, along with entitlements for 2 year olds.
- 3.2 Local authorities are required to consult providers on proposed annual changes to the local early year's funding formula, although the final decision rests with the local authority.
- 3.3 The government announced a £160m increase nationally for Early Years for 2022/23 within the November 2021 spending review, a 5% increase.

4. 2022/23 EARLY YEARS BLOCK FUNDING

- 4.1 The 2022/23 funding allocation for the Early Years Block shown in the following table was announced on 16 December 2021.

Early Years Block	Rate	2022/23 Estimated Funding (£)
3/4 Year Old Funding	£4.80 per hour	4,697,657
Disability Access Fund (DAF)		42,400
Pupil Premium		164,017
Total 3/4 Funding		4,904,074
2 Year Old Funding	£5.57 per pupil	1,197,065
Total Estimated Early Years Block		6,101,140

- 4.2 The funded rate for 3 to 4 year old provision increases from £4.63 to £4.80; the funded rate for 2 year old provision increases from £5.36 to £5.57. This hourly rate from government includes the funds both to deliver the scheme and the maximum payment for providers for each eligible child.

5. PROPOSED HOURLY RATE STRUCTURE 2022/23 – Three to Four Year Old Provision

- 5.1 The table below shows the proposed hourly rate structure for 2022/23, taking into account the increase for three to four year old provision. The local authority is proposing to apply the increase of 17p per hour to our existing formula as shown in the table below, with 16p of the increase being applied to the base rate and the remaining 1p to centrally retained budgets.

Proposed three & four year old formula	Current Hourly Rate (£)	Proposed New Hourly Rate (£)	% Allocated
DFE allocation	4.63	4.80	100.0%
Proposed Hartlepool Formula:			
Base Rate	4.34	4.50	93.8%
Mandatory Deprivation Supplement	0.01	0.01	0.2%
Contingency	0.02	0.02	0.4%
SEN Inclusion Fund	0.03	0.03	0.6%
Pass- through rate to providers	4.40	4.56	95.0%
Centrally retained funding	0.23	0.24	5.0%
Total	4.63	4.80	100.0%

5.2 Pass-through rate – 95%

The pass-through rate includes the base rate, the funding of the deprivation supplement, the proposed contingency fund and an allocation for the SEN inclusion fund. These elements are described in more detail below.

5.3 Base rate– 93.8%

The base rate proposed would represent an increase of 16p per hour from the existing base rate of £4.34. The base rate is payable to all providers of three to four year old provision.

5.4 Mandatory Deprivation Supplement – 0.2%

Deprivation is a mandated supplement within the early year's hourly rate. This is proposed at the same rate as 2021/22. Payments would continue to be allocated on the basis of those three to four year olds attracting pupil premium.

5.5 Contingency Fund – 0.4%

Although there is a duty to ensure that 95% of 3-4 year old funding is passed to providers, it is important to understand and manage the risk of exceeding the 95%, resulting in a new financial pressure on the early years block. A contingency fund of 0.4% is proposed (0.4% in 2021/22) in order to mitigate this risk. Such a risk could materialise through unexpected volatility in census volumes during the funding year. The contingency fund would provide for circa seven full time places for a complete year and is considered a reasonable provision based on previous year census variations.

5.6 SEN Inclusion Fund – 0.6%

The SEN Inclusion Fund is proposed to be maintained at 0.6% (0.6% in 2021/22). This £29k fund can be accessed by all providers in accordance with the agreed policy.

5.7 The pass-through rate position will continue to be carefully monitored in-year to assess any risk and respond appropriately.**5.8 Centrally Retained Funding**

In accordance with ESFA guidance, centrally retained funding of 5% of the EYNFF, is proposed to be retained. Schools' Forum approved that the retention of 5% be recommended to Children's Services Committee for approval.

5.9 Other Specific Funding

The local authority also receives specific funding for eligible three and four year olds relating to the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Pupil Premium; this is passported to eligible providers. The rates per pupil for 2022/23 are DAF £615.00 per pupil and pupil premium of £0.53p per hour. These rates are unchanged from 2021/22.

6. Two Year Old Provision Shortfall - Update

- 6.1 Members will recall previous decisions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to withhold 16p (2 x 8p) of the 2 year old funding to support the ongoing risks associated with the funding deficit in this early years budget area. This decision reduces the two year old deficit by approximately £40,000 each year.
- 6.2 Temporary changes to funding in response to the pandemic improved the funding shortfall in 2020/21 and a similar outlook is expected for 2021/22. However, the temporary funding changes end in 2022/23 so it is likely that the funding shortfall will increase to pre-pandemic levels.
- 6.3 Prior to holding back the 16p hourly rate funding, the excess cost of two year old provision against available funding was £150,000 in 2019/20. Should the funding shortfall for 2022/23 return to pre-pandemic levels, proposals for managing the position would be presented to Schools' Forum for recommendation to this Committee as part of budget setting for 2023/24. An intensive period of consultation with providers would be conducted prior to such proposals being presented for decision.

7. PROPOSED HOURLY RATE STRUCTURE 2022/23 – Two Year Old Provision

- 7.1 On announcing the hourly rate funding increases in October 2021, expectation of government is that increases are passed to providers. The announcement stated "We are investing additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160m in 2022-23, £180m in 2023-24 and £170m in 2024-25. This is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflects the costs of inflation and national living wage increases".
- 7.2 Therefore, the proposal for 2022/23 hourly rates is that the previous 16p needs to be retained and the new hourly rate funding increase for 2022/23 of 21p is passed directly to providers of two year old provision.

8. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 8.1 The consultation with providers ended on 28 January 2022. A summary of the responses is provided in the table below.

Early Years Consultation 2022/23 - Responses	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total	% Agreed
1: Do you agree that the hourly rate for 3 to 4 year old provision is distributed using the current hourly rate structure as shown in the table at section 4.1 above?)	17	3	1	21	81%
2: Do you agree that the historic 16p increase for 2 year old funding is not passed to providers in 2022/23?	11	8	2	21	52%

3: Do you agree that the 2022/23 hourly rate increase of 21p for 2 year old funding is passed to providers in 2022/23?	20	1	0	21	95%
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- 8.2 Responses to the consultation were from a mix of settings – 7 childminders, 7 private nurseries and 7 schools with early year's provision.
- 8.3 Schools' Forum consulted with the Head Teachers they represent and, at their meeting of 2 February 2022, Forum approved the proposed hourly rate for three to four year old provision outlined in section 5 of this report.
- 8.4 At the same meeting, Forum approved the proposed hourly rate for two year old provision outlined in section 7 of this report.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 It is possible that a funding shortfall on two year old provision may materialise in 2022/23 once the temporary funding changes in response to the pandemic are removed. However, should this risk materialise, there should be adequate funding in Dedicated School Grant reserves to fund the shortfall.
- 9.2 The Task and Finish Group remain on standby to re-establish options to tackle the funding shortfall, to be implemented from April 2023, if this became necessary.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The 2022/23 allocations are subject to adjustment following the January 2022 census. Therefore, the figures provided in the table shown at paragraph 4.1 are subject to change during 2022, although the hourly rates will not vary.
- 10.2 The proposed hourly rates for 3 to 4 year old provision reflect the continuing need within the regulations to pass through at least 95% of the NFF to providers.
- 10.3 The proposed hourly rate for 2 year old provision pass on the 21p per hour increase announced by government in October 2021, whilst continuing to retain the 16p increase from previous financial years in response to the ongoing risk of a funding shortfall.

11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

LEGAL	The local authority is required under the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to consult providers on annual changes to their formula. This has been completed, with the outcomes reported at paragraph 8.1 above.
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CONSULTATION	All providers in Hartlepool have been consulted on the hourly rate proposals for 2022/23 and the results were considered at Schools' Forum on 2 February 2022.
CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY	There are no specific child and family poverty considerations.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	There are no specific equality and diversity considerations.
STAFF	There are no specific considerations
ASSET MANAGEMENT	There are no asset management considerations.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1 Local authorities are required to consult providers on annual changes to local early year's funding formulas, although the final decision rests with the local authority to agree the EYNFF.
- 12.2. The consultation closed on 28 January 2022 and the outcome was discussed at Schools' Forum on 2 February 2022.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- a) note the contents of this report and the outcomes from the consultation with providers and Schools' Forum;
 - b) note the recommendation by Schools' Forum to centrally retain funding of 5%;
 - b) approve the hourly rate funding formula for three to four year old provision for 2022/23 as shown in the table at paragraph 5.3, passing the increase of 16p on to providers through the hourly rate formula;
 - c) approve the hourly rate funding formula for two year old provision for 2022/23 as outlined at paragraph 7.2, passing the increase of 21p on to providers through the hourly rate.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 Schools' Forum Reports of 18 November 2021 and 2 February 2022 relating to Dedicated Schools Grant – Early Years Block 2022/23.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Director of Resources and Development



Chief Solicitor



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 March 2022



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

Subject: 2022/23 SCHOOLS' CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 Key Decision (test (i)/(ii) apply) Forward Plan Reference No. CJCS 123/21

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the 2022/23 Schools' Capital Works Programme, as detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A**, in order to progress the design and detailed costing exercise in time for the majority of projects to be carried out during the summer holiday period. **This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Each Spring term, the Department for Education (DfE) announces capital funding allocations, these being School Condition Allocations (SCA) – formerly known as Capital Maintenance and Devolved Formula Capital (DFC), for the school estate in Hartlepool.

3.2 At the time of writing this report, capital funding allocations had not been communicated to the LA. The DfE have previously stated that SCA allocations for a current year would be indicative of the funding that responsible bodies will receive in future years and further stated that SCA will be revised annually to reflect any schools moving to a different responsible body e.g. converting to academy status, opening or closing. During 2021/22 (financial year), no schools that the LA is responsible for, converted to academy status. However, we are mindful that two primary schools are

converting to academy status on 1 April 2022 and this is likely to be reflected in our funding allocation.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 This report is seeking approval for the schemes proposed in confidential **APPENDIX A** and will be funded from all available funding. Schools are also expected to contribute a minimum of 10% towards the condition schemes.

5. FUNDING

- 5.1 School Condition Allocation is a grant to the LA for all maintained community schools and is aimed at addressing condition needs in existing school premises, but does not include academies who receive funding from a Condition Improvement Fund, direct from the Education & Skills Funding Agency.
- 5.2 Devolved Formula Capital is a relatively limited capital allocation made directly to schools via the LA to support small scale projects and ICT development. Schools often use this allocation to fund their 10% contributions to larger capital schemes
- 5.3 Detailed in Table 1 below is the total funding available for works. Table 2 details the total costs of schemes proposed, the contingency sum for 2022/23 and the total funding required. Although there are three projects yet to be fully costed, Members are asked to approve the works and contingency totalling £877,000. The programme will be carefully managed to ensure there is no risk of overspending the funding available.

Table 1

22/23 SCA Funding*	700,000
21/22 Unallocated	26,700
21/22 Unused Contingency	70,000
10% School contributions	80,700
Total Available	877,400

*anticipated allocation

Table 2

Condition Schemes	807,000
Contingency	70,000
Total Required	877,000

6. CONTINGENCY

- 6.1 As in previous years, the overall programme recommended to Committee for approval includes a separate contingency fund which has been allocated from the SCA. This will continue to ensure that urgent but unforeseen items can be addressed, should the need arise.
- 6.2 Other than in response to an emergency situation, there will be no significant variation to the programme of works as detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A**.

- 6.3 Within the 2021/22 programme there was a contingency sum of £70,000. An emergency project has very recently been identified. Cost estimates have not yet been obtained, however, it's expected the 2021/22 contingency sum will be sufficient to meet the project costs.

7. PROCUREMENT

- 7.1 All works of a non-specialist nature will be offered to the in-house Construction Team. If they decline, then the works will be externally procured in accordance with the Council's procurement rules.
- 7.2 All in-house work that utilises subcontractors and suppliers or work of a specialist nature will be procured in accordance with the Council's procurement rules

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2 The proposed programme of school condition works has been compiled on the basis of those areas/sections of school buildings which are showing clear signs of failure and those aspects which will prevent possible loss of school days due to emergency school closures.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 If the schemes detailed in the attached confidential **APPENDIX A** are approved, funding can be met from the 2022/23 Schools Condition Allocation and current unallocated capital funding.

10. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal considerations.

11. CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The draft condition priorities detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A** were noted at Schools Capital Sub Group meeting of the 20 January 2022.

12. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY

- 12.1 There are no child and family poverty considerations.

13. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

13.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations.

14. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

14.1 There are no staff considerations.

15. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

15.1 The report is concerned with the condition, protection and development of Council assets i.e. school buildings.

16. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 For Members to:

- a) Approve the schedule of 2022/23 capital works programme as summarised in confidential **APPENDIX A**, subject to the LA agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum;

These items contain exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

- b) Authorise the Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, dispensation and discretion to authorise works where an emergency (eg risk of school closure) or a significant health and safety risk is exposed;
- c) Authorise the Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, dispensation and discretion to add or remove a project(s) as a result of an increase or decrease in the 2022/23 SCA funding allocation;

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

18. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Director of Finance and Policy ☒

Chief Solicitor ☒

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

15th March 2022



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

Subject: TO NOMINATE A LOCAL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE GOVERNING BODY OF FENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 This is a Non Key decision.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To consider a nomination for the Local Authority Governor position at Fens Primary School.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 the process for appointing Local Authority Governors to school governing bodies requires the local authority to consider nominations to vacancies before they are presented to the relevant governing body for formal approval. Applications have been received for the vacant positions at the above schools details of which are set out in **Appendix A**.

This item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The report seeks the committee's decision on the application for nomination as Local Authority Governor at Fens Primary School

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no risk implications

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 There are no financial considerations

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 There are no legal considerations

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Discussions have taken place between the applicant and head teacher of the school around the skills the applicant can contribute to the Governing Body. The application received relates to a position that is currently vacant.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 There are no child and family considerations

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 There are no staff considerations

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 There are no asset management considerations

13. RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The committee gives consideration to application for nomination as Local Authority Governor as set out in **Appendix B**.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 To ensure that the identified governing body can appoint a Local Authority Governor who is able to contribute to the effectiveness of governance at the school.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 There are no background papers

16. CONTACT OFFICER

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Sign Off:-

Director of Finance and Policy ☒

Chief Solicitor ☒

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 March 2022



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

Subject: HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide Children's Services Committee with a report on the delivery of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme during the summer and Christmas school holidays during 2021 and outline proposals for future delivery of the programme.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 2020, the government announced the holiday activities and food programme providing funding to local authorities to coordinate free holiday provision including healthy food and enriching activities during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. The HAF programme is aimed at children who receive benefits-related free school meals although other children can also benefit from the offer. Local authorities were asked to ensure that the HAF programme was available for all children eligible for free school meals in the local area, although recognised that not all eligible children would participate.
- 3.2 A report was presented to Children's Services Committee on 20 July 2021 outlining details of the programme delivered during the school Easter holiday 2021.
- 3.3 The delivery of the HAF programme in Hartlepool is overseen by a Steering Group which is well established and made up of a range of partners representing the breadth of stakeholders in the programme. The Steering Group benefits from the expertise of those who work with children and young

people as well as those working in the activities and sports sector and food standards and nutrition sector.

- 3.4 The summer school holidays HAF programme delivered by 34 different providers across Hartlepool, including council services, voluntary and community sector organisations, sports clubs, schools and private organisations. The summer programme reached over 5,500 children and young people in Hartlepool and engaged them in a range of activities including: swimming, drama workshops, canoeing, hair and beauty, dodgeball, arts and crafts, music and dance, gardening, cooking, movie days, road safety, puppet making, story times, board games, treasure hunts, chemistry and astronomy, football, cricket, a climbing wall, street dance, archery, and bricklaying and joinery. It was estimated that approximately 70% of all eligible children participated in at least one HAF activity.
- 3.5 In addition to the delivery of activities for children and young people, the programme also developed and delivered Food Boxes to families providing them with the ingredients and a recipe booklet for three nutritional family meals for a family of four as well as nutritional education and health and wellbeing leaflets and an activity for a child or young person.
- 3.6 As part of the summer programme, officers within HBC designed and implemented a booking system which was reported as simple to use and effective. This was further refined for the Christmas offer and supports the programme exceptionally well.
- 3.7 The Christmas 2021 programme was delivered by 28 providers. Delivery over the Christmas holiday period was more of a challenge due to bank holidays and many services closing over the Christmas period. Nevertheless, the programme reached over 3200 children and young people and included activities such as: ice rink, festive crafts, Christmas parties, swimming, forest school, music, cooking, roller disco, three D printing and laser cutting, yoga and Pokémon themed maths sessions. In addition, Christmas craft activity packs were distributed to children and young people to provide a virtual offer to complement the activities available.
- 3.8 During both the summer and Christmas holiday programmes, the activities offered all included the provision of a nutritional meal for children and young people. Due to the fact the HAF programme is free, there were some instances of non-attendance at some sessions, leading to a surplus of food. Initially this led to some food waste, however after the first week, officers and providers worked with VCS partners and the local Food Council to ensure that food was not wasted and was redistributed.
- 3.9 Feedback on the 2021 HAF programme from providers and children and families was very positive with high level of satisfaction with the offer. The range and choice of provision was seen as a strength. Children engaged well with the opportunities available, pop up events where children gather were particularly successful at engaging those harder to reach and less likely to engage in more structured, centre based activities.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 In October 2021, the Government announced a further investment of over £200m per year over the next three financial years for the holiday activities and food programme and in December 2021 issued updated guidance on the programme. Hartlepool has been awarded a maximum allocation of £595,500 to deliver the programme in 2022/23.
- 4.2 Given this announcement, work has commenced on the delivery of the programme in 2022/23 and beyond. It is a requirement within the new guidance that every local authority appoint a HAF coordinator who takes responsibility for the delivery of the HAF programme and work has commenced on recruiting to this post. The coordinator will be responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the programme, building on work completed to date and further refining and developing this. The work of the coordinator will be overseen by the Steering Group who are committed to continuing to support the HAF programme.
- 4.3 Going forward, the Coordinator will be responsible for carrying out a local mapping of holiday provision, develop a local plan and produce an annual report of the HAF programme. The coordinator will also have a strengthened role in monitoring the Hartlepool HAF provision ensuring that they support providers to comply with or improve the quality of their provision, for example, through arranging training and development or qualifications.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The HAF programme has been funded by the Department for Education and is supported by guidance documentation. Delivery of the programme is a significant undertaking for the Council and requires the cooperation and partnership working across HBC and with a range of providers to make sure that the programme is successful and reaches as many children and young people as possible.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Department for Education has allocated a maximum grant of £595,500 for the delivery of the HAF programme in Hartlepool during 2022/23. This grant will be paid in instalments and is intended to cover all costs associated with the management and delivery of the programme.
- 6.2 If the grant phasing does not match the expenditure profile the Council will need to manage the cash flow implications within existing cash resources, which is not anticipated to be an issue and will be necessary for the successful delivery of this initiative.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific legal considerations arising from this report. The decision is reported to the Committee in accordance with Article 12.3 (h) of the Constitution.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The HAF programme for 2021 was delivered by a Steering Group made up of a wide range of partners who have contributed to the development of the programme. This Steering Group will continue to oversee the development and delivery of the programme for 2022/23 and beyond.
- 8.2 As part of the 2021 delivery programme, an online survey was rolled out with children and young people and their parents/carers to gain feedback on what events and activities they enjoyed and other things they would like to be included. This was supported by focus group interviews with young people to get richer information. The feedback received on the 2021 programme will inform the development of the future offer.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 9.1 A child and family poverty impact assessment has been completed and is attached at **Appendix 1**.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 10.1 There are no specific equality and diversity considerations arising from this report, the HAF programme is offered to all children and young people who are entitled to free school meals. The programme is delivered through a range of partners to ensure the offer is inclusive and meets the needs of all children and young people including those with protected characteristics.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 The announcement of the continuity of the programme from 2022 – 2025 requires the Council to appoint a HAF coordinator. The job description and person specification for this post have been written and job evaluated and the post is out for recruitment.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.

13. ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations arising from this report.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Members of Children's Services Committee are asked to note the detail of the HAF delivery programme for 2021 and proposals for future delivery arrangements for 2022/23 and beyond.

15. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The HAF programme is an initiative of the Department for Education to tackle holiday activities provision, nutrition and physical health and reduce social isolation. The Council has received funding to deliver programme and will report progress to Children's Services Committee.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Children's Services Committee 02 March 2021 'Holiday Activities and Food Programme'

https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4180/childrens_services_committee

Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2021>

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

Sally Robinson

Director

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1. Is this decision a Budget & Policy Framework or Key Decision? NO

If YES please answer question 2 below

2. Will there be an impact of the decision requested in respect of Child and Family Poverty? YES / NO

If YES please complete the matrix below

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

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

Poverty Measure (examples of poverty measures appended overleaf)	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	NO IMPACT	REASON & EVIDENCE
Children in low income families	X			HAF programme will provide activities and food to children and young people eligible for free school meals during the three longer school holidays in 2021.
Educational attainment	X			HAF programme will support disadvantaged children and young people during the school holiday period which is designed to provide them with healthy food and enriching activities that will support them to be more engaged with school
Healthy eating	X			The HAF programme is designed to support children and young people to eat more healthily and be more active during school holidays and provide them with a greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
Overall impact of Policy / Decision				
POSITIVE IMPACT	X	ADJUST / CHANGE POLICY / SERVICE		
NO IMPACT / NO CHANGE		STOP / REMOVE POLICY / SERVICE		
ADVERSE IMPACT BUT CONTINUE				
Examples of Indicators that impact of Child and Family Poverty.				
Economic				
Children in Low Income Families (%)				

Children in Working Households (%)
Overall employment rate (%)
Proportion of young people who are NEET
Adults with Learning difficulties in employment
Education
Free School meals attainment gap (key stage 2 and key stage 4)
Gap in progression to higher education FSM / Non FSM
Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils (key stage 2 and key stage 4)
Housing
Average time taken to process Housing Benefit / Council tax benefit claims
Number of affordable homes built
Health
Prevalence of underweight children in reception year
Prevalence of obese children in reception year
Prevalence of underweight children in year 6
Prevalence of obese children in reception year 6
Life expectancy

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

15 MARCH 2022



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

Subject: OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT – CARE LEAVERS

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

1.1 For information only

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To report to Children's Services Committee the outcome of the Ofsted focused visit to Hartlepool Children's Services, which took place in January 2022.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In January 2018, Ofsted launched a revised framework for the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) to examine the arrangements for the care and support provided by local authorities to children and young people in receipt of early help and children's social care services. Since the implementation of the ILACS framework, Hartlepool Children's Services has been inspected on three occasions:

- Short inspection (July 2018);
- Focused visit – Children in need and children subject to a protection plan (March 2020); and
- Focused visit – Care leavers (January 2022)

3.2 Children's Services received notice of the focused visit on care leavers on 11 January 2022 and the inspectors were on site in Hartlepool on 18th and 19th January.

3.3 The report of the focused visit was published on 22 February 2022 on the Ofsted website <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80473>

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The letter from the focused visit is attached at **Appendix A** to this report and outlines Ofsted's findings into the quality of support provided to care leavers in Hartlepool. The report reflects a strong performing children's services that supports care leavers well, has continued to deliver a high quality service to care leavers despite the pandemic and created a culture where 'care leavers are always in mind and, always in reach'. The Ofsted letter reflects very positively on the quality of services to care leavers in Hartlepool and is an outcome to be celebrated.
- 4.2 The report identifies one area for improvement where work has commenced but the inspectors were not yet able to see the impact of that in the young person's record. Senior managers are confident that as the work programme is rolled out over the next eight weeks, this area for improvement will have been addressed. Nevertheless, audit work will be completed to be assured that the voice and influence of care leavers is reflected in pathway plans.

5. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial considerations arising from this report.

7. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal considerations arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In undertaking this focused visit, Ofsted consulted with care leavers and sought their views on the quality of care and support they receive.

9. CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 9.1 Care leavers are a vulnerable group who are at greater risk of experiencing child poverty. Delivery of high quality services to this group reduces the likelihood and impact of poverty on them.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS (IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM TO BE COMPLETED AS APPROPRIATE.)

- 10.1 There are no equality and diversity considerations, care leavers are entitled to support and services regardless of any protected characteristics.

11. STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

- 11.1 There are no staffing considerations arising from this report.

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 12.1 There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.

13. ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

- 13.1 There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the outcome of the Ofsted focused visit on services to care leavers delivered by Hartlepool Children's Services.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Children's Services Committee has responsibility to be assured of the effectiveness of the local arrangements to safeguard and protect children including receiving external reports on the quality of services provided.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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22 February 2022

Sally Robinson
Director, Children's, and Joint Commissioning Services
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Dear Mrs Robinson

Focused visit to Hartlepool children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the focused visit to Hartlepool children's services on 18 and 19 January 2022. Her Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Vicky Metherringham and Jo Warburton.

Inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for care leavers.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. Inspectors were on site during the visit and carried out a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings. Inspectors met with care leavers, personal advisers, social workers, managers and leaders.

Headline findings

Determined senior leaders ensure that care leavers are provided with consistent practical, financial and emotional support. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, care leavers have continued to experience the same high-quality service as they did prior to the pandemic. Senior leaders have created a relational approach across the whole social work system. This has created conditions for good-quality practice to grow and flourish and has created a culture where care leavers are always in mind, and always in reach.

Highly skilled and effective workers, many of whom have worked in the authority for years, have long-standing and meaningful relationships with young people. They support care leavers exceptionally well to make the transition to becoming young adults in all areas of their lives. Care leavers benefit from a 'one worker' model of practice, which enables them to develop trusting relationships with workers and foster carers. 'Staying put' is actively encouraged and other accommodation options are explored with care leavers at their pace, and only when they are ready to move to independence. Strong agency partnerships, and a highly effective virtual school, work closely with social workers, staff and carers to help care leavers access employment and training opportunities and achieve their ambitions.

What needs to improve in this area of social work practice?

- The voice and influence of care leavers in developing and owning their individual pathway plan.

Main findings

COVID-19 rates in Hartlepool are consistently above the national average. At a very early stage, senior leaders made the decision that care leavers needed to be seen and supported as usual. The senior leadership team worked closely with the workforce to secure the balance between ensuring the safety and well-being of young people and that of their staff. Buildings remained open to provide face-to-face support throughout the pandemic to care leavers. Care leavers were encouraged to remain living with their foster carers and other carers during the first period of lockdown, and beyond. Leaders recognise that care leavers need the continued support of their carers, to feel safe and remain safe.

Workers know their care leavers exceptionally well. The 'one worker' model provides them with a social worker from the through care team during the time they are looked after until they no longer require a service, irrespective of their age. Care leavers spoken to during the visit told inspectors that they experience excellent support from workers in all areas of their lives. They report that they have strong and supportive relationships with workers who they feel truly care about them.

Inspectors observed persistent workers making relentless efforts to keep in touch with care leavers. They visit them frequently and according to their needs and wishes. Care leavers are seen face to face, even when they live at some distance. Workers keep in touch with care leavers using a range of methods in between face-to-face contact. They know what their rights and entitlements are and have access to an advocate from the National Youth Advocacy Service or an independent visitor if this is required.

Most assessments in pathway plans are detailed and consider all relevant issues for care leavers effectively. They provide a comprehensive range of agreed actions and timescales about when these will be completed, and by whom. Plans reflect care leavers' financial entitlements, and show that they have access to the key documents needed to begin their lives as young adults. Some plans are written to care leavers and avoid jargon, but this approach is still in its infancy. While workers can clearly articulate care leavers' views, this does not always translate into their written individual plans.

Transitions for care leavers are informed by individual assessment of their needs, undertaken by their social worker. Assessments include thoughtful consideration of accommodation needs and longer-term education or training aspirations. Social workers undertake timely work which ensures that care leavers move towards

independence at their own pace. Their transition plans are informed by a thorough understanding of care leavers' experiences and needs.

Care leavers live in a range of safe and appropriate accommodation provision which includes staying put, supported lodgings, independent tenancies and student accommodation. Their views inform where they are going to live and individualised packages of support are developed and followed through. When care leavers progress to into independent living, they see their workers frequently. Workers provide practical, financial and emotional support. This reduces the risk of their tenancies breaking down and ensures that the standards and suitability of their accommodation are continuously assessed and monitored.

Care leavers are encouraged to stay put with their foster carers, even when these arrangements incur additional financial expenditure. Committed foster carers support care leavers to be prepared well for adulthood. Foster carers are well supported with staying put agreements which provide clarity about the support that they will receive. Only a very small number of care leavers are in custody. Workers maintain regular contact with the prison service and young people to ensure that their individual needs are known and assessed, both in prison and in preparation for their release.

The numbers of care leavers engaged in education, employment and training are improving, despite the impact of the pandemic. The number of care leavers accessing university is increasing, with more being prepared to attend this year. A range of options are considered when transitioning from school, including consideration of work experience, apprenticeships, further education and university. A highly effective virtual school head promotes the engagement of care leavers' involvement in further education and training, described by some as the 'nagging parent'.

Care leavers' routine health needs are actively considered, and they are well supported by their carers and workers to attend appointments. Proactive workers support timely referrals to adult services to provide care leavers with continuity of care to maintain their health needs, particularly where they are taking medication. Care leavers report feeling well supported by their workers and foster carers when they experience low mood. The in-house therapeutic team provides filial therapy to foster carers and young people. It also provides consultation to workers and carers.

Risks to care leavers are monitored and reduced through skilful direct work and attention by their workers. Timely and appropriate referrals to other agencies are made through effective multi-agency working.

Senior leaders actively seek feedback from care leavers through the reinvigorated, enthusiastic care leavers group as well as through other methods, including a care leavers ballot. Care leavers are engaged and encouraged to attend corporate parenting panels. During the pandemic, workers continued to reach out to care leavers to provide them with gift vouchers to celebrate their success and commend

them on their achievements. A range of other creative offers of support were provided to them, to enable them to remain connected.

This visit has evidenced a strong and stable senior leadership team whose members show determination and ambition to improve care leavers' outcomes. They use highly effective performance data, which they have created, to focus on care leavers' vulnerabilities, needs and progress. They use this to scrutinise and constructively challenge frontline managers to inform improvement activity. The quality assurance framework provides senior leaders with a consistent line of sight to the quality and impact of practice. Audit and moderation processes are underpinned by a relational and supportive approach. Workers report that their practice is improving as a direct consequence of this approach.

Enthusiastic political leadership, driven by the lead member, means that care leavers are benefiting from their needs being understood and prioritised as any good parent would. Senior leaders and members are rightly very proud of the service and are determined to improve care leavers' outcomes even further. Children's services have received additional financial investment and increased worker capacity to sustain and improve high-quality support to care leavers.

Staff describe feeling valued and supported by senior leaders. Many workers have worked in the authority for many years, showing unstinting commitment to young people. This culture was palpable as inspectors spoke with staff and managers. Staff unequivocally describe visible and approachable senior leaders who communicate well with them. Staff describe their caseloads as being manageable. This assists them to support care leavers exceptionally well. Staff experience personal and case supervision which encourages reflection and a focus on young people and care leavers. Staff and managers report that the training provided to them is improving the quality of their practice.

Ofsted will take the findings from this focused visit into account when planning the next inspection or visit.

Yours sincerely

Vicky Metheringham
Her Majesty's Inspector